

PREMIUM
ADVENTURER

KEEPING COSTA RICA GREEN

Overwhelming
Antarctica

Finding ikigai
in Japan

A taste of Sicily
and Puglia

PLUS MORE INSIDE

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Spectacular feature stays on Intrepid Premium trips

By Daniel Fahey

A good hotel should heighten your holiday. Anyone who says otherwise hasn't kipped in a Costa Rican jungle lodge where the howler monkeys sing during their morning shower. They haven't camped between the ochre dunes of the Sahara, under ink-blue skies splattered with stars.

Every Intrepid Premium trip includes a feature stay in a unique property chosen for its historical significance, local architectural style or its special ability to bring you closer to a destination. These slumber sanctuaries go well beyond a comfy bed and are so memorable you'll be talking about them forever.

1. Rest your head at a jungle lodge in Costa Rica

Few countries take guardianship of Mother Nature as seriously as Costa Rica. Following decades of reforestation, the country has doubled its forest cover and a quarter of the country is now protected.

Your feature stay – the incredible 10-acre Si Como No Resort – is secreted among the jungle of Manuel Antonio National Park, home to toucans, white-faced monkeys, sloths and ocelots, as well as a golden cowlick of pristine beach.

2. Bed down on a junk boat in Halong Bay, Vietnam

Prepare for the remarkable. Powered by the whip of wind and flap of the sails, an ethereal glide through the mesmerising jade-green waters of Halong Bay on

a traditionally-decorated Vietnamese junk-style boat might be the highlight of your north-to-south run from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City.

As black-collared starlings and little egrets sweep above the giant limestone pillars and karsts of this alluring bay, you'll dig into a candlelit seafood dinner followed by a nightcap on the boat's afterdeck.

3. Find a tropical oasis in Bali, Indonesia

Halfway through a jaunt across two of Indonesia's most enticing islands, Jakarta and Bali, taking in the remarkable 10th-century Hindu temple Prambanan and the former royal city of Yogyakarta, you'll likely want some time out.

Enter the serene hideaway of Arkamara Dijiwa. Holding a yoga pose between the emerald rice paddies of Bali's cultural heart Ubud, this exclusive enclave of tranquillity marries a meditative calm with ancient Balinese healing rituals and modern infinity pools.



4. Relax at a ryokan with mountain views in Japan

Japan always finds new ways to make you fall in love with it. However, the mountain town of Hakone is Cupid's golden arrow. Overlooking both Mount Fuji and the glistening lake of Ashino-ko, this forest-shrouded beauty spot also sports natural onsen (thermal pools).

During an immersive tour of the country, you'll unwind at Susukinohara Ichinoyu, a Feature Stay that combines the craftsmanship of a traditional ryokan (Japanese inn) – tatami mats and softwood – with modern comforts. It's love at first sight. Each room even comes with its own private onsen.

5. Sleep under the stars in Morocco

For centuries, Amazigh nomads wandered the hot, snaking spines of turmeric-coloured dunes in the Sahara. They would camp overnight and tell stories under the glow of dancing stars as steam rose from their fresh mint tea.

On an entrancing cultural excursion around Morocco, you'll experience the fabled Amazigh hospitality by bedding down at an oasis camp in the middle of the desert – camels, woven mats, live music, hot tea all included (showers, too). Other highlights of the trip include a cooking class in Tahannaout, a trip to the blue city of Chefchaouen and a picnic among the ruined Roman city of Volubilis.

6. Stay among the vineyards in Portugal

Created over thousands of years by one of Europe's vintage waterways, the Douro River weaves between steep, sun-baked vineyards until it finally spits out at the Atlantic Ocean near Porto.

The Premium Portugal trip covers much of the same ground but takes in cosmopolitan Lisbon, medieval Coimbra and the Douro Valley en route. Play estate owner with a sophisticated feature stay at Hotel Vila Gale Douro Vineyards. It pairs fine dining with fantastic fortified wine and vistas of the Douro Valley so beautiful, you could get drunk on them.

7. Kip at a cave hotel in Cappadocia, Turkey

Rodin, Donatello and Michelangelo. Chuck any of them a chisel and hammer and it's unlikely that any of them could have crafted such artistic beauty as a feature stay inside the caves of Cappadocia.

Once you've waltzed from Istanbul, one of the world's greatest cities, to the ancient mystic city of Konya (home of Sufi 'whirling'), via beautiful Antalya, you're in for something special in Cappadocia. Spend a generous three nights at Utopia or Alfinia Cave hotels, two troglodyte masterpieces decked out with mod-cons.

8. Get closer to nature in the Amazon, Peru

Deep in the Amazon rainforest, with herons, macaws, capybaras and alligators around to watch your arrival by motorised canoe, you'll find one of Peru's most unforgettable places to stay: Inkaterra Hacienda Concepcion.

Centrepiece of a private 380-hectare ecological reserve, this former cacao and rubber plantation is now a low-impact resort that puts you at the very heart of Mother Nature. As much of a hidden treasure as the great Machu Picchu (you'll visit that too!), you'll get your own private cabana here and access to onsite wildlife guides.



Settle into a feature stay on an Intrepid Premium trip. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel

Agency for more details - 0848 000 844 or globetrotter.ch/termin.



Creating opportunities for refugees in Greece

Intrepid works with humanitarian organisation Naomi to produce tote bags in Greece. As well as providing emergency aid to refugees and asylum seekers, Naomi also offers language lessons and courses in sewing and tailoring, equipping them with tangible, transferable skills.

