

PREMIUM ADVENTURER

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Egypt through a
local leader's eyes:

MEET AHMED BADR



As told to Tiana Templeman

We talked with Ahmed Badr about his passion for Egypt and what it's like to share it with Intrepid travellers.

Ahmed Badr lives in the heart of Cairo and fell in love with history as a young boy. He soon realised that he wanted to share his passion for Egypt and its history with others. After completing a bachelor's degree in Egyptian History and Monuments, Ahmed began working as a tour leader in 2005 and guiding extensively throughout Egypt.

"Watching the people who come to see the pyramids and Egyptian monuments and seeing the excitement on their faces, it made it easy for me to decide [what I wanted to do]. It was my dream and it is my passion."

Like all of the tour leaders on Intrepid Premium trips, Ahmed has extensive experience as a leader and a passion for sharing his country and its history with like-minded travellers.

What do you love most about being a tour leader and sharing Egypt with Intrepid travellers?

The best thing about my job is that I get to share my passion and knowledge about Egypt and its ancient and modern history with others who share my interests. I love to take people to the pyramids, Abu Simbel, Karnak, and the Valley of the Kings as these are my favourite monuments. I like to see other people's excitement when they see these sights. I also enjoy meeting people from all over the world and experiencing different cultures and being able to learn new things about the world every day.

What do you think makes Premium tours so good?

Travelling in a Premium group is always a great choice. It removes a lot of hassle and pressure for travellers and it also gives them confidence. They don't have to worry about fixing any issues that may occur during the trip and everything is premium: the hotels, transportation, food, and even their tour guide.





"If I can sum up my Premium Egypt trip in one word, it would be "AMAZING". From the well-executed itinerary and logistics to the amazing experiences and sites we visited, I could not ask for more. I will now be a forever recurring customer of Intrepid. Also going Premium was well worth the money for sure!"

- Ann Marie, Intrepid Premium Traveller

How do you maintain your enthusiasm when you're visiting the same places again and again?

I love to be out and about [with a group] so all I need to do to maintain my freshness and enthusiasm is to have a good sleep. Once I wake up, I'm ready to go on a new trip.

Is it ever hard to say goodbye at the end of a tour?

After one or two full weeks together we have become a family, not just a leader and a tour group. The most special groups are those where you can tell that everyone is getting along and sharing the love all the way. It changes the group atmosphere to more of a big family vibe. It is hard to say goodbye to some groups.

What things do you do as a Premium leader that make a trip extra special?

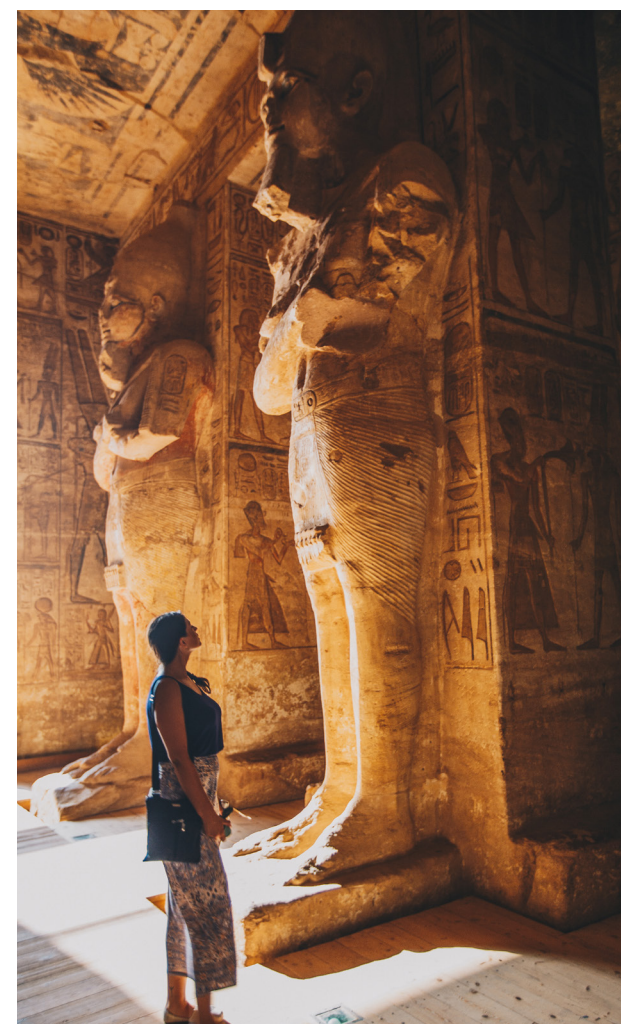
I'm always willing to go the extra mile to help everyone with their needs. I also check with everyone individually to find

