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TRIP DETAILS

20 days

Mali & Mauritania

*Rugged off-road travel in
4-wheel-drive vehicles*

Remote desert camping

*14 nights camping,
5 nights hotels
or lodges*

2007 DATES

*Mar 9–Mar 28**

Nov 2–Nov 21

**Itinerary runs in the
reverse direction.*

LAND COST

*\$6190 per person
(12-16 members)*

*\$6690 per person
(9-11 members)*

\$200 internal airfare

ACROSS MAURITANIA

From Timbuktu to the Sea

TRIP LEVEL
MODERATE TO STRENUOUS

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ *Follow the tracks of ancient salt caravans of the Sahara—an MTS exclusive!*
- ◆ *Travel from Timbuktu to the sea through one of the most unknown regions of the Sahara*
- ◆ *Meet desert nomads, see 4,000-year-old rock art, visit ancient salt mines, settlements, and lost oases*

Printed January 15, 2007



ACROSS MAURITANIA

From Timbuktu to the Sea

Mauritania was once described as “the end of the world.” Sounds like just the kind of place we love to explore!

With Sahara veteran **Alberto Nicheli**, who’s undertaken more than 40 “missions” in the Sahara, you’ll undertake an unparalleled desert-to-sea expedition across one of the least known regions of the Sahara. In Mali, follow the tracks of the Azalaï salt caravan from Timbuktu to the salt mines of Taoudenni, long the forbidden dream of many a lover of the Sahara. Then, heading into Mauritania, retrace a vanished 16th-century caravan route, navigating through an endless sea of dunes that Alberto calls a “spiritual vertigo of total emptiness.”

Finally, you’ll cross the Adrar, a fascinating region of eroded mountains, canyons, lost oases, prehistoric petroglyphs, and tiny Islamic settlements, and arrive at the Atlantic coastal town of Nouakchott, Mauritania’s capital. Along the way you’ll meet colorful nomads, from Moors and Tuaregs to the legendary Reguibat of Berber origin, considered fearless warriors.

Travel is entirely by four-wheel-drive vehicles across very rough trackless terrain and requires a roll-with-the-punches attitude and a commitment to *real* adventure travel.

ITINERARY

(March 9 departure)

DAY 1, Mar 9 ~ Nouakchott, Mauritania

Arrive in Nouakchott in the late evening. A member of the Mountain Travel Sobek staff will meet you outside the customs and immigration area at the airport. This representative will answer questions, brief you on the immediate arrangements, and escort you to your hotel.

D...Novotel

DAY 2, Mar 10 ~ Into the desert

We leave Nouakchott, driving on the beach, the Trans-Sahara highway linking Mauritania to Morocco. Soon the sea meets the desert and we enter a region of sand dunes.

B,L,D...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAYS 3-5, Mar 11-13 ~ Amatlich dune range – The Adrar

We continue through the Amatlich range of sand dunes, one of the more beautiful in all Mauritania. As we go along it will become evident that we are crossing an ancient sea bed, as we discover small shells and lichens. We cross the Adrar, a rugged landscape of mountains, gorges, and mesas. This region has been inhabited since Neolithic times, and there are traces of prehistoric artifacts and rock paintings that remain as testaments.

B,L,D each day...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAY 6, Mar 14 ~ Chinguetti

Drive to the oasis of Chinguetti, an ancient Berber village. Chinguetti, a religious and cultural mecca of the Islamic and nomadic world throughout the Sahara, was the ancient capital of the Moors and the seventh sacred city of Islam. Today the city is half-buried in sand. An ancient white stone *ksar* (fort) with five towers remains as a remarkable example of Arab-Berber architecture. We'll spend the afternoon discovering the magic atmosphere of this oasis.

B,L,D...Lodge

DAY 7, Mar 15 ~ Ouâdane

A difficult drive through the *Barcane* (half-moon-shaped dunes that move during sandstorms) leads us to Ouâdane, once an important stop of the caravan route. Its still inhabited dwellings are built of stone and are decorated in typical Mauritania style. After our long crossing of the desert, we'll appreciate the green oasis and its date palm plantations.

