

escapes

Keep it Real

The new holiday trend is all about immersing yourself in the local community

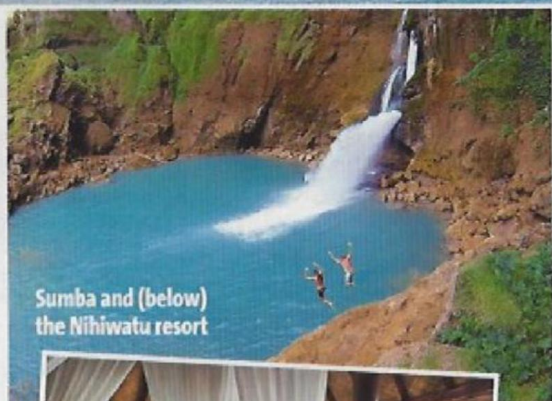
Responsible travel

A growing number of people want to holiday in ways that reduce the negative impact of tourism, or even help places they visit. But voluntourism, where tourists breeze into a place and 'help' build a school or care for orphans, rarely helps and can cause more harm than good, depriving locals of work.

Instead, companies such as Responsible Travel offer a range of holidays that strive to protect the environment, support local cultures and ensure money goes to local people. Special interests are catered for, as are all budgets.

About Asia uses all profits from its Cambodia trips to support schoolchildren around Siem Reap. And non-profit hotels funnel money back to communities that are as poor as their surroundings are idyllic. The Nihiwatu resort on Indonesia's Sumba island is an example, helping to provide clean water and reduce malaria levels.

And some hotels take part in Pack For A Purpose (packforapurpose.org), which asks guests to bring supplies in their luggage to benefit local people.



Sumba and (below) the Nihiwatu resort



- Responsible Travel (responsibletravel.com) offers over 8000 holidays in more than 190 countries.
- Indonesia's Nihiwatu (nihiwatu.com) island resort has luxury villas from £575 per night full board.
- About Asia (aboutasiatravel.com) offers several Siem Reap trips. The seven-day Cambodia's Ancient and Modern Capitals private tour costs from £813, including accommodation, excursions and transfers.