

hidden
places in a
small world...

...a new
concept of
adventure
travel

Are you passionate about discovering new places?

At Undiscovered Destinations we share your passion for travel and adventure. We are a specialist UK based tour operator, offering unique, quality escorted small group tours and private journeys to some of the least visited countries in the world. In addition we provide an efficient and knowledgeable tailor-made service of individual itineraries for discerning travellers seeking authentic experiences in a range of truly hidden places in an increasingly small world.

We are proud to offer the following carefully researched destinations: Bangladesh, Burma (Myanmar), East Timor, Ethiopia, Taiwan, Angola, Comoros, Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Gabon, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda, Nicaragua, Panama, Oman and Ukraine.

Being a company run by passionate travellers, we still have the travel bug. We are always searching for the next undiscovered destination, so keep up-to-date with developments by visiting our website and check out the news section.

Our exciting itineraries combine a blend of comfort and discovery, with the focus on delving deep into countries and cultures, so far untouched by tourism. Forget about conventional tours, our flexible, but highly professional, approach gives a whole new meaning to getting 'off the beaten track'. Whether your wanderlust inspires you to cruise down the Ganges Delta by 'Rocket' paddle steamer in Bangladesh or to join a unique landcruiser desert safari in Eritrea, to gorilla trekking in Uganda, we discover a new world. Our world is one where people have no concept of tourism and greet all travellers with the warmest and most genuine of welcomes. This is Undiscovered Destinations, hidden places in a small world, a unique range of quality pioneering adventures for the informed and inquisitive traveller.





The faces of Undiscovered Destinations

At Undiscovered Destinations we believe that locals know best.

As part of our determination to offer a new approach to adventure travel our groups are accompanied throughout by an experienced local representative, often the same English speaking guide from the start to the end of the tour. We believe this allows our clients to build up a genuine rapport with our local colleagues and one, which we are definitely keen to encourage. This opportunity for an informal but highly informative cultural exchange is invaluable and for many is the very essence of an overseas adventure.

That is why we do not routinely send tour leaders from the UK to escort our groups overseas.

The cost is unnecessary and one that can only be passed onto the client, at the expense of the community we are visiting.

Most companies use a series of local guides to assist the tour leader. Very often a foreign leader or 'chaperon' lacks a detailed knowledge of the country or the ability to converse fluently in one of the many dialects of the local language.

We only use the very best local operators, with a proven track record of providing high quality tours, with an emphasis on safety and security. In turn, our overseas team is amongst the most experienced, with our shared passion for providing clients a truly memorable experience, which will be savoured for years to come. In the unlikely event a problem arises overseas which cannot be resolved by our local colleagues, clients are encouraged to contact a senior member of the Undiscovered Destinations direct, no matter what time of day or night. We will immediately act upon the matter, and offer our commitment to resolve the issue in an efficient manner.

We are keen to maintain our strong relationship with local representatives who we view as 'colleagues' rather than simply suppliers. That is why Jim Louth, founder and owner of Undiscovered Destinations makes frequent trips to view first hand our guides in action. We are committed to maintaining the highest possible standards in the industry and Jim views these trips as an essential part of that process. So on your next tour with Undiscovered Destinations; do not be surprised to be greeted by Jim at some stage of your itinerary.





Abdur Rahim Razu can be described as a true pioneer in tourism in Bangladesh. He says, "It is my aim to establish a sustainable tourism industry in Bangladesh and to improve the welfare of the local people. It is also my aim to develop eco-tourism in the region. I have the experience that is sometimes very difficult for travellers to find in a country so new to tourism".

Indeed, we applaud his efforts and will continue to guide and support him as he continues to grow his business. He has already visited our Tyneside office in the UK and in future will be invited to attend travel shows as our guest where we are sure his enthusiasm and love for Bangladesh will help us to promote our programme.

To travel with Mr Razu in Bangladesh is an enjoyable experience few clients will forget. His dedication to ensuring every tour is an overwhelming success never ceases to amaze us. Frequently clients comment that it was like "travelling with a friend, rather than with a tour company". It is this ability to make travellers feel so welcome and special that means he is regularly given excellent recommendations by the likes of Lonely Planet and other guide book authors.