B,L,D...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAY 8, Mar 16 ~

Continuing once more into the desert, we pass by the Richat crater, a series of concentric terraces with an interior depression that may have been caused by meteorites that fell to earth 65 million years ago (and which may have brought about climatic changes that contributed to the disappearance of dinosaurs).

B,L,D...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAY 9, Mar 17 ~

We come upon the well of El Beyyed, which lies on ancient soil rich in stone tools like arrowheads, axes, and shaping stones, mute testaments of the first peoples that dwelled in this land. We then pass the abandoned fort of El Ghallaouiya, built by the French colonial "camel battalions" and retaining an atmosphere of the French Foreign Legion. At Trig Chauail, we'll explore impressive and unique rocks covered with petroglyphs of the Arab-Berber culture. More than 200 panels with 600 subjects display a retrospective exhibition of the last 4,000 years of rock art.

B,L,D...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAYS 10-11, Mar 18-19 ~

We continue across one of the least visited regions of the Sahara, the wildest desert on earth. In these wide-open landscapes of sand dunes and stone and rock deserts we meet the legendary Reguibat nomads of Berber origin, who are considered fearless warriors. Like other Sahara nomads, they maintain a fierce independence.

B,L,D each day...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAYS 12-13, Mar 20-21 ~ Terhazza

Continue to Agueraktem, where a single well and uninhabited hut are all that mark the political border between Mali and Mauritania. Heading south toward Taoudenni, we come to the ancient salt mines at Terhazza, which once contributed to the riches of Timbuktu and wielded considerable influence over the economy of the region. (The geographer Ibn Battuta visited Terhazza in A.D. 1352 and depicted it as "an unattractive village with the curious feature that the houses and the mosques are built of blocks of salt.") Now these mines are abandoned and considered haunted.

B,L,D...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAYS 14-15, Mar 22-23 ~ Taoudenni

We undertake a journey across trackless sands to explore and rediscover an ancient, long-forgotten caravan track. Once this caravan route meant much to the Saharan trade, linking Oualata to Timbuktu and southern Morocco to the oasis of Touat in southern Algeria. Only a few sand-covered tracks remain. We continue south toward the salt mines at Taoudenni. Taoudenni is located right in the center of the Sahara, and has long been a “forbidden dream” of many lovers of the Sahara. Camel caravans arrive from Timbuktu to load up with bars of salt. The workers are Harratins, descendants of the black slaves of the Arabs, and they work in the same manner and use the same tools as centuries ago. They work under the sun and live in huts built out of salt blocks.

The region has always been hostile toward foreigners, due to raids by the Tuaregs and Bedouin Moors of the desert. After independence in 1960, Mali transformed the mines into a political prison and Westerners were strictly forbidden to enter the region. With the end of the military regime in 1991, the prison ceased to exist, but in the meantime, the Tuareg rebellion made travel to the area once more impossible. It hasn't been that long that one could finally travel here, together with a local guide who knows the land and nomads intimately.

We will be welcomed by the Marabout, the local leader.

B,L,D each day...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAY 16, Mar 24 ~

We continue to head south through the desert toward the outpost of Araouane, crossing vast sand dunes and seeing camel caravans and other sights that are almost biblical in nature. We'll camp at Fom el Alba (“the passage through the dunes”), a meeting point for all the caravans coming from north and south. This is where all the latest news about the salt market in Timbuktu is exchanged, along with the conditions of the wells and the always-difficult relations between different nomadic tribes.

