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Newsletter
October 2017

I recently read a humorous letter to my mom written by her friend regarding aging. It went something like this: When you were young, you counted your age in fractions, as in, "I am five and a half" and you were so proud of that 'half.' After you pass the age of ten you enter the "gonna be" years, "I am gonna be 16," it didn't matter if you were still 14 at the time. At 21, you **become** 21, then some years later you **turn** 30, which does not sound good at all (like a carton of bad milk turning). Soon enough you are **pushing** 40, eventually trying to **reach** 50. You finally reach your 50's and hopefully you **make it** to 60. As you pick back up some speed in your 60's you eventually **hit** 70. In your 80's your perspective starts to reverse and you are in the "was just" years. Instead of looking forward to your next birthday, you start looking back at the previous one. When asked how old you are, your answer is, "I was just 81" if you manage to make it to your 90's a funny thing happens. You start counting back in fractions again. I am "92 and a half." Life has a funny way about itself, doesn't it?

Our Charleston and Savannah trip in mid-October is coming together great regardless of a little weather worry. I am super excited for the itinerary and restaurants we will be experiencing. These are two of my favorite cities I have ever traveled to. For those still interested, please reach out to me to discuss if there is any room. There is also a New Year's Eve trip being worked on as well to Panama. If interested please let me know. Some of the itinerary is at the end of the newsletter.

Our September continues next weekend on Sunday, September 24th at a new restaurant for our group, the recently opened **MORSO**. This Italian gem owned by the famous and highly successful restaurateur Pino Luongo hits all the right marks and there already appears to be a nice size joining us. Finally, our event "**Curvy Widow**" has been rescheduled to October 18th (in this newsletter). The show is about a 50-year old recently widowed woman restarting in the dating scene in NYC. I *had* to sign us up for this one. The show has recently opened on West 43rd in NYC.

Our October begins on October 1st, at a restaurant listed by Zagat in their "Best Middle Eastern in NY," the internationally known, **ALMAYASS**. Even though you shouldn't try to pronounce the name (nor ask me to), you still want to join us for an incredible shared menu in a beautiful restaurant near the Flatiron Building. The following weekend, October 8th, get your sweet tooth satisfied as we head to **The Big Chocolate Show**. The name sort of describes itself, but this show will be everything chocolate (with perhaps a little cheese, wine, demonstrations and more thrown in). Our tickets are good for admission, plenty of tastings and demonstrations at this 4-hour afternoon event. The following Sunday, Oct 15th, we head downtown to Washington Square Park where we dine at **NORTH SQUARE**. This cozy subterranean, popular, family-owned, local restaurant is well known in the neighborhood for serving some top American fare. We dined here back in 2014 and I remember it being of my all-time favorite meals. That week on Oct, 18th, we finally head to **CURVY WIDOW**, please RSVP early for this as I need to secure tickets. That coming weekend I decided to try something different and something that I always thought would be a fun event. We will head on a boat ride up to Bear Mountain on the **Bear Mountain Oktoberfest Cruise**. This full day event takes places with an Oktoberfest theme, Polka band, incredible views and a full day of fun and relaxation. That week, on Sunday, Oct 22nd we try a new and incredible restaurant for the group, **TORO**. Run by celebrity and top chefs, this tapas style restaurant is one of the best in the Highline area. The following week we revisit our traditional Halloween dinner at **Café Centro**. We keep coming back to this Mediterranean French on Halloween because they give us such a spooky, yet delicious meal plus, they throw in a lot of candy. Costumes are not mandatory, and usually hardly worn, but I will be wearing some sort of costume.

The following September events are still available for Single Gourmet Members and their guests:

- **Morso Italian Cuisine**- 420 East 59 (Between 1st and Sutton) Sunday, September 24th 5:30pm drinks 6:15pm dinner, 3-courses, glass of wine, coffee, tax, tip \$76

The following October events are available for Single Gourmet Members and their guests:



Almayass

**24 East 21st (off Broadway near Flatiron Bldg)
Sunday, October 1st**

5:30pm optional drinks, 6:30pm dinner

\$74: family style dinner, glass of wine, tax, tip

Winner of Opentable's Dinner Choice award for best Mediterranean, Almayass has a 4.5 rating on Yelp and **Zagat rating of 4.4** for "a delicious introduction to Lebanese-Armenian cooking and a lovely, welcoming, share-worthy meal" where the food and the space are meant to evoke eating at someone's home. It just might be the "Best Middle Eastern in New York".

