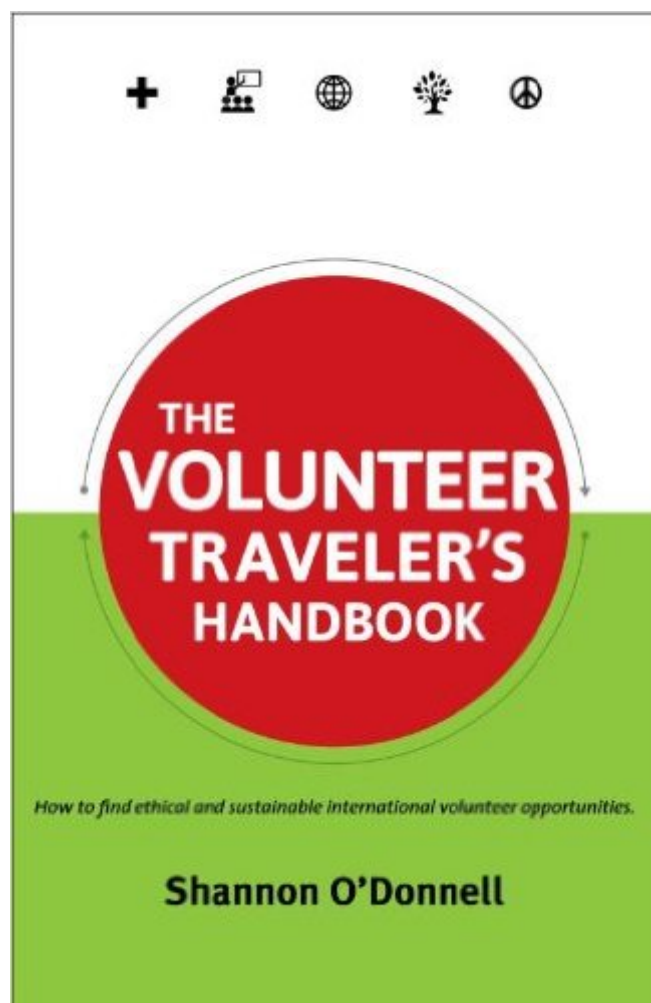


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# The Volunteer Traveler's Handbook (Traveler's Handbooks)



## Synopsis

The Volunteer Traveler's Handbook guides new and veteran travelers through the challenges of finding, vetting, and choosing their ideal volunteer experience. The book's practical advice is interwoven with first-person narrative, stories from a wide range of volunteers, beautiful photography, and expert interviews to help interested volunteers find meaningful ways to give back to communities all over the world-through volunteering, but also through social enterprises and supporting sustainable tourism practices. This handbook is filled with advice beyond merely where to volunteer, it delves deep into the industry and answers the questions you never thought to ask. The handbook covers: - the psychology and ethics of volunteering. - volunteer stories from the author, solo travelers, families, professionals, and many others. - practical strategies for finding and vetting volunteer organizations. - tips to adjust to life as a volunteer. - traveling advice covering safety, packing, food, and cultural immersion. - resource lists of international volunteering opportunities and sustainable enterprises to begin your research. Practical, inspiring, and realistic, The Volunteer Traveler's Handbook equips interested volunteers with the information they need to make informed and ethical decisions on their next trip. - - - This book is part of The Traveler's Handbook Series, which includes books on career break, food, luxury and solo travel. Each niche guide is designed to help travelers see the world in a unique way.

## Book Information

Series: Traveler's Handbooks

Paperback: 138 pages

Publisher: Full Flight Press (October 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0987706144

ISBN-13: 978-0987706140

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars - See all reviews (27 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #400,121 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #7 in Books > Travel > Reference > Tips #199 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Nature Travel > Ecotourism #3470 in Books > Travel > Specialty Travel