B,L,D...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAYS 17-18, Mar 25-26 ~ Araouane – Timbuktu

Ten days after leaving the last permanent settlement, the oasis of Ouâdane in Mauritania, we reach the village of Araouane. From November through March, long caravans loaded with salt from the Taoudenni mines in the center of the Sahara commonly make their way through the village of Araouane on their way to Timbuktu. Araouane is the only place of habitation along the whole caravan route, and has been inhabited since the 11th century by some salt traders of the Arabic clan Ouled Sidi Hammed. The appearance of “foreigners” is a rare event and we'll be warmly welcomed by the Amenokal, the village chief. We'll spend a few hours visiting the town, which consists of a few clay houses half buried in the sand, and perhaps see the local school and medical clinic.

We then head south along the sandy tracks of the Azalaï salt caravans. Historically, the salt trade was the main economy of the region. The Azalaï track to Timbuktu is one of the most important, though least known, of the caravan routes that ply their way to the salt mines. In these forgotten no-man's lands nothing has changed since the 16th century. The same camel caravans leave Timbuktu in search of salt, the “white gold,” that has made Timbuktu prosper (some say that salt was once exchanged at the same weight as gold). Caravanners make the 1,000-mile round trip journey on foot in 36 days, leading camels carrying four blocks of salt (two large, two smaller), for a total of about 65-70 pounds. Caravans range from 50 to 200 camels.

We'll pass many ranges of sand dunes and a few places where wells have been dug for the local nomads. We may see them watering their herds of camels and sheep and may also be able to visit some encampments of the Maur people of Moorish descent. Along the way we are sure to come upon a few camel caravans, either heading south with their

bars of salt from the salt mines, or convoys heading north with goods bought with the proceeds of their salt sales. Arrive in Timbuktu in the evening.

B,L,D each day...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp (Day 17); Hotel Azalai, Timbuktu (Day 18)

DAY 19, Mar 27 ~ Timbuktu

Legendary Timbuktu (Tombouctou) was founded by Tuareg nomads at the end of the 12th century and was once the capital of a flourishing Tuareg empire. Now landlocked away from the shifting Niger River, Timbuktu was the meeting point for caravans that descended from the Maghreb (the settled area in the northern Sahara that spawned the caravans) to cross the Sahara, and of *pinasses* plying the river with cargoes of gold from the mines of Bourem. In its long history, it has been occupied by the Manding, then the Songhai people of Gao, then the Moroccans, then the Peuls (Fulani) of the kingdom of Macina and finally again by the Tuaregs. You may wish to wander the markets and visit Djinguereber Mosque, probably built in the 13th century, the most interesting monument in the city.

B,L,D...Hotel Azalai

DAY 20, Mar 28 ~ Bamako – fly home

Transfer to the airport and fly to Bamako, the capital of Mali. We'll visit the town and its markets and museums. A dayroom will be held so you can relax and clean up before the long flight home. Evening transfer to the airport and depart on homeward-bound flight.

B,L,D...Dayrooms at hotel

ITINERARY

(November 2 departure)

DAY 1, Nov 2 ~ Bamako

Arrive in Bamako in the late evening. A member of the Mountain Travel Sobek staff will meet you outside the customs and immigration area at the airport. This representative will answer questions, brief you on the immediate arrangements, and escort you to your hotel, located on the banks of the Niger River.

D...Hotel Plaza

DAY 2, Nov 3 ~ Timbuktu

Transfer to the airport and fly to Timbuktu, arriving in the late morning. After checking into the hotel, we'll take a walking tour of the town. Legendary Timbuktu (Tombouctou) was founded by Tuareg nomads at the end of the 12th century and was once the capital of a flourishing Tuareg empire. Now landlocked away from the shifting Niger River, Timbuktu was the meeting point for caravans that descended from the Maghreb (the settled area in the northern Sahara that spawned the caravans) to cross the Sahara, and of *pinasses* plying the river with cargoes of gold from the mines of Bourem. In its long history, it has been occupied by the Manding, then the Songhai people of Gao, then the Moroccans, then the Peuls (Fulani) of the kingdom of Macina and finally again by the Tuaregs. You may wish to wander the markets and visit Djinguereber Mosque, probably built in the 13th century, the most interesting monument in the city.