'At Naomi I can work in a safe, friendly and fair work environment,' says Rosemary, who came to Greece from Nigeria as an asylum seeker in 2006. 'I earn money for my family and can be independent. It's great being part of a team with a strong sense of belonging.'

Providing a safe space for trans women in Peru

Gaining safe paid work is a significant challenge facing trans people in Peru. According to a recent IPSOS Peru survey, only 3% of Peruvian trans women are able to access formal employment.

Enter FUERZA by Casa Trans – a textile startup launched during the pandemic that originally produced protective clothing and face masks. These days, orders from the likes of Intrepid help Casa Trans to provide training and employment to the trans community in Lima, and a vital stepping stone towards a brighter future.

Breaking down barriers for women in Kenya

Want something done right? Do it yourself. That seems to be the way at Kisisyo Women's Group in Kenya. 12 women formed the collective in 1995 in an effort to improve their living standards and find mutual support.

For Lucy Gichu, a 55-year-old founding member from the Majengo slums in Nairobi, their

mission is simple: 'We formed the group to empower our women. Since we partnered with Intrepid, our members have been economically uplifted, as we can afford daily simple meals and to take our children to school.'

Maximising the potential of young adults in India

In Hindi, 'Jugaad' roughly translates as 'making the most out of the little you have'. And that's exactly what happens at Jugaad, the sister project of children's refuge Karm Marg, located near New Delhi, India.

Here, young adults and women with limited employment opportunities learn to create bags, stationery and other handicrafts, often using waste materials such as newspapers and second-hand textiles to up the eco-credentials of their products. This training helps to empower people in Indian society who are often overlooked, while supporting Karm Marg's important work.

Supporting underserved communities in Vietnam

In the mountainous regions of northern Vietnam, ethnic minority communities have been using organic cotton, hemp and natural dyes to create traditional costumes and handicrafts for generations. Now, with the support of Indigo in Hanoi – a workshop aiming to preserve Vietnam's ethnic minorities' cultural heritage – they're transferring these skills to totes.

Intrepid also works with Vun Art, a partner of their not-for-profit, the Intrepid Foundation, who work to eradicate social stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities by providing them with training and employment at their textile workshop.

Improving the lives of women in South Africa

In South Africa, Intrepid sources fairtrade tote bags from Township, an umbrella organisation representing seven independent women-owned cooperatives based in Cape Town.

They've been operating since 1997, providing sustainable economic opportunities to women living in South Africa's township communities. Today over 60 women produce beautiful handmade clothing and bags made from 100% natural cotton, jute and recycled PET fabric.

You can get your own Intrepid tote on most Premium trips. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - 0848 000 844 or globetrotter.ch/termin.



As a B Corp, Intrepid is always looking for ways to create positive social impact. That's why, wherever it's practical, they offer a reusable tote bag to travellers on their trips. But to go one step further, they work with local social enterprises to produce these bags where they can.

So how much good can a bag really do? Turns out, quite a lot. Here are some of the ways Intrepid totes are empowering communities, challenging stereotypes, preserving heritage and changing the lives of people all over the world.

Keeping families together in Thailand

Textile worker Mrs Isada left her factory job to go freelance because she prefers working from the comfort of her home neighbourhood, On Tai, near

Chiang Mai. Little did she know her business would blossom into a community enterprise supporting almost 30 artisans.

This work enables local women to remain at home with their families, rather than having to

leave for bigger cities to find employment. Intrepid travellers in Thailand receive a unique tote featuring traditional Thai fish designs made by Mrs Isada and her colleagues.

SPACE *at the* TABLE

Some say one of the best ways to get to know a place is through its food. Others say it's through getting to know its people. We say, why not both?



On many Premium trips, travellers get the chance to dig into exclusive home-cooked meals alongside local hosts, often inside their own homes. This kind of experience is hard to come by when you travel on your own but offers an immersive and intimate glimpse into traditional dishes and daily life. Travellers sometimes get to chip in with food prep, but always get to swap stories and chit-chat with the welcoming folks who open their homes and set a place at the table for strangers.

Bake and break bread in Morocco

In the quaint Moroccan village of Imlil at the foot of Mount Toubkal (North Africa's tallest peak), you'll be invited into a local resident's home to join in a bread-making workshop. Learn all about this important staple and then enjoy your creation as part of a homemade lunch with your hosts, including olives sourced from the area, couscous or tagine and seasonal fruits. On a different trip, visit an Amazigh

family in the Khenifra region for a truly memorable experience and a priceless insight into their way of life in the Atlas Mountains. The family will demonstrate how to brew the perfect pot of mint tea and will provide a home-cooked lunch using locally grown ingredients.

Sample regional cuisines in India

On trips in India, you'll get the chance to immerse yourself

in Tamil, Brahmin and Rajput cultures when you join families in three different cities for home-cooked meals. Sample traditional dishes and take the time to chat with your hosts, look at photographs and return the favour with tales about you and your life back home.

Help prepare a Cappadocian feast

Nuray will welcome you into her Cappadocian cave home with a big smile and a warm merhaba (welcome). She hosts Intrepid groups for a cooking class and shared dinner in the home her family has lived in for over 50 years. Tuck into dishes like karniyarik (stuffed aubergine) and sarma (vine leaves stuffed with beef and rice) while learning about Nuray's life, her community and the life she's created for her family.