Lebanese cuisine is "Southern Mediterranean meets Middle Eastern," and if you have never tried it, the Michelin Guide highly recommends it!!! The story of Almayass began in Beirut in 1996 by the third-generation Armenian Alexandrian family, who had a passion to share and serve their culinary delights. Since then, the restaurant has come to the attention of The New York Times, New York Magazine, Food & Wine Magazine, The Los Angeles Times and many other international publications as a 'must go' destination for an Armenian-Lebanese dining experience. In recent years, Almayass has expanded in the Middle East with locations in Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait City, Doha at The Pearl and Dubai. Our meal consists of multiple shared starters such as tabbouleh, Armenian salad, hummus, mouttabal (mashed charbroiled eggplant), lentil kefta (lentil cooked with crushed wheat, onion, parsley), sarma (rolled vine leaves stuffed with rice, tomato, olive oil, lemon), falafel and mantee meat (oven baked, artisan made boat shape dough stuffed with seasoned meat, garlic yogurt sauce). Our main course includes chicken taouk (marinated charbroiled free-range chicken breast) and baked Mediterranean bronzini filet.



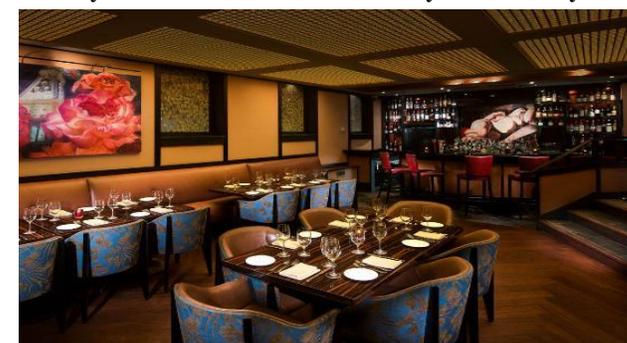
The Big Chocolate Show

269 11th Avenue (Terminal Warehouse @27th)

Sunday, October 8th (11am to 3pm)

\$45- please RSVP early as tickets are limited.

New York City's largest chocolate show and the anchoring event of Chocolate Week with more chocolate than you can eat! Meet some of the world's greatest chocolatiers, chocolate makers, artisans, and leading industry figures. Taste and buy exceptional craft chocolate of all creations. See hourly live demonstrations from award winning pastry chefs and chocolatiers and hear from chocolate, cheese and wine professionals to learn about chocolate pairing and much, much more. We will meet at a location close to the event and walk over (TBD). There are classes that you can sign up for and join that day for a fee. If interested in any classes they are an additional \$25 per class that you pay at the show.



North Square- NW corner of Washington Square

103 Waverly Place (6th Avenue and MacDougal)

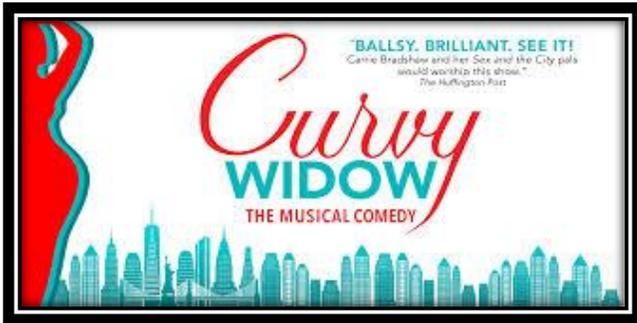
1 block East of ABCDEFM at West 4th

Sun, Oct. 15th, 5:30 pm opt. drinks 6:15 dinner

\$82 3-course, gl of wine, coffee/tea/soda, tax, tip

We ate here back in 2014 and I ate one of my most memorable entrees ever. So much so, it was the first time that I decided I had to take half of what I ordered home for my wife to try. ZAGAT 4.3, they say, "a favorite of NYU pros and other Washington Square regulars, this swell little neighborhood

place mostly flies under the radar; superior New American cuisine, civilized service and a grown-up, comfy setting where you can talk without going hoarse keep it a neighborhood standby." Our menu consists of starters such as tuna tartar, crab and lobster cake or kale & treviso salad. Our entrees consist of coriander crusted yellowfin tuna, herb crusted rack of lamb or herb roasted free range chicken, followed by lemon mousse cake, cookie plate or key lime pie.



