

## *Inspiring Escorted Journeys*



21st April 2017

Hi Everyone

After three months in Argentina I've just returned to spend the Autumn in my home city of Melbourne. With the Byroads travel survey now finalised I'm turning my attention to some of the new destinations that our Byroads travellers have expressed an interest in exploring. It may seem early to be thinking of 2019 trips but it takes time to properly research, plan and market new trips. I want to ensure that your expectations as a Byroads traveller continue to be fulfilled. Please enjoy the newsletter and don't forget to check-out the most popular destinations from our survey.

Best wishes,

Steve

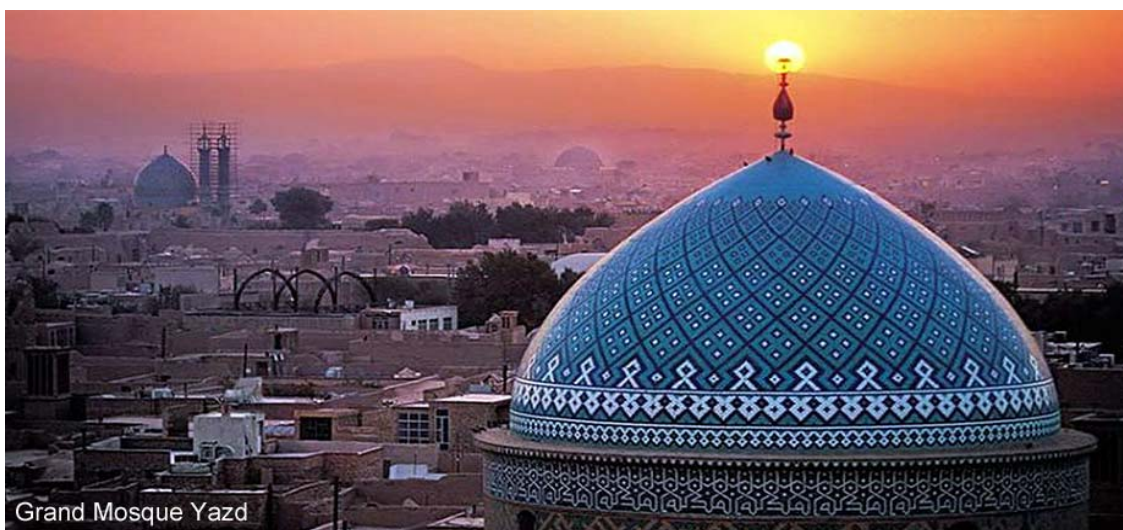
### **Iran: Now is the time to go.**

It was only a few short years ago that Iran drew a sprinkling of foreign tourists to its ancient shores. With economic sanctions lifted and its relations with the West thawing, more and more tourists are now discovering what a fabulous destination Iran is. Visa requirements are easing, hotels are busy and airlines are expanding their networks to connect the country to the Middle East, Europe, Asia and further afield.

Iran, with its stunning landscapes, ancient religions and cultures is an incredibly welcoming country. Apart from being amongst the friendliest people you will meet anywhere, Iranians are curious to meet strangers and to chat so visitors are assured of a warm Persian welcome.

This emerging destination is a treasure trove of ancient monuments and sites including the superb palace of Darius the Great at Isfahan, the Zoroastrian Towers of Silence and Grand Mosque in Yazd, whilst out in the barren surrounds are the remains of deserted caravanserais from a bygone era. The bustling capital of Tehran is also worthy of a few days, particularly for lovers of Islamic art, with its world renowned art galleries and museums.

Byroads 15 Days '[Persia Unveiled](#)' trip covers all the highlights of this remarkable country with departures in October of 2017 and 2018. It also combines perfectly with our 13 Days '[Uzbekistan](#)' trip for those who want a more in-depth look at this region of the world.



#### **Byroads Featured Accommodation - Galle Fort Hotel - Galle, Sri Lanka**

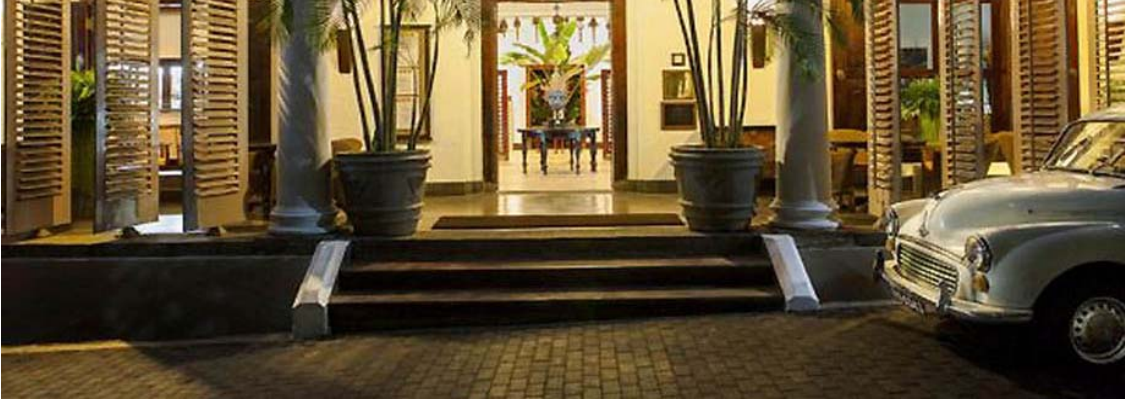
This newsletter I have chosen to feature the Galle Fort Hotel in the Sri Lankan coastal city of Galle. We spend two nights here on the Byroads 13 days '[Secrets of Sri Lanka](#)' tour.

