



# Walking and talking therapy/Text alerts/ Singapore push/Tickets to Tokyo

## Step-by-step

Here's a new take on the concept of healthy holidays. Walkwithin is a London company whose walking holidays finish with a psychotherapy session after a day of exploring some of Europe's most beautiful terrain.

Not surprisingly, it is the brainchild of a psychotherapist, Stefania Piazzalunga, who believes in the natural healing properties of the outdoors.

"Just about every form of holiday ... seemed to pamper and rejuvenate the body but there was little available to restore the mind," she says.

As well as being a great holiday, the combination of long walks and therapy sessions are conducive to a good mental state, Piazzalunga says.

The days include a four- to five-hour walk in the morning, a picnic lunch and massage and psychotherapy in the afternoon.

All counsellors are accredited with the relevant bodies in Britain and participants do not have to continue with the sessions if they don't find them helpful. Nor are there any rules or restrictions on food or alcohol, and everyone is free to explore the local village or indulge in a spot of shopping if they choose, says Italian-born Piazzalunga, who has a therapy practice in South Kensington.

Each of the destinations is chosen on the basis of its natural and built attributes.

Walkwithin has five itineraries this European summer, including two week-long walks in the Umbria and Alto Adige regions of Italy and one walk in Val Fex in Switzerland.

See [www.walkwithin.co.uk](http://www.walkwithin.co.uk).

## Warnings by SMS

Travel doesn't always go smoothly - recent events in Thailand and Fiji are evidence of that.

Travel Messenger is an Australian SMS operation that was intended primarily as a concierge service but has morphed into a security alert tool.

"In Thailand just recently and in Mumbai last year, we alerted our subscribers to what was happening within 15 minutes and kept them constantly updated," says Mark McCormack, the chief executive and founder of the company that developed the technology.

McCormack says the technology works in 3000 cities in 200 countries. As well as security updates, the Travel Messenger service provides travel-related information including weather forecasts, Australian embassy contact details, police and taxi numbers, currency conversion and coming events. It also has an SMS translator in 15 languages that can help in directing a taxi or ordering in a restaurant or even getting back to your hotel.

It is available for \$30 a month, \$25 for 16 days or \$20 for eight days from some travel agencies.

See [travelmessenger.com.au](http://travelmessenger.com.au).



Heal thyself... Vigilius resort in Alto Adige, on a Walkwithin tour; and (below) Tokyo Metro.

## Stay a little longer

Singapore is working hard to persuade travellers to make a stopover rather than transit to other destinations. Its Fabulous Singapore Stopover Package has a range of discounts including six hotels dropping prices to \$1 for the first night's accommodation, a free prepaid mobile phone card and vouchers for purchases at the retail and food and beverage outlets at Changi Airport.

You can also avail yourself of free ground transfers to and from the airport and unlimited use of Singapore Airlines' Hop-On bus, which visits 20 of the city's major attractions. Many of these, including Sentosa Island, Singapore Zoo and the Jurong Bird Park, have dropped the admission fee to attract travellers to Singapore.

The packages can be picked up at the SIA Singapore Stopover Holiday counter at Changi.

## Tokyo transport deal

Travel to and from Tokyo's Narita Airport and around downtown Tokyo has just become more economical.

Now you can buy a new Limousine and Metro Pass, which combines return tickets between Narita and downtown Tokyo on the airport bus and two days of unlimited travel on Tokyo Metro's nine lines for ¥6000 (\$83.30). It would cost an extra ¥1420 to buy the tickets separately.

The pass is valid for six months after purchase and can be bought at the airport.

## Skytrax 2009

Last week's report in Smart Traveller on the annual Skytrax World Airline Awards was incorrect.

Cathay Pacific was voted the world's best airline for 2009, with Singapore Airlines second and Asiana Airlines third. Qantas came sixth but was named No. 1 in Australasia. Jetstar and Virgin Blue were placed Nos. 4 and 5 respectively in the low-cost category.

Thai Airways' first-class lounge at Bangkok Airport took the honours in the first-class lounge category.

See [worldairlineawards.com](http://worldairlineawards.com).

Send news items to [smarttraveller@airfax.com.au](mailto:smarttraveller@airfax.com.au).