Curvy Widow

The Westside Theatre

407 West 43rd Street, New York

Wednesday, Oct 18th Showtime 7pm (80 minutes)

Meet at BEA Bar 403 West 43rd at 6:15 pm

\$69: RSVP EARLY, non-refundable orchestra

Direct from its critically acclaimed run at George Street Playhouse in NJ and starring Tony Award Nominee Nancy Opel (Urinetown). Based on a true story, this sassy and witty musical follows the daily exploits of a feisty fifty-something woman whose adventures inspire laughter and, in the least expected places reveal truths about life, love, and sex. From surviving hilarious first dates to her intimate rendezvous, this widow navigates her way through it all with humor and perseverance. Featuring a brilliant cast of best friends, a dead husband, and a myriad of potential suitors, Curvy learns the hard way what it means to start life over in the modern age.



Bear Mountain Oktoberfest Cruise w/ German Music

Meet at Pier 83

Saturday, October 21st

8:30am boarding- Full Day Cruise returning 5pm

\$65 boat ride only- PLEASE RSVP ASAP

Take in the crisp autumn air and awesome views of the fall foliage as we sail 2.5 hours up the scenic Hudson River enjoying the autumnal sights, to historic Bear Mountain in upstate New York. There will be live German Music by 'Smitty's Polka Band,' and German food and beer available for purchase. At Bear Mountain, we will have the opportunity to spend the next three hours exploring this beautiful area, hiking, foliage viewing, boating, the lake, visiting the zoo and Bear Mountain Inn on your own or with the group. Then, you'll enjoy another ride back down the river as dusk descends. It's a day of cruisin', leaf peepin', wurst eatin', polka dancin', mountain hikin' fun! Just the right time when those beautiful bursts of fall leaves to start appearing along the Hudson. This is much more than a fall foliage cruise, this will be a lively, Oktoberfest type cruise with a beautiful ending in Bear Mountain. Though food is not included, there is a brunch restaurant at The Bear Mountain Inn. Smity's plays classic old world German beer hall music with accordion, tuba, trumpet, guitar and drums. They start with the traditional "Ein Prosit"- "the toast song", where we all raise our glasses and give a nod to everyone's good health! Anyone who has ever done Oktoberfest knows this sing a-long song.



Toro-NYC

85 10th Ave (corner West 15th)

Sunday, Oct 22nd

5:30pm optional drinks; 6:15pm dinner

\$74- Tapas style, glass of wine, tax, tip

James Beard Award winning chefs and owners Ken Oringer and Jamie Bissonette along with partner Will Malnati opened Toro in the iconic former Nabisco Factory. Chef's Oringer and Bissonette feature an eclectic menu focusing on both traditional and modern tapas, combining regional Spanish flavors and techniques with local and market-fresh ingredients. The 120-seat dining room channels the spirit of Barcelona's lively tapas bars and features a mix of both industrial and refined elements. With nods to the building's history as a factory as well as capturing the surrounding cityscape through expansive 18-foot windows. This is the NYC version of the Toro Boston, Copa Boston, Little Donkey, Uni Boston, Toro Bangkok and Toro Dubai Restaurant group. Highly rated by **Zagat**. 4.5, they say, "Crazy-creative small plates and other awesome Spanish dishes meet killer cocktails at this sceney Chelsea tapas heaven where well-informed staffers preside over a huge, industrial-cool space, overall it's a pretty amazing experience." Earning two stars in the New York Times by Peter Wells and listed in Zagat's, "Best Spanish Tapas in NYC" and "Best Group Dining in NYC" our menu will be delicious Tapas shared by the table.



Café Centro- Halloween
200 Park Avenue @45th Street (Metlife)
Tuesday, October 31st
5:45 pm optional drinks, 6:30 pm dinner
\$83 3-course meal, glass wine, coffee, t&t.

It is Halloween night so join us for a not so scary French meal at this bustling French brasserie with a style that echoes the glamour of Paris in the 1930s. Guests can watch executive chef Ted Rozzi prepare French-inspired cuisine in the glass-enclosed display kitchen. A richly elegant Grand Café in the classic Parisian tradition - set in the iconic international style landmark MetLife Building - Café Centro offers a select menu of French favorites with

a Mediterranean twist. Costumes not required, but eating the candy is.



