

The  
World's  
First

2025 Edition

Tourism behavior guideline  
for a sustainable future.

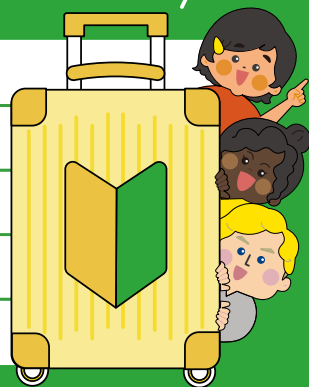
# Touristship Action Guide

Published  
by

General Incorporated Association TOURISTSHIP

Unlock the world of  
responsible tourism

Section A	Travel Basics
Section B	Socioeconomic Sustainability
Section C	Cultural Sustainability
Section D	Environmental Sustainability
Section E	Civic Support

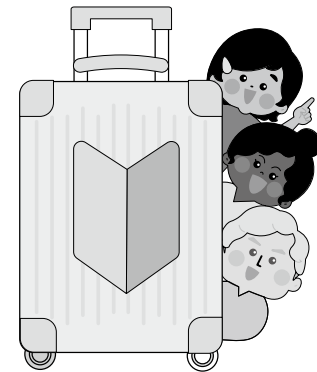




2025 Edition

Tourism behavior guideline  
for a sustainable future.

# Touristship Action Guide



Published by General Incorporated Association TOURISTSHIP



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## Prologue

### To keep the world a worthwhile place to travel

**Touristship is the mindset and behavior of local people and visitors in a travel destination, and involves being considerate, making positive contributions, and enjoying meaningful interactions.** Since 2021, the General Incorporated Association TOURISTSHIP has been promoting this concept with the goal of turning “Touristship” into a commonly used term globally.

Travel is an adventure into new environments. Along the way, we may make mistakes or unintentionally cause trouble. Still, for travel to continue being accepted by society and for us to enjoy it into the future, travelers must take responsibility for their actions—that is the essence of Touristship.

This guide introduces specific actions that embody Touristship. If you are new to the idea, some of the content may feel a bit formal at first, but Touristship is not about limiting your freedom as a traveler—it **is about expanding what is possible in your travel experiences.**

We hope to encourage you to apply at least one action from this guide. By doing so, you will not only help to protect the places you visit, but also enrich your own journey and the future of travel itself.

With care, from the team at TOURISTSHIP  
(General Incorporated Association)

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## About this action guide

Overtourism has become a serious issue in many parts of the world. **Overtourism refers to the negative impact caused by excessive tourism on the quality of life of local residents, the condition of tourist destinations, and the quality of experience for the tourists themselves.**

In today's world, where many destinations suffer from extremely high tourist numbers, the actions of each tourist have a growing influence on local town development and community well-being. The mindset expected of tourists today goes beyond simply "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Depending on tourist behavior, a destination can become a better place—or not.

We coined the term "Touristship" to inspire tourists to be more aware of their own actions and to make compassionate, thoughtful choices toward the places they visit. **This Action Guide was created to help tourists realize: "There is so much we can do."**

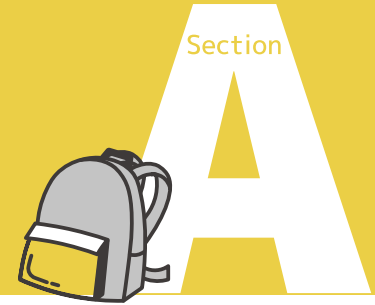
The guide is structured, based on the internationally recognized principles of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). For each overarching principle, we suggest specific research-based actions which derive from or are inspired by news sources, publications, key indicators, our organization's surveys, and numerous interviews.

We hope that this guide transforms the way you travel—and helps shape a richer, more respectful future for tourism.

## About updates and revisions

If you have suggestions like "I think this example should be included," or "Wouldn't this topic be relevant?," we would love to hear from you. This guide is reviewed and updated regularly. Your input will be considered in line with its core purpose. Let's work together to further enhance this Action Guide.

# Travel Essentials



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**In this chapter, we focus on the mindset of “taking responsibility for yourself” while traveling.**

**We will cover the importance of managing your health during your trip, being prepared for emergencies such as natural disasters, and the basic manners every tourist should keep in mind.**

---

01

**Bring medications and hygiene supplies to prevent illness caused by unfamiliar climate or food**



If you take regular medication or need prescriptions, it is best to bring them with you from your home country. In case you need to obtain medicine abroad, carrying a copy of your prescription translated into the local language will help you communicate more smoothly with medical professionals.

Be cautious—some shops that look like pharmacies may actually sell illegal substances. Even common cold medicines may contain different ingredients than you are used to, which could lead to unexpected side effects. Additionally, **certain ingredients that are legal in your country may be considered illegal in others.** For example, codeine, often found in cold medicine, is banned in Greece. Before you travel, check official sources such as your country's Ministry of Health or the destination's embassy to confirm whether the medications you plan to bring are allowed.

It is also helpful to pack basic hygiene items like adhesive bandages and disinfectants—they can come in handy during your trip. **If you are visiting a hot-climate destination, do not forget to prepare against heatstroke and insect bites.** To prevent mosquito-borne illnesses like dengue fever or malaria, be sure to use insect repellent. Some repellents sold locally may contain ingredients that are more effective against regional insects, so purchasing one after you arrive can be a good option.

**Watch out for food- and water-related health issues as well.** Tap water quality varies by country, and even if plumbing systems are well-developed, the water might not be safe to drink. Contaminated water on fresh fruits, salads, cooking oil, or even in fruits and nuts can cause stomach problems depending on hygiene and your individual sensitivity. If you have food allergies, it is important to research local ingredients and seasonings in advance.