Dig into Bhutanese farm-to-table grub

After a day exploring Bhutan's Paro Valley, home to the Taktsang (aka Tiger's Nest) monastery, Intrepid Premium travellers get the opportunity to enjoy a home-cooked dinner at a 200-year-old farmhouse featuring must-try Bhutanese dishes like ema datshi (chilli and yak cheese stew) while sipping home-brewed ara, an alcoholic beverage most often made from rice or maize. Your hosts Ugyen and Dole and their three children will join you and share stories about life in rural Bhutan.

Enjoy dinner and a show with Balinese royalty

Visit one of the exquisite royal palaces of Ubud in Bali, Indonesia. Of course, you'll have to look your best, so Intrepid lends you an appropriate traditional outfit to wear to this special event. Immerse yourself in the stories told by a member of the royal

family as they explain royal cultural traditions and provide insight into royal family life. Then cap off your evening with a dance performance.

Make your own tortillas in Mexico

Try your hand at tortilla-making in Valladolid, Mexico, when you meet up with a Maya family at their centuries-old farm. See what they grow and learn how they live off the land before sitting down to a traditional lunch featuring your fresh Coba tortillas. Later, visit a local family in the town of Piste, not far from Chichen Itza. Dig into a traditional pibil feast – cooked using an underground barbecue technique that has been perfected by Maya families over generations.

Dine on the Nile in Egypt

In Cairo, a local family welcomes you into their home and you'll all sit down to a meal of traditional dishes while you get the opportunity to learn more about Egyptian life. Later in the trip, ride a boat to a Nubian village on an island in the middle of the Nile. Stroll through the village before sitting down to dinner with a local Nubian family in their home. Enjoy traditional food like kofta and salad and swap stories with your friendly hosts as you gain a unique perspective into their lives.

Get a taste of these experiences on Intrepid Premium trips. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - 0848 000 844 or globetrotter.ch/termin.



FINDING IKIGAI IN JAPAN

By Heather Kang

Ikigai is one of the more recent Japanese philosophies to sweep the globe. It refers to a passion that roots your life's values and joys. You might notice a whiff of *joie de vivre* in it, a dash of *raison d'être*. But drop Duolingo and head to the source because no one does ikigai like Japan.





PACKABLE WORDS

Ikigai

A Japanese concept that means 'reason for being', representing the joy and purpose in our lives that gives us a sense of happiness.

Manga

Comics or graphic novels that cover a wide range of genres – action, romance, fantasy and more – often featuring distinctive art styles and captivating storylines.

Anime

A Japanese style of animation known for its vibrant visuals and diverse genres, from epic adventures and slice-of-life stories to fantastical worlds and engaging characters.

Nirvana

Derived from Buddhism, is a state of perfect peace, enlightenment and liberation from suffering, allowing individuals to transcend worldly desires and achieve spiritual fulfilment.

Ryokan

A traditional Japanese inn often featuring tatami floor beds, communal or private onsens and warm hospitality.

Onsen

Natural hot springs found throughout Japan, where people can soak in the therapeutic mineral-rich waters, enjoying a soothing and rejuvenating experience for the body and mind.

Lulu Assagaf doesn't hesitate when asked.

'Seeing the world and experiencing new things in new places is my ikigai,' she says.

Perhaps that's what brought her to Japan 23 years ago from her home in Indonesia. Well, that and a job with a Japanese company. Experiencing this new place with the help of countless warm and welcoming locals stoked her ikigai and ultimately inspired her to share her chosen home country with visitors from around the globe as an Intrepid trip leader.

On Premium Japan trips, Lulu spends 12 days leading travellers from the bright lights of Tokyo to the hidden alleyways of Kyoto. Along the way, groups learn to make sushi with a family of fourth-generation sushi makers, stay in a traditional ryokan where each room comes with its own private onsen and stroll in the shadows of the Japanese Alps.

One of her favourite stops is Daitoku-ji temple, a 700-year-old Zen Buddhist temple in Kyoto where the group takes part in a short, guided meditation session and chats with a monk over a cup of green tea about Zen Buddhist philosophy and the art

of meditation. Lulu remembers the first time she learned about the meaning behind each of the rocks that sat in the gravel 'river' of one of the zen gardens that 'flowed' towards the 'ocean' that is the complex's main zen garden.

The woman giving the tour explained that some rocks represented cows, facing away from the ocean. One rock shaped like a frog sat 'swimming' against the river current. Finally, a rock representing a treasure ship sat in the river, facing forward toward the ocean. These rocks and their position in the garden represent the shared problems we all face in our life journeys. The

teachings are simple: don't be like a cow stuck in the past or like a frog swimming against the current. Instead, live like the treasure ship, slowly drifting forward with life's ebbs and flows towards the ocean of nirvana.

Lulu believes it's this kind of rich and deep-rooted tradition juxtaposed against arguably the most modern cities and amenities in the world that draws visitors to Japan. Lulu recalls one traveller on a previous trip: an anime and manga fanatic from the UK who had saved up travel funds from his job at a toy store to travel to Japan with his grandmother. When

she passed away not long after they planned the trip, he decided to make the trip alone. In a free moment on Lulu's trip, he made his way to Akihabara in Tokyo – the towering, neon-lit epicentre of all things manga and anime. He was in his element.

'I think he reached heaven,' Lulu recalls.

Seeing the world is at the heart of Lulu's ikigai, but sharing it with others and helping them find theirs might just be a big part of it, too.

Find your ikigai on Premium Japan trip. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - 0848 000 844 or globetrotter.ch/termin.

After recovering from back-to-back health scares – a heart attack and then cancer – Leslie Latchman suddenly started talking about bucket lists. With family ties in Jamaica and India, he’s no stranger to travel, but in recent years his travel plans have gotten bigger and taken him further.