out what things they are interested to do, so once I get a chance wherever we go, I know what to take them to or what to point out to them. Also there are the "wow moments" which are the things I'll do on the spot without mentioning it earlier or in advance.

What is your top tip for travellers visiting Egypt for the first time?

My top tip is definitely a historical one. I would always say while you are at the Valley of the Kings in Luxor, the extra tomb of Ramesses V and VI is a must see.

Discover the magic of Egypt on an Intrepid Premium small group tour. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - **0848 000 844** or globetrotter.ch/termin.



UNIQUE *Premium* EXPERIENCES

By Eleanor McDonald

From foraging for fresh ingredients in Borneo's rainforest to learning the secrets of sushi from a Japanese family who have been making it for generations, every Premium trip is full of extraordinary moments you won't find in the guidebook, or on any other Intrepid itinerary.

Highlight activities are intertwined with carefully curated local experiences, each designed by the people who live there to connect you with the destination and show you a side often missed by visitors. Sometimes soul-stirring, often life-affirming, and always a bit of fun, we've picked out 10 exclusive experiences that dial up your adventure from great to truly unforgettable.

Experience unique premium moments on an Intrepid Premium small group tour. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - **0848 000 844** or globetrotter.ch/termin.

1. VISIT A MAASAI COMMUNITY IN KENYA

Among the striking landscapes of the Great Rift Valley, the Maasai people practice their traditional way of life with little influence from the western world. Visit the Tepesua Village, a local Maasai community known for championing Maasai women's health and education. Maasai warriors welcome you with song and dance before you tour the village with your hosts, gaining insight into this ancient culture. Meet the women of the Tepesua Widows Income Project who sew eco-friendly handicrafts for visitors and locals.



2. SHARE A MEAL AT A BEDOUIN CAMP IN JORDAN

For any visitor to Jordan, Wadi Rum is high on the must-see list. But beyond the sand dunes and rock formations, it's the resilient Bedouin communities who live across the desert that make this place really special. Join your Bedouin hosts for an exploration of Wadi Rum in local jeeps, then head back to their camp deep in the desert for a traditional zarb dinner cooked in underground pits. You'll have the unique opportunity to learn about your host's way of living as you share stories over a one-of-a-kind dinner.

3. LEARN THE SECRETS OF SUSHI IN JAPAN

In a city famous for its food, sushi might just be Tokyo's crowning glory. Pay a visit to the Tsukiji Outer Market to browse stalls brimming with fresh seafood, then meet with a 4th generation sushi-making family to learn the secrets behind this legendary dish. Find out how to make nigiri and hand-rolled sushi while the family fills you in on their story, the history of sushi and the art of making it. You won't just leave with a stomach full of sushi – you've now got four generations worth of culinary know-how to take back home with you.





4. DINE IN A LOCAL HOME IN EGYPT

Hidden behind the traffic-choked streets and chorus of car horns, family life ticks along quietly in Cairo. This is a side of the city most visitors don't get to see, but luckily you've got friends on the ground. Your local leader will take you behind closed doors and into the home of a Cairo family for lunch, where your hosts will welcome you warmly, eager to swap stories and share traditional Egyptian dishes. And while Cairo's restaurants are known to impress, you'll soon see that nothing beats a home-cooked spread.

5. WITNESS A RARE PERFORMANCE IN VIETNAM

Dating back to the Tran Dynasty, Hat Xam folk music was originally performed by blind musicians and was enjoyed by local working-class audiences right up until the late 1950s, when a wave of communism deemed all art forms to be corrupting influences. Today, the art form is considered endangered, and performances are rare. While in Hanoi, you'll visit a private club house and catch an exclusive performance in one of the few places where artists still sing acoustically. This emotive show is sure to be one of your enduring memories of Vietnam.