To fully enjoy your trip, be prepared to maintain your usual health routines and also plan for unexpected situations. A little preparation goes a long way in keeping you safe, healthy, and ready to enjoy your journey.

02

**Do not forget travel insurance and vaccinations – medical costs abroad can be extremely high**



If you become ill or injured abroad and do not have insurance, you may be required to pay the full medical bill out of pocket—which can be extremely expensive. In some cases, people have even gone bankrupt due to unexpected medical costs while traveling. Medical expenses vary widely by country and region. For example, in California, a hospital visit can cost around \$4,000.

In particular, alpine climbing and visiting snow-covered mountains often require specialized insurance. Be sure to check your policy before your trip to confirm whether your planned activities are covered. Knowing this in advance can save you from unexpected expenses and ensures you are fully supported in case of an emergency.

On the other hand, the issue of travelers returning home without paying their medical bills is becoming increasingly serious in many countries. According to the Japanese government, the total amount of unpaid medical expenses by foreign patients exceeded 100 million yen per month. If this situation continues, **it could place a financial burden on hospitals, and there is a growing concern that more medical institutions may begin limiting the acceptance of international patients.** To prevent such outcomes, it is essential that travelers purchase adequate insurance and pay their medical expenses properly.

Additionally, **the risk of infectious diseases differs by destination.** While regions such as East Asia, the U.S., and Eastern Europe generally have lower risks, countries in South Asia and parts of Africa may pose a risk for diseases like hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and rabies. Be sure to check which vaccinations are recommended or required for your destination in advance.



### 03 Plan a relaxed and flexible itinerary

Travel offers a special break from daily life. While it can be a joyful and exciting experience, differences in culture, language, and unfamiliar environments can unknowingly wear you out. That is why **it is important to create a travel schedule that allows for a comfortable pace, without rushing or overloading your days.** When your body feels at ease, your mind does too. With more breathing room in your itinerary, you can take the time to fully soak in the atmosphere, connect with people, and enjoy your surroundings more deeply. A relaxed pace not only helps you enjoy the trip yourself, **but also allows you to be more thoughtful and kind towards the people you meet and the places you encounter.**

If you are traveling abroad for the first time, starting with a nearby country could be a great idea. Destinations closer to home often have fewer cultural and linguistic differences, and shorter travel times, making the experience easier. Once you gain confidence, try venturing farther—it may lead to exciting new encounters and discoveries you never imagined.

#### 04 For your safety, check local security and risks in advance

Before traveling, it is essential to check for specific risks of your destination—such as natural disasters, terrorism, public health issues, and local crime—using safety and travel advisories issued by official government sources. In some regions, poor security conditions can increase the risk of exposure to criminal or terrorist incidents. When choosing accommodation options, look up reviews and pay attention to the surrounding area's safety. Ideally, stay in a location that is well-connected by public transportation, has plenty of foot traffic, and is well-lit even at night. Nighttime is can be especially high-risk for crimes targeting tourists, so if you are unsure about local safety, it is best to avoid going out after dark.

To prepare for unexpected situations, be sure to **share your itinerary and contact details with a trusted family member or friend before departure**. This can make it easier for local authorities to respond quickly in an emergency, and may help ensure a smoother resolution.

## 05 Protect your valuables

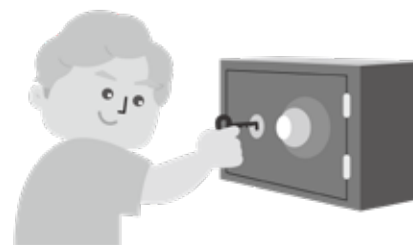
**Your passport and credit cards are essential for identification and payments while traveling.** It is best to keep those and other important documents with you at all times. When staying at a hotel, consider using a safe or security box to store such documents and valuables securely.

If you store credit card information on your smartphone, be sure to set a lock screen in case your phone is lost or stolen. Taking this simple step can help protect your financial and personal information.

To prepare for the possibility of losing your passport, make a photocopy and keep it separate from the original. Having a copy can make the replacement process at your country's embassy or consulate much smoother. Still, keep in mind that reissuing a passport may take time.

When staying at a hotel, check that your room locks properly, and avoid leaving valuables in plain sight, such as on a table. Also, do not carry large amounts of cash or flashy valuables in public. Once you have caught the attention of pickpockets, your risk increases. Some pickpocket groups work in teams, with one person distracting you by bumping into you, another starting a conversation, and another doing the actual stealing. Sometimes, even children may be used to lower your guard.

To enjoy a safe and pleasant trip, stay just a little alert to the fact that, as a tourist, you may be seen as a target. **Awareness and precaution can go a long way in avoiding serious trouble.**



**In case of natural disasters:  
stay safe, be flexible, and prepare**



To prepare for emergencies like earthquakes or floods while traveling, **download offline translation and map apps on your smartphone in advance.** These can help you navigate and communicate even if mobile service is unavailable.

Knowing what kinds of natural disasters could occur in your destination—and being familiar with the relevant information sources and apps—can help you to stay safe and make appropriate decisions.

If an evacuation order is issued, be aware that **local residents are usually prioritized in shelters**. If it is possible for you to return home safely, make arrangements to do so as soon as possible.

## Learn how to help others in need



Even when done with good intentions, touching someone or their belongings without permission can be surprising or uncomfortable. Always respect the other person's feelings and offer support only as needed and welcomed.

An AED is a device that delivers a controlled electric shock to restart a heart that has suddenly stopped. These devices are widely available in airports, train stations, shopping centers, and universities around the world. Most AEDs provide voice instructions, so even first-time users can follow the steps calmly.