Villa Berulia Restaurant- 25 Zagat
107 E 34th St (Park and Lex)
Sunday, November 5th
5:30pm optional drinks, 6:30pm dinner
\$88- 3-course, glass wine, coffee, tax and tip

Since 1981, Villa Berulia has been serving delicious Croatian & Italian food in a hidden gem tucked away right out in the open on 34th street. Zagat rated 4.5 they say, “exceptional hospitality is the strong suit of this Murray Hill family affair that follows through with excellent Italian fare.” The elderly brother and sister owners will insist on shaking your hands and offering a very warm

welcome and thank you. Recommended by many members of our group over the year, this 4-star on YELP and 4.5-star on Tripadvisor will be an amazing meal in a classic, tuxedo service old-school restaurant. Our menu includes, classic Cesar salad, soup of the day, eggplant rollatini with entrees of scallops in white wine sauce, grilled whole branzino, chicken picatta, slow braised short ribs, vegetarian pasta, and they are known for their baby lamb chops (though this is a supplemental upcharge paid to them directly \$15), with chefs selection of desserts.

To reserve at any or all the events please go to our website or call us at (646-825-0268), email us at aaron@thesingelgourmet.net or mail checks to: The Single Gourmet, c/o Aaron Lefkowitz, 69 west 9th Street Apt #6A, New York, NY 10011.

PLEASE NOTE: Our Cancellation Policy If you cancel within 72 hours of a meal event there are **no refunds**. Ticketed events (tours, shows, ANY non-dinner event) **are non-refundable** within 7 days of the event
 Also note: **ALL menus listed are subject to change without notice due to restaurant supply.**

1. Morso	Sun, Sept 2th	5:30pm	\$76 _____
2. Almayass:	Sun, Oct 1st	5:30 pm	\$74 _____
3. The Big Chocolate Show	Sun, Oct 9 th	11am-4	\$45 _____
4. North Square	Sun, Oct 15 th	5:30pm	\$82 _____
5. Curvy Widow	Tue, Oct 17 th	6:15pm	\$69 _____
6. Bear Mountain Oktoberfest Cruise	Sat, Oct 21 st	8:30am	\$65 _____
7. TORO- Top rated Tapas	Sun, Oct 22nd	5:30pm	\$74 _____
8. Café Centro- Halloween tradition	Tue, Oct 31 st	5:30pm	\$83 _____
9. Villa Berulia	Sun, Nov 5 th	5:45pm	\$82 _____
10. Charleston, Beaufort and Savannah	Oct 9 th to 16 th	Full Payment	\$4295
11. Panama- New Years.	Dec 27 th to Jan 4 th		\$500 Deposit

CHARLESTON - BEAUFORT - SAVANNAH October 9-16

\$4295 (-\$225 if flying on own, -\$475 pp if sharing a room)

Price subject to current airfare.

4 nights in Charleston 1 day in Beaufort and 3 nights in Savannah.

October 9th 12:35pm Jetblue- JFK - Charleston arrive 2:35pm; October 16th 5:4pm Delta Savannah - JFK arrive 8pm

Charleston- **Hyatt House**- Located in “The Upper King Street district” which has emerged as an area with tremendous energy; showcasing culinary innovation, experimental design and boutique shopping. Charleston's Upper King Street historic neighborhood was recently named one of the top 10 food neighborhoods in America.

Savannah- **The Hyatt Andaz**- 4 star, boutique hotel- (means "personal style" in hindi), free wifi, 24 hour fitness club, rooftop pool with firepit, mini bar included EXCEPT alcohol

Charleston's Upper King Street Historic Neighborhood Food Tour- this 2.5-hour culinary tour offers insight into the recently named top 10 food neighborhoods in America! Showcasing four of Charleston's culinary innovators who exemplify cooking in the New South! The restaurants featured in the tour are trailblazers in Charleston's culinary scene, edgy and innovative, with tremendous passion for their craft. This tour shows off the best of the neighborhood.

Ghost Tour- Monday Night 9pm

Horse Drawn Carriage Tour- See mansions, churches, and gardens as the tour covers more than 2.5 miles.

Chefs Kitchen Tour- Thursday morning- Meet the talented chefs behind some of Charleston's greatest restaurants and gain insight into their ideas, methods and creativity. The Chef's Kitchen Tour will visit five restaurants in the morning, and introduce us to Charleston chefs who will discuss the inspirations for their restaurants and provide a tour of their kitchens. In addition to visiting kitchens, the tour will include various samples along the way, this is a morning tour, before some of the restaurants open.

Walking tour- Take a journey through Charleston's 300 years of living history with our licensed tour guide. Experience the Old Market area and the historic homes and churches where generations of Charlestonians worked, lived and worshiped. Our walking tour is an overview of Charleston's history, culture, architecture, gardens and much more. We cover the city blocks through the most historic part of our city. The tour spans 350 years from our Colonial era to our modern day preservation efforts and the recent restoration that led to our being the most historically preserved city in America.