Topping his list: Antarctica.

Overwhelming ANTARCTICA

A PHOTO ESSAY

Photos by Les Latchman

Leslie’s travel-savvy son Les, 29, was game to join him. His wife of 38 years, Kamla, was less enthusiastic. She’d much rather go somewhere hot. But they booked three spots on an 11-day expedition aboard Intrepid’s Ocean Endeavour, and, true to form, Kamla started organising.

‘My mum was really not that keen to go, to be honest’, says Les.

From their base off the coast of the icy continent, Les and his parents would often split up to explore and join activities – kayaking between icebergs, whale-watching from a Zodiac and waddling among penguin colonies. At the end of each day, they’d meet up for dinner and share their tales from the day.

Five days into the trip, Les asked his parents over dinner how things were going. ‘My dad said, “it’s amazing, beyond expectations”, Les recounts. ‘I asked my mum, and she was looking at the menu. She slowly brought it up to cover her face and just started crying.’

It’s like that when you’re out there, he says. It’s just overwhelming emotion. In tears, Kamla told him it was unlike anything she’d ever seen before. ‘Someone came up to me one day and said, “I can’t believe you’re travelling with your parents.”’ Les says. ‘And then they said, “I wish I could experience this with my parents.”’

‘I’ve done a lot of solo travelling in my life, because I’m quite single-minded at times, and I’m not going to wait for anybody... But travelling by yourself can be quite lonely, and I don’t think it’s as enriching as when you travel with people.’

‘Making more memories with people that I love, that’s number one on my bucket list now.’





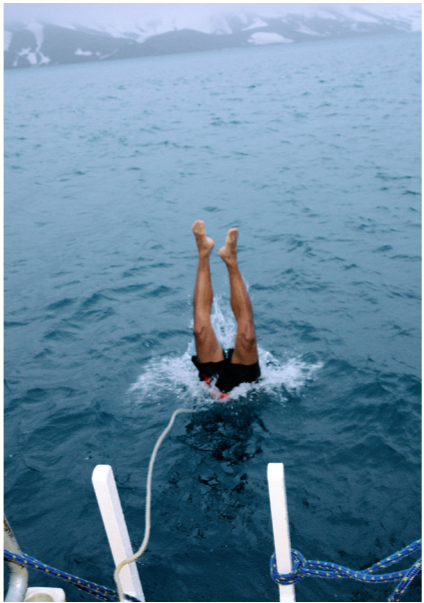
Top: An iceberg up close



Bottom: Kamla and Leslie enjoy the brisk Antarctic weather

Bottom: Penguins on the march

Top: Les takes the plunge into the chilly Antarctic waters (plunge photos taken by Matt Cherubino)





Top left: Kayaking in the icy blue Antarctic waters

Bottom left: Leslie and Kamla enjoy a Zodiac excursion with an Intrepid expedition leader

Top right: Intrepid photography guide Andrew Miller

Middle right: A minke whale surfaces

Bottom right: An Antarctic sunset aboard the Ocean Endeavour



PRO TIPS

FROM AN
ANTARCTICA
PHOTOGRAPHY
GUIDE

As an expedition and photography guide, Andrew Miller has learned a thing or two about capturing a place that defies words.

You don't necessarily need a fancy camera

Though I normally work with a DSLR, I shoot plenty of medium and wide shots on my phone. If I'm using a telephoto lens on a Zodiac and a whale comes right up to our boat, I'll reach for my phone. In moments like those, just remember to give the lens a wipe before you shoot.

If you're bringing a DSLR, consider a telephoto lens

If you're committed to bringing some gear, go big. A telephoto lens lets you get in really close detailed shots of wildlife. You might also want to pack your laptop so you can do a little editing at sea.

Don't be disheartened by grey skies

There's a reason wedding photographers love grey days. No blown-out highlights, no deep shadows. You can capture a certain moodiness and amplify the drama in post-production. Still want sunshine? Give it 30 minutes and chances are you'll have bright skies.

Don't hold out for the perfect shot

Don't be afraid to overshoot a little. Sometimes the photos you would usually disregard because they're not technically perfect capture a vibe or tell their own story.

Put the camera down and just enjoy

Sometimes, you just want to take it all in and you really should. Like the time a minke whale came so close to my Zodiac I could have scratched it on the chin. I didn't even bother trying to take a picture. I just wanted to take it in.

KEEPING COSTA RICA GREEN

Words by Meera Dattani
Photos by Ajay Shah

On an adventure around Costa Rica, Meera Dattani gets a valuable lesson in environmental education.

There should be a word – there probably is, in German – to describe what happens when you find out your favourite tropical bird eats the eggs of your second-favourite tropical bird. Until my guide Jorge drops this bombshell, it had been an otherworldly walk through Monteverde’s cool, damp cloud forest.

