

A guide to nominating

Since 2004, the Responsible Tourism Awards has relied on travellers to nominate their best holiday experiences. Receiving more than 10,000 nominations, it has given awards to 201 organisations in 52 countries. BBC presenter Simon Reeve has given his backing to Chumbe Island in Zanzibar and a trip to Madagascar run by Blue Ventures.

Add your voice to our nominations and tell us about the holidays that really move you. Need help deciding who to nominate? Be inspired by some of the nominations we've received so far...



George, an accountant from Poole, chose London's very own **PediBus** (pictured) for Best Low-Carbon Initiative. He said: 'A pedal-powered tour bus promoting fitness and reducing the carbon emissions of tourism in London – what's not to love?'

Rosy, a customer services executive from Arundel, nominated **Norway** for Best Destination.

She said: 'Norway is a beautiful country. The countryside is unspoilt and the cities are clean.

They were very proactive with the electric car.

Norway is a country we should all look up to.'

Jeremy, a singer and musician from London, cast his vote for **Global Vision International** in the Best Volunteering category. He said: 'GVI is always trying to invest in conservation to give projects it works with around the world vital funding and volunteer workers.'

Holly, a conservation expert from Basingstoke, suggested the **Straw Cottage** in Yorkshire for Best Accommodation. She said: 'They've built straw bale cottages and furnished them with recycled items from charity shops. They run courses to teach others how to build sustainably too. I cannot think of a more sustainable accommodation.'

Tip a nod to

Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards: Last call to win a holiday in Africa by casting your vote in this celebration of responsible tourism BY LISA SCOTT

Metro has joined forces with the Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards, organised by responsibletravel.com, to allow you to vote for the individuals and companies that have given you a special holiday but have also worked hard to help the local community and environment. Simon Reeve, BBC presenter, globe trekker and supporter of the awards, tells us why responsible travel could help the endangered marine world and countries that are recovering from revolution.



Protecting the environment: Gazing out to sea from the Chumbe Island Coral Park in the Zanzibar Archipelago

from the shackles of military rule. We may have worked hard for our holiday cash but it is an absolute fortune to communities in the developing world. Spent wisely, it can have a positive, wonderful impact.

> The craziness of the past year has definitely affected confidence in travel. We certainly wised up very quickly to the fact that nothing is guaranteed and that all sorts of things can go wrong. I wouldn't be surprised if people choose to spend more time in Britain this year.

> Previous Responsible Tourism Award winner Blue Ventures is a British organisation that runs adventurous volunteer projects and I recently visited its operation in Madagascar. Staying with its coastal community I worked on its award-winning marine conservation scheme. It's less a holiday, more a working vacation, but you will get a lot out of it. I was really impressed with the approach to the existing community on the island – they're not just handing out food to the locals so that rich, pampered foreigners can stay there – as they educate and train them all. The project is absolutely dedicated to preserving the environment in what is one of the most beautiful parts of the world.

> I have learned to scuba dive, allowing me to be a human in a totally different way. To stay underwater for longer periods of time has transformed my world – in fact, I don't know why I didn't learn before. I think I was overwhelmed by all the equipment. To be able to swim with sharks and all the amazing life that lives under the watery bits of our planet is such an experience.



> In the past I have stuck to learning about life on land – but my current project is all about life below the waves and the challenges our seas face through fishing and pollution. In recent months I have been exploring the Indian Ocean. I only got as far as the east coast of Africa, so I have four more months of travelling before I complete my journey.

> One of my favourite places to visit this year was Chumbe Island Coral Park in the Zanzibar Archipelago, just off the coast of Tanzania. The founders of this nature reserve have recruited people from different communities to help maintain the park, turning the fishermen, the people who were catching and consuming the fish and marine life that live in the reef, into gamekeepers that protect the island. It is a fantastic project set in a beautiful location.

> Authentic experiences generally cost more than a package holiday to a Costa del Sol hotel – but you get what you pay for. So if you go for a Responsible Tourism Award winner like Chumbe Island, you will contribute to the protection of the environment and the local community but you probably won't be able to sit around a pool in an air-conditioned complex drinking overpriced cocktails.

> There have been some major knock-backs to tourism in the past year, such as the Icelandic ash cloud, the chaos at Heathrow caused by the severe winter and the recent revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa. Some countries, such as Tunisia, were considered sunshine states for Western tourists but travelling responsibly means taking the local situation into account. Always think about where you are going and be aware of the political situation. If we are going to holiday in countries that are fundamentally dictatorships, then we have to accept that things can go wrong.

> Countries that have just kicked out a despot would probably appreciate our sterling now they have freed themselves

Nominations can be made at www.responsibletourismawards.com

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win a trip



What's in it for you: tell us your favourite holiday, win another

The Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards still need your votes for the best responsible holidays in the world. Nominate a winner and you could win a luxury safari for two to Kenya.

The awards, organised by responsibletravel.com, have once again teamed up with Metro to ask readers to choose their favourite responsible holiday experiences. Not sure if the awards are for you?

'The awards aren't just about volunteering in remote communities,' says Alex Lyons

(pictured), manager of the awards. 'It's for anyone who's ever had a truly brilliant holiday - the kind of experience that made you feel you had built a real connection with the destination.'



'Whether it was a small, renovated bed and breakfast in Britain, serving the best in local produce, or a diving holiday in Egypt run by a local operator

who knows the sea like the back of his hand.'

Tell us your favourite place to stay, the best volunteering trip you've been on, the greatest

place to dive or maybe just the best responsible destination in the world and this time next year you and a friend could be whisked off to stay in the Governors' Camp in Kenya, courtesy of Virgin Holidays.

Nominations can be made at www.responsibletravel.com

But be quick, you've only got until Friday, June 17, to make your suggestions and be in with a chance of winning that holiday.



"THRILLING"
★★★★★
PHILIP WILDING, EMPIRE

"A BREATHLESS FRENCH THRILLER"
★★★★★
JASON SOLOMONS, THE OBSERVER

★★★★★
MARK ADAMS, SUNDAY MIRROR

★★★★★
ROBBIE COLLIN, NOTW

"FAST AND FEROCIOUS"
OMER ALI, LITTLE WHITE LIES

POINT BLANK
"A BOUIT PORTANT"
MATT GLASBY, TOTAL FILM
★★★★★

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