

01 September 2017

**Support local communities and travel with a light step with these conservation holiday ideas from specialist members of The Association of Independent Tour Operators ([www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com)).**

**Join an ‘Eco-day’ in Gozo, explore Inca culture in the Andes, stay in an eco-friendly hotel in Kerala and more. *Departures throughout 2017 and 2018.***

**Departing late 2017**

### **Adventure and heritage on the island of Gozo – from £1,355 pp with Activities Abroad**

For the perfect mix of activities and culture, head to the little-known wonder of Gozo. Learn about local life first-hand and support the community by visiting local craftspeople, tasting island delicacies and enjoying a secret ‘Eco-day’ – an Activities Abroad favourite, and a surprise for all the family. Tourism is the main contributor to the way of life, traditions and identity of this small island. Among the many highlights, guests can enjoy a lazy boat day, try snorkelling, sea kayaking, scuba diving, climbing and abseiling, relax during an afternoon at Ramla Bay Beach and more. **Departing between now and 21 October 2017, [Gozo Island Explorer](#)** costs from £1,355 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), transfers, seven nights’ B&B accommodation, four dinners and lunches and guided activities listed. Call Activities Abroad on 01670 789 991 ([www.activitiesabroad.com](http://www.activitiesabroad.com)).

### **Share the lives of the locals and walk the Himalayas – from £1,995 pp with Inntravel**

In the foothills of the snow-capped Himalayas, not far from the borders of Nepal and Tibet, lies a ‘hidden India’ of small traditional villages and deep wooded valleys. [Through Himalayan Foothills](#) invites guests to explore the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary in the remote Kumaon Hills, staying in authentic houses and discovering how the local people work in harmony with nature. Relax into a simpler and slower-paced rhythm of life, experiencing friendly hospitality in welcoming guesthouses, gaining insights into local crafts, traditions and culture, and joining local families for home-cooked meals. **Departing from now until 31 December 2017, from January to May 2018 and from September to November 2018**, the price is from £1,955 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), 10 nights’ B&B, seven lunches, eight picnics, local guides and transfers. Call Inntravel on 01653 617000 ([www.inntravel.co.uk](http://www.inntravel.co.uk)).

### **Explore Inca Culture with the Misminay Community – from £1,379 pp with Llama Travel**

Connect with the friendly Andean community of Misminay in the peaceful Sacred Valley, staying at the Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba hotel, during the 12-day [Incas & Conquistadors of Peru](#) trip, plus the optional ‘Two Nights in the Sacred Valley’ excursion. Locals will prepare a traditional lunch before demonstrating traditional farming techniques to guests. Here, families live in two-room adobe houses, raising guinea pigs, cows and sheep and, depending on the time of year, visitors can help plough or harvest crops. Visit the Inca agricultural terraces at Moray, the salt evaporation ponds at Maras, and villages and ruins in the valley. The price is from £1,379 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), 11 nights’ B&B, transfers and the services of guides and local reps. The ‘Two Nights in the Sacred Valley’ excursion costs £140 pp. Call Llama Travel on 020 7263 3000 ([www.llamatravel.com](http://www.llamatravel.com)).

### **Discover Ecuador’s jungle eco-community and wildlife – from £3,037 pp with Sunvil Latin America**

Support the Anangu community, and enjoy daily guided jungle activities at the Napo Wildlife Centre, during this fascinating trip to Ecuador. Located within the Yasuni National Park in the Amazon Basin, guests arrive at the centre by canoe and stay in comfortable lodges. Other highlights include a private guided tour of the capital city, Quito – the first city to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site – a visit to a local butterfly

farm to see some of Ecuador's 4000-species, a guided walk through the trails at Septimo Paraiso Cloud Forest reserve and more. **Departing between now and December 2018**, the [Amazon and Cloud Forest](#) trip costs from £3,037 pp (two sharing), including flights (Heathrow), internal flights, 10 nights' B&B in hotels and lodges, seven lunches and four dinners. Call Sunvil Latin America on 020 8758 4774 ([www.sunvil.co.uk](http://www.sunvil.co.uk)).