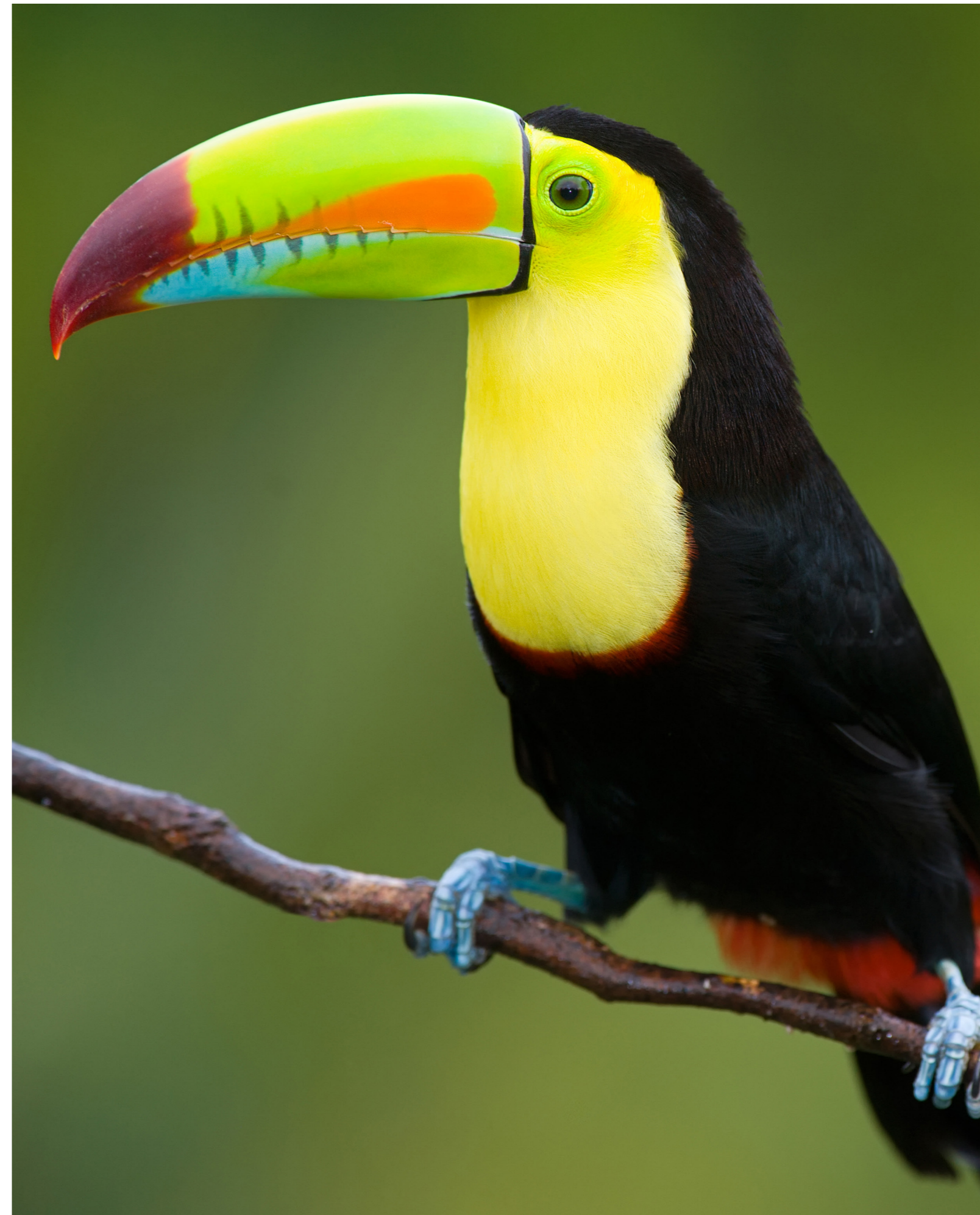
‘Yes, the toucan likes to eat the quetzal eggs,’ naturalist Jorge Marín Leitón tells us. If you’re not familiar with either, they are probably Costa Rica’s best-looking birds. By ‘they’, I mean the males, for in the

animal world, the onus is usually on the boys to get their make-up right. The male resplendent quetzal has a deep-red chest, feathery aquamarine neckline and glorious green plumage on its belly and tail – which can be up to three feet long. Even take ‘em-or-leave ‘em non-birders go mad for a quetzal.

The toucan, on the other hand, eschews elegance for outright madness. A bold and bonkers-looking bird with a colourful, oversized bill, it has a playful nature and has become something of a mascot for Costa Rica. It’s impossible

to return home without at least one toucan-shaped souvenir.

But the toucan shouldn’t need to eat quetzal eggs. It shouldn’t really be in the quetzal’s habitat. But climate change is affecting the high-altitude cloud forest where quetzals reside and the toucan’s lower-altitude habitat is becoming increasingly dry, forcing some species to move higher. That means competition for food and shelter – and new predators.





This tangible connection between climate change, conservation and habitats is an easy lesson learned, even on holiday. But it's not all doom and gloom. This is a country with a plan.

Jorge is friends with tour leader Marvin Araya Salas, who's leading our nine-day Premium Costa Rica trip. While 'premium' doesn't guarantee more sloth sightings, you do get very nice hotel beds, more included meals and experiences and some decent downtime.

Like Jorge, Marvin is an avid birder and naturalist who's keen to invite travellers into his worldview. 'There's been too much human intervention and deforestation,' Marvin tells us. 'I'm a positive person, but on some issues, there's no return. We need action now, from everyone, to see a reaction in five to 10 years.'

Cloud forests form one per cent of Costa Rica and are genuine biodiversity hotspots. Jorge tells us this habitat has more orchid species (around 600) than the USA and Canada combined, over 400 bird species and over 100 species of mammals.

Despite the stats, it's not so easy to see wildlife in abundance in Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve, so a guide is a must. Jorge reminds us to be respectful in this fragile habitat. 'We belong to this earth, it doesn't belong to us,' he says. 'Don't litter, don't use your camera flash – some micro-organisms would never recover – stick to the paths and listen to your guide.' He adds the last with a twinkle in his eye. Perhaps knowingly, for two of the group later do get lost, briefly, including my photographer partner.