B,L,D...Hotel Azalai

DAYS 3-5, Nov 4-6 ~ Into the desert

Our convoy of fully equipped 4x4 vehicles will be ready and waiting, so in the early morning we'll depart on our expedition, heading north along the sandy tracks of the Azalai salt caravans. Historically, the salt trade was the main

economy of the region. The Azaläi track to Timbuktu is one of the most important, though least known, of the caravan routes that ply their way to the salt mines. From November through March, long caravans loaded with salt from the Taoudenni mines in the center of the Sahara commonly make their way through the village of Araouane on their way to Timbuktu. In these forgotten no-man's lands nothing has changed since the 16th century. The same camel caravans leave Timbuktu in search of salt, the "white gold," that has made Timbuktu prosper (some say that salt was once exchanged at the same weight as gold). Caravanners make the 1,000-mile round trip journey on foot in 36 days, leading camels carrying four blocks of salt (two large, two smaller), for a total of about 65-70 pounds. Caravans range from 50 to 200 camels.

Accompanying us is a local caravanner who knows the desert, location of the wells, and the nomad tribes that live in the region. We'll pass many ranges of sand dunes and a few places where wells have been dug for the local nomads. We may see them watering their herds of camels and sheep and may also be able to visit some encampments of the Maur people of Moorish descent. Along the way we are sure to come upon a few camel caravans, either heading south with their bars of salt from the salt mines, or convoys heading north with goods bought with the proceeds of their salt sales.

During our journey we'll visit Araouane, an outpost that is the only place of habitation along the whole caravan route. Araouane has been inhabited since the 11th century by some salt traders of the Arabic clan Ouled Sidi Hammed. The appearance of "foreigners" is a rare event and we'll be warmly welcomed by the Amenokal, the village chief. We'll spend a few hours visiting the town, which consists of a few clay houses half buried in the sand, and perhaps see the local school and medical clinic.

We continue to head north through the desert toward the salt mines at Taoudenni, crossing vast sand dunes and seeing camel caravans and other sights that are almost biblical in nature. One place we'll camp is at Foug el Alba ("the passage through the dunes"), a meeting point for all the caravans coming from north and south. This is where all the latest news about the salt market in Timbuktu is exchanged, along with the conditions of the wells and the always-difficult relations between different nomadic tribes.

B,L,D each day...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAY 6, Nov 7 ~ Taoudenni

Taoudenni has long been a "forbidden dream" of many lovers of the Sahara. The region has always been hostile toward foreigners, due to raids by the Tuaregs and Bedouin Moors of the desert. After independence in 1960, Mali transformed the mines into a political prison and Westerners were strictly forbidden to enter the region. With the end of the military regime in 1991, the prison ceased to exist, but in the meantime, the Tuareg rebellion made travel to the area once more impossible. It hasn't been that long that one could finally travel here, together with a local guide who knows the land and nomads intimately.

Taoudenni is located right in the center of the Sahara. Camel caravans arrive from Timbuktu to load up with bars of salt. The workers are Harratins, descendants of the black slaves of the Arabs, and they work in the same manner and use the same tools as centuries ago. They work under the sun and live in huts built out of salt blocks.

We will be welcomed by the Marabout, the local leader.

B,L,D...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAYS 7-8, Nov 8-9 ~ Into Mauritania

We start the second part of our adventure, a journey across trackless sands to explore and rediscover an ancient, long-forgotten caravan track. Once this caravan route meant much to the Saharan trade, linking Oualata to Timbuktu and southern Morocco to the oasis of Touat in southern Algeria. Only a few sand-covered tracks remain. Heading north from Taoudenni, we come to the ancient salt mines at Terhazza, which once contributed to the riches of Timbuktu and wielded considerable influence over the economy of the region. (The geographer Ibn Battuta visited Terhazza in A.D. 1352 and depicted it as “an unattractive village with the curious feature that the houses and the mosques are built of blocks of salt.”) Now these mines are abandoned and considered haunted. Continue to Agueraktem, where a single well and uninhabited hut are all that mark the political border between Mali and Mauritania.

