

Vacations Of A Lifetime

Affordable European Travel Packages Take Flight

(NAPSA)—If you've resolved to see more of the world in 2004, you're in good company. But did you know that traveling with a group—versus going on your own—could save you a lot of money? Thanks to group travel packages, visiting Europe can be surprisingly affordable and offer more value for your travel dollar.

With group travel packages such as those offered by Cosmos, independent-minded, smart practical travelers can explore the sunny side of charming Europe—saving on travel costs so they can instead spend money on the experience.

Spain and Portugal are two of the year's most popular destinations. But how much could it cost to visit and experience these charming countries that are rich in history and natural beauty? Booking a trip to Spain and Portugal by yourself in the peak traveling season of June, using airline and hotel Web sites, could cost you nearly \$2,500. On the other hand, by taking Cosmos' 14-day Best of Spain & Portugal trip during that same season could save you in the neighborhood of \$900. The Cosmos trip includes visits to such places like Malaga, the Granada-Alhambra Palace, Gibraltar, Seville, Fatima, Coimbra, Oporto, Salamanca, Avila, Segovia, Evora as well as the sandy beaches of Costa del Sol and the olive and orange groves of Andalusia.

The savings leaves travelers with ample pocket money to sample the local Portuguese wines at



Spain and Portugal wait to be explored—at some of the best prices in a long time.

Porto, overlooking the Douro River, or buy some vintage port at Hutcheson Feuerheerd Winery. Besides being a cheaper way to travel, Cosmos provides travelers all the benefits of group travel with much of the freedom of an independent vacation to create a balanced experience for each and every traveler. Plus, you have the added benefit of an expert tour director who knows the area, knows what's a good value and can give you pointers on how to get the most out of your vacation.

For those who want to visit all the must-see sights of Spain, Cosmos' 16-day Grand Tour of Spain is the perfect vacation. This trip is truly a grand tour of Spain's beautiful cities and places such as the Royal Palace, the new Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Loyola Sanctuary and the Peniscola Castle built by the Knights Templar.

With air-inclusive prices starting at \$1,626, this trip is quite the bargain if you consider that 16 nights in a hotel comparable to the Cosmos trip accommodations would likely cost you more than \$100 a night.

Expanding the horizons slightly is the 16-day Spain, Portugal and Morocco trip, which covers the fortress city of Avila, Seville, Casablanca, Fez, Tangier, Costa del Sol and La Mancha. Local guides are provided for sightseeing in Madrid, Lisbon, Rabat and Marrakesh. With air-inclusive pricing starting at \$1,485, this trip can save travelers a lot.

With all the money saved by booking a Cosmos group travel vacation, travelers can afford to enjoy the exciting shopping that can be found in the region. Visitors to Madrid can find some distinctive treasures, such as the sought-after perfume scents of Alvarez Gumez; the museum-quality guitars found at Conde Hermanos and José Ramirez; all things flamenco found in El Flamenco; and a selection of sombreros found at Casa Yustas, Madrid's oldest hat shop. Other items found at local markets include leather from Cordoba, lace from Galicia and jewelry from Toledo.

For Cosmos reservations or to receive the Cosmos' Europe 2004 brochure, consumers can visit www.cosmos.com or call 866-603-1313.