### **Indigenous culture and Northern Lights in the Sámi heartlands – from £1,595 pp with The Aurora Zone**

Visit the cultural centre of Lapland, where the indigenous Sámi people live, to help protect the traditions which underpin this remote corner of the world. Tourism is vital to the local Sámi communities in rural Lapland and provides considerable employment, safeguarding their 4,000-year-old traditions. Staying in a family-run hotel, embark on a snowmobile safari to a wilderness church at Pielpajarvi and on to the island of Ukonkivi – an ancient sacrificial site respected by the Sámi people – and visit a traditional reindeer farm, enjoy husky sledding and join nightly Aurora hunts via snowmobile, snowshoe and minibus. **Departing between 29 November 2017 and 4 March 2018**, [Aurora in Sámi Heartlands](#) costs from £1,595 pp (two sharing), including flights (Gatwick), transfers, four nights' full board, guided activities and cold weather clothing. Call The Aurora Zone on 01670 785012 ([www.theaurorazone.com](http://www.theaurorazone.com)).

### **Departing in 2018**

#### **Authentic husky sledding in the Sámi wilderness – from £2,045 pp with Artisan Travel**

Join Scandinavia's 11-time winner of the Finnmarksløpet – the longest dog sled race in Europe – Sven Engholm, who also finished in the top 10 of the Iditarod North American mushing race, for a three-day sledding adventure in Karasjok. Enjoy the wilderness and get to know the value of huskies whilst also supporting the community by following local guides on these exciting winter trails. Tourism plays a key role in remote northern regions as a way of boosting the local economy and protecting livelihoods. **Departing between 2 January and 16 April 2018**, [Karasjok - 3 Day Husky Safari](#) costs from £2,045 pp (two sharing), including flights (Heathrow), transfers, two nights' shared log cabin (in own private room) and two nights' wilderness camp/cabin accommodation on a full-board basis, plus expert-guided three-day husky safari and cold weather clothing. Call Artisan Travel on 01670 785085 ([www.artisantravel.co.uk](http://www.artisantravel.co.uk)).

#### **Gastronomic Kerala, India, staying in an eco-friendly hotel – from £4,940 pp with Martin Randall Travel**

Travel through southern India on a 10-day culinary journey, surveying the history and culture of the region through its cuisine. Led by food historian and writer Dr Elizabeth Collingham, taste the distinctive flavours of Jewish, Muslim and Christian culinary traditions and stay at an eco-friendly hotel in Kumily. Inspired by the tribes of the Cardamom Hills, the hotel works closely with local people to create self-sustaining fish ponds, biodegradable pesticides and an organic garden, which provides fresh produce every day. **Departing 18 February 2018**, [Gastronomic Kerala](#) costs from £4,940 pp (two sharing), including nine nights' B&B in select hotels, airport transfers, private coach transport, most meals with drinks, talks by the lecturer and all taxes and tips. Flights extra. Call Martin Randall on 020 8742 3355 ([www.martinrandall.com](http://www.martinrandall.com)).

#### **NEW: Albanian Odyssey 15-Day Escorted Tour – from £1,995 pp with Ffestiniog Travel**

Part of Ffestiniog Travel's 'Small & Traditional' range is a new escorted tour which goes off the beaten tourist track and uses locally-owned accommodation, restaurants, transport and guides, thus benefitting the local community. A rarely-visited part of Europe, Albania is a mountainous and sparsely populated country with a rich and varied history. Travel from the Greek border in the south to the remote and mysterious Albanian Alps in the north, encountering wonderful hospitality and culture en route. **Departing 9 May 2018**, [Albanian Odyssey](#) costs from £1,995 pp (two sharing), including flights (London), 14 nights' B&B, four lunches, 11 evening meals, ferry and private mini-coach travel, a journey on the Podgorica to Belgrade scenic rail line and the services of a British tour leader and a local professional Albanian guide. Call Ffestiniog Travel on 01766 772 030 ([www.ffestiniogtravel.com](http://www.ffestiniogtravel.com)).

## Ends

### Note to Editors:

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**The Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO),  
18 Bridle Lane, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW1 3EG  
Telephone: +44 (0)20 8744 9280**

[www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com)

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