CPR involves chest compressions and rescue breathing to help circulate blood and provide oxygen in a life-threatening situation. Before your trip, consider watching instructional videos or checking medical guidelines to learn the basics—it could help save a life.

During your journey, there may be times when you receive help from others. That is why, when the chance arises to help someone else, **be the kind of tourist who has the knowledge and courage to step in and offer support.**

## 08 Be cautious with alcohol and illegal substances



**While traveling, it is easy to get caught up in the excitement of a new environment and sense of freedom.** This can sometimes lead to drinking more than usual or letting your guard down in other ways. However, alcohol impairs judgment and can lead to impulsive behavior, so it is important to enjoy it responsibly. Getting carried away under the influence can result in serious trouble—or even violations of the law. Wherever you are, stay aware of your limits and keep control of your actions.

In some countries, substances that are illegal in your home country may be legal locally. For example, marijuana is permitted in certain regions. Even if it is legal at your destination, **it still carries risks such as dependency and health impediment.** Use of such substances should be approached with caution and self-awareness.

One key danger to watch out for is accidentally bringing illegal substances back home. Carrying drugs or substances that are banned in your country—even if purchased legally abroad—can lead to legal consequences. To stay safe, check not only the laws of the destination country but also your home country's import and customs rules before you travel.

Travel often lifts your spirits and creates moments of joy—but especially in those moments, **it is essential to stay grounded and act with moderation regarding the use of alcohol and/or (il)legal substances.**

## 09

**Be quiet, clean, and respectful  
— so you do not disturb the local community**



In quiet areas such as residential neighborhoods, always be mindful of your surroundings. **Avoid loud communication or disruptive behavior, especially early in the morning and late at night.** If you are staying at an accommodation near private homes, try to avoid checking in late at night. If late-night check-in is unavoidable, consider staying near the airport or train station for the night. Traveling at night not only makes it easier to get lost, but the noise of rolling suitcases can disturb residents and may disrupt the peace of the neighborhood.

In some countries, quiet hours are even protected by law. For example, in Germany, “Ruhezeit” (quiet time) prohibits loud noise between 10 PM and 6 AM.

When it comes to **smoking**, always follow the local rules and smoke only in designated areas. In countries like Singapore, smoking outside of permitted zones can result in heavy fines.

Avoid activities that damage the appearance or cleanliness of public spaces, such as **littering or graffiti**. In Australia, such actions can also lead to penalties.

While walking in the destination or visiting tourist sites, be careful not to block foot traffic. **Avoid sitting on the ground or stopping in the middle of pathways where others may be inconvenienced.**

When **taking photos** or videos, stay aware of your surroundings. Do not enter private property without permission, even for a quick photo—that is considered disrespectful and may even be illegal.

Be mindful when using **camera drones** as well. For example, drones are banned at Heian Shrine in Japan. Always check local regulations before flying a drone, and get proper permits if needed.

These small, respectful actions help build trust with the local community and lead to more meaningful travel experiences. As a tourist, always show appreciation for the places you visit by acting with care and consideration.

## 10 Be mindful of waste disposal



When it comes to the waste you generate while traveling, it is important to tread carefully, follow local rules and consider the environmental impact. **Depending on the country or region, waste management systems may vary, and some places require detailed sorting due to differences in incineration methods or recycling infrastructure.** Always follow the local guidelines.

When buying items like plastic bottles or cans, try to choose ones that are easy to recycle. For example, in Germany, the Pfand system allows you to return single-use containers, such as drink bottles or cans, at recycling machines in exchange for a small refund. Many other countries have their own unique recycling systems. Therefore it is helpful to research the waste disposal rules before you travel. (For waste reduction tips, see section P.74 D-e\_61)

If you no longer need large items like a broken suitcase or unused clothing, do not leave them behind at airports or hotels. First, check whether there are options for donation or recycling. If disposal is unavoidable, follow local procedures to do so properly.

To support more sustainable behavior, keep in mind the concept of the 3Rs:

- **Reduce:** Buy only what you need and avoid generating unnecessary waste.  
e.g., only order what you can finish; carry only what you will use.
- **Reuse:** Use items that can be used repeatedly.  
e.g., bring a reusable bag or water bottle.
- **Recycle:** Sort waste correctly so it can be reused as a resource.  
e.g., follow local sorting and recycling rules.

Being thoughtful about waste helps protect the environment for both local communities and future travelers.

## 11

## Share responsibly — be accurate and considerate when posting

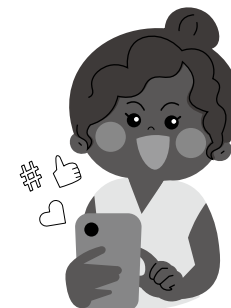


Sharing your travel experiences on social media is one way to express the joy of your journey. However, **it is important to think carefully about how the information you share might impact others—both nearby and far away.**

In recent years, overtourism has become a serious issue around the world. For example, a viral post featuring Bibury, a picturesque village in the UK, drew a surge of visitors that disrupted the quiet daily life of residents. In other cases, a small, locally loved shop went viral online, leading to crowds of tourists and making it harder for locals to access the business they rely on. This is why, especially **when sharing about small shops or locally rooted places, it is important to consider whether the owners or staff are comfortable with being promoted.** When in doubt, ask—or choose not to post.

Also, avoid sharing misleading or inaccurate information. False claims, exaggerated captions, or out-of-context photos can cause confusion, inconvenience, or even harm to both locals and fellow tourists. Make sure your posts are accurate, respectful, and thoughtful.

When you share the charm of a destination, do not forget the people and lives that make that place special. Kind and mindful sharing helps create a better travel experience—for everyone who comes after you.



