

Travel Advice

7 trips that let you see the world while doing good

By Jessica Festa May 17, 2015 9:00 am

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Kokoda trip. Photo courtesy of Intrepid Travel.

Travel shouldn't just be about seeing the world, but making a positive impact. Luckily, a number of tour operators offer a chance to do both.

1. Kokoda Charity Trek (Papua New Guinea)

On Intrepid Travel's 11-day Kokoda Charity Trek you'll complete the 60-mile Kokoda Trail in Papua


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New Guinea, led by guides who are directly related to those who helped Australian troops (this was once an Australian territory) in this very place during World War II. Tour guests are asked to fundraise \$1,850 USD, with 100% (plus Intrepid Travel's donation match) going to The [Kokoda Track Foundation](#) (KTF) to train local teachers to assist with local education. Price is \$3,710 + fundraising and airfare.

2. Intro To Public Health In The Caribbean (The Dominican Republic)

Those aspiring to get into the medical field can book a 16-day [Intro To Public Health In The Caribbean](#) trip in the Dominican Republic with Rustic Pathways. Along with taking language courses, enjoying local beaches, visiting waterfalls and touring the capital, get involved by learning about local issues from local NGOs, like helping solve agricultural problems and implementing a healthcare workshop for youth. Pass an exam at the trip's completion to receive Wilderness First Aid certification. Price is \$3,695 + airfare.



Red Beach in Santorini. Photo courtesy of Learning Journeys.

3. Yoga Journeys Greece Tour (Greek Islands)

Travelers wanting to stay centered and [healthy on the road](#) will enjoy spending days doing downward dog, meditating and immersing themselves in local cultures on Santorini and Crete through experiences like Greek dancing lessons and cooking with a local Yia Yia (grandmother).

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The 9-day trip hosted by Learning Journeys' new Yoga Journeys incorporates a social good aspect through working with Angel's House — a shelter for orphans, abused women and the homeless — where you'll do everything from painting the home to helping with gardening. Price is \$2,850 + airfare, semi-inclusive.

4. Mountain Shepherds (India)

Mountain Shepherds offers a number of treks in India, including high up into Himalayas, in an effort to preserve the Bhotiya culture, people who lost their traditions and tourism livelihood when the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve was closed to people. Mountain Shepherds provides young Bhotiya the chance to work as guides, chefs and housekeepers, even getting to own shares in the company. While completing the trek of a lifetime you'll help strengthen this group and their sustainable tourism model, which is now starting to inspire other communities around India. Prices vary.



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5. Middle East Behind The Headlines (Israel)

Operation Groundswell runs service trips around the world — often for 20+ days each — with a variety of focuses, even requiring “backpacktivists” to apply and interview to ensure qualified travelers are chosen for each job. One particularly interesting trip is the 35-day [Middle East Behind The Headlines](#), where you'll visit Israel to hear both sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict and work with [Rabbis for Human Rights](#) (while also getting to experience a sunrise Dead Sea hike, biking Tel Aviv and experiencing the communal lifestyle of an Israeli kibbutz). Price is \$2,985 + \$750 community contribution and airfare.

6. Sea Turtle Conservation (Costa Rica)

Discover Corps is backed by the National Peace Corps Association, passionate about interacting with locals and assisting without taking over local jobs. The company's 8-day [Sea Turtle Conservation trip](#) in Costa Rica allows travelers to help the rapidly declining sea turtle population by studying the animals and collecting data, releasing them back into the ocean and cleaning local beaches. More fun comes in the form of mangrove boats trips, crocodile spotting, visiting animal sanctuaries, dipping into natural hot springs and rainforest horseback riding. Price is \$2,199 + airfare.



Photo courtesy of andBeyond

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7. Rhino Tagging On Safari (South Africa)

Rhino poaching is a hot topic, especially as [over 1,200 rhinos were illegally killed](#) in South Africa in 2014. To help combat this rising problem, [andBeyond Phinda Private Game Reserve](#) guests can go on a 4-hour rhino notching and tagging safari with a team of conservationists. Guests help locate and dart the rhinos, as well as collect data — doing good while also having the safari experience of a lifetime. Price is \$3,625 + accommodation.

BONUS: TravelGiver

[TravelGiver](#) allows you to book a trip while donating up to 8% of the booking to the non-governmental grassroots initiative of your choice, at no extra cost to you.

Jessica Festa is the founder on the solo and offbeat travel blog, [Jessie on a Journey](#), and the online responsible tourism and culture magazine, [Epicure & Culture](#). She's constantly searching for local experiences beyond the guidebook. You can follow her travels on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



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