


**Community- Led
Responsible
Tourism - A
Pathway to
Cultural
Preservation**



“Responsible cultural tourism begins when local communities lead the narrative.”

Travellers become guests, not consumers. Culture is witnessed — in homes, fields, festivals, and conversations.





**Village Ways - began
in 2005, in the Binsar
Wildlife Sanctuary,
when we found that:**

- Villages needed an **alternate source of livelihood**
- Villages were under **serious threat of out-migration**
- There was a **lack of confidence and social security**
- **Women** were reluctant to participate
- There was an **increasing gap between people and forests**
- Villages didn't **benefit from tourism**



The Process

Encouraged the use of **local architectural styles** and **skills**.

Embracing **simple comforts**.

Organised **exposure visits** and provided **training** in **guiding, housekeeping, health, hygiene** and **safety**.

And **linked** the experiences through **direct marketing** and **like-minded partners**.

35 villages across India, in 6 states offer experiences that promote cultural and traditional aspects, and which are led by local communities.



Mothakkara, Kerala



Lamna, Chhattisgarh



Hulgol, Karnataka



Hacra, Rajasthan

Impacts



Pictured: Students of Bhetuli Primary School learning more about how the communities in Upper Saryu Valley make use of sheep wool.



An all-women drumming group in Mothakkara, Kerala



Rebuilding pride in their culture and raised awareness about the natural resources and importance of conservation

Responsible Tourism Best Practices – Winner of ICRT Indian Subcontinent Awards 2025

- Sri Lanka – Heel Oya CBT Village – The revival of Traditional Farming practices



Sai Duan – Vietnam – Winner of ICRT South - East Asia Awards 2024

The traditional Herbal Bath, now also being offered to guests.




Kerala – A Global Leader of Responsible Tourism

- Community Ownership & Local Livelihoods
- Revival & Promotion of Local Culture
- Environmental Responsibility & Sustainable Practices
- Inclusive & Replicable Model



Cross-learning is the future—by expanding these practices, we can make responsible tourism the new normal.



A scenic landscape featuring rolling green hills in the foreground, a large, gnarled tree on a small hill to the right, and snow-capped mountains in the background under a blue sky with light clouds. Two small figures are visible in the lower right foreground.

*“The future of tourism
isn’t about seeing more
places — it’s about
seeing through more
eyes.”*

Community- led tourism allows us to do just that — and in doing so, it helps culture live, breathe, and inspire.



Thank you!

