

GOING PLACES

Travel | By Abbie Kozolchyk



Earn Some Humanitarian Miles

Exciting Getaways With an **Altruistic Edge**

Two of the impulses tied to the holiday season—giving back and getting out of town—happen to pair quite nicely. Especially now, with the travel industry responding to an ever greater demand for trips that also do good. Virtuoso, a luxury travel advisor network that forecasts top trends in luxury travel, names wildlife preservation among the year's major motivators; same goes for travel that benefits local communities, including tours and hotel stays that—by virtue of your simply booking them—will give back in some meaningful and useful way.

"Some people say you can't change the world," says Barbara Alpert, who recently traveled with Micato Safaris to help support the company's childhood-education initiatives (more on those shortly).

"But when you change one child's life, you *do* change the whole world for that individual child. And if that can happen as the natural extension of an already amazing trip, so much the better." Of course, even when you're not going big, you can still go bighearted: The quickest weekend escape (to the right hotel) can make a difference. So whatever the scale of your next getaway, one of these give-back hotel stays and tours may be just the ticket.

Micato Safaris

This award-winning luxury outfitter offers an extensive safari menu, from the classics (see: the Heart of Kenya and Tanzania, with stops in the Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater and Maasai Mara) to the niche.



From Left: The breathtaking vistas of Machu Picchu; running safari with Micato; students in Africa with their Buffalo bikes from World Bicycle Relief for Backroads; Como Foundation invests, among other things, in local communities where it does business such as Bhutan.

The new Elite Running Safari, for example, will have you training and socializing with some of Kenya's most storied marathoners—as well as seeing hallucinatory wildlife. But whichever safari you choose, its sale will cover all school fees for a local child who couldn't otherwise afford them.

Among the many other worthy endeavors of Micato's nonprofit arm, one standout is Huru International, formed in response to the staggering number of girls who miss school for want of affordable menstrual supplies. Since its founding eight years ago, Huru has distributed free reusable kits to approximately 150,000 girls in East Africa, often in partnership with the Peace Corps. *Micato.com*

Backroads

Though it began—and is still best known—as a bike tour company, the beloved Berkeley, California–based Backroads brand has expanded into all manner of active travel. New offerings range from an Antarctic multisport adventure (the kayaking, hiking and snowshoeing are surreal) to a bike tour that traces Japan's Noto Peninsula (think rice terraces, limestone formations and fishing villages).

Whichever way you go, your trip supports any number of initiatives, two of which involve bikes: Trips for Kids introduces at-

risk children to cycling, and World Bicycle Relief provides bikes to workers, students and health-care providers in various Asian, South American and African countries. *Backroads.com*

Inkaterra

This company may own some of Peru's most stunning high-end hotels, but it is equally focused on conservation. So if you stay at the ethereal, jungle-shrouded Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel below the ruins, for example—or at the impeccably appointed colonial-era mansion that is now Cusco's La Casona hotel, you'll be contributing to the cause as well. Through a nonprofit arm called Inkaterra Asociación, the company manages thousands of acres of rainforest, monitors their biodiversity and supports local farming. *Inkaterra.com*

Como Hotels

Masters of luxury escapes (see: Shambhala Estate in Bali, Uma Paro in Bhutan and Parrot Cay in Turks and Caicos), this family of hotels also has a nonprofit arm that's rooted in the real world: the Como Foundation focuses specifically on gender equity and invests in programs for girls and women, from treatment for sex-trafficking survivors to solar energy sales training for rural women. *Comohotels.com* ■

Online Booking Gives Back

Do-good hotel booking sites are starting to take off: If you book a stay through *kindtraveler.com* (and there are some amazing options), you'll automatically contribute \$10 per night to a local cause—and get a discounted room rate. For its part, *suiteness.com* gives local charities 1 percent of whatever you spend on any luxury suite booked through the site.