Overseas Team

Using local guides means getting access to local knowledge. When you travel with Undiscovered Destinations you can be sure that your guide knows the location and that they will use their local knowledge to make sure your tour runs smoothly.

Partner Focus

Our man in Bangladesh - Abdur Rahim Razu.

Known by his many happy clients as simply 'Mr Razu' it is local partners like him who make our tours such a great success. Mr Razu is just one of the many colleagues around the world who we are privileged to be working with. Unlike most adventure travel companies we can totally depend on our locally owned partners to provide tours of the very highest standard, without the need to send our own 'tour leader' or chaperone.

Our overseas colleagues are at the heart of the business. We put enormous value in building-up long-standing relationships with our overseas team. Firstly we take the time to meet them personally and to travel on a 'recce' tour. Together we will decide how we can provide our travellers with an exceptional tour that will be safe, interesting and rewarding for everyone concerned. Very often we will make suggestions on how services can be improved to ensure the local operation meets our exacting standards.

"Just thought I would write to say thank you for all your help in organising my trip to Bangladesh. It was much more of a culture shock than I expected and was exactly what I was looking for. I had a truly fantastic time and both my guide and driver were superb, I cannot sing their praises enough. It has felt much more as though I have been on holiday with friends than with a travel company."

Both Undiscovered Destinations and your local agent, 'Mr Razu', offer a Rolls Royce service and took all the hassles out of the holiday that travelling can sometimes present - a real slice of the Michael Palin experience!"

Mark Colbourne - Bangladesh

Our style of travel...

Travel with a blend of adventure and comfort

At Undiscovered Destinations we have worked hard to source the best accommodation, transport and services available. We believe that travel, even in countries where tourism is a new concept, can be a rewarding journey of discovery and adventure. Travelling with us you can look forward to a comfortable hotel, with en-suite room, running hot water and a welcoming restaurant/bar. On the majority of tours we have included breakfast and lunch, allowing clients the opportunity of doing their own thing in the evening. In our experience adventure travellers are independently minded and enjoy this freedom.

We believe that all travellers, whatever their experience, will appreciate our high standards at the end of a long and challenging day, and the freedom of not being restricted to eating with the group.

Of course there can be occasions when we have no alternative but to use more rustic accommodation, sometimes with intermittent supplies of running water and electricity. These tend to be rare and any slight discomfort will be outweighed by the spectacular, natural surroundings and opportunity to meet local people, who are totally untouched by tourism.

Most of our tours are hotel based although, on a few itineraries, we have included some camping and all food and soft drinks prepared by our excellent cooks. We only use the very best equipment locally available. For example in Sudan we use a permanent camp, set at the foot of the stunning Meroe pyramids, complete with en-suite showers. In Angola and Congo our camping equipment also includes showers.

To help you choose the perfect adventure we have given each of our tours a trip rating.

Pioneer - Taking you there first

Pioneer is a term often over used in the travel industry. At Undiscovered Destinations, when we describe a trip as pioneering we mean it. Almost certainly you will be amongst an elite group of intrepid travellers to be the first to explore a country, few have discovered. You will not find our Pioneer tours in other brochures. They are unique journeys that add a whole new meaning to getting off the beaten track. If like us you are driven by a desire to discover a truly hidden corner of the world, then you may like to join us and explore Angola, a spectacular land, now recovering from nearly 30 years of civil war.



Alternatively travel down the Congo River meeting the local people as you go, or join us in Eritrea and explore the remote Denkalia by 4WD.

Of course, reaching such remote areas of the world can come with its challenges. Several nights camping, long and uncomfortable journeys off-road and the need to maintain flexibility and a sense of humour for when carefully laid plans almost certainly change. Needless to say, bathroom and washing facilities will be limited and basic. However testing and hard the local conditions, most importantly you will be more than rewarded with an opportunity to explore an untouched country and meet friendly local people who have no idea of the concept of tourism.

Traveller - Our road of discovery

Still with an underlying spirit of adventure our Traveller itineraries are at the core of our programme. These journeys will appeal to those travellers who still want to discover a land, totally untouched by tourism, but expect the minimum standards we all enjoy. Look forward to good quality hotels, private transport and knowledgeable local staff on a varied range of unique and exciting tours. Any camping will be kept to a minimum and can even be substituted for a hotel stay. Similarly any trekking or other activities are always optional. Our aim is to be as flexible as possible, but still maintaining the ethos of adventure travel.

