

CUCRA/CUCEA Meeting, April 28, 2026

Introduction

The travel program is operated by a team of seven volunteers (Sue Barnes, UCD/UCLA, coordinator; 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 28, we will have completed seven trips since the October CUCRA/CUCEA meeting: India, Victoria & Vancouver Christmas Markets, Galapagos/Ecuador (two departures), Patagonia & Chilean Fjords, Japan/South Korea, Flavors of Portugal & Spain. Two other trips will be in progress during the spring meeting: Amalfi coast/Tuscany and Namibia/South Africa.

We continue to see a softening of demand, and the recent war in the middle east has impacted new trip registrations significantly. While some trips exceeded our average (Patagonia, Japan/South Korea, and Amalfi/Tuscany), at least nine 2026 trips will run with fewer than the minimum 11 travelers to earn a complimentary liaison trip. In 2024, only three trips did not reach this threshold. In 2025, six trips fell below this goal. We continue to do what we can to market the trips.

Publicity

- We publish the monthly *Travel Talk* e-newsletter. Our email list started in May 2019 with 689 subscribers. Since October, the list has grown from 5,107 subscribers to 5,409 subscribers.
- We send publicity to retiree center directors, CUCRA reps
- We send *New Dimensions* editor an article and photo options for every issue highlighting different aspects of travel in general, such as insurance, packing tip, travel applications and tech, etc.
- We set up display tables and/or give presentations at in-person events at their locations.
- We created business cards, magnets, and flyers to distribute on trips and at in-person events.
- We offered four trip preview webinars facilitated by our partners to preview their upcoming trips (two for Collette and two for OAT).

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 began offering optional packing workshops, which have been popular and appreciated by travelers.
 - We send tchotchkes (currently UC Retirees Travel headlamps) to registrants.
 - We schedule pre-trip traveler meetings via Zoom about two weeks prior to departure for each trip.
 - We began offering optional packing workshops for several of our trips.
- **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.
 - Obtain photo releases for publicity and *New Dimensions* articles.
 - 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.
 - Where appropriate, assist with language translation.
 - 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 offer past travelers a two- to three-week priority registration period, as some trips fill very quickly, especially for single spaces.

Management

- We held monthly team meetings via Zoom.
- 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 2025 which will be added to our 2026 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. As an added incentive for travelers who mention our group code, OAT offers the travelers a \$100 per person discount. Collette offers travelers a \$50 per person discount.

Trip Participation

- 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, 259 travelers (avg. 11.8)
- 2026 (YTD): 21 trips, 236 traveler YTD (avg. 10.7)

2026 Trips

As of April 14, 236 travelers registered for 2026 trips. We have not yet collected data on the travelers' campus affiliation for the later trips.

UC Retirees Travel Trip Counts 2026 (excluding liaisons)

Trip	Ret. Staff	Ret Fac	Curr Staff	Curr Fac	Guests	Non UC	Total	LANL	LBNL	LLNL	UCB	UCD	UCI	UCLA	UCOP	UCR	UCSB	UCSC	UCSD	UCSF	Total
Galapagos A (OAT)	4	2	1		6		13					3	4	1			3		2		13
Galapagos B (OAT)	7	1			2		10					3	1	1				1	4		10
Patagonia (OAT)	8	2			6		16					3	3	6					2	2	16
Japan/South Korea (Collette)	8				10		18					4	7	3				4			18
Portugal/Spain (Collette)	2		1		10		13					5		7					1		13
Amalfi/Tuscany (GCT)	12				9		21					6	2	10					2	1	21
Namibia/S Africa (Collette)	4	1		1	1		7					3		2						2	7
Ireland (Collette)	3	1			2		6						2					1	1	2	6
Sicily/Malta (Collette)	5	1			4		10				4		2			1	1		2		10
American Heritage (Collette)	2				2		4					2								2	4
Nordic Countries (OAT)							9														0
Java/Bali (OAT)							2														0
Canadian Rockies (Collette)							25														0
Greece (Collette)							4														0
Peru/Lake Titicaca (Collette)							12														0
New England (Collette)							14														0
New Zealand A (OAT)							7														0
Egypt A (OAT)							15														0
New Zealand B (OAT)							15														0
Egypt B (OAT)							13														0
Danube Xmas (Collette)							2														0
Total	55	8	2	1	52	0	236	0	0	0	4	29	21	30	0	1	4	6	14	9	118

Total number of trips: 21 Collette Travelers (11 trips): 115 OAT/GCT Travelers (10 trips): 121
Average travelers/trip: 10.7 Avg. Collette/trip: 10.5 Avg. OAT/GCT/trip: 12.1

2027 Trips

Registration is underway for most of our 2027 trips. To date, we have a total of 92 registrants. The most popular trips are Canada, Dubai/Egypt/Jordan, and China. The first China departure only has two spaces available, so we have opened a second departure. We are still awaiting details about several Collette trips in the second half of the year.

Trip	Reg.	Avail.	Trip	Reg.	Avail.
Costa Rica (OAT), 1/15-27, 2027	9	6	Mongolia/Gobi (OAT), 7/8-23, 2027	5	10
Canada-Aurora (Collette), 1/17-26, 2027	10	10	Kenya (Collette), Jul/Aug dates TBD, 2027	0	18
Vietnam (OAT), 2/2-21, 2027	3	12	Great Britain (OAT), 8/11-27, 2027	1	14
Antarctica (Collette), 2/3-14, 2027	6	0	Iceland (OAT), 8/27-9/8, 2027	1	14
Morocco (Collette), 3/7-21, 2027	7	17	Portugal Spain (OAT), 9/8-27-10/12, 2027	0	15
Dubai, Egypt & Jordan (Collette), 3/7-25, 2027	19	4	China A (OAT), 10/10-30, 2027	1	14
South America (Collette), 4/8-20, 2027	5	17	China B (OAT), 10/19-11/8, 2027	13	2
Holland/Belgium cruise (GCT), 4/16-27, 2027	7	lots	Turkey (Collette), Oct dates TBD, 2027	0	24
Northern Spain/Portugal (OAT), 5/4-20, 2027	2	13	Thailand (Collette), Nov dates TBD, 2027	0	24
Majestic Cities Europe (Collette), 5/2-15, 2027	2	21	Xmas Markets/Castles (Collette), Dec dates TBD	0	44
Baltic Capitals (OAT), 6/14-29, 2027	1	14			
Total	92				

Individual Traveler Commissions

As mentioned earlier in this report, OAT and Collette both pay commissions to CUCRA when travelers mention CUCRA's group number when registering for any of their trips outside of the escorted trips that we include on our scheduled. Year-to-date for 2026, we project earning commissions for 29 OAT individual travelers and one Collette individual traveler.

Submitted 4/14/2026 by Sue Barnes, UC Retirees Travel coordinator, and Dolores Dyer, assistant coordinator