



CUCRA/CUCEA Meeting, April 23 & 24, 2025

Introduction

The travel program is operated by a team of seven volunteers (Sue Barnes, UCD/UCLA; Dolores Dyer, UCLA, assistant coordinator; and liaisons Frank Trueba, UCSC; Vickie Leow, UCSF; Sabina White, UCSB; Elise Woods, UCB; and Judi Franz, UCI).

As of April 23, we will have completed 10 trips since the October 2024 CUCRA/CUCEA meeting: SE Asia (two departures), Montreal/Quebec Xmas, Galapagos (two departures), Costa Rica, Finland, Italy, Japan, and Northern Spain/Portugal. Two trips will be in progress during the April meeting: Danube River cruise and Northern Italy.

We continue to have excellent participation. Traveler feedback has been positive, and we are starting to see several repeat travelers. We are seeing a bit of a downturn in registrations, which I think can be at least partially attributed to the current political uncertainty. A few retirees have mentioned that they are worried about losing their Social Security and others worry about the acceptance of U.S. tourists in other countries. The fires in Southern California also had a detrimental effect since so many in the LA area were impacted.

Publicity

- We continued the monthly *Travel Talk* e-newsletter. Our email list started in May 2019 with 689 subscribers. Since October, the list has grown from 4,130 subscribers to 4,634 subscribers.
- We continued sending publicity to retiree center directors, CUCRA reps, and *New Dimensions* editor.
- Liaisons set up display tables and/or give presentations at in-person events at their locations. Sue recently gave a presentation to the LLNL retirees' group.
- We offered three trip preview webinars: one by Premier World Discovery and two by our volunteers, hosted by UCSF and UCI. The host campus publicizes the event to its retirees, and we invite retirees from all UC locations to register. We had to upgrade to a Zoom large meeting license because attendance at some webinars has exceeded 100 people. We add new travelers to our email list with each webinar.

Traveler Support

- **Pre-trip:** Most of our work continues to be pre-trip preparation and traveler support:
 - We answer questions from and provide information to those considering registering for trips and those who have registered.
 - We send welcome email messages each month to those who registered during the previous month.
 - Beginning three months before departure, the liaison begins sharing information with registrants, including packing tips, safety information, book/movie recommendations, and more.
 - We collect information from travelers to prepare a profile sheet to share with travelers on each trip.
 - We send tchotchkes (previously UC Retirees Travel laundry bags and now headlamps) to registrants.
 - We schedule pre-trip traveler meetings via Zoom about two weeks prior to departure for each trip.
- **During trips:** For trips with at least 12 travelers, a UC Retirees Travel liaison accompanies the group to:
 - Provide back-up support to the trip leaders.
 - Facilitate communication among travelers using apps such as WhatsApp and PhotoCircle.
 - Organize free time activities and meals.
 - Pay special attention to single travelers to make sure they are included in activities.
 - Help to mediate any challenging issues.
 - And anything else that needs doing.
- **After trips:**
 - We send evaluations to all travelers and discuss any issues with the tour operators as well as at our team meetings.
 - We have started offering past travelers a two- to three-week priority registration period, as some trips fill very quickly, especially for single space.

Management

- We held monthly team meetings via Zoom to provide training, discuss successes, and brainstorm solutions to challenges.
- We will be holding our first in-person team meeting in Davis May 18-19. We will meet for two ½-days to provide training and discuss challenging situations so that we can provide the best service to our travelers.
- Sue and Dolores connected several times per week to coordinate plans and address issues.

Tour Operator Additional Incentives

Collette and Overseas Adventure Travel (OAT)/Grand Circle Travel (GCT) offer us additional incentives because of the number of travelers we are bringing to them.

- Collette offers us an additional \$3,000 commission for every 30 travelers, in the form of credits to be used in the following year. We earned an extra \$9,000 in 2024 which will add to our 2025 trip commissions.
- OAT/GCT increases our commission from 10% to 12% for every traveler, beyond 50 each year. We reached 50 travelers in April of this year, so we will earn 12% for the remainder of the year.
- Collette and OAT/GCT pay CUCRA a commission for individual travelers who mention CUCRA's group number when they register for any of their trips. We have earned about \$6,000 in commissions from six individual OAT travelers since October 2024. As an added incentive for travelers who mention our group code, OAT offers the travelers a \$100 per person discount and Collette offers a \$50 per person discount.