Hidden Luxury - discovery for the discerning traveller

A new and exciting addition to the programme and one that has already proved to be a popular choice with our well-travelled, yet discerning clients. Available now in Eritrea, Bangladesh, Mozambique and Myanmar (Burma), we can offer you the best facilities meeting the highest international standards.

As a taster our superb Luxury Week in Eritrea itinerary is based on a stay at the fabulous Albergo Italia, the country's first boutique hotel. Originally opened in 1899 as the Keren Hotel, the Albergo Italia is probably the oldest hotel in Asmara. The hotel re-opened in the second half of 2005, after a thorough renovation to restore its original grandeur. The present owner hired an Italian architect and imported handmade inlaid-wood furniture from Italy. The dining room is exquisite: soft greens and yellows set off the rich woods, with Asmara's astonishing light slanting in through the wooden window slats

All rooms reflect an attention to detail. The bar, with its beautiful marble floor is *the* meeting place in Asmara, or alternatively, enjoy Asmara's pleasant year round climate with a drink on the hotel's outdoor terrace.

A superb choice for any visitor, which makes for a truly luxurious base in probably the most charming city on the African continent and one which today represents perhaps the most concentrated and intact assemblage of Art Deco Modernist architecture anywhere in the world.

For the ultimate luxury experience and available on all of our tours, why not enquire about flight upgrades, or suite options at our hotels



Get even more from your travels...

Selecting your adventure

Throughout the brochure we have included a number of Journey Ideas; these may include suggested stopovers or extensions to your main holiday, or even a combination of more than one of our unique destinations. For example we can easily combine Bangladesh with neighbouring Myanmar (Burma) for a unique glimpse into a hidden corner of Asia. Or for some relaxation and simply to unwind at a top hotel, why not complete your adventure to Uganda with a stopover in Dubai. At Undiscovered Destinations we pride ourselves on our highly individual approach and taking adventure to a new level. To put it simply we want to inspire our clients to think beyond the normal realms of travel and to share our passion for the unexplored.

Escorted Small Group Adventures

Our escorted small group tours offer the many advantages of independent travel with the benefits of an organised tour. We understand that many of our trips appeal to experienced travellers, which is why we aim to be as flexible as possible, taking into consideration the desires of the group. With the smallest minimum group size of any operator, starting at just four clients and a maximum of 12, we offer a client led approach to adventure travel. Our local staff will encourage your input along the way, whilst skillfully maintaining the tour structure, to ensure it meets the expectation of all participants.

The very unpredictability, which makes travel so rewarding, occasionally dictates itinerary changes, but these will only ever be made in the interests of our clients, and based on the sound experience of our local operators.

Private Journeys

Many of our destinations include tours based on a minimum of just two clients, your very own private journey. We can even arrange a private tour for solo travellers; simply contact us for details and prices. With a private journey we can offer you a wide selection of dates; the majority of destinations are available with weekly departures throughout the year. Our high standards and the convenience of having your travel professionally pre-arranged this really is a great way to travel.

Tailormade

Working closely with our local colleagues, we are pleased to offer an expert tailormade service for many of our destinations. Whilst many independently minded travellers may consider going off, doing it alone, we believe that our competitive tailormade rates will compare favourably to the cost of independent travel. Our local suppliers have access to discounted rates not available to individual travellers. Of course, it is not just about saving money, we encourage you to contact our office, so you can begin to appreciate first hand the passion and experience we have for all of our destinations. Tourism is a new concept for many of the countries we offer, facilities remain limited and getting up-to-date accurate information can prove to be difficult. To find out more call Undiscovered Destinations now or complete the online Tailormade Request form.





A special welcome to Solo Travellers

On average, about half of our group members are independent or travelling alone - with many regulars among them. It's a fact that being within a group and in the hands of our experienced local team relieves any concerns about feeling conspicuous in unfamiliar locations; often countries so far untouched by tourism. It's also a much more sociable and fun way of getting about.

That is why we particularly welcome and value our solo clients.

No Single Supplements

When travelling solo accommodation is generally on a shared basis, in same-sex twin rooms, at no additional charge. In the event that we do not have another traveller of the same-sex for you to share with, we will of course allocate a single room, without any extra charge.