6. FORAGE FOR FOOD IN BORNEO

Deep within Borneo's Batang Ai rainforest among hornbills, gibbons, and wild orangutans, the Iban people have co-existed with nature for 400 years. Living in longhouses along the river, they've preserved centuries-old traditions. Meet a local expert and learn how the Iban people live off the land as you forage for wild ferns, ginger shoots and other edible ingredients. Once you've gathered a fresh crop, learn how to transform your finds into a meal like no other, which you'll eat surrounded by the forest you sourced it from.



7. EXPLORE WITH A CONSERVATIONIST IN MEXICO

Home to almost 1,150 species of mammals, birds and vegetation, the Celestun Bird Sanctuary and Biosphere Reserve is a dramatically diverse wetland. Here you'll have the unique opportunity to meet a local conservationist and explore the area with expert insight, learning about the conservation efforts taking place in the reserve and looking out for the vibrant birdlife that calls it home. If you're travelling between November and March, you could be lucky enough to witness thousands of flamingos painting a pink streak across the landscape.

8. MEET A LOCAL ARTISAN IN COSTA RICA

In the multicultural city of Colon, many folkloric traditions live on today, including the art of mask making. With roots in Carnival, Costa Ricans don oversized and colourful masks for parades and celebrations. Visit the workshop of a local artisan to learn about his craft while members of his family try on masks for you to admire. Enjoy a look at a typical Costa Rican home that most visitors don't get to see while sitting down to a traditional casado lunch prepared in a wood stove, followed by dessert and coffee.

9. TAKE A SCENIC TRAIN JOURNEY IN PERU

The ancient Incan citadel of Machu Picchu is a highlight for most who visit Peru, but as they say, sometimes it's not about the destination – it's about the journey. And there are few better journeys on earth than the 360 Machu Picchu Train. With high domed windows in each carriage, the ride serves up some seriously unbeatable views of the Andes. There's also an open-air observation carriage, meaning you'll not only get the best mountain views, you'll get to breathe the fresh mountain air too. It's like hiking, without all the hard bits.

10. TAKE PART IN A PLOV DEMONSTRATION IN UZBEKISTAN

Made in a cauldron with rice, meat and spices, plov is Uzbekistan's most popular dish. It's served up for breakfast, lunch, dinner and special occasions – there's never a bad time to eat plov. In the former silk road hub of Samarkand, join a local family to learn how to make the country's signature dish. Every plov varies depending on region, occasion and who's making it, so if you're lucky you'll be let in on the family's secret recipe. You'll also gain insight into everyday Uzbek life as you chat with your hosts over dinner.



LASTOVO FISHING PROJECT:

PREMIUM SUSTAINABILITY IN CROATIA

By Neringa Rackauskaite

When overfishing threatened their livelihood, Ivica and Helena discovered passion, promise and purpose in sustainable tourism off the island of Lastovo.

Waking up early was a challenge after a sleepless night. As an introverted adventurer, I'd been kept awake by the nerves and excitement of joining a half-day fishing trip the following morning. The fisherman, who introduced himself as Ivica, was already waiting for us in his car as we left our hotel. He drove our group down to the harbour where we met his wife, Helena, and their warm nature put me at ease immediately.

Ivica and Helena showed us their fishing boat, docked in Lastovo's harbour. They joked that their friends used to say this boat would ruin their marriage, but in the end, it was the boat that brought them even closer together. As we took off, I climbed onto the roof for a better view and watched the island unfold in front of me.

I'd imagined a morning at sea would include a lot of standing around impatiently with a rod. Instead, Helena and Ivica practice a more traditional way of fishing, using nets and traps. As we sailed between the spots where they'd left their nets overnight, they filled us in on the types of fish we could expect to find.

Watching the couple smoothly go through the motions of pulling in and preparing the fish made me think they'd been doing this all their lives, which as I came to learn, was almost true. Ivica had been fishing with his grandparents in Lastovo since he was a child, and with limited career options on the island, he chose to become a fisherman.

Helena's connections to the sea were quite different. Originally from Bosnia and Herzegovina, her family fled to Split when she was 12 to escape the Bosnian war. It was here she met Ivica while working with his cousin as a hairdresser, and they married and moved back to Lastovo.