Fort Sumter National Monument Tour- Stand on the grounds where America's deadliest war began at Fort Sumter National Monument. The first shots were fired here, igniting a conflict that saw more than 700,000 casualties. One-hour visit to Fort Sumter allows ample time to explore well-preserved fort ruins. The Fort Sumter National Monument sits prominently at the mouth of the Charleston Harbor, a strategic location that was crucial to its defense. The first shots of the American Civil War were fired on Fort Sumter. Fort Sumter surrendered 34 hours later, and Union forces tried for nearly four years to take it back. Walk in the steps of those who shaped this nation alongside a National Park Ranger guide, and take in the stunning scene of historic Charleston as you cruise the harbor en route to the fort.

Plantation Tour- Still working with our tour guide to determine which plantation we will be visiting but it will be one of either Magnolia Planation, Middleton Place or Boone Hall Plantation and Gardens.

Halls Chop House- #1 restaurant in Charleston, #4 restaurant in USA on Tripadvisor, Opentable Top 10 best restaurants in the USA, Yelp's #17 Top Places to Eat in the US, Yelp's #1 Best Steakhouse in America, Business Insider's Best Steakhouse in South Carolina, AAA Four Diamond Award, ZAGAT 4.8 “The place to go if you want to be pampered, this old-school steakhouse features tremendous cuts of beef and awesome sides, delivered by an almost overly attentive staff, most find it fabulous for a special occasion”

Circa 1886- #6 in Charleston on TripAdvisor, 4.5 stars yelp, Zagat 4.7 they say, “They get everything right, say patrons of this intimate destination where celebrity chef Marc Collins’ modernist take on local cuisine includes “something for everyone, from traditional Southern specialties to one-of-a-kind masterpieces in a converted carriage house. There is no other in Charleston for a special night out” Listed in Zagat “Best Restaurants in Charleston”, “Best Restaurant Décor in Charleston”, “Best American restaurant in Charleston”, Best Restaurant Service in Charleston.” **Tripadvisor #12 “Top Restaurant in the US”**. AAA Four Diamond.

Trattoria Lucca Charleston- Zagat 4.7 they say, “Absolutely divine Italian fare distinguishes this higher-end staple, a real treat where chef-owner Ken Vedrinski makes magic with his unusually creative renderings of obviously very fresh ingredients” . Listed in Zagat, “Best Italian Restaurant”, “Best Restaurant”, “Best Service” and “Chef Mike Lata’s Favorite Charleston Restaurants”,he says, “Chef Ken Vedrinski, is the best cook in the city of Charleston”.

Beaufort- The Spirit of Old Beaufort Tour Company has been hired to be our guide on this all-day tour of Beaufort. They have been doing tours for over 23 years sharing the history of Beaufort through storytelling in period costumes. Covering subjects such as the colonial era, the Revolutionary war, slavery, succession, the Civil War, contraband, emancipation and the 13th Amendment.

The Santa Elena History Museum - More than 40 years before the English settled at Jamestown in Virginia, the Spanish established a town and fort on the shores of Port Royal Sound in Beaufort County, S.C. The story of Santa Elena, founded in 1566 on Parris Island, is one of religion, geopolitics, cultural clashes, war and struggles to survive. It also is little known, even in South Carolina, where colonial European powers France and Spain established beachheads in the New World. The Santa Elena Foundation is dedicated to sharing the story of Santa Elena with South Carolinians and the world.

Lunch in Beaufort at **Wren** #3 on TripAdvisor.

Lowcountry Island & Gullah Tour. Gullah and Geechie heritage of South Carolina's Sea Islands on a bus tour visiting several areas of Beaufort County and discovering its lone history and unique culture Discover Lady's Island, St. Helena, Hunting Island and more.

Dinner in Savannah Friday at **The Olde Pink House- Zagat 4.6**, they “urge you to dress up and go to this Historic District star nestled in an 18th-century mansion, where the lovely dining experience includes delicious Southern fare served by staffers who meet your every need in a impressive setting that drips of Savannah history; all in all, you cannot go wrong”- Listed in Zagat, “Best Restaurant”. #3 Fine Dining TripAdvisor. #1 top restaurant on Yelp.