This has proved to be an increasingly popular option with our clients and is now the basis on which we routinely accept bookings from solo travellers travelling on group tours. As well as saving on the payment of any supplement you can be rest assured that your companion will share your passion for real travel. Often they will have fairly extensive travel experience and will have been on at least one previous tour with Undiscovered Destinations. Whilst our clients come from a range of backgrounds, and indeed countries, you can be sure they share your quest to discover some of the lesser known areas of the world.

And just in case you're wondering, like you, almost certainly your fellow travellers will enjoy their own time and will be happy to go off and do their own thing. With plenty of free time on each tour, feel free to do a little exploring on your own, or to try that restaurant you have found in the guidebook.

Single Room Option

We know that many travellers value their privacy and prefer the option of a private room. Just let us know if you would prefer single accommodation, as this can easily be arranged on most of our group tours. Although we have no option but to pass on the single supplement charged by hotels, we will do our best to keep these to a minimum. In fact our single supplements are amongst the lowest charged by any adventure travel company. If the supplement is not shown in our pricing section do contact us, as often it will be determined by the number of people travelling on your tour, with the aim at keeping it as low as possible.

Responsible Travel

Not just another marketing ploy, we take responsible travel seriously. In some countries we are the sole international Tour Operator, forging new frontiers. We have a duty to set the standard and to demonstrate best practice. Our ethos is based on building long-standing relationships with our colleagues around the world. It is not just a business arrangement, but one where we can act as mentors and coach our partners. We believe that they should apply their responsibilities in every aspect of their business and not just when travelling with our clients.

This is just an example of our Responsible Travel Policy. For full details visit our website.

Economic responsibility:

- We are working with some of the least developed and poorest nations in the world. We are passionate about creating real and sustainable economic benefits.
- We take our role incredibly seriously and are determined to put as much as possible back into the communities we are privileged to visit. We have gone to great lengths to personally research our tours and to meet with our 100% locally owned suppliers. We have built up strong relationships with these operators who we prefer to call 'colleagues'. We believe that our continued success is dependent on this close relationship.
- We actively support and advise our overseas colleagues on a range of issues, which are intended to benefit their overall operation, not just the business they do with Undiscovered Destinations. We have advised on brochure and website design, and have contributed financially to their overseas marketing campaigns.

Environmental responsibility:

- Undiscovered Destinations, together with our overseas colleagues can often be described as the pioneers in tourism. We therefore believe that this represents a unique and exciting opportunity to formulate a clear Environment Policy at an early stage of the country's tourism development. We are determined to set the standard.
- We only work with small group sizes, averaging just 6 clients. Our small group sizes are low impact on the environment.
- Throughout our programme we have included a growing number of visits to appropriate local projects with direct or indirect environmental benefits.

Social responsibility:

- We are active supporters of the charity Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and have given financial donations to help fund their essential work of clearing land mines in Angola and other countries we visit.
- We are working hard to promote destinations that so far do not appear on the tourist map. We are investing in the future, in the belief that along with our local colleagues we can create sustainable social benefits for corners of the world, that to-date have been overlooked by larger tour operators.
- Ensure our guides and clients are sensitive to local attitudes and act responsibly in their interaction with local people.

To learn more about the Mines Advisory Group, their aims and how you can help please visit www.magclearmines.org.uk



