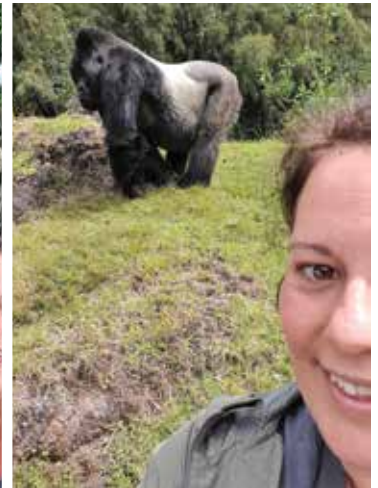




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AS 2020 APPROACHES KATE WEBSTER TAKES A LOOK BACK AT THE YEAR DEPARTING AND HER 2019 JOURNEYS.



A YEAR OF TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

What a year 2019 has been. As the last issue of Asian Journeys Magazine goes out for 2019 and we start planning for 2020, I must take this opportunity to thank you for reading my column and articles.

SHARED EXPERIENCE

One of the things I enjoy most about travelling is sharing my experiences with those around me and anyone who will listen, really. I have become a storyteller, sharing my stories to hopefully inspire others to travel, explore and discover something outside the norm.

This year has taken me to some wild and off the grid destinations where I experienced more than I could have ever imagined. Each time, my mind was blown, and I thought to myself, "how can I beat this?" The world is a marvellous place and each time I touched down in a new country, I was surprised beyond my wildest expectations.

THE DE-HORN OF AFRICA

Africa saw me de-horning rhinos for conservation in South Africa, staying in a counter-poaching camp in Mozambique and trekking to see mountain gorillas in Rwanda. I scooted off to Laos where I learned about gratitude daily and found bliss in Bali. Back home in Australia, I relaxed in a rainforest sanctuary at Crystal Creek Rainforest Retreat and explored the West Coast of Australia at Perth and had the opportunity to swim with

wild dolphins at Rockingham.

Papua New Guinea showed me its secret tribes and culture at the first ever Baining Firedance Festival. Wrapping up the year of travel, I lapped up the luxury of the Maldives.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

All the while through my travels, I learnt one important thing - to travel more responsibly and sustainably. We are seeing more and more travel companies going plastic free and being more socially responsible. It is fantastic that such a movement is taking place and as individual travellers, we can also be a part of this.

Ditch those plastic bottles and invest in a re-useable water bottle. Mine travels with me everywhere. I also take my metal straws and re-useable coffee cup. My toiletries consist of a shampoo and conditioner bar in a tin and deodorant in a cardboard container.

MORE AWARENESS

Beyond the packing of eco-friendly products, it is important to leave a positive footprint wherever you go. Be kind to the locals, take time to learn about their culture and understand it may be different to yours. Respect that. Try to avoid over tourism by visiting places less populated with travelling crowds. Be aware of where your tourism dollar goes.

Let 2020 be a year that we all travel with more awareness, kindness, curiosity and respect. ❖