

travel



Close ties: Kate Armstrong loves to capture the feel of a country and its people.

Go with a different attitude

TAKE a different path to far-flung places. That is the advice of Melbourne's Kate Armstrong, who avoids mainstream routes to add another dimension to her travel experiences.

After backpacking the world, Kate became a volunteer working with scientists studying altitude sickness in Peru. She took a cycling trip in Europe and stayed to pick grapes in France.

Kate also studied Spanish in Bolivia and joined a folk dance group, touring the country's south.

"I was the oldest, the tallest and the blondest dancer in the group — not exactly your typical Bolivian — but it was lots of fun," Kate says.

"I've always preferred the more educational travel itinerary, where I pursue my passions, rather than ticking off predictable places in a guide book.

"It's the best way to become close to the lives of people in another country while making friends, and staying long enough to have a real sense of their national culture," she says.

Back in Australia, Kate has written a book to guide others on a similar adventurous travel path.

"I want to inspire like-minded people to discover activity-rich adventures that expand the mind, satisfy one's curiosity, and put travel in a cultural context," she says.

Published this week, her book *Inspiring Adventures Overseas: Special Interest Travel* has a smorgasbord of travel options and practical tips to make any journey brighter.

Kate says the book will appeal to those who backpacked the world in the 1960s, hiked across Asia in the '70s, took a coach tour to places they missed, before taking the kids to Disneyland in the '80s and '90s.

"They want the adrenalin surge of an adventure holiday at a time in life when children are off their hands, and they are financially secure," Kate says.

Inspiring Adventures Overseas includes chapters by specialists who run the gamut of interests from archeology, art, culture and birdwatching to cookery and genealogy, taking in literary and film locations, wildlife safaris, pilgrimages, sacred sites and battlefields.

Kate also advises on language schools and aid work overseas.

Specialist contributions come from Christopher Carter, of the Australian National University, who leads global archeological tours; Victorian Ann Proctor, who is researching a doctorate on sculpture in Vietnam and leads art tours there; Ian Kelly, of the Australian War Memorial, who takes battlefield tours to the Western front; and Christopher Nelson, who describes himself as a wandering gourmet after cooking his way through Europe.

Inspiring Adventures Overseas shows the advantages of walking, cycling and sailing tours that bring travellers in touch with the rhythms of life in another country, while growing fitter.

VERONICA MATHESON

Inspiring Adventures Overseas
(Global Exchange, rrp \$24.95)