She continued to work as a hairdresser and opened her own salon on the island, but business was slow. Ivica was out at sea between 5 am and 5 pm every day and struggled spending so much time away from family, so Helena decided to join him. Together they bought their own fishing boat, and whenever they weren't out fishing, they spent their time renovating it.

While they were pleased to be working together, it wasn't always easy. A growing number of fishermen meant there weren't enough fish for everyone, and they had to put out more nets, travel further away from the island and spend more time at sea. They recognised this way of fishing wasn't sustainable for them or the environment, and they came up with a life-changing idea: shifting from commercial fishing to sustainable tourism.

Rather than spending 12 hours a day on the sea, Ivica and Helena now make their living by taking small groups out on the water to share their traditions, go for a swim and catch only as much fish as they need for a relaxing lunch.

"We wanted to share this experience with people who don't normally do these kinds of activities," shared Ivica. "Maybe someone who spends a lot of time inside or staring at a computer screen. We hoped to bring people together, share our traditions, and teach them about fishing."

Once we'd visited the final net, Ivica fired up the grill and Helena set about decorating the table and serving up

homemade liquors and snacks. We raised a glass of rakija to the successful fishing trip, sharing a cheerful "Živeli". Gazing out at the water, listening to the laughter of happy people and smelling the freshly grilled fish, it was clear Helena and Ivica had achieved exactly what they'd hoped to do.

"The thing I'm most proud of is everything we put on table is made by us. We catch the fish together, we make the fish paste, prepare the vegetables and we even make the liquors. It's amazing to see people coming together over food we have prepared for them," says Helena.

Since they began showing visitors their self-sustaining lives at sea, things have changed for the better. Not only is their new job less physically demanding, but every day they get to meet interesting people and fish in a slower and more environmentally friendly way.

Listening to their story, it all started to make sense to me. For someone like me, with a busy life in a big city, this fishing experience was the best kind of therapy. Out at sea, we were away from everything and the problems we left at home seemed so tiny and insignificant. It allowed me to truly appreciate everything that was happening in that moment.

I remembered the person who was tired and anxious at the hotel this morning, and I wanted to tell her that in just a few hours, she would be feeling the most tranquil she's felt in a long time – but I also didn't want to ruin the surprise. Of all the things I'd gained that day, the biggest was my happy place – now I can close my eyes and see Lastovo.

Discover the people and places of Croatia on an Intrepid Premium trip. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - **0848 000 844** or **globetrotter.ch/termin**.





5 tips for the conscious traveller

By Eleanor McDonald

Doing right by the environment doesn't mean you have to stay home, but there are ways to minimise your impact while on the move. Whether you're swapping planes for trains, opting for an off-grid getaway or exploring on foot, climate-conscious travel isn't just important – it's enriching.

As the world's largest carbon-neutral travel company, Intrepid is always looking for new ways to cut down on emissions. All of our 1000+ tours around the world are carbon offset, which is a great place to start, but reducing your footprint in the first place is even better. If you want to travel in a way that's good for both people and the planet, these are our top responsible tips.

Take the train

Slow travel is the way to go. Rail travel is not only better for the planet, but it's an experience in and of itself. Train tracks often cut through landscapes not accessed by roads, so you'll have the chance to take in scenery you'd totally miss if travelling by car or plane. And you can forget about check-ins, baggage collection and hunting for airport snacks – all you need to do is sit back, relax and enjoy the ride.

Go off-grid

Logging off and going off-grid is one of the surest ways to minimise your environmental impact. While a digital-detox can help provide a much-needed mental recharge, it is also the most environmentally friendly way to travel, and a camping or hiking-focused holiday can be rewarding in more ways than one. A 100% human-powered adventure effectively means eliminating your footprint, while switching off electronics means you're not disrupting nearby wildlife.



Forgo flights

It's no secret that airline travel and the environment aren't best friends, however it can be tempting to save time and hop across a country on a short-haul flight. But between airport check-ins and wait times, you may find it's just as quick to drive, catch public transport or take the train, reducing the overall emissions of your trip. Be sure you are looking at total travel time vs. flight time for the truest picture on how much "time" and "energy" a flight will take – the answer may surprise you.