12 Check before you carry  
— some foods and plants are prohibited



When traveling internationally, **it is important to check the import rules of your destination before bringing in any food or plants.** Regulations vary by country, and violating them could result in fines, confiscation, or even legal penalties.

**Animal products, especially those containing meat or eggs, require particular caution.** Many countries strictly restrict the import of raw meat (such as beef, pork, or chicken), as well as processed items like ham, sausages, bacon, jerky, and even eggs. These rules are in place to prevent the spread of animal-borne diseases like avian flu or foot-and-mouth disease.

Similarly, plants such as fruits, vegetables, seeds, seedlings, tubers, cut flowers, wood, grains, beans, and spices may be subject to plant quarantine regulations. These rules aim to protect local agriculture and ecosystems from invasive pests or pathogens.

Some local specialty items may also be banned in other countries. For example, coca tea, which is legal and sold in Peru, contains ingredients considered illegal in countries like Japan and is prohibited from being brought in.

Attempting to bring restricted items into the destination, whether knowingly or unknowingly, could be considered a criminal offense and may have severe consequences. To avoid issues, **check the official website of your destination's embassy or customs authority before your trip to get the latest information on banned or restricted imports.**

Respecting these rules ensures a smoother, stress-free journey—and helps protect the environments and communities you visit.

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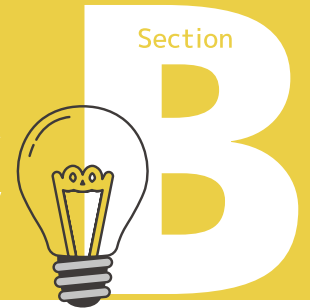
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# Socioeconomic Sustainability



**In this chapter, we introduce thoughtful behaviors that help protect everyday life at travel destinations and contribute to local communities. These include mindful ways of getting around, shopping, handling crowded peak travel times, respecting children's rights, and offering support during disasters.**

### 13 Know the local etiquette when using public transportation

**When using public transportation, it is important to understand the rules and customs of the country or region you are visiting,** and to behave in a way that respects the local culture. For example, in Japan, eating and drinking on trains is generally discouraged from a manners perspective, but not strictly prohibited. Quietly having a snack or drinking water is usually acceptable.

In contrast, in countries like China and Singapore, eating and drinking on trains is legally prohibited, and violators may face fines. Given that these rules can vary significantly by destination, it is essential to check in advance.

Even sleeping on public transport can be an issue. In Dubai, sleeping on the metro is not allowed, and penalties apply. Regardless of location, falling asleep in public places may also increase the risk of theft, so always stay alert when in transit.

Cultural norms around conversation differ as well. While silence is the norm on trains in Japan, in many other countries it is common for passengers to chat with family or friends. Try to adapt your behavior to the local atmosphere.

Other rules—such as whether phones or sound-producing devices can be used, or how to manage large luggage—also vary by country. Furthermore, it is considered good manners to let passengers off before boarding and to avoid blocking aisles or doorways with bulky bags.

With the mindset of “When in Rome, do as the Romans do,” practicing local transportation etiquette can help you have a smoother, more pleasant journey—and leave a positive impression on those around you.

## 14 Know the local rules when driving or cycling abroad

If you are planning to rent a car or bicycle while traveling, it is essential to be familiar with local traffic laws and to act with care for the environment. Traffic customs such as which side of the road to drive on, how signs are displayed, and rules for parking or bike storage vary widely from country to country. **Always check the local rules and etiquette before getting behind the wheel or on the road.** While basic signal meanings (red = stop, green = go, yellow = caution) are mostly universal, smaller details may differ.

Before you go, also check whether your destination has vehicle-restricted zones. For example, in Venice, Italy, cars are not allowed in the historic city center, so driving there is not an option at all. In countries like Germany and France, street parking may be permitted in designated areas, but parking in restricted zones can lead to fines or your vehicle being towed. To avoid problems, always park cars or bicycles in designated areas.

Rented bicycles must also be used safely. In Japan, as of November 2024, using a smartphone while cycling is subject to penalties. Other punishable actions include ignoring traffic lights, riding on sidewalks, and cycling side-by-side in groups. Be considerate and ride in a way that respects others and keeps public spaces safe.

When using taxis or ride-sharing services, stay alert. **In some countries, unlicensed taxis are illegal but still operate frequently.** For instance, in the Netherlands, ride-sharing services without a government license are strictly prohibited. In contrast, in some developing countries, informal ride-sharing is tolerated, though it may come with higher risks or unclear legal protections.

To travel safely and comfortably, choose reliable and legal services. If you are unsure, check with local transportation authorities, your accommodation, or official tourism centers to get the most up-to-date information.

By respecting local rules and prioritizing safety, you can enjoy your trip with greater peace of mind.



By researching ahead and staying safety-conscious, you can enjoy your ride with greater peace of mind—and without disturbing the people around you.



By engaging with locally made goods and the stories behind them, tourists not only help preserve cultural traditions but also contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive economy. **Even a small, thoughtful purchase can become a meaningful act that brightens the future of the places we visit.**

## 17



The same goes for online reviews. Platforms that require user verification or where multiple reviews share consistent experiences tend to be more reliable. In contrast, sites that allow anonymous posts may include biased or false information. **Approach all reviews with a critical eye and a calm mindset, and avoid taking every comment at face value.**

(A quick guide to globally recognized standards)

- Travelife

Headquartered in the Netherlands, Travelife is an international certification for tour operators and travel agencies. It evaluates companies on sustainability performance across various indicators.

- Blue Flag

Managed by the international NGO FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education), the Blue Flag program certifies beaches, marinas, and tourism boats that meet strict environmental and safety standards.