B,L,D each day...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAYS 9-13, Nov 10-14 ~

We continue across one of the least visited regions of the Sahara, the wildest desert on earth. In these wide-open landscapes of sand dunes and stone and rock deserts we meet the legendary Reguibat nomads of Berber origin, who are considered fearless warriors. Like other Sahara nomads, they maintain a fierce independence.

We come upon the abandoned fort of El Ghallaouiya, built by the French colonial “camel battalions” and retaining an atmosphere of the French Foreign Legion. At Trig Chauail, we’ll explore impressive and unique rocks covered with petroglyphs of the Arab-Berber culture. More than 200 panels with 600 subjects display a retrospective exhibition of the last 4,000 years of rock art. The well of El Beyyed lies on ancient soil rich in stone tools like arrowheads, axes, and shaping stones, mute testaments of the first peoples that dwelled in this land.

We also pass by the Richat crater, a series of concentric terraces with an interior depression that may have been caused by meteorites that fell to earth 65 million years ago (and which may have brought about climatic changes that contributed to the disappearance of dinosaurs).

More than 10 days after beginning our desert expedition, we arrive in Ouâdane on the Adrar plateau, an ancient oasis founded by Berbers in the 12th century. Ouâdane, once an important stop on the caravan route, is still inhabited. Its dwellings are built of stone and are decorated in typical Mauritania style. After our long crossing of the desert, we’ll appreciate the green oasis and its date palm plantations. We’ll spend the afternoon resting and exploring the oasis and the nearby troglodyte village of Tin Labbé.

B,L,D each day...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAY 14, Nov 15 ~ Chinguetti

A difficult drive through the *Barcane* (half-moon-shaped dunes that move during sandstorms) leads us to the oasis of Chinguetti, an ancient Berber village. Chinguetti, a religious and cultural mecca of the Islamic and nomadic world throughout the Sahara, was the ancient capital of the Moors and the seventh sacred city of Islam. Today the city is half-buried in sand. An ancient white stone *ksar* (fort) with five towers remains as a remarkable example of Arab-Berber architecture.

B,L,D...Lodge

DAYS 15-18, Nov 16-19 ~ The Adrar – Amatlich dune range

We cross the Adrar, a rugged landscape of mountains, gorges, and mesas. This region has been inhabited since Neolithic times, and there are traces of prehistoric artifacts and rock paintings that remain as testaments. We

continue through the Amatlich range of sand dunes, one of the more beautiful in all Mauritania. As we go along it will become evident that we are crossing an ancient sea bed, as we discover small shells and lichens. We'll cross a range of white dunes and suddenly have a glimpse of the ocean in the distance.

B,L,D each day...Mountain Travel Sobek bush camp

DAY 19, Nov 20 ~ Nouakchott

Drive to Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania. Hundreds of sea birds will fly from old shipwrecks and greet us as we arrive along the beach, the Trans-Sahara highway linking Mauritania to Morocco. We'll take a tour of Nouakchott, built after independence in 1960. We may visit its national museum, which features exhibits on the Moor culture, the mosques, and perhaps the wharf and fish market.

B,L,D...Novotel

DAY 20, Nov 21 ~ Nouakchott – fly home

Transfer to the airport for departure on homeward-bound flights.

B...

LAND COST

\$6190 per person (12-16 members)

\$6690 per person (9-11 members)

\$200 internal airfare (Mountain Travel Sobek will book and issue these tickets for you)

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$700 for “requested” singles; \$350 for “forced” singles.

If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee. If you're traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we'll try our best to find you a roommate. If that's not possible, we will only charge you half of the single supplement.

