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Something To Declare: New year in Bali; Faroe Islands; seven-minute train trip; ferries to France

Saturday, 19 February 2011

Warning of the week: New year in Bali

The Hindu new year in Bali, known as Nyepi, falls on 5 March. According to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, local custom requires all people in Bali to observe 24 hours of silence from 6am on that day. "Authorities require that all people in Bali stay indoors, make no noise and switch off all lights for the duration of this period. These prohibitions are taken very seriously," it says. "Tourists must remain in their hotels. Seek the advice of hotel management regarding movement around the hotel grounds. Balinese strictly observe this tradition and people leaving their homes or hotels between 6am on 5 March and 6am on 6 March risk being forcibly returned to their homes."

The island's main airport, Denpasar, closes for the full 24 hours.

Destination of the week: Faroe Islands

As "niche" flights go, the annual Atlantic Airways flight from Stansted to the Faroe Islands is one of the best: once again this summer, the two-hour hop will operate on Mondays and Thursdays, from 2 June to 29 August. This year, there is also a chance to travel over Easter – with additional flights on 16, 20 and 24 April. The oil-rich Faroes offer a fascinating mix of jagged scenery, bounteous birdlife and human struggles against adversity. Fares with Atlantic (00 298 333900; flyfaroe.com) start at £285 return, but excellent deals are also available from Sunvil Discovery (www.sunvil.co.uk/discovery/faroe-islands) for holidays based in the capital, Tórshavn. The basic three-night package is £456 per person, based on two travelling, with each extra night at £42 per person.

Bargain of the week: Seven-minute wonder

The seven-minute train trip from Dawlish Warren to Teignmouth in Devon costs £3 one way – a bargain for one of the great little railway journeys of Britain. This stretch of Brunel's line between Exeter and Plymouth runs right beside the coast, with waves occasionally crashing over the track. Even better value, though, is offered by the Devon Day Ranger – costing £10, or £6.60 for railcard holders. It is valid across the whole county from Honiton to Gunnislake, Barnstaple to Exmouth and Tiverton Parkway to Paignton, on all but some morning trains. There is no need to plan ahead; just buy tickets on the day you want to travel.

Tip of the week: Ferries to France

A car and up to nine people can sail by ferry between Dover and Calais return for a maximum of £128 return, even on the busiest summer sailings, with SeaFrance (0871 423 7119), so long as you commit to at least three round-trips in a year. The basic Multi-Ticket Carnet is available for £78 return, with unlimited free changes; a supplement of £5 each way applies in the school summer holidays, with £25 more on some peak sailings. Book 10 round-trips and the price falls to £50 return, plus any supplements. You can even transfer a limited number of sailings to friends and family.

"You'll also receive a complimentary coffee on your first crossing," trills the ferry line.

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