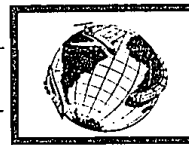


Travel Scene



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O.S.E. Thursday, March 29, 1990

crossroads

Ode to a travel agent

By Iris Sanderson Jones
contributing travel editor

Today, Iris Jones begins a new travel column, *Crossroads*, as an addition to the travel section. The column will appear weekly offering tips and tales about adventures around the world.

Have you ever wondered if a travel agent can save you money?

You should have been sitting on my shoulder when I sat across from Janet Kerns in the Lathrup Village Office of the American Automobile Association (AAA). I gave her an impossible task: find two low-priced airline tickets from Detroit to Los Angeles on a week's notice. She performed a miracle and saved me several hundred dollars.

Like many of you, I buy my airline tickets as inexpensively as possible. I could have bought Detroit-LA tickets for under \$200 during any of the Great Ticket Spectaculars of the last six months.

They seem to give tickets away in August, in October, even in January. One airline would slash prices and the rest would follow.

Unfortunately, there were no spectaculars in sight when I needed tickets to L.A. It was too late to purchase 14 day, 21 day or 30 day advance tickets — the prices go down as the number of days goes up. I had one week and would have to pay for the tickets that day.

I signed in at the AAA office at 4:40 p.m.; they close at 5:30 p.m.

I'm a member of the Automobile Club of Michigan and have always been a fan, but you don't need to be a member to buy airline tickets or book other travel from them. AAA is the biggest travel agent in the state.

I SIGNED in, waited my turn, and was led to a desk by a cheerful blonde in a navy blue suit. I didn't know her, she didn't know me, but the sign on the wall at the back of her cubicle read "Janet Kerns, Travel Counselor."

"Can you find me any low-priced tickets to Los Angeles next Wednesday," I said.

"Seven day advance tickets," she said as she put on her telephone earphones and started tapping on the computer. "They are going for about \$435. How many tickets?"

"Two. That's nearly \$900 for two tickets. Any chance of getting them for less than that?"

Janet clicked away, talking to me as the numbers came up. American, United, Continental. "Continental's just under \$400, that's the best so far."

"I didn't want to give you all the bad news at once," I said, "but we need to be in L.A. before noon."

"Two bad we can't get you on Southwest, they have good fares, but they extended their coupon offer and everything's booked going west. You never know, let's look."

She called Southwest but the only flight that got in before noon was fully booked in Q-class. That's what they call the low-cost fare. Q-fare.

Most travel agents would have stopped there but Janet is a determined soul. "Is your travel companion a child by any chance?"

"No, he's over 60."

"Aha!" and she started typing furiously again. "American gives 10 percent off to anyone who is a member of AARP." That's the American Association of Retired Persons. Other airlines have retiree rates too, but none of them could get us into Los Angeles before noon Wednesday.

"Can you go a day ahead and stay overnight?"

"Not in L.A., but I wouldn't mind an overnight in Phoenix, does that work?"

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Copenhagen a free-spirited Danish adventure

By Noreen Flack
staff writer

When touring Europe this summer, be sure to fit Copenhagen into your plans.

This charming, yet often overlooked city is sure to surprise you with its ancient cobblestone streets and free-spirited Danish culture.

Copenhagen, Denmark's capital, lies on the Danish island of Zealand and is the biggest and liveliest of the Scandinavian cities.

The streets in town are filled with young and "young at heart" folks, out and about, eating and drinking in outdoor cafes and listening to music in the center square. You'll get the same European charm other large cities offer, without the intense cultural mishmash.

The pedestrian drag, Stroget, is a wide-open cobblestone street filled with wonderful Scandinavian clothing stores and shops. The walk seems endless with each store bringing on a new European style in shoes, scarves and hats. The end of the drag opens up to the city center with peddlers offering great bargains on jewelry, trinkets and food.

DURING MY TRAVELS, my friends and I became regular explorers of the beautiful canals near the harbor, our favorite area in the city. Nyhavn, a canal lined with boats and seaside cafes, was once a strip filled with sailors and rowdy bar room brawlers.

The place is pretty mellow now and offers a peaceful stroll down by the docks between pubs. Most of these places are pretty cheap, and the friendly people who run these small joints enjoy practicing their English.

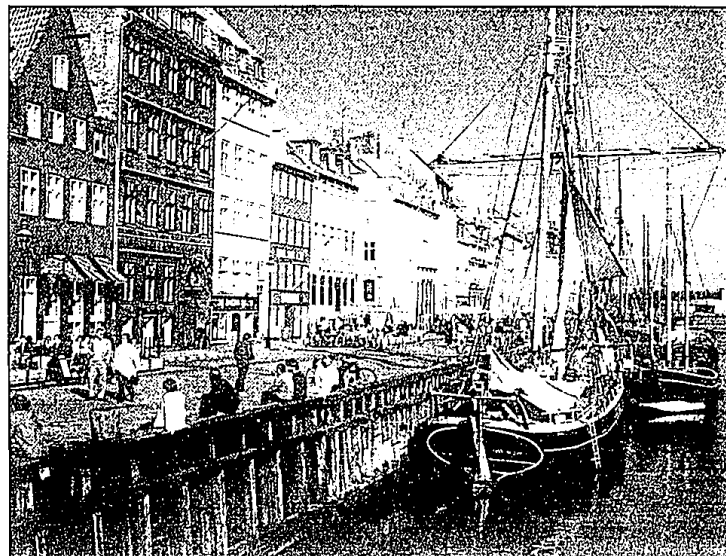
There is so much to do for nightlife in Copenhagen, the days seem endless. We were surprised that many of the bars and restaurants don't close until 5 a.m. and by that time the early-morning cafes are opening to serve a hearty breakfast. So try not to run yourself down during the day; you'll regret missing some of the best jazz in the world.

