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Select a budget:

BC-MCT-TRAVEL-BJT — travel (1800 words)

McClatchy-Tribune News Service
Travel Budget for Monday, January 11, 2010

Updated at 8 a.m. EST (1300 UTC).

TOP STORIES

New CityCenter megaresort is a high-stakes gamble for Las Vegas

UST-CITYCENTER:SL—One of the city's famous faces was among the preview crowd wandering wide-eyed through the lobby of the Aria Resort & Casino, the showpiece of the new CityCenter, the most extravagant megaresort in Las Vegas history.

"It's beyond belief; it's so awesome you can't take it all in," said Siegfried Fischbacher, the blond partner of the Siegfried & Roy tiger-and-illusion show that performed for almost five decades. In a wheelchair at his side was his dark-haired partner, Roy Horn, who was injured by one of the tigers in 2003, closing the long-running act.

"The city has been on kind of a roller-coaster," Fischbacher said. "This is going to bring new life to Las Vegas."

Even in a city with its own Eiffel Tower, Great Pyramid and Venetian canal, CityCenter is an audacious array of art and architecture. With a price tag of \$8.5 billion, the largest privately funded project in U.S. history, the complex of buildings on 67 acres next to the Bellagio on The Strip is a high-stakes bet that nearly folded.

"We had a very near-death experience" is how Bill McBeath, president and chief operating officer of Aria, put it.

1300 by Tom Uhlenbrock. **MOVED**

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

Even the limos at CityCenter are 'green'

UST-CITYCENTER-GREEN:SL—MGM Mirage officials ordered the world's first fleet of stretch limousines powered entirely by compressed natural gas. The 26 limos have fewer greenhouse gas emissions, and natural gas has been cheaper than gasoline or diesel fuel.

The huge CityCenter project used so many environmental innovations that it earned six LEED gold ratings — for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design — from the U.S. Green Building Council. As with the limos, the "green" way of doing business was not only more environmentally friendly, but also was often cheaper and, in the process, created new businesses and technologies.

600 by Tom Uhlenbrock. **MOVED**

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

Tourist hot spot? Sure, but Italy's Cinque Terre still worth a visit

WLT-CINQUETERRE:CC—The days of having the Cinque Terre to yourself are long gone.

The string of villages along the Ligurian coast in Italy is far too exposed. Rick Steves wanders the lovely streets and waxes poetic about the charm and the food, and the masses come. Even in the offseason, the streets are jammed with visitors gawking at the colorful little harbors. You should not let that deter you from visiting, however.

I've been wanting to go since I heard about it a few years ago (on a Rick Steves show, I must admit), and my dad wanted to see it in person, too.

The towns, from north to south, are Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore, all surrounded by and built within rugged hillsides.

The name Cinque Terre means five lands, or in this case, five towns that were individual fiefdoms during pre-Roman times. Because rough terrain made access difficult, these towns developed wine and food cultures that were mostly unhindered by outside influences. Even today, they remain largely car-free. The only invaders are tourists.

1450 by Patrick Cant. **MOVED**

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#) | [PHOTOS](#)

Rent an Italian villa to find home away from home

WLT-CINQUETERRE-VILLA:CC—Spending a week in a hotel didn't sound like a relaxing way to explore Italy.

So, my family and I opted instead to rent a villa in a little town called Gabbiana.

The town had the added bonus of being in the Lunigiana territory—located in northern Tuscany, inland from La Spezia and the Cinque Terre — which is largely undiscovered by the masses.

550 by Patrick Cant. **MOVED**

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

OTHER DESTINATIONS

Hip Mexican digs invite siestas ... and fiestas

WLT-CONDESADE:TB—Suffice it to say, in researching a place to crash after a long day pounding the Mexico City pavement, it's crucial to find a hotel that's truly a respite — ideally one that doesn't sacrifice the city's unique, flavorful style.

Condesa DF (short for Distrito Federal) is a great contender. It marries the city's love for the cultural and the cutting edge. The boutique hotel is housed in a vintage art deco building with a stylish, mod makeover; its restaurant serves classic dishes updated with flavorful flourishes, and its staff has its finger on the pulse of the city's sophisticated night life.

Not to mention (and here's the kicker), the hotel borrows its name from the surrounding neighborhood, one of the capital's most desirable.

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900 by Lauren Viera. MOVED

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Travel with an open heart and mind

[WLT-TRAVELWISE:SE](#)—Hanging on the walls inside his little shop were necklaces made of strings of brightly colored beads. I expected him to unhinge one of the necklaces, and put it around my neck. Instead he went to his workbench and began rummaging through a box. Mixed in with some old coins was an Obama button as big as a small saucer.

Ahmed pinned the button on his vest and smiled.

“America good now,” he said.

After spending a few minutes with Ahmed, I finally was starting to feel the same way about Morocco. I realized then how silly I was to let a few brushes with aggressive touts color my initial impressions. I’d had some negative preconceived notions about Marrakech based on things I had heard about the effects of mass tourism, and had been on the verge of giving in to my expectations.