## Customer Reviews

You've probably read a little elsewhere about the ethical quandry that is voluntourism, and

wondered if modern volunteering is really all it's cracked up to be. This is a book that wastes little time before tackling that head-on, with intelligence and wit. Shannon O'Donnell is a passionate advocate of the principles that should be guiding the volunteer industry, and she isn't shy about pointing to examples of those principles being circumvented or ignored, but this isn't a piece of deconstruction - as befits the the subject matter, O'Donnell is clearly interested in creating something practical that can be built on, and that hard-headed optimism really shines through. In the book's four main sections she: - examines the philosophy and practical reality underpinning volunteering in all its modern forms - outlines a methodology for getting involved - summarizes her wide experience in a set of 'best practice' suggestions, and - takes a practical look at the reality of traveling and working as a volunteer. Beyond the author's plentiful case studies (many of which are drawn from her own experiences) there are plenty of references to chase beyond the confines of the book. The book is a useful jumping-off point for further reading, and a good kick in the pants for anyone with an emotional investment in volunteering - but it's also a great read from a gifted storyteller, who knows how important stories are for a subject like this. A terrific introduction, handled with intelligence and sensitivity. Highly recommended.

I'm a big fan of Shannon's blog, so when she announced her book about volunteer travel, I was, of course, eager to hear what she had to say, already knowing a fair bit about her experiences in Asia and elsewhere. Flipping through the pages of tips and recommendations, it is clear that Shannon is not just sharing generic suggestions, but in fact is giving you concrete advice about preparing, planning, and enjoying a volunteering excursion based on her own travels - she's got the photos in there to prove it! I like that Shannon handles media stereotyping head on and also spends a significant part of the book on helping you prepare and plan. Most guides focus way too much on the where, instead of the why and the how - which is, in my experiences, is where many travelers have the most problems, but Shannon will keep you safe and sane.

This book is full of practical guidance and how-to's for an aspiring first time international volunteer, but it doesn't stop there. The author presents solid questions about the impact that volunteering and voluntourism has on communities- both good and bad, and leads the reader through a thorough thought process to consider how to wisely research and choose a volunteer program that is right for them AND will truly benefit the community it intends to serve- longterm. A great guide if you're considering a volunteer vacation or a first time long term volunteer opportunity abroad.

This is my first book on this topic (I received this book for free from Story Cartel in exchange for my honest review) and I didn't know what to expect. In fact, I expected a lot of "westernized tree hugging advice" and since I have worked in many developing countries, I know that those aren't always useful and they do not tell you what to expect. Well, this book inspired me to try out volunteering eventually, it provides great links and solid advice on dos and don'ts and what is available out there (I didn't even realize volunteering was, not only useful, as you get to do some good, offer your skills (ANY skills!), but also a great way to travel and see the world) Love this excerpt: How to Be the Volunteer from Hell\* Demand that everything be just like back home.\* Wear revealing clothing in a conservative culture.\* Be lazy and unmotivated.\* Assume you know the best actions.\* Be picky.\* Refuse to eat the food.\* Wear fancy clothes you can't get dirty.\* Argue passionately during all misunderstandings.\* Do no pre-trip cultural research.\* Constantly criticize, "wow, we'd never do this back home."\* Pass out sweets to every local child you meet.\* Expect that everything will go according to plan.\* Demand that everything go according to plan.\* Sulk when nothing goes quite according to plan.\* Anticipate that your work alone is saving the world.

This book offers a comprehensive look at what you need to do and prepare for if you are considering volunteering abroad. Aside from pointing out issues that one may not have considered, I liked that the author also included the obvious (at least to me!)....because this is often what one overlooks. The personal anecdotes are short and compliment the focus of the text...a nice balanced combination. Plenty of outside links are included for further reading. It's clear one must do one's due diligence before, during (and even after!) committing to volunteering abroad and this is a valuable guideline.

I am extremely impressed by this handbook -- it offers answers to any concerns or questions I've had about volunteering abroad: How do I find a position? How do I know I'm doing more good than harm? What kinds of positions are available? How will I afford to volunteer? Do I have the right (or any) skills? Am I too old/young/poor/unskilled (answer: no.)? The author speaks from experience, as she has volunteered around the globe, and the anecdotes peppered throughout the text are super inspiring. She obviously has a ton of experience. I particularly enjoyed reading about 11-year-old Ana's experience in SE Asia, but all of the interviewees and case studies are useful. This book is an excellent resource for anyone considering volunteering or who has already decided to volunteer but needs guidance and some tips. You really can't go wrong -- the author provides further reading and resources so you can be truly prepared. There are even tips for folks already on the road, so

the book is great for those who have an e-reading device. Again, I thoroughly enjoyed this book: easy to read, well-organized and expertly written.

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