When you consider 29 national parks form 25 per cent of the country (plus wildlife refuges, wetland areas, forest reserves and more) and the country's renowned ecotourism model, you might wonder how Costa Rica has managed to shift environmental conservation to the forefront.

'WE BELONG TO THIS EARTH, IT DOESN'T BELONG TO US'

Well, for one thing, the country doesn't have an army. Following a bloody civil war, Costa Rica demilitarised in 1948, sold its weapons to neighbouring nations and brought in free universal healthcare. Primary education is free and compulsory, and secondary school is free although not mandatory.

'Money wasted around the world on armies, we invest in education, uniforms, shoes, computers,' says Jorge. 'Environmental education should be mandatory everywhere – that's what has provided continuity here.'

Further south in Costa Rica's famous coastal rainforest is Manuel Antonio National Park. Here, a guide is compulsory, but with a good one, it's (relatively) easy to see two- and three-toed sloths, white-faced monkeys, anteaters and iguanas. It's a world away from the quieter trails of Monteverde though, as you crisscross well-marked walkways towards the two sweeps of golden beach where most visitors end their visit.

Our local guide Josué spots a three-toed sloth mother and baby. It's our group's first up-close sloth sighting and the excitement is palpable – this slow-moving, half-smiling, real-life soft toy is usually top of most wishlists.

We see camouflaged lizards and cascaded helmet iguanas while blue mariposa butterflies flutter about. White-tailed deer, ocelot and even puma are known to roam these forests, but sightings are rare. Birdlife is easy to come by even at our hotel, Si Como No, with its sweeping views over the rainforest canopy. Over breakfast, we hear squawking macaws and at night,

one of the group spots a kinkajou, a nocturnal creature related to raccoons and coatis, perched on a telephone wire. The rest of us miss out as we're sipping margaritas on a hotel terrace, but you can't have it all.

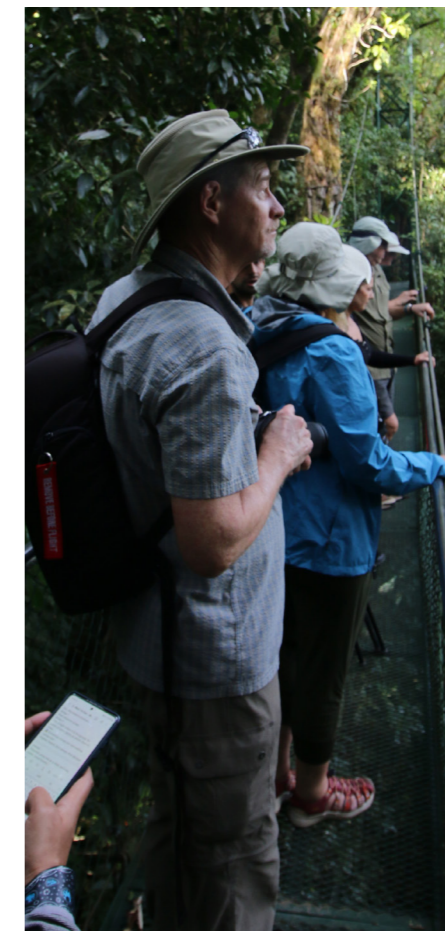
Judging by the photos on my phone and our group's beaming smiles on the penultimate day, it's been a wonderful taster of Costa Rica's highlights. I'd also had something of an environmental education. I'd learned why habitat protection is so key and how we need to remain inspired by our travels by staying connected to the outdoors in our own backyard. I've even learned a lesson in forgiveness: I no longer bear ill will to the quetzal-egg-eating toucans. I hope they can rely on their own habitats and let something else – who should be higher up – eat the eggs.

Not even Costa Rica, for all its rich biodiversity, wonderful wildlife and world-famous ecotourism credentials, can escape the global realities facing it. However, one thing was loud and clear: There are people willing to go out of their way to protect the earth, show it off and ensure they retain as much of it as possible – and it shows.

I recall my conversation with Jorge about what it means to not have an army. Later, he'd smiled and said, 'Actually, we do have an army – it's blue and white.'

I tried to work out what he meant. 'That's the colour of our school uniform,' he told me. 'That's the Costa Rican army – our children. You can't protect or love what you don't know. Education has everything to do with the success of a nation.'

Meera was hosted on Intrepid's nine-day Premium Costa Rica tour. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - 0848 000 844 or [globetrotter.ch/termin](https://www.globetrotter.ch/termin).





see everything you want to see, without being too regimented. And it proved to be just that.'

For history lover Caroline, the flexible itinerary meant her group got to see the wonders of Abu Simbel at sunrise, in solitude, instead of a crowded, hot afternoon – with their 'fabulous' local leader and Egyptologist, Noha, on hand to enlighten them.

'You could ask Noha about anything – and I'm terribly curious – so I would! She soon realised I wanted to collect a few history books to take home, so she'd go off to the tradespeople and buy the appropriate one at the right price on my behalf. Nothing was too much trouble for her.'

This kind of personalised service also ensured Caroline spent her 62nd birthday sharing a giant chocolate cake with a community of Nubian villagers, along with her fellow travellers – who quickly became friends. 'We all got on like a house on fire. We're still in contact and will be for life, which is nice,' she says.

With her next Intrepid Premium trip already booked ('India – there's a culture I just have to experience') and another in Turkey on the cards, it's safe to say Caroline's wanderlust has been well and truly unleashed. And she's quick to encourage others to follow their travel dreams too.