Circa 1875- #1 Fine dining restaurant on Tripadvisor in Savannah. Circa 1875 is Savannah's unpretentious Parisian bistro and pub where one can enjoy delicious French cuisine served with excellence in an authentic bistro.

We start Savannah off with **The Savannah Experience**, a 3-hour mini-bus tour- The most comprehensive sightseeing offered in Georgia’s “First City.” The non-stop 3-hour excursion will see all the familiar sites and haunts of the Historic District, and give us more by exploring the other “forgotten” neighborhoods as well.

After lunch our first day in Savannah we embark on the **Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil Tour**- Travel back in time and into the pages of the best-selling book Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil on this one-of-a-kind 2-hour Savannah city tour. You'll follow your professional guide to sites described in this epic book and get an up-close look at the landmarks and destinations described in this popular story.

Day 2 in Savannah we have the #1 Tour in Savannah- **Architectural Tours of Savannah** presented by Jonathan Stalcup. Jonathan graduated from the Savannah College of Art and Design with a Master of Architecture degree in 2004. He shares Savannah’s history by describing the city’s built environment. Oglethorpe’s original plan, today’s desire to balance preservation with a living city, and almost 300 years in between presented as a narrative timeline. Savannah's Historic District is one of the largest in the U.S.

Note: the itinerary is not complete. I am still working on lunches, Sunday Dinner, and a few other tours. I should have it all finished by the weekend.

PANAMA NEW YEARS

This is still being worked on and is not final.

8 nights, 9 days- This Itinerary is still being worked on. \$4500 single occupancy deluxe
(NOT INCLUDING AIRFARE at this moment that is+\$1220)

Dec 27 - Jan 4th

Day 1: Wednesday, 27 December 2017- Welcome to Panama City, Panama! Panama City is a vibrant, cosmopolitan and beautiful city, Capital of the Republic of Panama, and located at the Pacific side of the American Continent. Built in 1519 by Pedro Arias Davila, a Spanish Governor, it has been considered as one of the most important cities of the Americas. Upon arrival at Panama’s Tocumen International Airport you will be met by your guide and taken to the **Intercontinental Miramar Hotel** in Panama City. The InterContinental Miramar Hotel continues to be the luxurious Iconic hotel in Panama that oversees the Pacific Ocean, the bay of Panama and located within walking distance to the Financial Center of Panama. Each of the elegantly appointed,

spacious suites has breathtaking ocean views making it perfect to view vessels entering into the world famous Panama Canal. First Night in Panama City at Intercontinental Miramar Hotel – Deluxe Room. Dinner at Leisure on Own, no plans the first night.

Day 2: Thursday, 28 December 2017- Private Full Day Guided Authentic Panama City and **Miraflores Locks Visitors Center Tour**- We start by visiting the ruins of the original Panama City that was torched by the Pirate Henry Morgan in 1671. Climb the Cathedral Tower for a panoramic view of the surrounding ruins, Panama Bay, and the giant skyscrapers of modern Panama City. Then with our local Guide leading the way, we will venture deep into the alleyways of “real” Panama City to discover how humble Panamanians go about their daily lives with visits to the pedestrian only thoroughfare of Avenida Central; a stroll by the simple local stalls of Sal si Puedes (Get Out if You Can); and we'll get an inside look at the unique low-income neighborhood of El Chorillo. We will also visit Mercado de los Mariscos (Fish Market) where we can see the fishing boats anchored and watch as the vendors sell the fresh catches obtained from the local fisherman to the public. Lunch will be at the Fish Market or our favorite place on Amador Causeway which is Mi Ranchito. The Palapa-style restaurant also boasts views across Panama Bay of modern Panama City! After lunch we will wander the colonial cobblestone streets of Casco Antiguo which was founded in 1673 and is the oldest area of Panama City. We'll see the monument to the French entrepreneurs who began the Panama Canal; or the art museum in the converted strong house, known as Las Bovedas, that was once used for storing gold. Other points of interest are the famed flat arch or Santo Domingo Church, the beautiful gold-plated altar of the San Jose Church, the Panama Canal Museum, the National Theater, the National Cathedral, and the Presidential Palace. **Miraflores Locks/ Panama Canal**: This classic experience brings you to the very best that Panama has to offer: The Panama Canal!!! Witness the magnificent Miraflores Locks. An expert canal guide will take us back in time. This tour will also include a visit to the Miraflores Locks Exhibits. Time permitting we will take a journey to the top of Ancon Hill to admire some of the best vistas in all of Panama City. When the original Panama City was torched by the Pirate Henry Morgan and the new city was built at present day Casco Antiguo, they needed a source of water which came in the form of a creek they developed called “el Chorillo” that flowed down from Ancon Hill. This important source of water became part of the canal territory when the treaty was signed that gave the Americans ownership of 8 kilometers of land on either side of the Canal. Ancon Hill was declared a Panamanian National Historical Heritage Site. Ancon Hill boasts spectacular views of Panama City and particularly nearby Casco Antiguo, the Panama Bay and Pacific Ocean, and the entrance to the Panama Canal. A trip to the top of Ancon Hill is often one of the highlights of the guided Authentic Panama City Tour.

