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Family Bonding, Afar

written by [Deserae del Campo](#) | Posted on September 5th, 2013

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The tour operator offers a 9-day Costa Rica Family Discovery tour.

Learning Journeys, a Perillo Tours brand launched in 2011, was born after travel agents, educators, and clients requested active and engaging overseas tours immersed in art, culture, music, language, and health and wellness experiences created to enhance personal interests and change lives.

President of Learning Journeys, Carol Dimopoulos, who is also an educator, says what also triggered the need to create the brand, which offers a wide selection of learning-inspired itineraries designed for students, special interest groups and families, was her own thirst for knowledge while traveling.

"Whenever I travel, I search out local schools and places to incorporate my areas of interest to improve my own skills, or offer a new perspective," she says. "When traveling with my family my goal is to deepen my children's text learning with hands-on experiences, such as language, music, and art lessons that will broaden their world view."

From its *Worldly Group Journeys* to destinations like Australia, Cambodia and Vietnam to the *European Group Journeys* to Spain, France or Greece and its *Wellness Journeys* to the Himalayas, every Learning Journeys tour is crafted by educators who want travelers to stray from the typical vacation experience; and if you have clients interested in hauling the family to exotic and far-flung destinations like India, Kenya or Dubai, look no further than *Learning Journeys' Family Adventures*.

Learning Journeys' Family Adventures allows "families to spend quality time together sharing their specific interests," says Dimopoulos. "We offer fun classes that the family can incorporate into their daily lives, like family cooking, learning how to paint, draw, dance and even experience piñata making. These types of programs also provide an advantage for college applications and career growth. They are an investment in the future."

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The 10-day *Arabian Family Adventure* is one of the company's most popular itineraries. Families go on sightseeing tours of Dubai and Abu Dhabi; take a nighttime cruise in a dhow along the Dubai Creek; learn about the cultural sport and technique of falconry by interacting with falcons from the private collection of a local family; visit with scholars at the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding; and take a desert safari tour over the sand dunes followed by camel rides and a BBQ buffet dinner. For entertainment during dinner, an entrancing belly dancer performs to Arabic music.

While in Dubai, families stay at the **Jumeirah Beach Hotel**, a five-star hotel with 598 oceanview rooms and suites, and 19 Arabian-style beachside villas; five swimming pools and private beach; *Talise Spa* with saunas, massage rooms, hot tubs, jacuzzi, steam room and plunge pool; and the kids can spend a few hours at *The Hub Teens Club* and *Sinbad's Kids Club*. As of press time, rates for this Arabian adventure were listed at \$3,200 pp; children under the age of 4 (sharing a room with two adults) are \$514 each; and children 4-12, also sharing a room with two adults, are \$1,810. Incidentally, children of any age are welcome on all family adventure tours.

The brand's 13-day *Italian Family Journey* and its 9-day *Costa Rica Family Discovery* tours are also top sellers. Additionally, the brand offers a 10-day tour of India and a yachting tour of Greece. Pre- and post-tours are also offered upon request.

Also, look into the 8-day *Kenya Family Safari Tour*. On day one the learning begins when guests are taken to Amboseli National Park where they will help build a lion-proof boma, which is a 6-ft.-tall triple chain-linked fence with firm metal doors designed to keep lions from eating the livestock of the Maasai villagers.

The tour also takes travelers to a local village school where donations of pens, balls, books and wall posters are encouraged; the Amboseli Elephant Research Project site where Africa's elephants are studied; a coffee farm in the Aberdare region; a Maasai cultural experience in Maasai Mara; a cooking lesson of local delicacies from the Kikuyu tribe culture; game drives and more.

Accommodations include the **Amboseli Serena Lodge**, the **Outspan Hotel** and **Lake Naivasha Sopa Resort**. Rates, with land transfers in a Land Cruiser, for four guests is \$3,400 per adult and \$2,740 per child.

No matter the size of the family (aunts and uncles are welcome, too), the tours are private, which means your group won't be sharing a motor coach when it comes to daily departures.

"All departures are private for each individual family, so there is no limit, which means the whole family can book a trip and experience the adventure together," says Dimopoulos.

An added bonus is the onsite teacher who travels with the families and is responsible for managing all day-to-day operations of the tour, as the curriculum and the learning themes change and build with each new day of the tour. To keep with the learning theme, because after all this is a "learning journey," questions are posed to the group related to what the travelers already know or don't know about the destination, excursion, and experiences that are incorporated throughout the tour.

For example, with the *Greek Family Yacht Adventure*, a language session is normally offered on the first day and the onsite teacher will use the new language skills sprinkled here and there during the duration of the tour so the family can put their skills to work.

the bottom line

According to Dimopoulos, next year Learning Journeys will be "offering some unique skill development journeys and introducing domestic programs" to the agenda.

The brand also supports travel agencies by offering co-branding opportunities such as e-blasts, flyers, webinars, and certification, which brings some added incentives like FAM trips and increased commission rates—agent commission ranges from 12 to 18 percent depending on bookings and certification.

contact information

Learning Journeys: (888) 884-8259; learningjourneys.com or certification.learningjourneys.com

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