Opt for community-owned

When you travel, it's usually a good idea to make a conscious effort to keep your tourism dollars in the hands of locals. Community-owned lodges and hotels are collectively owned and developed to benefit multiple families and residents of a community. These types of properties are found all over the world and almost guarantee

100% of your tourism dollars genuinely support the community you visit. When looking for a unique stay, try booking a proper community-based hotel stay.

Choose the road less travelled

Overtourism is a big issue for many of the world's most popular holiday spots, adding strain to the environment and restricting tourism dollars to certain hotspots. When it comes to more climate-conscious tourism, taking the road less travelled – sometimes literally – is often the best way to go. By seeking out under-touristed places, you'll not only have a more authentic experience, but also reduce pressure on the local environment and ensure the positive effects of tourism are felt by more people.

Experience the joy of conscious travel with Intrepid Premium. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - **0848 000 844** or **globetrotter.ch/termin**.



UZBEKISTAN:

A PHOTO JOURNEY

Words by Tiana Templeman

Mention you're heading to Uzbekistan and even your most well-travelled friends will probably have a few questions. The first being: where *exactly* is Uzbekistan? The answer is Central Asia, and it's easier to get to than you might think with direct daily flights from London to the capital, Tashkent. It's amazing more people don't come here as those who make the journey are rewarded with a culturally rich destination that remains undiscovered (and unspoiled) by mass tourism. Even if you've been travelling the world for years, there is so much to uncover and explore here.

Uzbekistan held a strategic location along the Silk Road trade route linking the East with the West, and its rich Soviet, Islamic and Asian cultural connections remain. Add unspoiled natural beauty and locals who share their country and culture generously, and you've got the makings of a truly magical trip. From sleeping in a yurt in the Kyzylkum Desert to marvelling at the UNESCO-listed city of Bukhara, cooking hearty traditional dishes with a local family and hiking the Nuratau Mountains, this land-locked country surrounded by five of the other 'Stans is as mesmerising as it is unique.



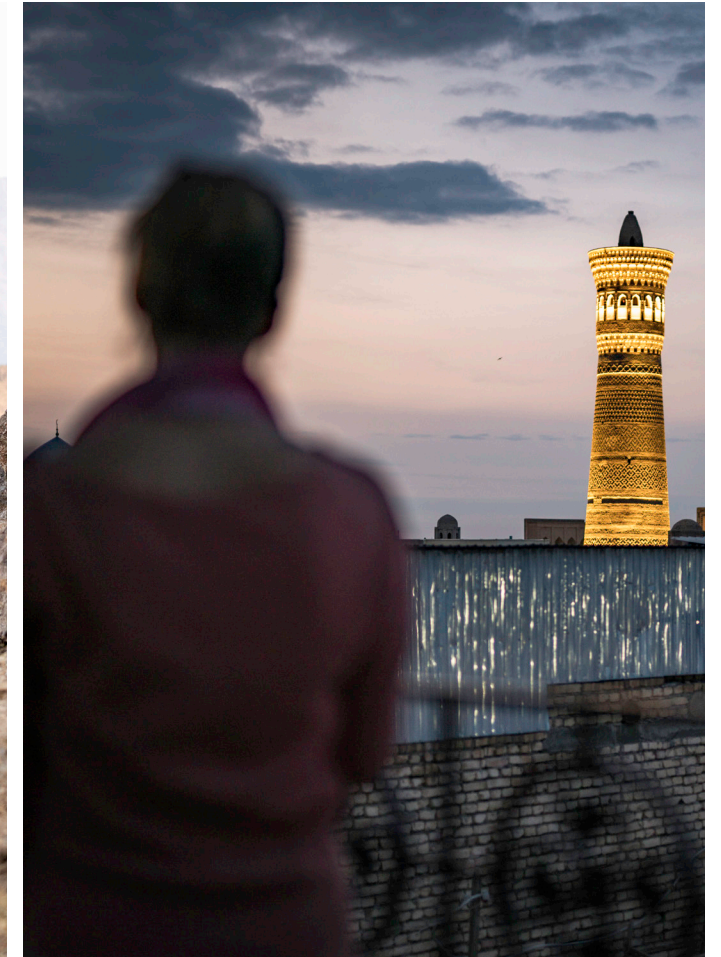
Stay in a centuries-old medressa turned elegant hotel in Khiva

Discover the beauty of Uzbekistan. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - **0848 000 844** or globetrotter.ch/termin.



