



Meet the
Specialist

Sam Drew

Island life

Sam Drew from our New Zealand & South Pacific team recounts her travels

I grew up in a family renowned for their globe trotting; my father travelled the world with his job and I was lucky enough to experience life in places as exotic as Southeast Asia and the Middle East at a young age. This upbringing has left me with a fascination for travel and an irrepressible wanderlust. After finishing college I set off on my first round the world adventure which took me to the far away shores of Australia and Thailand, but rather than satisfying my curiosity it opened up the world a little bit more. I came back to read English and European Studies at Oxford Brookes University and was not long out of my degree before I headed back to Southeast Asia and the area of the world I fell in love with, New Zealand and the South Pacific.

I have been extremely lucky to have returned to New Zealand twice with Audley to thoroughly research the destination. Each time I visit it seems more dramatic, more beautiful and more enchanting than ever, and I doubt any other country rivals its sheer diversity of landscape and experience within such a small area.

My most recent trip took me to Fiji, a country that surprised me by being far more than idyllic beaches and breathtaking sunsets. I flew out to Vanua Levu in the north and was completely taken aback by the sheer lushness of the island. This abundance of rainforest, with its bright tropical flowers and profusion of birdlife, increased the more off the beaten track I ventured. Taveuni, Vanua Levu's tiny next door neighbour, offers visitors the best of Fiji with waterfalls, mountain walks, traditional villages as well as some of the best diving and snorkelling in the world. However, it was the offshore islands of Matangi and Qamea that stole my heart through their true escapism, peace and quiet. I spent my days snorkelling some of the prettiest reefs I have ever seen and eating fresh barbequed lobster on a stunning crescent of abandoned beach: it really doesn't get better than that.