

Long haul

Volunteer on an international aid project

Volunteering abroad no longer has to mean a six-month mission digging latrines and living in a flea-ridden dormitory. Virtuous just got adventurous and you could find yourself involved in coral reef surveying in Fiji, tree planting in Ecuador or archaeological digs in Morocco!

Organisations such as Working Abroad (www.workingabroad.com) work with groups all over the world and can help you to find the right length placement in the area you want to visit, linking you up to projects that suit your skills and abilities. They can also offer more demanding opportunities such as teaching or humanitarian aid work if you fancy something more ambitious. You would usually be expected to contribute towards travel, food and accommodation, but the experience of helping a grass roots organisation is priceless and one that will stay with you forever.

Benefit the hosts of the country you visit

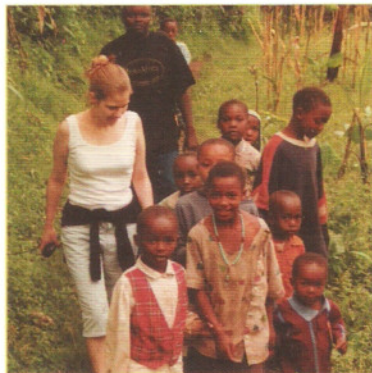
Shop! Spend! Eat out! UK tourists spend £3bn a year on holidays in developing countries. Tourism is a massive industry and helps to reduce poverty and increase independence through employment. However, be aware of the negative impact tourism can have on the host community. Eat in restaurants that use local produce, hire local guides, shop at craft markets and apply your fair trade ethics on holiday to make a direct difference.

Our favourites

If you fancy something wild and adventurous from your holiday, IntoAfrica offers rare opportunities to experience the wildlife, scenery, history and folklore of Africa from the perspective of traditional African guides. These fair-trade safaris are led by local people and the benefits are retained by their communities.

Amid the labyrinthine alleyways of Marrakesh in Morocco, Les Borjs de la Kasbah, glows green. Environmental friendliness, a barely acknowledged and rarely practised concept in Morocco, emanates from this alluring boutique property created from a riad and six neighbouring houses. Four original patios with orange trees, flowering shrubs and ornamental fountains provide a charming focal point, while solar power and the exclusive employment of local staff on fair pay terms add to the feel-good factor.

3 Rivers Eco Lodge is set on a secluded plot, in a lush rainforest valley, in Eastern Dominica. Guests can bathe in natural river pools, wander among organic gardens or walk up into the rainforest. 3 Rivers is situated in an environment of outstanding natural beauty, and one of the owners' most fundamental aims is to live in harmony with, and have as little harmful impact on, those surroundings as possible. The business has an important role to play in protecting and enhancing the environment for guests and the residents of the local community.



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