950 by Carol Pucci. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

Tim Burton’s museum show is a scream

[UST-TIMBURTON:TB](#)—It’s hard to miss the entrance to the Museum of Modern Art’s latest, somewhat incongruous blockbuster—an overstuffed, overheated, entertaining retrospective of the imagination of movie director Tim Burton. The entrance is a large, white face with frazzled hair resembling dead tree branches — a compelling argument that Burton should reinvent himself as an alt-Walt and build a theme park for disaffected art students. Somehow, if you still have trouble finding this, just follow the crowds.

350 by Christopher Borrelli. MOVED

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TRAVEL TIPS

Top '10: The most inviting, enlightening and unusual travel trends for the new year

[CNS-PREDICT:DE](#)—Come in, come in. Dim the lights. Pull the curtains.

Pull up a chair to the crystal ball.

What’s the reality of travel for 2010? What are trends?

Think vacations to Suriname and Malaysia. Germophobic travelers. Trips through the Northwest Passage and to Nicaragua. Renewed emphasis on airline security.

And be the first on your block to book that trip to Romania.

650 by Ellen Creager. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

Privacy advocate changes her stance after ride on Flight 253

[CNS-TERROR-FLIGHT:DE](#)—Hebba Aref has always been an outspoken advocate of privacy rights and opponent of profiling.

Then she flew Dec. 25 on Northwest Flight 253 from Amsterdam, Netherlands, to Detroit and found herself six rows in front of a Muslim man who has been charged in the attempted bombing.

And as a Muslim woman, she says she now believes security trumps privacy for air travel.

“I’m always standing up for rights and privacy concerns, but now I hope that body scans will be mandatory,” Aref, 28, said Wednesday. “Balanced against national security, it’s worth the invasion of privacy. And I acknowledge the fact that there has to be attention paid to Muslims.”

500 by Ellen Creager. (Moved Jan. 7.) MOVED

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Taxis keep tacking on the ‘extras’

[CNS-TAXIS:TB](#)—We’re no longer surprised by surcharges tacked on by airlines, hotels, car-rental companies.

We’re even used to taxi surcharges — those tied to fluctuating gasoline prices, toll-bridge fees, etc.

That doesn’t mean we’ve given up eyeballing bills carefully and why we choked on the — OK, questioned — \$12.50 worth of “extras” on top of a recent \$13 trip from a Washington hotel to Reagan National Airport.

300 by Judy Hevrdejs. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

Canada continues carry-on ban for U.S.-bound flights

[CNS-CANADAFLY:SE](#)—If you’re planning a ski trip or other travel to Canada soon, be aware that the Canadian government continues to restrict carry-on luggage on flights into the United States.

Passengers flying into the U.S. are not allowed to bring any carry-on bags into the cabin. The exceptions are medical devices, small purses, laptops, items needed for infant car, musical instruments and diplomatic consular bags. Passengers traveling to or within Canada are still permitted two carry-on bags.

200 by Carol Pucci. MOVED

[TEXT](#) | [HTML](#)

Earbuds manage calls, music

[CNS-TRAVELGEAR:TB](#)—Name: iFrogz Timbre noise-canceling earbuds with microphone, for iPhone and BlackBerry

What they are: Subtly stylish earphones that fit snugly to block out noise and come with a hands-free microphone and a button to mute your music when you receive a call.

200 by Eric Gwinn. MOVED

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FIXTURES

Ask Airfarewatchdog: Air travel Q&A

[AIRFAREWATCHDOG:MCT](#)—Air travel Q&A.

550 by George Hobica. MOVED

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Great sales for the new year

[BESTFARES:DA](#)—We’re starting the new year right with some great sales.

550 by Tom Parsons. MOVED

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Foreign correspondence: Petit St. Vincent is home to an exclusive resort that takes up all of the land

[WLT-CORRESPONDENCE:CH](#)—Noel “Goatie” Victory, 43, is the mason, plumber, construction foreman and honorary

historian at Petit St. Vincent Resort (www.psvresort.com), which occupies the entire island of Petit St. Vincent in the Caribbean nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

1050 by John Bordsen. MOVED

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Family travel five

[FAMILYTRAVELS:DA](#)—Enjoy winter sports in Colorado, Wyoming and New York.

400 by Lynn O'Rourke Hayes. MOVED

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The Frugal Traveler: Cash in on savings with off-season travel tips

[CNS-FRUGALTRAVELER:MCT](#)—Cash in on savings with off-season travel tips.

500 by Sharon Harvey Rosenberg and Myscha Theriault. MOVED

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The weekly geography quiz

[GEOQUIZ:TB](#)—What is the most populous country in Central America?

50. MOVED

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Travel Q&A

[TRAVADVICE:SE](#)—Getting around Switzerland.

300 by Carol Pucci. MOVED

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MCT News Desk: 202-383-6080, news@mctinfoservices.com

Travel Editor: John Price, 202-383-6083, jprice@mctinfoservices.com

MCT Photo Service: 202-383-6099, photo@mctinfoservices.com

MCT Graphics: 202-383-6064, graphics@mctinfoservices.com

MCT Special Sections: 202-383-6151, MCT-onepages@mctinfoservices.com

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