

Sustainable Tourism Tips

General

- An understanding of the local culture and environment will be appreciated by the local people and will help enrich your holiday experience. It is useful therefore to read about the geography, religion, history, traditions, politics and local customs of the destination.
- Learning a few words of the local language is always well received.
- Litter is a problem in many countries where there is limited or no infrastructure for waste disposal or recycling facilities. Litter should always be disposed of responsibly.
- Reduce waste by using biodegradable products and minimising the packaging that is taken on holiday. Batteries are one of the most damaging products to leave behind.
- Respect local culture and observe dress codes if you visit religious sites. Not dressing according to local custom can cause offence and attract unwanted attention.
- Standards of acceptable behaviour vary greatly from place to place, and any local differences should be observed - our local agents will advise you of these. People of developing countries are often easily shocked by 'Western' behaviour, for example, displays of intimacy are often not considered suitable in public.
- Putting money back into the local community by spending in the local economy is encouraged. Buying souvenirs from the local market will do this and it will also help to preserve traditional lifestyles. Eating in local restaurants also helps put money back into the local community. Additionally, it will ease pollution from air freighting food around the world, one of the most significant contributors to climate change.
- Ensure that the souvenirs you buy are not endangered species, as this contributes to the degradation of the natural environment and may be illegal.
- Haggling is very much a way of life in many countries, but a fair price should be paid.
- Tipping can form the basis of a local economy and it should be recognised that some people rely solely on tips.
- Be sensitive to limited resources such as water, electricity and fuel. These will almost certainly be at a premium in developing countries.
- Depending on your destination, you may be confronted by extremes of wealth and poverty. In some countries, beggars are a fact of life - some are genuine, others try to cash in on tourists. Giving money or gifts is an individual choice and our agents can offer advice in this matter. In many cases, we would recommend supporting a charity that works in the local area as this is often a better long-term solution. Full details of charities we recommend can be viewed on our website.
- Taking photos of local people can cause offence so permission should be asked if you wish to do this. In some cases people may ask for money in return for a photo and, in some cases, this may be their main source of income.
- Avoid touching ancient monuments to minimise erosion and damage. Rules against flash photography in sites should be observed as the bright light can cause damage to frescoes etc. Rare items should not be moved from their surroundings.
- It should be recognised that it can be difficult for local people to understand the difference between making goods and services available to tourists and constantly hassling them.
- If you would like to take gifts for local children, gifts such as school materials instead of sweets are recommended.
- Avoid encouraging local people to exhibit or parade animals, e.g. dancing bears.

Wildlife

- Help preserve local wildlife and habitats by observing rules and regulations, such as sticking to footpaths, and not buying products made from endangered plants or animals.
- Maintain a suitable distance from wildlife; avoid crowding animals.
- In game parks noise should be kept to a minimum so as not to disturb the animals or any other game watchers.
- Animals should not be touched, fed or disturbed in any way.
- Driving off track has a detrimental effect on the environment and drivers should not be encouraged to drive off track to get closer to animals.

Air Travel

- Air travel has a detrimental effect on the environment and while it is not practical to stop flying, there are positive things passengers can do to offset the impact.

For further information and advice on more than 200 countries around the world, as well as travellers tips and checklists, please visit www.fco.gov.uk/travel

If you have any environmental or social concerns while you are on holiday, please do pass these on to Cox & Kings on your return. Your experience and feedback is an integral part of Cox & Kings evolving its sustainable tourism policy in the years ahead.