Group Welcome Dinner at **Las Bovedas Restaurant** in Colonial Casco Antiguo- The word bóveda means vault or dungeon in Spanish and when Casco Viejo was established, the location of Las Bóvedas was just that: a holding cell for prisoners and slaves. The restaurant bears no resemblance to a jail cell now with lovely indoor and outdoor seating. It offers an exquisite menu featuring fresh ingredients and excellent service.

Day 3: Friday, 29 December 2017- **Chagres River Adventure and Visit to Embera Quera Indigenous Community**- This trip is truly paradise found in its purest form! The enchanting journey takes us deep into the dense jungles of Chagres where the Emberá Indians have lived for centuries. Our adventure begins with a 15-minute ride up river in dugout canoes, the Emberá traditional, hand carved boats. Upon arrival at the village you will be taken back in time as you are immersed in the ancient Embera cultural dances and music that have not changed much since Columbus arrived in the 1500's. The Indians will invite visitors to explore the area's abundant variety of birds and wildlife during a trek that takes you through the untouched jungle and past sparkling waterfalls. During your visit, the Emberas will give you a glimpse into their mystical rituals and amazing knowledge of medicinal plants and other natural remedies. The Embera women are known as one of the world's finest basket makers, and you will be able to watch them create these beautiful objects made out of palm leaves and dyed with natural dyes. You can also have your body painted with the natural fruit dye called Jagua, used by the Indians for body decorations as well as for its health-giving properties. Before returning back to civilization, the Indians will offer us a traditional meal of fresh fish and plantains and you will have an opportunity to purchase some of their beautiful handicrafts.

Day 4: Saturday, 30 December 2017- Private Group Transfer to Gamboa Pier, Panama Canal Partial Transit Tour – Southbound Private Group Transfer to Resort, Dinner on Own at all-inclusive Resort Restaurant, Night at **Gamboa Rainforest Resort**

Day 5: Sunday, 31 December 2017- **Pipeline Road Nature Hike and Bird Watching Tour**- morning hike through Soberania National Park observing a variety of exotic tropical birds while enjoying the surrounding trees and plants of this area. Pipeline Road, where our hike takes place, is a dirt road that goes through the heart of this national park and affords us views of some of the diverse bird life that abounds in the area. Pipeline road has for several years in a row; set world record bird counts in a 24-hour period – up to 367 different species of birds. Some of the more common sights are the Slaty-tailed Trogon, Keel-billed Toucan, Thick-billed Mot-Mot, and several species of ant birds, wrens, tanagers and flycatchers. Of course, just because this tour focuses on observing the bird life, it does not mean that you might not hear or even see Howler monkeys or other mammal life like sloth, anteaters and agoutis. Private Group Pipeline Road Bird Watching Tour and Nature Hike Special New Year's Eve Dinner event.

Day 6: Monday, 1 January 2018- **Gatun Boat Expedition, Aerial Tram with Ecological Exhibitions Tour** and Lunch at the Resort- Experience the verdant rainforest of Gamboa from within, ascending some 280 feet from the shadowy forest floor, through the dense undergrowth and up to the sun-drenched canopy with its thousand shades of green that are only interrupted by the vibrant colors of flowering trees. Once at the top, you will have the opportunity to climb an observation tower from where you

will have uninterrupted views of the vast rainforest of Soberania National Park while at the same time watch the giant cargo ships maneuver through the Galliard Cut (the narrowest part of the Panama Canal). Once we finish our visit to the Aerial Tram and Natural Exhibits, we will experience an exhilarating 20-minute ride at high speed right through the heart of the Panama Canal. The boat will slow down and enter the labyrinth of jungle-covered islands of Gatun Lake. In this protected area the wildlife is plentiful, and you are likely to encounter capuchin monkeys, 3-toed sloth, howler monkeys, various kinds of toucans and other bird life as well as caimans, crocodiles, turtles and a wealth of butterflies. This is an exceptional place to experience the sights and sounds of the jungle up close. Our trained naturalist guides will ensure that you have an outstanding nature experience by tracing the wildlife as well as educating you about it and its habitat throughout this exceptional jungle and canal adventure.