www.magclearmines.org

reproduced with the kind permission of MAG

Clients' Experience

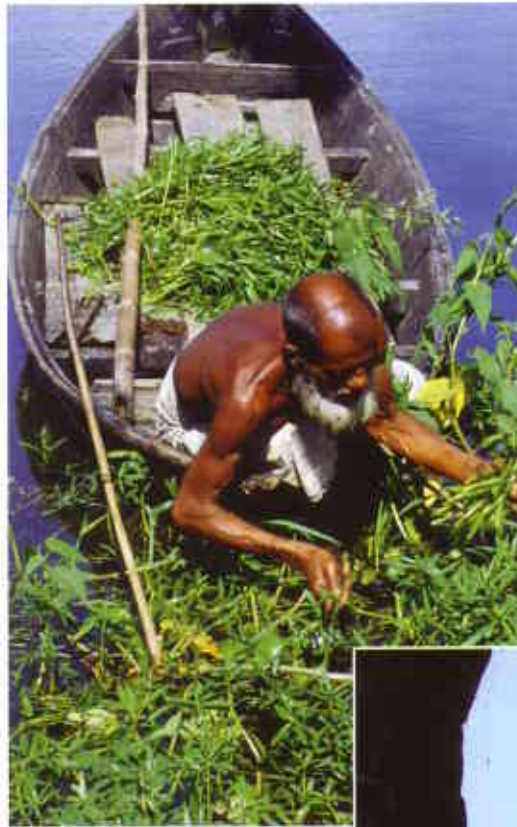
This is just a selection of the valuable feedback we have received from our clients. At Undiscovered Destinations we are committed to offering a range of innovative trips that not only push the boundaries of conventional travel, but most importantly meet and exceed the expectations of the well-travelled.

Based on feedback our programme of tours and destinations is constantly evolving. If you have somewhere in mind that would be ideal as the next undiscovered destinations we would love to hear from you!



"I had a wonderful time on this trip. The islands were beautiful and the people all friendly and welcoming. They all seemed happy and we felt very safe the entire time we were there, even when walking around town at night. I even got a ride from some local people (I kind of thought it was a taxi until I tried to pay and they wouldn't take the money). The local tour guide, Mohammed was very knowledgeable and did an excellent job showing us all the sights around Grande Comore. The location of Mohéli Laka Lodge was beautiful with a nice range of activities offered. I loved the hilltop sitting area which had a great view and was very peaceful and relaxing. The snorkelling was the best I've seen, and surpassed many of the dives I've done (and I've done over a 100 in some of the best dive destinations in the world!). We saw an incredible variety of fish and also octopus and lobster. We also had the chance to see the turtles nesting, which was an amazing experience. As a bonus we were also treated to a breathtaking moonrise, out of a night sky filled with thousands of stars and a glorious view of the Milky Way."

Vivienne Verschuren - Comoros



"Thank you very much for everything you did for us, making our visit most memorable and beyond all my expectations. I would recommend other travellers to ignore the negativity from the British media and to visit the country."

Kevin Pardoe - Bangladesh



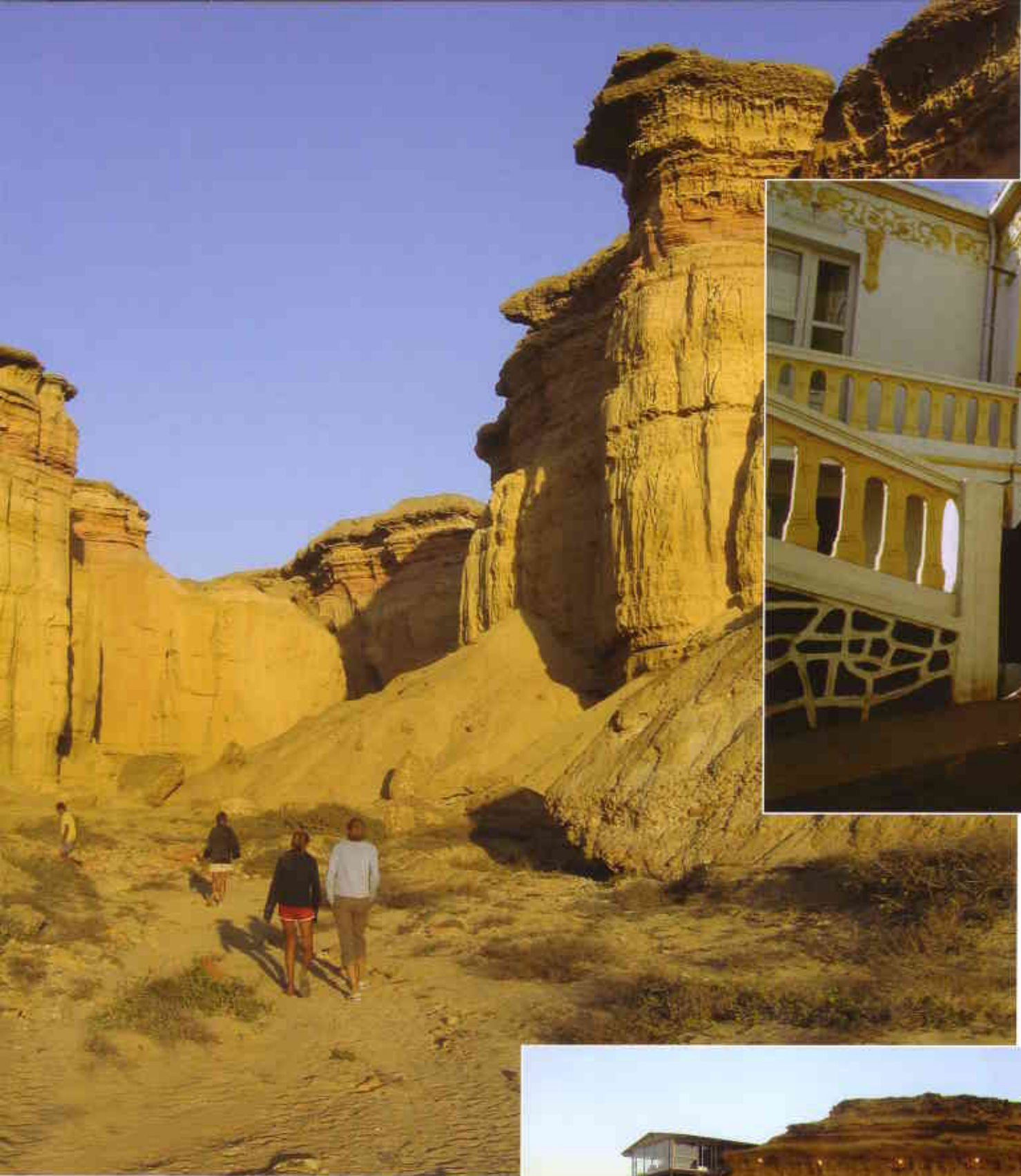
Like most travellers I wasn't sure if I was doing the right thing by travelling to Burma. But having just returned from a fantastic trip I now know that the vast majority of the Burmese people welcome tourists.