- Green Key

Also operated by FEE, Green Key is an international certification for accommodation providers that meet high standards in environmental management, staff training, and local engagement.

These certifications are awarded only to organizations that meet comprehensive criteria, including environmental protection, community support, and fair labor practices. From a sustainability perspective, choosing businesses with these trusted labels is highly recommended.

## Manage crowds thoughtfully

## 18



To make your travels more comfortable and meaningful, **consider avoiding peak seasons and reserving attractions ahead of time whenever possible.**

Traveling outside of high season helps reduce stress from overcrowding and allows you to enjoy a more personal and relaxed experience. **It also eases the pressure on local infrastructure, making life easier for residents.**

**In recent years, many destinations have introduced mandatory reservation systems as part of their efforts to combat overtourism.** For example, in places like Kyoto (Japan), Granada (Spain), and Rome (Italy), some tourist sites now require advance booking. At the Alhambra Palace in Granada, for instance, walk-in entry is not allowed—you must book in advance. This makes it essential to check official websites ahead of your trip and make reservations early.

Advance booking gives travelers the peace of mind that they will be able to enter, and allows for smoother planning throughout the day. It also benefits the facilities themselves, helping them manage visitor numbers and maintain service quality.

By avoiding peak crowds and taking advantage of reservation systems, you can enjoy your journey more fully—while helping create a more sustainable tourism environment for all.

**19** Be considerate during crowded times: travel light, wait in line, and share space



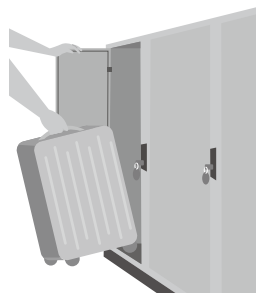
In crowded places like public transportation and tourist sites, large luggage or multiple bags can easily inconvenience others—and can also become a burden for the traveler. To move around more comfortably and respectfully, try to travel light. Also consider using coin lockers or arranging a luggage delivery service.

For example, on Eurail trains in Europe, luggage size and quantity are limited to ensure a pleasant ride for all. In Japan, the concept of “hands-free travel” is promoted, with easy-to-use baggage delivery services available to help reduce crowding.

In narrow spaces or crowded walkways, walk with care and follow the natural flow of people. When stopping, make sure you are not blocking others. If there is a queue, never cut in—waiting your turn is a basic rule of etiquette.

When visiting places that are likely to be crowded, prepare in advance: **allow extra time, use the restroom ahead of time, and bring drinks or snacks to stay comfortable.** If you are in an area where locals live, try to prioritize their needs and minimize the pressure placed on the local community.

In busy situations, every small act of kindness matters. Thoughtful behavior, like sharing space, following rules, and showing patience, helps create a more comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.



**20** Protect children's safety and well-being



One of the darker sides of tourism is the issue of sexual exploitation of children. In response to this, the travel and tourism industry has developed an international framework known as “**The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism**”, often simply called “The Code.” This global initiative encourages tourism businesses—such as hotels, travel agencies, and transport providers—to establish systems and practices that prevent child exploitation.

In some regions, such as Thailand, Cambodia, and India, so-called “sex tourism” that exploits children has become a serious social problem. These acts are not only violations of local laws, but are also considered criminal offenses under international law, meaning perpetrators may be prosecuted even after returning to their home countries. The consequences for children are severe, including loss of education and long-term physical and emotional trauma.

As a traveler, you can help protect children by choosing accommodations and tour operators that are members of The Code. Many companies around the world are committed to this cause and have implemented meaningful preventive measures.

**Unauthorised photography of children near schools and kindergartens in tourist areas is another concern.** While local children may seem charming, always ask a parent or guardian before taking photos, as many worry about safety, online sharing, and other potential issues.

Tourism should be a way to celebrate culture and connect people—never a means of harm. That is why we, as tourists, must act with awareness and responsibility, keeping in mind the future of the communities we visit and the rights and dignity of every child.

## 21 Visiting orphanages and care facilities requires caution

In recent years, the act of visiting orphanages or care facilities is increasingly marketed to tourists as “volunteer experience” or “heartwarming exchange”. At first glance, such visits may appear to be acts of goodwill. **However, recently there is growing concern that even well-intentioned actions may unintentionally cause serious negative impacts on the local children.**

For example, in Cambodia, the number of orphanages increased by more than 60% between 2005 and 2015, despite a decline in poverty levels during that period. One possible reason is the demand from foreign tourists in areas like Phnom Penh and Siem Reap who wish to visit orphanages. This has been referred to as “orphanage tourism.” Some reports suggest that in order to attract donations or volunteer fees, facilities may intentionally appear underfunded or even separate children from their families unnecessarily.

Furthermore, repeated short-term visits or brief volunteer activities can cause psychological stress or instability for the children. This issue has not only been raised in British media, but also by international NGOs, showing growing global concern.

On the other hand, this does not mean that all visits or volunteer activities are wrong. It is important to understand local needs, respect the rights of children, and build long-term relationships based on trust with local staff. In fact, for some travelers, such experiences have inspired them to later engage in international cooperation or educational support.

**What is most important is to ask yourself: “Who is this visit for?” and “How might this action affect the local children?”** Choose support methods with care and deep thought. Such questions also apply beyond this issue—to all travel that involves visiting places connected to global and social issues. Travelers should be aware of their own position, and when visiting such places, carry the mindset of being a supporter, not just a tourist.

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## 22 Don't give money directly to children begging on the streets

In developing countries and conflict-affected regions, you may encounter children begging on the streets. It is natural to want to help when you see someone in need, but it is important to understand that even well-intentioned actions can sometimes contribute to systems of exploitation.