Go hiking in the Nuratau Mountains.

Stay in the heart of Old Bukhara.



Discover the ancient town of Bukhara, Uzbekistan's "holiest city"

Immerse yourself in local traditions.





*Spend the night in a desert yurt camp.
Feast on traditional Uzbekistan cuisine.*



Admire the architecture of Uzbekistan.



Explore the city
of Bukhara.



Admire the striking azure dome of the Gur-e-Amir Mausoleum.

Go market shopping in Bukhara.



C

3 ways to connect with

Country

on a Premium Australia trip

By Tiana Templeman

Connect with the heart and soul of Australia during three Indigenous experiences that venture beyond the usual tourist trail.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia have a rich history stretching back more than 70,000 years. If you want to truly discover the heart and soul of Australia, there's no better and more meaningful way to do it than on an Indigenous experience led by a First Nations guide on Country. For Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 'Country' isn't just a name given to the land they live on or where they came from. It's a complex system of ideas and beliefs tied to things like spirituality, law, language, customs, family and identity.

Australian Indigenous tourism experiences are richly rewarding for travellers and deliver benefits far beyond the value of the tourist dollar. Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture



helps preserve it, while creating cross-cultural respect and promoting understanding and change. It's also a positive step towards reconciliation with the world's Indigenous peoples. Gain a deeper understanding of Australia with these Indigenous tours that venture beyond the usual tourist trail and deep into the heart of one of the world's largest and most diverse countries.

Karrke Aboriginal Cultural Experience at Kings Canyon

From native foods to medicines, plants, artefacts, dot painting and bush jewellery, this tour captures the richness and spirituality of

the Red Centre's Country and culture. Located at Karrke, on the southeast edges of Watarrka National Park in the Northern Territory, this Indigenous experience begins with a traditional smoking ceremony and blessing. Join your First Nations guide for a leisurely walk and talk as you learn about bush tucker and bush medicines used for spiritual and healing purposes by the Luritja and Pertame (Southern Arrernte) people. Your guide will share their traditional knowledge and skills, from Creation stories about the land you're walking on to how to grind ochres for traditional paints and the craft of making boomerangs and spears.





This tour highlights the resilience and resourcefulness of the Luritja and Pertame peoples, the richness and beauty of their Country and the wealth of knowledge they have gained over thousands of years.

Explore Mimbi Caves with a Gooniyandi guide

Located within a stunning escarpment of ancient rock, Mimbi Caves are one of Western Australia's largest cave systems and one of the oldest identified sites of human occupation. These remote natural limestone caves were created by thousands of years of geological movement and weathering, and they're regarded as one of the greatest geological and cultural wonders of the Kimberley region. They also hold profound spiritual significance for the Gooniyandi people. On this tour, you'll join a Gooniyandi guide who will take you into the caves and on an inspiring virtual journey back through time in the heart of Gooniyandi Country. Along the way you'll visit Mimbi's pools, discover ancient fossils and rock art and listen to Creation stories as you stand deep in the heart of the cave. Your adventure ends with freshly cooked damper (a simple but tasty bread baked in a campfire), a

steaming cup of billy tea and a yarn with Gooniyandi traditional owners.

Tour Derby with a local Aboriginal poet and artist

Deepen your understanding of Indigenous culture on a cultural walking tour of Derby with local award-winning Aboriginal poet and artist Edwin Lee Mulligan. A descendent of two acclaimed First Nations artists, Hanson Boxer and Jimmy Pike, Edwin is passionate about sharing the art, culture and Country of the Walmadjari and Nyigina peoples. After a yarn under the shade of a boab tree, join Edwin for a walk around Derby as he shares the history of the town, his poems and Creation stories from the surrounding region. This intimate tour provides a unique and personal insight into the spiritual connection traditional owners have with the land. After a smoking ceremony on the marsh, the tour concludes with a leisurely stroll back to the Visitor Centre.

Embark on your own Australia adventure with Intrepid. Get in touch with your Globetrotter Travel Agency for more details - **0848 000 844** or **globetrotter.ch/termin**.



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