'Do it. You'll be absolutely fine. You'll enjoy it; you'll be looked after – and you'll probably want to go on another one next year, like me!'



Follow in Caroline's footsteps and experience Premium Egypt in Depth with Intrepid. Call Trailfinders at 020 7408 9021 to save 10% when you book before 31 August.

*See page 2 for details.

ON THE ROAD Again

By Emma Sparks

Caroline Blakeney, 62, from South Gloucestershire, is just back from a Premium adventure in Egypt – her first trip abroad in over two decades.

It wasn't that Caroline didn't want to see more of the world. Life simply got in the way. Divorce, single motherhood, financial

restraints and other family commitments kept Caroline on home soil for more than 20 years.

When her father passed and left her some money, Caroline decided it was time to get away. Then COVID hit. Soon after, she lost a couple of friends – one of whom died of a sudden heart attack. These events only sharpened her perspective and determination.

'You've got to go and do these things. You can keep putting it

off, but you never know what's around the corner,' she says. 'I thought, if I don't go now, I may never see the things I want to see.'

And it was Egypt that she wanted to see first. She went straight to her local travel agent and booked her first ever small group adventure.

'I'm not a hotel, sit on the beach person. I knew that I didn't want a holiday like that. Intrepid's Premium Egypt in Depth trip sounded like a good balance of getting to



meet the makers



By Gemma Music

Souvenirs mean more when you know where they came from and get the opportunity to meet the artists and craftspeople who made them.

The joys of travel extend beyond the places you visit. It's just as much about the people you meet and the memories you collect along the way. They say the best things come in small packages, and this especially rings true when you're looking for keepsakes to cherish forever. One of the best ways to hold onto those memories is in the form of souvenirs with a special story behind them. To strengthen the connection between your travels and your take-home trinkets, go as close to the source as possible – or even learn how to make your own while supporting local communities.

Trace the Silk Road to discover centuries-old artisan techniques

Journey along one of the world's most iconic trading routes and immerse yourself in Uzbek culture with visits to a small collective of workshops to learn about centuries-old techniques to craft paper, silks and pottery.

On some Intrepid trips, head to the hub of arts and crafts, Gijduvan, for a behind-the-scenes look at how ceramics are carefully crafted or visit the traditional village of Shofirkon to meet with a local family and learn how to make



suzani, a beautiful silk fabric. In Samarkand, don't miss the chance to meet a local artisan and one of the few people in Central Asia who continues to produce paper using a 1000-year-old method.

Mingle with traditional textile makers in Mexico

If the idea of textiles, fabrics or hand-crafted goods makes your heart sing, then Mexico is sure to please. In Oaxaca, craftwork traditions are just as prevalent as they were hundreds of years ago, and the story behind them is equally as important. Learn about Zapotec woven fabrics steeped in history and watch closely as local artisans meticulously craft clothing and rugs, some taking months to complete.

Deepen your understanding of Māori culture at a pounamu workshop in New Zealand

Diving into the arts and culture scene in cities across New Zealand is arguably one of the best ways to deepen your appreciation for the centuries-old Māori culture. In Greymouth on the South Island's west coast, you can learn about the power of pounamu – a vibrant green stone only found in New Zealand.

Make time to drop into a boutique studio and deepen your knowledge and admire pieces that are often carved into a pendant or

necklace, which carries special meaning for its wearer.

Get crafty in Northern Thailand

When it comes to textiles and handmade goods, you'll be spoilt for choice in Thailand, especially up north. Learn about the history of Benjarong, a traditional style of painted Thai porcelain, with a visit to a ceramics community. You can even paint your own mug or teacup, which will be fired and returned to you to take home as a unique and very special souvenir.

Further north, get the chance to learn about pha khao mah hand-weaving – where more than 100 colours of yarn are used to create traditional Thai clothing – at a small agricultural village visited on some trips.

Design your own jewellery while empowering women in Georgia

Georgia's mix of superb beauty, rich history and enviable wine regions is one of the many reasons to visit. Outside of Mtskheta, the ancient capital and religious centre of Georgia, take time to pay a visit to the Tserovani Refugee Settlement, home to 8000 displaced people. Here, you can visit an enamel

jewellery workshop – a social enterprise offering training and employment to displaced youth and women within the camp.

You will have the chance to meet the jewellery artists whose pieces tell the story of Georgia, and with their guidance, you'll get to design a piece yourself.

Share lunch with artisan silk weavers at a social enterprise in Cambodia

Any journey through Cambodia is bound to be jam-packed with insights into the country's rich history. Outside Siem Reap, you can visit Santuk Silk Farm – a social enterprise workshop employing local women as artisan weavers.

See the cycle of silk production from start to finish, and learn all about this intricate craftwork. All that creativity will no doubt work up an appetite so afterwards sit down to a homemade lunch with your village hosts.

Find these souvenirs and more on a range of Intrepid Premium trips. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - 0848 000 844 or globetrotter.ch/termin.



A taste of SICILY AND PUGLIA

By Emma Sparks



Orecchiette,
Nardo

Passa la PUGLIA

1. Olive oil, Ostuni

Puglia is peppered with ancient olive groves – so it may come as no surprise that the region is Italy's largest producer of olive oil. With Intrepid you'll visit a farm where some of the olive trees date back 3000 years, to learn how oil making techniques have changed over the centuries, as well as the proper way to taste this 'green gold'.