In Cambodia, for example, some impoverished families send their children to beg near the Vietnamese border. In parts of the Middle East, including Iraq, many children have lost their homes and families due to war and now live on the streets, surviving through begging.

**More troubling is the recent emergence of “rental child” schemes,** a form of child exploitation where adults temporarily rent children to elicit sympathy from tourists. In Jamaica, for instance, a woman was prosecuted for child abuse after using rented children—having paid 1,500 to 2,500 Jamaican dollars per child (approx. ¥1,300–2,200)—to beg on the streets. **In most cases, the money collected does not go to the children, but rather to the adults or organizations behind them.** This deprives the children of opportunities for education, safety, and independence.

Because of this, many experts and organizations advise against giving money directly to children who are begging, even if it is done with good intentions. Instead, consider alternative ways to help - **such as offering to buy food or essential items directly, supporting reputable local charities working to improve children's welfare, or research and support local NGOs that assist street children and similar vulnerable groups.**

Your actions as a tourist can influence a child's future. Let your goodwill truly benefit them by understanding the deeper issues involved, and responding with both compassion and care.

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### 23 Support disaster-affected destinations through your actions

What if a natural disaster struck a town or region that once moved your heart during a trip? That is the moment when your memories and care as a tourist can transform into meaningful support. Turning empathy into action is key to making a real difference for affected communities.

There are many ways to help beyond simply donating money or supplies. **One effective approach is volunteer tourism, where travelers visit affected areas and take part in recovery efforts.** This not only supports reconstruction but also stimulates the local economy through use of accommodations, restaurants, and transportation.

If you are unable to visit in person, **you can also contribute by purchasing local products from the disaster-hit region.** After the 2012 earthquake in northern Italy, for example, many cheese storage facilities were damaged. In response, producers sold their cheese as “earthquake recovery products,” and received overwhelming support from consumers. This helped restore both economic stability and community pride. Buying such items online or staying informed can sustain long-term recovery efforts.

Other examples include tourists helping revive local economies after the Mount Merapi eruption in Indonesia, the tsunami in Phuket, Thailand, and the 2023 earthquake in Turkey, where travelers volunteered in reconstruction efforts that locals alone could not manage.

Supporting a destination does not only mean showing up in the immediate aftermath. Continuing to care, even after the headlines fade, is a quiet but powerful form of kindness that we, as travelers, can offer.

24

### When visiting disaster-affected areas, go prepared and be respectful

Volunteering in disaster-affected areas can be a powerful way to support recovery and rebuilding efforts. For those with the time, physical strength, and willingness, it is a deeply meaningful act of solidarity.

However, no matter how sincere your intentions may be, **a lack of preparation or understanding of the local context can unintentionally burden the very communities you hope to help.** That is why sensitivity and thorough planning are essential before setting out.

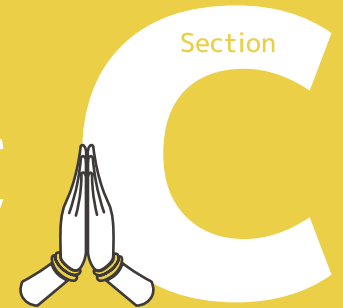
Each disaster-affected region has different needs and levels of readiness to accept volunteers. Be sure to check trusted sources—such as local volunteer coordination centers or official municipal websites—for the latest information. Avoid calling overwhelmed local governments directly. Instead, go through official volunteer registration systems, and always attend the required pre-orientation sessions.

**To avoid consuming limited local resources, bring all necessary supplies for yourself where appropriate,** including food, water, bedding, and clothing. Arrange your own transportation and accommodation in advance. This “self-sufficient approach” ensures that you do not place extra strain on a community still in recovery. Also, make sure to enroll in volunteer insurance to prepare for potential injuries or accidents during your stay. Carry identification and any necessary documentation with you.

In countries like the U.S., U.K., and Australia, there are dedicated insurance systems in place for volunteer tourism. Similar services are now emerging in Japan and other parts of Asia, gradually creating safer environments for those who want to help.

After completing your disaster volunteer activities, be sure to share your thoughts and observations with the local volunteer staff and organizers. In affected areas, there are often various challenges, such as conflicts among evacuees, hygiene issues, and the risk of secondary disasters. Your awareness and insights can lead to swift improvements in addressing these problems.

# Cultural Sustainability



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**In this chapter, we explore how to show respect for local culture, religion, history, and customs. We introduce mindful manners when using facilities, ways to appreciate traditional culture, how to engage respectfully with local people, and attitudes and actions that help you gain a deeper understanding of the places you visit.**

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25

**Check local customs: clothing, dining etiquette, and hand gestures**



What may seem normal in your home country can be seen as impolite or even offensive elsewhere. Understanding and adapting to local norms can help ensure respectful and enriching interactions.

For example, at the Blue Mosque in Turkey, all visitors are expected to remove their shoes and to cover their shoulders and knees. Women are also asked to cover their hair with a scarf, which can often be purchased locally at a low cost. Similarly, at temples in Thailand, revealing clothing, such as shorts or tank tops, is considered inappropriate. Some temples provide rental garments, but it is best to arrive in respectful attire. In Thai temple grounds, even casual physical contact like holding hands or putting arms around each other may be considered disrespectful.

**Dining etiquette** differs greatly by country as well. In Germany, it is common to signal staff using eye contact rather than raising a hand. In France, it is perfectly acceptable to place bread directly on the table rather than on your plate. In Mexico, tacos are traditionally eaten with the hands, whereas in Chile, using a knife and fork for all foods—even finger foods—is expected. In China, flipping over a fish after eating one side is considered bad luck, and should be avoided.

