

Top Five Must-See Places to Experience Indigenous Culture

The International day of the Indigenous People, celebrated all over the world on August 9 every year, was declared as a special day by the United Nations in 1994 in order to facilitate international cooperation for solving indigenous people's problems. It aims to focus on environmental conservation, socioeconomic development, cultural heritage preservation and improvement of basic human rights and ensuring better access to healthcare as well as education.

When it comes to areas with indigenous people, the greatest asset is their traditional culture which they would only be glad to share with the tourists. However, it is essential to mindfully operate the cultural tours in a sensitive way. Here are one of the most fascinating indigenous communities that can be visited around the world.



Embera Indigenous Community, Panama

In the time of rapid globalization, it is essential to take a break from the busy schedules at times in order to just unwind and get de-stressed. If you are in search of a place that can help you do that by breaking away from modernity and rapid development, you can consider visiting the Embera indigenous tribe in Panama. The Embera tribe has been distancing itself from globalization because of the deep respect they have for the environment.

They use natural fibers and palm trees as construction material, wear simple multicolored garments made out of woven cloth, practice corporal painting, wear flowers in their hair and are known for beautiful dancing. They continue to live as their ancestors did in the past.

The cultural tours start with an Embera host paddling the visitors down the river in a traditional canoe to the village. Once there, the visitors get to see their dance forms, learn local crafts and eat typical foods. The tour also includes a walk through the village and the surrounding areas which would give you a good idea of the biodiversity of the natural environment they live in.

Malekula Island People, Vanuatu

Tourists visiting Malekula always find the island's history of cannibalism, until about a century back, to be

highly intriguing. Cannibalism is not being practiced now, but the indigenous Namba does carry on with the tribal practices such as matting, wearing vibrant costumes and face painting.

Special safaris organized by tour operators consist of Malekula Island visit and an experience of the life of the indigenous Namba tribe. The safaris start from Port Vila and, the capital city, and proceed to Malekula. At the island, you will enjoy a remarkable stay in Nawori seaview Bungalows operated by locals. You will also be taken on a visit to the nearby tribal villages by local guides and a canoe trip to the Rano Island, which has a history of cannibalism too. Another attraction is the Big Nambas tribe visit, which stands out among the tribes in Vanuatu.



Bassari People, Senegal

In Senegal, *teranga*, a Wolof word, describes as to how the Senegalese welcome people. You must get to experience their hospitality when visiting this place. A visit to Park Niokolo Koba and the areas surrounding it will give you an experience of the day-to-day life of people in several villages in Bassari.

Lodging is provided in a village encampment and the activities involve time spent with the local people. If you are lucky, you will be able to witness an initiation ceremony, which is quite spectacular.

Northern Hilltribes, Thailand

Thailand's second largest city, Chiang Mai, is one of the must-go places if your goal is to experience the cultural lives of indigenous people in Southeast Asia. Northern Thailand, which borders with Myanmar, is well known for its lush rural settings. There you can meet people belonging to several indigenous communities such as the Karen, Lahu Hmong or Meo, Akha and Lisu. Each tribe has its own distinct way of dressing, language and traditions.

A trip to visit the hill tribes helps you to explore areas surrounding Chiang Mai. You can enjoy the waterfalls, scenic mountain passages, breathtaking views and way of life of the different tribes. The tribes would share home-cooked meals with you and also give you an experience of their ancient customs.



Canaima National Park, Venezuela

Angels Falls, one of the world's highest (2,648 feet) waterfalls, is Canaima National Park's greatest attraction. As the Falls is located in a remote place, it is a challenging task to reach the site. One option is to take a traditional dugout canoe. If you want to go beyond the Canaima Park, a guide belonging to the aboriginal Pemon tribe would take you deeper into the forest to give you an experience of the indigenous populations' customs. The Pemon guide will explain to you the symbiotic relationship between the indigenous people and their land and share their myths and beliefs.

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