

Honeymoon planning is one of the most important and difficult tasks in a wedding scenario. It is not easy for a couple to decide where to spend the “happiest moments” of their life, when one of the partners wants to go to a romantic trip to Paris or Venice and the other partner would love to bask in the sun and enjoy water sports in an exotic island. The budget is also an issue, as faraway attractive destinations are always expensive in terms of accommodation and transport. Some tourism agencies have made a business from organizing honeymoon journeys for newlyweds and have managed to attract many customers by finding the right balance between price and destination, Jeni Costea, general manager of Romanian tourism agency Ultramarine Travel International, tells Bucharest Herald.

B.H: What type of offers does the tourism agency Ultramarine Travel International promote?

Jeni Costea: We are mainly specialised in honeymoon. This is a special offer we have been promoting since 2002. It is not the only type of offer we have, but it is the most important. We launched this concept in Romania and other agencies have adopted it later.

BH: Did you have this offer from the beginning or were there any other targets you had in view?

Jeni Costea: My dream was to bring foreign tourists to Romania. We launched some new projects among which one resumed by the Romanian Railways Company (CFR): the revitalisation and the use of the old trains for incoming. A German company that wanted to send tourists to Romania contacted us. But this project did not become operational because we made them an offer based on some prices communicated by CFR in June and then the transport company almost doubled the prices in September without any reason. This was the moment when the partnership with the German company ended because CFR did not respect its commitment. We launched another five incoming projects: concert and cruise on the Danube, concert in the interior yard of Bran Castle and smaller scale concerts in Bucharest.

BH: What was the impact of the “honeymoon” concept on the Romanian customers?

Jeni Costea: Romanians initially did not think about the honeymoon as a special package but this concept was assimilated in time. We have customers all the year round, except for the fastening periods, when the customer number drops. We have recently added a new offer: tours for two as many tours get cancelled because there are not enough people to set up a group. We are organizing tours in Mexico that end with a stay in Cancun, which could last between 4 and 6 days. We also have tours in Syria, Morocco and even in Japan- a tour no Romanian tourism agency offers at the moment.

BH: What are the most requested destinations?

Jeni Costea: The destinations we are promoting are exotic. The most requested by far is Bora-Bora, which has two issues: customers can only get there through a stopover in Los Angeles, Chile or Japan and the accommodation and transport are very expensive. The next destination is represented by the Maldives Islands regarded as a special destination due to the bungalows on the water. The problem is when in a couple one of the partners wants to take trips, visit places and the other one does not want that. In the Maldives people can make water sports, the community is very small, the tourists have all the conditions, but the social life is not very active. It is a destination for people who want to relax. In the same area, but with the possibility to take trips, is the Mauritius Island which competes with the other islands, because it is a larger island and something different can be done every day. There are also semi-exotic destinations where the season begins earlier and ends later. These destinations are also cheaper in terms of accommodation and transport, because they are closer to Romania. Morocco and Egypt are also among these destinations and tourists can get accommodated here in old mansions turned into houses with interior yard.

BH: Are there special hotels for couples only?

Jeni Costea: Of course, there are hotels just for couples. There are hotels which do not receive people under 18. In Jamaica there are certain hotels specialised for couples that are in love, people who want to kiss and hug everywhere and they can do it there without restrictions.

BH: How long is a honeymoon journey?

Jeni Costea: The standard journey is 8 days and 7 nights, but those who chose very faraway destinations and travel 14 hours by plane extend their journey to 10 to 12 days.

BH: What new offers for couples are you preparing?

Jeni Costea: We launched a programme called wedding vowels renewal, for married couples that want to repeat the marriage ceremony. We have some very beautiful offers on the beach shore. We also have unusual offers such as: honeymoon over the clouds, launched after the first Boeing plane with suits onboard was introduced, a plane owned by Singapore Airlines that travels to Singapore. We launched this offer last year in January and at that time no tourism agency in the world had this honeymoon package except for us.

BH: Have you faced a sales decline, caused by the financial crisis?

Jeni Costea: Romanians are now checking. The number of demands has not dropped compared to 2008 and 2007, but the customers need more time to decide on an offer.

Romanii aleg destinatii exotice precum insulele Bora-Bora, Mauritius si Maldive pentru luna de miere

Planificarea lunii de miere este una dintre cele mai importante si mai dificile sarcini din scenariul unei nunti. Nu este usor pentru partenerii unui cuplu sa decida unde vor petrece “cele mai fericite” momente din viata lor, cand unul dintre parteneri vrea sa mearga intr-o calatorie romantica la Paris sau la Venetia, i-ar celuilalt i-ar placea foarte mult sa stea la soare si sa faca sporturi de apa pe o insula exotica. Si bugetul este o problema, intrucat destinatiile indepartate sunt intotdeauna costisitoare din punct de vedere al cazarii si al transportului. Unele agentii de turism au facut o afacere din organizarea de sejururi de luna de miere pentru cuplurile proaspat casatorite si au reusit sa atraga multi clienti gasind echilibrul dintre pret si destinatie, Jeni Costea, director general al agentiei de turism romanesti Ultramarine Travel International, a declarat pentru Bucharest Herald.

B.H: Ce tip de oferte promoveaza agentia Ultramarine Travel International?

