

enchanted

TRAVELS

Responsible Travel

Top Tips



Responsible Travel is a journey, not a destination, but you can create lighter footprints and share in some smiles if you follow our top tips.

Environment

1. Pack with purpose. We all know there's a temptation to take more than you require on your holiday. Consider the season you're travelling in so you only take what is necessary. If you are buying toiletries and new clothes, remove all the excess packaging (cardboard and plastic) and stick it in your recycling bin before you leave your country. Space-saving organizers such as packing cubes are a much better method to divide up your luggage than plastic bags.

2. Conserve water where possible. In some of our destinations, water shortages are a serious problem, especially during the dry seasons.

3. Conserve energy. Remember to switch off lights when you leave your room and selectively use air-conditioning.

4. Support local artisans when you buy any souvenirs but also be wary of buying items that might be using endangered species – always enquire about the origin and if in doubt, leave it out. Do not purchase wildlife products such as ivory and skins as this may encourage killing animals for souvenirs and endanger their survival.

5. Keep your litter until you find a suitable way to dispose of it. In some countries, garbage bins are not as common.

If you are a smoker, carefully discard cigarette stubs as many destinations are arid and catch fire quickly with disastrous effects.

6. Visit local conservation projects, to support the local environment and contribute to funding of projects.

If you're going on safari, avoid wearing bright colors. Choose muted, beige safari clothing that will blend well into the natural environment.

7. Don't ask your guide to drive off-road or get closer to wildlife than what your safari guide finds appropriate. If driving yourself, stick to roads, tracks and trails. This helps minimize damage to vegetation and disturbance of wildlife.

8. Keep a respectful distance when approaching animals in your vehicle or on foot. Do not attempt to feed or touch any wildlife.

Communities

1. Give wisely. Do not give money or other gifts to kids or beggars. As kind as your intentions may be, you will involuntarily contribute to turning the children into dependents as they will associate foreigners with providers. Instead make a donation to a local school or charity. Ask your Travel Consultant or Trip Coordinator if you would like suggestions for this.
2. Think about your required body language, which is especially important for the many non-verbal communication moments that occur during travel. For example, when you meet someone do you bow, put your palms together, touch their feet or shake hands? When you are on your trip, if you have any doubts about the cultural norms, ask us!
3. Be aware of and respect local customs and traditions. Every region has different cultural, religious and local rules. Rather than wait until your arrival, we recommend that you take a little time before you leave to research the destination you're visiting. We hope you will feel enriched by cultural exchanges during your visit and by learning more about your host community.
4. Embrace patience. When you step out of your daily routine and comfort zone it's more important than ever to have an open mind. Diverse cultures often judge time differently – whether it's being offered a cup of chai whilst picking up the clothing that you've got tailored, or sitting in a traffic jam in a bustling metropolis. Keeping your cool and accepting the differences will allow you to enjoy the moment more. It also ensures good relations between future guests and the host country.
5. Beware of “authentic cultural experiences” that entail forcing local people forced into demeaning, stereotypical roles. This is absolutely not what Enchanting Travels offers. We aim to facilitate true encounters where you can meet local people going about their day-to-day lives, with these encounters being beneficial to both you and your hosts and instilling mutual understanding and respect.
6. Many cultures encourage you to bargain over prices, especially in the marketplace. When involving yourself in this custom, remember that everyone deserves a fair wage for their labor and be careful that you don't offend a shopkeeper by being too aggressive. You can ask your local guide for advice on usual prices.
7. If you are buying high-value items, such as gold, precious gems or antiques, then ask for a list of approved shops to ensure you are getting the real – and appropriately certified – deal.
8. Go local. Visit local community projects where possible. Purchase local goods and visit local souvenir shops and purchase from these rather than city/hotel tourist shops. Be adventurous and dine in local restaurants and cafés. This helps to support the local economy rather than increasing leakage of funds back to other countries through international chains.
9. Plan for tipping within your holiday budget. If you feel that you have received good service during your stay, please tip your guide, driver and hotel staff at the end of your visit. Tipping differs from place to place, we will happily share specific recommendations and you can also ask the local management about the best way to do it to ensure that the people behind the scenes also benefit.

Never get ... Lost in Translation

- Ask your local guides about their customs – they are the best to advise you
- Take into consideration dress codes to avoid causing offence
- Think before you click! Ask before taking photographs of local people – respect their privacy
- Learn the lingo! Practice simple words or phrases from the local language to show your interest
Don't be shy! Even if you're visiting an English-speaking country and it isn't required to learn the national or native languages, learning the basic greetings and common phrases will always bring a smile to the faces of the people you meet and can be fantastic ice-breakers. A pocket translation dictionary is always helpful.
- Maintain respect for local people, avoiding high-handed foreigner attitudes
- Avoid being over-amorous in public

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Do we walk the talk and live up to our responsible travel policy? We wish to hear how we can further improve: responsibletravel@enchantingtravels.com