**Hand gestures** can also carry very different meanings. The common Japanese hand-wave for “come here” can mean “go away” in the U.S.. The “OK” sign is considered offensive in Brazil, Spain, and France, and showing an open palm can be seen as rude in Greece, parts of Africa, and Pakistan.

Being mindful of these small cultural details helps build trust and respect with local people—and can lead to a much richer and more meaningful travel experience.

26

**Understand and respect local toilet and bathing etiquette**



Facilities such as toilets, baths, and hot springs may have different rules and customs depending on the country or region. Being aware of these differences helps ensure a comfortable experience—for you and for others.

For example, in China, some areas lack advanced plumbing systems. In many public toilets, you are thus expected to throw used toilet paper into the bin next to the toilet, rather than flushing it. Flushing paper may clog the system and inconvenience the next user.

By contrast, in Taiwan, the government has promoted flushing toilet paper since 2017 due to improved infrastructure. Still, not all regions follow the same practices, so always check signs inside restrooms to see what is appropriate.

In Japanese hot springs, there are rules regarding mixed-gender bathing with children. Typically, children aged 7 and up are not allowed to bathe with a parent of the opposite sex, and most facilities follow this rule. In Hungary, children under 8 are not permitted to use saunas without a guardian.

**Showers, baths, and pools may also have age-related guidelines.** For instance, at a facility in London, children under 8 must use the changing rooms with a parent or guardian when visiting the pool.

Cultural expectations around bathing vary widely. In Finland, it is common to enter saunas without swimwear, though wrapping yourself in a towel is acceptable if you prefer modesty. Meanwhile, in Hungary, wearing a swimsuit is mandatory in public baths. Behavioral norms in public spaces and beaches also vary. In Spain and France, some beaches are designated as nudist-only, mixed, or clothing-required, and each has its own rules—always check posted signs before entering.

These rules are often listed on the facility’s official website, so it is a good idea to check in advance.

A

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Cultural Sustainability

D

E

## 27 Try learning and using the local language



In regions where English is not the official language, starting a conversation in English may come as a surprise to local residents. But even a simple greeting in the local language—such as “Hello” or “Thank you”—can go a long way in creating a sense of connection and warmth.

**Making an effort to speak the local language shows respect for the people and culture of the destination.** It often opens the door to deeper mutual understanding and more meaningful exchanges. Even when an interpreter is present, it is courteous to look at and address the local person directly, rather than only speaking to the interpreter.

In some regions, such as remote islands in Okinawa, Japan, local languages are at risk of disappearing due to globalization and other social changes. When travelers make an effort to use such endangered languages, even only a few words, **it helps preserve the language and the culture it represents.**

Learning a new language also benefits the traveler. According to research from Japan, studying foreign languages helps keep the brain flexible and improves your ability to understand different perspectives.

A warm, memorable encounter often begins with just one word. Start your conversations with curiosity—and a little bit of local language.

## 28 Experience local culture and history with respect



Architecture, history, performing arts, music, language, and culinary traditions—these are all expressions of a destination’s unique identity. By approaching such cultural elements with respect and curiosity, and taking time to engage with them firsthand, you can enrich your journey in lasting and meaningful ways.

Whether you join a guided tour or read signage and instructions carefully, it is important to follow local customs and guidelines while participating in cultural activities. For example, in Jeonju Hanok Village in South Korea, you can experience authentic Korean culture by staying in a hanok (traditional house), making hanji (traditional paper), or wearing a hanbok (traditional dress). These experiences offer a peaceful, immersive alternative to urban tourism, and are increasingly popular with international visitors. They also provide new income streams and recognition for local artisans and cultural practitioners.

Another powerful form of cultural tourism is Indigenous tourism. In Sabah, Malaysia, the Mari Mari Cultural Village introduces visitors to the traditions of local communities such as the Kadazan-Dusun and Bajau peoples. Through hands-on activities like fire-starting, blowpipe use, traditional handicrafts, and dance, guests gain a deeper understanding of Indigenous lifestyles and histories. With local guides explaining the cultural background behind each activity, it becomes much more than just a fun attraction—it becomes a meaningful learning experience. **For the communities involved, such tourism helps preserve cultural heritage while supporting sustainable livelihoods.**

These kinds of experiences exist all over the world. When planning your travels, consider including cultural immersion experiences in your itinerary. By engaging with local culture respectfully and embracing different ways of life, you help build a more thoughtful and connected world—one travel experience at a time.

29 Check entry and photo rules before visiting 

One of the joys of traveling is experiencing beautiful landscapes and historic landmarks. But in the excitement of the moment, whether it is to take a perfect photo or capture a memory, **it is essential to respect rules and never enter restricted areas.**

For example, at the famous Trevi Fountain in Rome, featured in the film Roman Holiday, some tourists have repeatedly jumped into the water, despite clear prohibitions. According to the Rome police, around a dozen people are arrested each year under Italy's Cultural Heritage Protection Law. Such actions show a lack of respect for historical sites and can result in fines or legal penalties.

**Cultural institutions like museums, galleries, and religious sites also have specific rules.** At the Louvre Museum in France, flash photography and selfie sticks are prohibited. Even in outdoor areas like gardens, stepping on the grass or touching sculptures is not allowed. Picking flowers or climbing statues is also strictly forbidden. In the Vatican Museums, photography for personal use is generally permitted, but flash, tripods, and other equipment are banned to protect the artwork and maintain a respectful environment for all visitors.

At India's Taj Mahal, some areas allow close viewing of the structure, but touching the marble walls or decorations is prohibited. Even light contact, repeated by thousands of visitors over time, can cause irreversible damage to cultural heritage.