This beautiful 14 room boutique hotel is situated inside the grounds of the old Galle Fort. The fort itself was originally built in the 16th century by the Portuguese however it passed into Dutch hands in 1640. In 1999 an Australian entrepreneur purchased a dilapidated 17th Century Dutch merchant's mansion inside the walls of the fort and impeccably restored it to open as a hotel in 2003. This iconic building has throughout its long life been a gem merchants mansion, RAF barracks, a post office, bakery, lapidary and even a pitch for the forts juvenile cricketers.

The Galle Fort Hotel is quintessential Galle, a beautiful, eclectic, eccentric gem of a place in the town that exerts a magnet appeal for history and culture buffs. In 2010 and 2016 the Galle Fort Hotel was named 'Sri Lanka's Leading Boutique Hotel' at the World Travel Awards.







**Your Destinations of Choice**

Well the results are in from the travel survey. It's interesting to see that Morocco continues as Byroads most popular destination however as you can see there is no shortage of new ideas as well. For the 2019 season you can be assured of at least two new destinations from the list below:

- 1. Morocco
- 2. Iran
- 3. Oman
- 4. Kazakhstan
- 5. Bhutan
- 6. India
- 7. Cuba
- 8. Italy
- 9. Mongolia
- 10. Kyrgyzstan







### Not quite Uber - Cuba's ageing taxi fleet

On the streets of Havana and right across Cuba thousands of ageing American cars work as 'gypsy cabs', part of a thriving black market economy that helps keep the island nation's economy limping along.

Abandoned first by the USA when the communist revolution swept across the island in 1959 and again in 1991 with the collapse of its long-time sponsor and communist ally the Soviet Union, Cuba's economy has struggled under the weight of crippling economic sanctions. The drivers of the country's fleet of pre-1960's taxis are testimony to the tenacity of the Cuban people and demonstrates the amazing ability of Cubans to improvise in order to keep the wheels of these giants of the road, rolling along. The cars best demonstrate the diverse reality of life in Cuba – on the one hand there is the romantic, frozen-in-time feeling and on the other, the country's faltering development.

With almost no vehicle imports coming into the country, these cars are preserved by Cuban mechanics and improvised fixes by their owners. Even if they could afford a new car, most Cubans rarely receive the government's authorisation to buy them. Approvals are normally reserved for officials and the wealthy and for the government's own taxi service. As a consequence, Cubans cannibalise older cars for parts and irrespective of the make, these rare parts can end up on any vehicle. Try to imagine a 59 Chevrolet with a Nissan diesel engine, a Toyota radio, Ford seats and a transmission from a Russian Lada and you have the right idea.

Our Byroads '[Rhythms of Cuba](#)' trip includes a late afternoon drive along the Malecon in one of these great American classics. The Malecon is Havana's iconic waterfront boulevard and an open top convertible is just the way to see it.



---

## Byroads Tour Program 2017 & 2018

### 2017 - MOROCCO, UZBEKISTAN & IRAN

- [16 Days Moroccan Mosaic](#) - Departs Rabat 14 September 2017
- [13 Days Uzbekistan](#) - Departs Tashkent 8 October 2017
- [15 Days Persia Unveiled](#) - Departs Tehran 23 October 2017

### 2018 - MEXICO, CUBA, SRI LANKA, MONGOLIA, MOROCCO, UZBEKISTAN & IRAN

- [15 Days Mexico & the Yucatan](#) - Departs Mexico City 2 February 2018 \*\*\* **New**
- [14 Days Rhythms of Cuba](#) - Departs Havana 18 February 2018 \*\*\* **New**
- [13 Days Secrets of Sri Lanka](#) - Departs Colombo 15 March 2018
- [14 Days Mongolian Discoverer](#) - Departs Ulaanbaatar 4 July 2018 \*\*\* **New**
- [16 Days Moroccan Mosaic](#) - Departs Rabat 13 September 2018
- [13 Days Uzbekistan](#) - Departs Tashkent 7 October 2018
- [15 Days Persia Unveiled](#) - Departs Tehran 22 October

---

## Send to a friend...

If you think a friend might be interested in learning more about Byroads, please forward the newsletter to them. They can subscribe by following this link:

[New subscribers](#)

---