Trip Participation

We have increased the number of trips and travelers each year since we started up again after the pandemic:

- 2022: 9 trips, 130 travelers (avg. 14.4)
- 2023: 13 trips, 189 travelers (avg. 14.5)
- 2024: 18 trips, 256 travelers (avg. 14.2)
- 2025: 22 trips, 261 travelers to date, 310 projected
- 2026: 23 trips, 56 travelers to date, 320 projected

We have reached the number of trips manageable by volunteers, so we have leveled off at 20-23 trips per year.

2025 Trip Details Year-To-Date

Most trips scheduled in the first half of the year filled but there is still availability on trips in the second half of the year. Trips with limited availability are noted below. The year-to-date numbers of travelers as of April 2, 2025, excluding liaisons, are:

Trip	Dates	Regist.	Avail.	Trip	Dates	Regist.	Avail.
Galapagos A (OAT)	1/9-24/2025	13		Africa B (OAT)	6/22-7/9/2025	13	FULL
Galapagos B (OAT)	1/16-2/1/2025	11		Canadian Maritimes (Coll)	7/27-8/6/2025	7	
Costa Rica (Collette)	1/31-2/8/2025	13		Scandinavia (Collette)	8/3-17/2025	10	
Finland (Collette)	2/20-27/2025	21		Azores (Collette)	8/14-26/2025	13	
Italian Vistas (Collette)	3/3-15/2025	18		England/Scotland (Collette)	9/17-30/2025	5	
Japan (OAT)	3/17-31/2025	15		France (OAT)	9/19-10/5/2025	9	2 snl, 2 dbls
N. Spain/Portugal (OAT)	3/30-4/15/2025	15		N. Spain/Portugal (OAT)	3/30-4/15/2025	12	1 snl, 2 dbls
Danube River Cruise (GCT)	4/19-5/3/2025	15		Niagara Falls (Collette)	10/15-22/2025	8	
Northern Italy (OAT)	4/28-5/13/2025	14		Cuba (Premier)	10/20-25/2025	17	
Cowboy Country (Collette)	5/22-29/2025	8	CLOSED	India (OAT)	11/11-29/2025	7	2 snl, 3 dbls
Africa A (OAT)	6/19-7/6/2025	10	2 dbls	Vanc/Vict. Xmas (Premier)	Dec. TBD	10	
Total	264	Collette 103		OAT/GCT 134		Premier	27

2026 Trips

We have recently started accepting registrations for our 2026 trips. Three trips already filled or are almost full, so we have opened second departures for Galapagos and New Zealand and we are working on a second departure for Egypt. Trips with limited availability are noted below. The year-to-date numbers of travelers, as of April 2, 2025, excluding liaisons, are:

Trip	Dates	Regist.	Avail.	Trip	Dates	Regist.	Avail.
Galapagos A (OAT)	1/18-2/3, 2026	13	FULL	Alaska (GCT)	8/4-14, 2026	0	
Galapagos B (OAT)	1/25-2/11, 2026	6	4 Dbls.	Greece (Collette)	September TBD	0	
Patagonia (OAT)	2/17-3/4, 2026	5	2 sngles.	Seine River Cruise (GCT)	9/13-25, 2026	0	
Japan/S. Korea (Collette)	3/7-22, 2026	8		Peru/Lake Titicaca (Collette)	October TBD	0	
Sicily/Malta (Collette)	3/24-4/4, 2026	0		Colors New England (Collette)	October TBD	0	
Flavors Port/Spain (Collette)	4/7-22, 2026	5		Morocco (Collette)	November TBD	0	
Amalfi/Tuscany (GCT)	4/19-5/4, 2026	4		New Zealand A (OAT)	10/29-11/14, 2026	3	
Namibia/S. Africa (Collette)	4/24-5/10, 2026	8		Egypt/Nile Cruise A (OAT)	10/31-11/15, 2026	11	2 dbls.
Ireland (Collette)	5/7-17, 2026	1		New Zealand B (OAT)	11/4-20, 2026	8	1 sngl. 3 dbls.
Finland/Sweden/Norway (OAT)	6/9-25, 2026	4		Danube Xmas cruise (Collette)	December TBD		
Java/Bali (OAT)	6/13-29, 2026	2		Egypt/Nile Cruise B (OAT)	December TBD		
Canadian Rockies (Collette)	June TBD	0					
Total	65	Collette 22		OAT/GCT 56			

Submitted by Sue Barnes, UC Retirees Travel coordinator, and Dolores Dyer, assistant coordinator