



COMPLEXD

travel

Robert Leon

Photographs the beauty of Cuba, Guatemala and Goa

“Photography is a passion that drives me to see what’s out there and live it. I am fascinated by different cultures and travel/documentary photography has given me a life full of very interesting experiences with amazing places and people, in particular indigenous people in their environment. With the bare essentials on my back I have pretty much used whatever was needed to get me where I want to be: planes, trains, automobiles, hiking, camels, horses, mules, jeeps, canoes, kayaks, boats, helicopters, seaplanes, zodiacs, yachts... the list goes on. While working in Central America and Mexico, I was on a lot of old buses which is a lot of fun because you get the real deal travel experience with the locals...that way I can show it as it is!”

I met some of the most generous and friendly Cuban people during 1995-1996 when the Russian collapse of Communism had cut off Cuba’s supplies. Even during those very difficult times the Cubans were always very hospitable - cooking meals for me when they themselves had almost nothing to eat, let alone having enough fuel for their cooking stoves. The Cubans made the best of what they had. Children were happy playing with simple things, like a rubber glove blown up as a balloon, or young girls having a great time playing with hula-hoops. It was all about the human spirit continuing forward when things get rough.





Mayan woman hand crafting pottery



Maya women weave textiles for their traditional costumes (called huipiles) on back strap looms; it's a weaving technique seen in pre-Columbian Mayan tomb drawings. Mayas here still use back strap looms daily and girls by the age of eight learn to weave traditional costumes that take up to six or eight months to make. Walking around in the Santiago Atitlan market you can see the Mayan women wearing colourful clothing resonating with the energy of traditional Mayan culture in Central America



Mayan women around Lake Atitlan lead a very traditional and agrarian lifestyle. In the early morning Tzutujil Mayan women would settle by the shoreline washing clothes like they have done for centuries.



After experiencing a traditional festival called the 'Garifuna Settlement Day' in Livingston, Guatemala, I saw that Garifuna people hold onto their African roots through their Punta music and dancing. They are amazing drummers and dancers.



The most amazing thing I have photographed is the Lacandon Mayas in Chiapas Mexico. They are the last surviving link as direct descendants of the Mayan Empire and it was incredible to be living with them in the Lacandon Jungle where they run in the rainforest barefooted as the guardians of the rainforest.

Where next...S.E Asia!

See more of Roberts Leon's

work at www.robertleon.com