

Here's your 2013 faith travel go list

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Photo: Tourism Ireland

Thursday, December 13, 2012 - Contemporary Christian Travel by Ruth Hill

Ruth Hill



Ask me a question.

WASHINGTON, December 14, 2012 – Looking for inspiring 2013 travel ideas with sites and enjoyable experiences that will build your faith?

Faith-based travel worldwide remains one of the best pathways to spiritual insight and inspiration. Mingle the sites with some contemporary pleasures along your way for truly memorable journeys.

As modern interest in this oldest form of travel grows, professional tour operators are crafting itineraries that showcase familiar and lesser-known destinations and sites.

Here's a sample of the diversity to consider:

Luther 500 Festival: Destinations in Germany continues its anticipation of the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's challenges to the church that launched Europe's Protestant Reformation in 1517. A festival in Luther's hometown of Wittenberg June 17-23 will celebrate the Reformer and his heritage.

Reformation Tours is offering several festival-focused tours encompassing the historic events and cities in Germany and Switzerland associated with the Reformation. Included are Luther sites tours, worship in historic churches, and concerts. For more information on Luther sites, look [here](#).



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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



December 21, 2012: Will the world end? (Video)



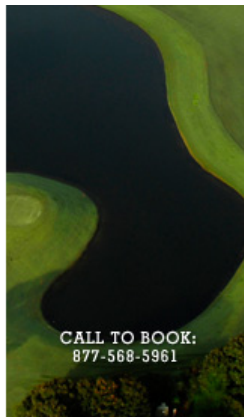
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Marian Shrines: Shrines to the Virgin Mary in Portugal, Spain and France are some of the most visited religious sites in Europe. Globus Faith and its budget brand Cosmos are among operators offering April through October departures. Included are the shrines and other stops that have drawn pilgrims since the Middle Ages: Lourdes, Fatima, Santarem, Santiago de Compostela, Madrid and Barcelona.

Gettysburg 150th: The four-year sesquicentennial anniversary of the Civil War continues in Gettysburg with several headline events in July (the three-day battle) and November (Lincoln's Gettysburg Address). Many war stories of faith and courage are interpreted at various Gettysburg sites, including the new Seminary Ridge Museum (opening July 1), a joint project of the Lutheran Theological Seminary (founded 1826 in Gettysburg) and the Adams County Historical Society.

Ireland, The Gathering 2013: There are more Irish (about 100 million) who live outside the homeland than who do (6.5 million), so in 2013, Ireland is unfurling its homecoming welcome mat to the world. Even if you're not Irish, you can partake in the ubiquitous culture – especially the faith heritage.

Select International has several tours that mingle faith sites and Emerald Isle favorites like the Ring of Kerry, Cliffs of Moher and Galway Bay. Enjoy Irish music, food, and maybe a pint or two along with the scenery and history. CIE Tours is also showcasing Ireland's spiritual history with tours that touch world-renowned Catholic sites like The Book of Kells, Knock Shrine, Holy Cross Abbey and Ormond Castle plus trips to mass rocks, holy wells and other sacred venues.

Presbyterian Heritage in Britain: A July tour of sites associated with the church in England, Scotland, and Wales is offered by **Reformation Tours** and led by Dr. Larry Roff, a Presbyterian pastor and theologian. Giants of the faith such as Knox, Spurgeon, Wolsey, Wycliffe, Newton, and Bunyan will be featured in tours and lectures.

Faith Cruises: Sailing for inspiration and fun is attracting more and more faith travelers, and **Inspiration Cruises** has an enticing roster of faith leader and musical artist-led cruises all over the world. Personalities headlining the cruise itineraries include Michael W. Smith, Anne Graham Lotz, Dr. David Jeremiah, Dr. Tony Evans, and Bill and Gloria Gaither.

Turkey and The Bible: Biblical Archaeology Society (BAS) biblicalarchaeology.org is offering a scholar-hosted May tour to Turkey and Greece where St. Paul preached in the first century. Athens, Ephesus, Istanbul are on the itinerary. A September scholar-led BAS tour will explore Old Testament stories in stunning and faith heritage landscapes like Cappadocia, Antioch and Gobekli Tepe, the world's earliest known religious site.

Revelation Churches: Seven ancient churches are mentioned in the Book of Revelation, and **Ed-Ventures, Inc** has organized a pastor-led tour of those church sites in Turkey that departs in March from Rochester, MN. The itinerary begins and ends in Istanbul, one of the world's most fascinating cities and site of Hagi Sophia, a stunning Sixth Century Byzantine building that has been a Christian and Muslim worship center and is now a museum.

Faithful Italy: As one of the most visited countries in the world, Italy has a lot more than pasta and gondola rides for faith travelers, including over two millennia of church heritage stops. Magnificent cathedrals, art, and heritage of the western world – Italy holds a mother lode of treasures. Italian expert **Perillo Tours** offers its Faithful Journeys lineup for Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. Italian journeys include faith icons in Rome (Vatican, Catacombs), Assisi (hometown of St. Francis) and Florence (Duomo, David by Michelangelo).

Faith in Travel has clergy-led tours of Italy that include private masses, a papal audience, an Italian cooking class, and wine tasting in a private villa.

MOST READ

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QUESTION OF THE DAY

Where do you stand on the Gun Ban and why?

- Ban all guns
- Stricter purchase laws/get rid of gun shows
- There are enough rules and regulations; leave it alone
- Ban assault weapons/high volume magazines

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Run, Karla, Run!

Notes from a running nerd: musings and more on all things running.

Christian Broadway: That's the moniker **Sight & Sound Theaters** in Lancaster, PA and Branson, MO have earned for their spectacular live productions that delight all ages. Shows coming March through October to Lancaster: a redux of "Noah," the company's all-time favorite; and in Branson, "Joseph." Both theaters will stage Christmas shows in season for 2013.

Disney adds 10K run, Dumbo Double Dare to Disneyland Half Marathon Weekend
Ready for a double dare? The Disneyland Half Marathon Weekend invites runners to compete in a new 10K and the half marathon as part of the Dumbo Double Dare.

Gear Review: Yaktrax Run makes winter running safe and a great Christmas gift