What's Included

- ◆ expert leadership
- ◆ accommodations
- ◆ meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- ◆ tent accommodations and all field arrangements, including cook staff, community camping equipment
- ◆ airport transfers
- ◆ sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ◆ ground transportation
- ◆ additional guides where necessary
- ◆ entrance fees and permits
- ◆ basic medical and evacuation insurance

What's Not

International airfare; flights within Mali (see separate cost above); meals not noted on itinerary; insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplemental trip insurance offered by Mountain Travel Sobek, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; visas; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; cost of medical immunizations; items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

Air Travel

Airfare is not included in the land cost of our trips. For air reservations, we recommend you contact the airlines directly, either by phone or the Internet. In addition, many travelers elect to use their "frequent flyer" miles when traveling with us. **But please check with our staff before purchasing or obtaining your tickets.** We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Expert Leadership

Expert leadership is the key to an exciting, unforgettable experience. Our trips feature gifted leaders for whom leading trips is a true vocation. Besides showing you wonders you'd never find on your own, they make sure everything runs smoothly and safely without a hitch. They are knowledgeable about all aspects of your trip, and take great pleasure in sharing their insights with you. More than just guides, they positively elevate your experience by being teachers, companions, and the best of friends. You'll be in good hands with them every step of the way.

Alberto Nicheli is currently scheduled to lead this trip. Alberto is Italian by birth but has the heart of a nomad. He's traveled extensively throughout West Africa since 1975 and been a resident of Togo since 1984. His travels have been in pursuit of the understanding of these people: their customs, art, history, and tribal wisdom. He has established fast friendships with chiefs and elders in many remote villages and works energetically to preserve and understand their ways of life. During his travels in the Sahara, Alberto conducted field research of rock art, ethnological research on the Tuareg, and organized documentary film production logistics for the Discovery Channel. He has also made a solo crossing of the Sahara from north to south. Alberto is a contributing writer to Italian tour magazines and collaborated with Angela Fisher and Carol Beckwith on their field research for their book *African Ceremonies* and *National Geographic* articles on West Africa.

Lodging, Food & Vehicles

Camping nights in remote locations are spent in airy, mosquito-proof, two-person dome tents. You will be provided with a foam sleeping pad (you must bring your own lightweight sleeping bag). The camps are somewhat rustic and will involve "roughing it": toilet facilities are non-existent (because of shifting sands, it's difficult to dig a pit toilet), and showers are not available due to scarcity of water. Dinners in camp may include West Africa cuisine or Italian specialties. Lunch is cold food, served picnic style. Frequently, we will have imported Italian and French wines.

We will be traveling into remote areas aboard sturdy, all-terrain Land Cruisers that seat a driver and four passengers. (Please note: although the Land Cruisers have air-conditioning, it will not be used, as the drivers need all the power possible to navigate the vehicles across the sand.)

Activity Level

We rate this trip as moderate to strenuous because of the heat, rustic nature of travel, and long drives. This is a unique expedition that explores one of the most remote and unknown regions of the Sahara, the wildest desert on earth. We will visit areas of majestic beauty, where no other tourist has ever been, and encounter nomads that have never met a westerner. For two weeks we will be a self-sufficient expeditionary unit. You must be in good physical condition, enjoy an active life, and have recent hiking and camping experience. A spirit of adventure and a flexible, adaptive nature are musts.

If you are not optimally conditioned, we recommend that you start a training program *at least three months* before departure, gradually increasing the intensity and duration. If your health is questionable or your physical capacity is limited, please discuss other trip options with us.

Climate

Mali has a typical dry climate with a rainy season from June to September. The Saharan influence is felt in winter with the ebb of the monsoon and the arrival of dry air masses. The cooler dry season is from November to February, with lows of 45°-65° and highs of 75°-90°. In the dry season, the humidity is only 5% or 10%.

THE NEXT STEP

Ready to go? Signing up is easy!

Just call us at 1-888-MTSOBK (687-6235) and reserve your spot! You can also book a reservation online at our website (www.mtsobek.com). If you prefer to use a travel agent, he or she can book your trip at no extra cost and provide other helpful assistance.

Then Leave the Rest to Us

Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including clothing recommendations, suggested reading lists, up-to-date health advice prepared by our consulting physician (an expert in wilderness medicine), and other details from procuring visas to advice on local customs.