The Jazzhaus was a hard club to find, hidden away down the pedestrian street Nørregade, but that place was well worth the adventure. If you go, search it out. Jazzhaus brings in internationally known artists along with excellent local bands.

If you want to dance to some traditional jazz music, go to the Foyer Scenen on Magstræde.

TIVOLI GARDENS is a central place lined with bars such as Shoketter and Færgesmed with contemporary folk music to traditional jazz. We found ourselves joining in the sing-alongs even though our Danish was pretty weak.

We agreed that the best music in



Nyhavn, the harbor area, is a great meeting place and always active in Copenhagen

town was played at the Irish Pub. There is really nothing Irish about the place which is filled with long-haired, blond Danish men singing the blues. These guys would give some of the greatest New Orleans bands a run for their money.

I missed the world famous Copenhagen Jazz Festival which is celebrated in July—if you plan to go make reservations, the town will be bursting with tourists.

Like other Scandinavian countries, Denmark enjoys a very high standard of living. High quality porcelain and silverware have become popular products imported to the U.S.

DON'T BE MISLED by Danish currency, the kroner. Although you may receive approximately \$kr to the dollar, kroner go fast when you pay 150kr, or \$25, for a reasonable dinner.

Copenhagen has a great bus and train system but the city is best seen on foot, so wear your walking shoes; there's a lot to do. If you're out late and miss the last train back to your hotel, flag down a taxi. Most drivers will pull up in a Mercedes Benz and

are very polite, unlike most of our New York City cab drivers.

When you arrive in Copenhagen, orient yourself in the Radhusplads or Town Hall Square. You'll receive much help from the tour guides and you'll actually be sitting in the center of Copenhagen.

THE DANES are some of the friendliest people you'll ever meet, and most of them speak English very well. So don't hesitate to ask for help.

For a good view of the city, try the endless spiral stairs of Fresters Kirkes Tårn which leads to a twisted tower in Town Hall Square. The tour guides to the tower make the exhausting trip up the stairs at least five times a day, so don't try to keep up with them.

LIVING UP TO its free-spirited reputation, Denmark is the only country where you will find a place like Christiania, a tax-exempt experimental living project. This "free society" with limited or no laws, is a 10-minute bus ride from Central Station, on an island isolated from the

city. The society was founded in 1971 by youthful squatters and continues to be a controversial issue in Europe.

During World War II, the island of Christiania was used as a concentration camp while Denmark was occupied by Nazi Germany.

Today, a trip to Christiania will give you flashbacks filled with '60s counter culture and hippie regalia. The place is mainly occupied by harmless junkies and freaky free-love folks who run shack-like workshops and houses.

Loppen, a bar just through the entrance of Christiania, is a pretty heavy scene that features hard rock, jazz and funk music. Expect it all, from legal drug use to dog's lying on the counter. How these people actually survive is a question not worth pursuing. And as harmless as they may be, the shock of their lifestyle may scare you. But if you're a brave traveler looking for new adventures to blunder into, go for it. You'll never forget it and there is no place like it on the planet.

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Celebrate spring Japanese style

Thousands of winter weary people will take to the streets of San Francisco, Japanese style, for two weekends, April 20-22 and April 27-29, for the annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

The Japan Center at Post and Buchanan streets will be filled with revelers who gather to pay homage to spring and celebrate the arts and culture of Japan.

The Japanese festival, the Sakura Matsuri, is celebrated as respect for beauty and transience of cherry blossoms, or sakura, the national symbol of Japan. Cherry blossoms bloom in unison for a moment before spring breezes carry them away.

Martial arts performances, Judo, judo, aikido and karate. Masters in the gentler arts will teach

such traditional skills as Ikebana, flower arranging; bonsai, tree dwarfing; and origami, paper folding.

Women and children will wear brightly colored yukata, the formal dress of Imperial Japan. They will perform classical dances of the homeland and play traditional instruments such as the harp-like koto and the banjo-like shamisen.

The festival's food bazaar will give festival goers a chance to taste Japanese cuisine such as grilled teriyaki, yakitori and sushi.

A children's village will be set up for children to participate in activities such as Japanese folktales, magic shows, block printing and clay sculpting.



The San Francisco Cherry Blossom Festival celebrates the beauty and transcendence of Japan's national flower by honoring children. Symbolic of youth, the sakura, or cherry blossoms, bloom before spring breezes carry them away.

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Amtrak makes tougher smoking laws on board

AP — Two lawmakers who succeeded in snuffing out cigarettes on most domestic flights announced March 21 that Amtrak is about to make it tougher to light up on trains.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., and Rep. Richard Durbin, D-Ill., said Amtrak's new policy will take effect April 1.

"These new rules are another victory for health and common sense," said Lautenberg, chairman of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee. "It's further acknowledgement that non-smokers should not be forced to breathe other people's smoke."

Lautenberg and Durbin jumped the gun on Amtrak's own announcement of the new policy, which had been scheduled for March 22.

The new policy will continue to permit passengers to smoke in sleeping compartments.

But otherwise, according to Amtrak spokeswoman Sue Martin, smoking will be banned in: — First-class cars on all trains in the Northeast Corridor that don't require reservations. Reserved-seat Metroliners will carry smoking cars and will set aside smoking areas in first-class cars.

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