2. Orecchiette, Nardo

Think Italy, think pasta? Don't miss the local classic, orecchiette. These concave discs of durum wheat flour and water – named for their resemblance to 'little ears' – are traditional throughout Puglia and often served with broccoli or tomato sauce. In Nardo, you'll have the option to make your own pasta at a cooking class.

3. Burrata, around Bari

Mozzarella's trendy little brother, burrata, hails from Puglia – and you'll find it at most good restaurants throughout the region. Softer and creamier than its sibling, its mozzarella casing is filled with fresh cream and stracciatella – shredded cheese curds – making it a decadent, delicious treat.

4. Seafood, Polignano a Mare

With 500 miles of glorious coastline and a rich fishing history, seafood is a staple in Puglia. The picture-perfect town of Polignano a Mare is a fine spot to sample classic dishes such as riso, patate e cozze (baked rice, potato and mussels) or fritto misto – calamari, octopus, prawns and more coated in a light, crunchy batter.

Squisita SICILIA

5. Genovesi, Erice

Where better to try a traditional Sicilian pastry than the very town it was invented in? If citrusy sweet treats sound right up your street, look no further than Erice. This beautifully preserved medieval town is the home of Genovesi, a crumbly pastry filled with lemon cream – which Premium Intrepid travellers can try at a special tasting.

6. Ragusano cheese, Ragusa

Like your lactose with a side of baroque architecture? You'll love Ragusa. This ancient town is renowned for its cheese, which has been made here since the 16th century and ranges in flavour from mild to sharp and spicy, depending on how long it's been aged. Try a few different types on a tasting, exclusive to Premium travellers.

7. Modica chocolate, Modica

The Spanish ruled Sicily from 1516 to 1713, bringing with them the chocolate-making traditions they'd acquired from indigenous communities during their colonisation of the Americas. Made at low temperatures with only cacao and sugar, Modica chocolate is deliciously dark with a crumbly texture. Your local leader will take you on a tasting – don't miss versions flavoured with cinnamon and chilli.

8. Arancini, Catania

They're perhaps Sicily's most famous street food – and the subject of fierce debate among locals (in the west, they're spherical and called arancina, in the east, they're conical – supposedly in homage to Mount Etna – and called arancino). But whatever you call them, these tasty, breadcrumb-stuffed risotto balls are unmissable.

Discover the flavours of Italy on Intrepid's Premium Sicily or Premium Puglia trip. Still can't decide? Indulge in both on the Premium Sicily and Puglia trip. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - 0848 000 844 or globetrotter.ch/termin.



Modica
chocolate,
Modica

Italy is one of the world's best destinations for food-loving travellers, but the regions of Puglia and Sicily (the heel of Italy's boot and the island off the tip of its toe) have their own distinct ingredients, recipes and taste bud-pleasing traditions.

This year, Intrepid launched two new Premium trips, one in each region, that get travellers mingling among the flavours. Problem is, how do you decide where to go? Feast your eyes on this culinary map of Sicily and Puglia for some appetite-stirring inspiration.

Some people follow their hearts when it comes to choosing their next holiday. Others are guided by their stomachs.

Which new Intrepid Premium trip is RIGHT FOR YOU?

Do you ever feel like just choosing where to go is the hardest part of trip planning? To make it a bit easier, we've pulled together a selection of brand-new Intrepid Premium trips to help guide you. Run through these five questions to help you hone your travel wishlist and find the perfect trip for you.

1. What kind of scenery do you prefer?

- a) Vast red sand desert plains
- b) Lush rivers through tropical forests
- c) Rainforests and small villages
- d) Rural landscapes and medieval towns
- e) Waterfalls and glaciers

2. What kind of activity would you like to try?

- a) Walking to a sacred waterhole
- b) Learning how to salsa dance
- c) Having breakfast atop a mountain as the sun rises
- d) Dining out at an exclusive gastronomical society
- e) Seeing penguins in the wild

3. What local delicacies get you salivating?

- a) A five-course meal under the stars
- b) Ceviche and exotic fruits
- c) Savoury fried rice and spicy satays
- d) Small plates and regional wines
- e) Empanadas and hearty stews

4. Which accommodation option sounds most appealing?

- a) An airy 5-star resort with a spa and pool
- b) A family-run hacienda set in a jungle
- c) A serene and secluded boutique hotel surrounded by rainforest and rice paddies
- d) An elegant hotel surrounded by lush palm gardens
- e) An eco-lodge built into the rugged landscape with spectacular views

5. What type of wildlife gets you reaching for the binoculars?

- a) Dingoes, wallaroos and cockatoos
- b) Parakeets, crocodiles, turtles and iguanas
- c) Exotic birds and cheeky monkeys
- d) Deer and wild boars
- e) Penguins and sea lions



Mostly As: Premium Red Centre & Uluru

Adventure through the sun-soaked Australian Outback to Uluru while learning about the connection between the land and Aboriginal peoples.



Mostly Bs: Premium Colombia

Discover the fascinating history, warm hospitality and rich culture of Colombia on this journey through coffee country from Bogota to Cartagena.



Mostly Cs: Premium Java and Bali

Get to the heart of life on the Indonesian archipelago by visiting rice paddies and remote villages and learning about the region's traditional arts and crafts.



Mostly Ds: Premium Northern Spain

Stroll the medieval streets of Laguardia, visit the famous Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and dine with locals at an exclusive gastronomic society.



Mostly Es: Premium Patagonia

Travel from Santiago through Torres del Paine National Park, take in stunning views of glaciers and icebergs and explore the majestic Perito Moreno Glacier.

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