Why Mountain Travel Sobek is Your First Choice for Adventure

Mountain Travel Sobek is the pioneer in active adventure travel. No other adventure travel company can lay claim to that title. We were the first to take Americans trekking in Nepal, raft the wild rivers of Africa, and open up many previously inaccessible corners of the world to curious travelers. We set the standard for adventure travel and have a strong reputation for excellence that we do everything we can to maintain. Since we are the leading adventure company, we have a lot to live up to, so we make sure we provide safe, quality trips and the best customer service to our passengers.

With Mountain Travel Sobek, you'll see the Sahara as only an insider can, with friendly, hospitable guides who know the region intimately. They'll accompany you throughout the day, lending support and insights about where you are and what you see. Their close familiarity with the local geography, history, culture and traditions (plus their entertaining stories and great jokes) are the key to a superb, informative experience—one you just can't get on your own.

References

Don't take our word for how great our trips are. We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travelers.

Questions?

Feel free to call us at 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) if you still have any questions or concerns. We're here to help you. You can also check out our website at www.mtsobek.com.

Note on Itinerary

Although we will do our best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change. Please read the Limitation of Liability and Booking Conditions in the four-page Participant Information Form. You can find all this information on our website at www.mtsobek.com/faq and the form itself at www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf.

Limitation of Liability

"Mountain Travel Sobek" is defined to include its owners, agents, directors, officers, employees, representatives and affiliates (collectively "Mountain Travel"). Except for the Alaska Discovery Inn, some small craft and some vans in Alaska, Mountain Travel does not own or operate any entity that provides goods or services for your trip including, for example, ownership or control over hotels or other lodging facilities, airline, vessel, bus, van or other transportation companies, local ground operators, providers or organizers of optional excursions, food service or entertainment providers, etc. All such persons and entities are independent contractors. As a result, Mountain Travel is not liable for any negligent or willful act or failure to act of any such person or entity, or of any other third party. Without limitation, Mountain Travel Sobek is not responsible for any injury, loss, or damage to person or property, death, delay or inconvenience in connection with the provision of any goods or services occasioned by or resulting from, but not limited to, acts of God, force majeure, acts of war or civil unrest, insurrection or revolt, strikes or other labor activities, criminal or terrorist activities of any kind, overbooking or downgrading of accommodations, structural or other defective conditions in hotels or other lodging facilities, mechanical or other failure of airplanes or other means of transportation or for any failure of any transportation mechanism to arrive or depart timely, dangers associated with animals, marine life or vegetation of any sort, dangers incident to recreational activities such as scuba diving, snorkeling, swimming, kayaking, sailing, canoeing, rafting, hiking, bicycling, rock climbing, etc., sanitation problems, food poisoning, lack of, access to or quality of medical care, difficulty in evacuation in case of a medical or other emergency, or for any other cause beyond the direct control of Mountain Travel. In addition, participants release Mountain Travel from its own negligence and assume all risk thereof. **On advancement of deposit to Mountain Travel, the depositor therefore agrees to be bound by the above recited terms and conditions. These are partial conditions. Your participation is contingent on your signature on the full list of terms specified in the four-page Participant Information Form**, which you can find it on our website at www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf (or call us at 1-888-687-6235 and request a copy).

Arbitration

Any dispute concerning, relating or referring to these Terms and Conditions, to any literature concerning this trip, or the trip itself, shall be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration in San Francisco, California, according to the then existing rules of the American Arbitration Association. Such proceedings will be governed by substantive California law without regard to the California Arbitration Act.

Conditions of Participation

Your participation on a Mountain Travel Sobek trip is subject to the conditions stated in the four-page Participant Information Form, which includes the Agreement and Release from Liability and the Booking Conditions. Specific information on payment and cancellation policies is also contained within this document, as well as in our current catalog and on our website (www.mtsobek.com/faq). We urge you to read this information carefully, and to call us if you have any questions.

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Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.