Stuart Graham - Burma



"Our guide, Chico, couldn't have been better. Everyday was well organised and full of interesting sites and scenes. The people are some of the politest I have met anywhere in the world and the children certainly the happiest"

Alan Amos - East Timor



"This was an amazing trip! Angola is untouched by tourism and should be on every adventurous travellers list of destinations. I cannot praise enough the local staff. They were excellent hosts and guides, and always showed professionalism, enthusiasm, knowledge and a great sense of humour. Angola is truly Africa's final frontier - the experience for me has been life-changing"

Stephen Makin - Angola



"Hi Jim. Just thought I'd report back on our trip. It was fantastic, thanks - and now I just need to sort through the 300-odd photos taken! Asmara really was wonderful! All seems very surreal now - I do wish we were still there. We saw very few other tourists"

June Lancaster - Eritrea



"I must mention Ray (our Tour Leader). Having been on this trip for a second time, I believe I now have a better understanding of what an awesome task he has undertaken in putting the trip together. My respect for him, his skills and knowledge. I am so grateful for his passion for Angola and his generosity in wanting to share the experiences with others"

Shirley Harper - Angola

Bradt travel guides

Why we recommend Bradt Travel Guides

Hilary Bradt founded Bradt Guides in the 1970s with volumes on South American destinations. The series specialises in countries recovering from civil war or political upheaval - where visitor's money can make a real difference.

Hilary adds further thoughts on a subject close to her heart.

"Like Jim, I believe that tourism can play a part in bringing countries back from devastating situations. When disaster strikes a country, whether natural (earthquakes, floods) or man-made (war), the media-borne image is of misery. The first trickle of tourists - usually backpackers - bring back stories of resilience and nature's powers of regeneration.

The Bradt guide that follows is a response to these travellers' reports: that the reportedly dangerous or devastated country is beautiful, that the people are warm and hospitable, that they have moved on from their recent trauma. I think our guide books sometimes give tour operators the confidence to include new places in their brochures, and the trickle of tourists becomes a large enough flow to improve the economy and provide much-needed hard currency. In the case of Undiscovered Destinations, they give us the confidence to do a guidebook, so it's very much a two-way process."

Hilary Bradt

www.bradt-travelguides.com