Day 7: Tuesday, 2 January 2018- **Panama Railway with Private Panama Canal Expansion** Visitors Center and Historic **Portobelo Tour**, Train Passage along the Panama Canal- Private transfer to Corozal station where we board the comfortable train for a historical ride alongside the Panama Canal. This railroad, constructed with immense drama, snakes its way past protected rainforests, the river feeding the Canal and the once largest man-made lake in the world, the Gatun Lake. We will have unsurpassed views of the 8th wonder of the world and the giant ships transferring between two seas as well as of the spectacular nature of the isthmus where native Indians still live in the jungles and a vast array of birds and wildlife can be encountered. Originally completed in 1855, The Panama Railroad became the first transcontinental railroad. The French Panama Canal Company purchased the railroad in 1880 to assist in their attempt to build the Panama Canal. In 1904, the United States purchased the New Panama Canal Company's assets from the French, including the railroad. The United States rebuilt and operated the railroad until 1979, when it was transferred to Panama under the terms of the Panama Canal Treaty. In 1998, Panama privatized the railroad and awarded a 50-year concession to the Panama Canal Company, a joint venture of Kansas City Southern and Mi-Jack Products, to rebuild and operate the line. The new "reborn" railroad began operations in 2000. The visual charms of this train ride will make this an unforgettable trip.

Panama Canal Expansion Project- The Canal Expansion project was approved by the people of Panama via a referendum in October in 2006 at the extraordinary cost of approximately \$5.2 billion dollars. The widening of the Panama Canal began in September 2007 as a means for doubling the capacity of the inter-oceanic passageway to meet the world's growing commercial demand. Due to the girth of Post-Panamax ships being too large to fit through the existing chambers, two new sets of locks are being located alongside the existing ones – one on the Caribbean side at Gatun and one of the Pacific side at Miraflores.

Historic Portobelo- Portobelo is a sleepy bayside town full of colonial history where you will feel transported back in time. Here, you will encounter no less than 5 colonial fortifications where the canons are still pointing their mouths towards the bay they once protected. Portobelo is also home to the statue of the Black Christ, which according to the legend possesses divine powers, that has several times prevented the statue from being removed from here. Other monuments of interest are: The Custom House (counting house) built in 1640 and the Hospital Chapel built in the year 1597.

Morning Half Day Shopping Tour- Panama is a strategic point for the transportation of merchandise from all over the world. Thus bringing the opportunity for tourists from all over the world to buy goods all in great prices! Albrook Mall is an indoor mall that offers a wide variety of discount stores and boutiques. Multi-plaza Pacific Mall is a large indoor air-conditioned mall located in the Punta Pacifica district in Panama City.

Dinner- **Las Tinajas Traditional Panamanian Dinner and Folkloric Show** Panama has been a melting pot of several cultures for quite a long time now. Originally, the native Indian groups created acoustic instruments using parts of plants and shells of different animals. Before then the Spanish conquerors brought their influences from the Old World. The Afro-Caribbean's also contributed to the Panamanian culture when they came for the Canal construction. Also other small groups contributed to what is today, one the most attractive and folkloric heritages of Latin America. Panama has been considered "The Crossroad of the World" for many years now. Many cultures (Spaniards, Africans, and Indians) widely influenced our culture and this is clearly shown in our food, our music, dances and just the way we are. Experience all these elements combined together that form culture in one place: The Las Tinajas Restaurant with an authentic Panamanian Restaurant where you can enjoy a delicious Panamanian dinner, and move on your chair to the rhythms of the Panamanian "repicadores, pujadores & guiro" (Panamanian folkloric instruments) while you are amazed by the display of beautiful and elegant "Polleras", our national dress and one of the most spectacular folkloric dresses in the world. The show is fully allegoric with typical acoustic music and musicians. Women wear the unique 'Pollera', a hand-made cotton dress complimented with precious body and head jewelry which is exhibited while they dance. Men's typical attire is relatively simple; however their hats are finely hand-made by artisans. Their cotton shirts boast golden or pearl bottoms.

Day 9: Thursday, 4 January 2018- Group Transfer to Tocumen International Airport for Flight Home