Jeni Costea: Prima noastra specializare este luna de miere. Este o oferta speciala pe care o promovam din 2002. Nu este singurul tip de oferta, insa este specializarea principala. Noi am lansat acest concept in Romania, iar ulterior a fost preluat si de alte agentii.

BH: Ati avut aceasta oferta de la inceput sau au fost si alte directii pe care le-ati avut in vedere?

Jeni Costea: Visul meu a fost sa fac incoming. Am lansat cateva proiecte inedite pe piata romaneasca, printre care unul reluat de CFR: revitalizarea si folosirea intr-un context de incoming a trenurilor de epoca. Pentru acest proiect noi am avut o comanda de la o companie germana in 2002, care voia sa trimita turisti in Romania. Insa acest proiect nu s-a materializat pentru ca noi le-am facut o oferta bazata pe niste preturi comunicate de CFR in luna iunie, dupa care compania de transport a marit preturile inca o data si jumatate in luna septembrie, in mod nejustificat. A fost momentul in care parteneriatul cu compania germana a luat sfarsit pentru ca CFR nu si-a respectat angajamentul. Au urmat alte 5 proiecte de incoming: concert si croaziera pe Dunare, concert in curtea Castelului Bran si concerte de mai mica anvergura in Bucuresti.

BH: Care a fost impactul initial al conceptului “luna de miere” asupra clientilor romani?

Jeni Costea: Romanii nu priveau initial luna de miere ca pe un pachet special, insa intre timp acest concept a fost asimilat. Avem clienti pe tot parcursul anului, cu exceptia perioadelor de post, cand numarul clientilor scade. Acum am adaugat o oferta noua si anume circuite pentru doi, pentru ca multe dintre circuite se anuleaza pentru ca nu exista suficiente persoane pentru a se inchega un grup. Organizam circuite in Mexic si le terminam intr-un sejur la Cancun, care poate dura 4-6 zile. Mai avem si circuite in Siria, Maroc si chiar in Japonia, acesta din urma fiind un circuit pe care nicio agentie de turism din Romania nu il are in oferta.

BH: Care sunt destinatiile cele mai solicitate?

Jeni Costea: Destinatiile pe care le promovam noi sunt exotice. De departe cea mai solicitata este Bora- Bora, care are insa doua probleme: nu se poate ajunge acolo decat prin escala in Los Angeles, Chile sau Japonia, iar cazarea si pretul transportului sunt foarte mari. Urmatoarea destinatie este reprezentata de insulele Maldive, care sunt privite ca o destinatie speciala, din cauza bungalow-urilor pe apa. Problema intervine cand in cuplu unul dintre parteneri vrea sa faca excursii, sa viziteze, iar celalalt nu isi doreste acest lucru. In Maldive se pot face sporturi de apa, comunitatea este foarte restransa, sunt toate conditiile, insa viata sociala nu este foarte activa. Este o destinatie pentru oameni care vor sa se relaxeze. Tot in aceeaasi zona, dar cu posibilitatea de a face excursii, este insula Mauritius, care rivalizeaza cu celelalte insule pentru ca este o insula mai mare si in fiecare zi se poate face altceva. In general luna de miere inseamna exotic pentru toata lumea. Exista si destinatii semi-exotice unde sezonul incepe repede si se termina tarziu. Acestea sunt si mai accesibile ca pret pentru ca sunt mai aproape. Printe aceste destinatii se numara Egipt si Maroc, unde exista posibilitati de cazare in conace vechi, transformate in case cu curte interioara.

BH: Exista hoteluri specializate pentru cupluri?

Jeni Costea: Sigur, exista hoteluri numai pentru cupluri. Exista hoteluri care primesc numai cupluri si nu primesc copii. Exista hoteluri care nu primesc persoane sub 18 ani. In Jamaica sunt anumite hoteluri, specializate pe cupluri indragostite, oameni care vor sa se sarute si sa se imbratiseze peste tot si aici o pot face fara restrictii.

BH: Care este durata unui sejur de luna de miere?

Jeni Costea: Sejurul standard este de 8 zile si 7 nopti, insa cei care aleg destinatii foarte indepartate si calatoresc 14 ore cu avionul isi prelungesc si sejurul la 10- 12 zile.

BH: Ce alte oferte pentru cupluri ati mai pregatit?

Romanians chose exotic destinations like Bora-Bora, Mauritius and Maldives for honeymoon

Written by Administrator

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Jeni Costea: Am lansat un program numit reinnoirea juramintelor, pentru cuplurile casatorite care vor sa repete ceremonia casatoriei. Avem cateva oferte foarte frumoase de ceremonii pe malul marii. Avem si destinatii inedite: luna de miere deasupra norilor, facuta dupa ce s-a lansat primul aparat boeing care are apartamente la bord, proprietatea Singapore Airlines si care calatoreste in Singapore. Aceasta oferta a fost lansata anul trecut in ianuarie si in acel moment pe planeta nimeni nu avea acest pachet de luna de miere in afara de noi.

BH: V-ati confruntat cu o scadere a vanzarilor, ca urmare a debutului crizei financiare?

Jeni Costea: Romanii se afla acum intr-o perioada de tatonare. Numarul cererilor nu a scazut comparativ cu 2008 si 2007, insa clientii se decid mai greu asupra unei oferte.