**Thinking "just this once" or "just me" may seem harmless, but such behavior can lead to restrictions or closures of historical sites in the future.** To help preserve these places for generations to come, always follow local rules and observe proper visitor etiquette.

30 Take part in local traditions 

**Participating in local cultural or religious events can be one of the most memorable and meaningful parts of a journey.** For example, Oktoberfest in Germany is world-famous as the largest beer festival, but it also includes traditional costume parades. With prior registration via the official website, even tourists can join as volunteers and become part of the celebration.

On Bali Island in Indonesia, the Ogoh-Ogoh Festival has gradually opened to tourists in recent years. Held on the eve of Nyepi (Balinese New Year), this vibrant parade of large demon statues is a sacred ritual meant to ward off evil spirits. If you wish to participate, it is best to arrange your experience through a local travel agency that works closely with the community, ensuring your involvement is respectful and welcomed.

For travelers, experiencing the local way of life, beliefs, and traditions from the same perspective as the community is not only a valuable opportunity, but also a meaningful way to show respect. **When done respectfully, participating in traditional events can help revitalize local culture and support the next generation of tradition bearers.** Be sure to learn about local customs to join in actively, if appropriate.

### 31 Check whether eating and drinking is allowed in religious or cultural sites

**Rules about food and drink in cultural and religious spaces are often in place to protect cleanliness, preserve cultural heritage, and show respect for the significance of the location.**

For example, at the Taj Mahal in India, eating, drinking, and smoking are strictly prohibited within the grounds. These rules help protect this historic monument from litter, odors, and potential damage, especially given the large number of visitors.

In Vatican Museums, food and drink are not allowed inside the exhibition areas. This protects the artwork and ensures a respectful atmosphere for all visitors. However, there are designated spaces such as food courts and vending machine areas where refreshments can be enjoyed. Note that alcoholic beverages are not permitted inside the museum; if brought, they must be left at the entrance and retrieved the same day, or they will be discarded.

In contrast, at mosques, food may be allowed in certain areas depending on the location and occasion. However, it is essential to avoid foods with strong smells and to keep the space clean as a sign of courtesy and respect. Since policies vary by mosque, it is important to read local signs or ask staff before eating or drinking inside or nearby.

In many cultures, food etiquette is deeply tied to spiritual values and social norms. Whether food is prohibited altogether or allowed in designated spaces, being mindful of these rules ensures a more respectful and harmonious travel experience.

## 32 Avoid buying counterfeit artifacts

When purchasing souvenirs or cultural items abroad, it is important to follow local laws and ethical guidelines. **Many archaeological or historical artifacts are protected, and their sale or export is strictly restricted.** International agreements such as the UNESCO Convention and the UNIDROIT Convention prohibit the trafficking of stolen or illegally exported cultural property.

That said, there are legitimate cultural items that can be purchased through official channels. For example, in 2023, parts of the Berlin Wall were sold at auction, and in 2024, a marble “Ten Commandments” tablet was legally offered at an international auction house. These cases demonstrate that not all historical objects are off-limits, but proper verification is crucial.

Another issue to watch out for is the sale of counterfeit goods, such as fake designer bags or watches. **Purchasing these knowingly not only violates intellectual property rights, but may also support criminal networks that profit from illicit trade.** You could unknowingly become complicit in illegal activity. Counterfeit cosmetics and medicines in particular may pose serious health risks, making them especially dangerous.

Shopping during your travels is a memorable part of the experience, but it becomes even more meaningful when you consider what your purchases represent. By choosing items that are locally made, ethically sourced, and support traditional artisanship, you contribute to the preservation of culture and the well-being of the communities you visit.

Let your souvenirs be more than just keepsakes—let them be a way to honor the place and people you encountered on your journey.

### 33 Choose accommodations that preserve cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship

All around the world, travelers may have the rare opportunity to stay in historic buildings, gaining access to immersive cultural experiences that go far beyond a typical hotel stay.

In Hungary, the Matild Palace—a UNESCO World Heritage site—has been transformed into the luxurious Matild Palace Hotel, a 5-star accommodation that faithfully recreates the elegance of the Belle Époque era from over 120 years ago. Guests are transported to the grandeur of 19th-century Europe the moment they step inside.

In France, Villarceaux Château offers a similarly immersive experience. This Baroque-style estate, preserved under the strict supervision of regional cultural authorities, maintains its original structure and aesthetic. Staying here feels like stepping into the refined world of aristocratic court life.

In Japan, you will find Keiun-kan at Nishiyama Onsen, officially recognized by Guinness World Records as the world's oldest hotel. Located in the mountain village of Hayakawa, Yamanashi Prefecture—the least populated municipality in Japan—this traditional inn has been welcoming guests for over 1,300 years.

**Staying in cultural heritage properties like these is not just a special experience, but also a way to support the preservation of architecture, craftsmanship, and tradition.** By choosing accommodations that operate within historic buildings, you help keep these cultural treasures alive for future generations.

If you are looking to make your next trip more meaningful, consider booking a stay at a property that lets you “sleep within history”.

# C-c

## Connect with the local community

**34** Greet others with a smile:  
a simple “Hello” or “Thank you” goes a long way

When traveling, greeting the people you meet is one of the most important and respectful things you can do. **A simple hello is not only a sign of courtesy, but also the first step in creating a positive, welcoming atmosphere.**

As the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset once said, “A greeting is a way of saying, ‘I mean you no harm. You can feel safe with me.’” Whether you are passing someone on the street, entering a shop, or making eye contact, even a small gesture of acknowledgment can ease tension and create a moment of connection. Saying hello or thank you in the local language can make an especially strong impression and bring people closer together. (See also P.38 C-b\_27)

At the same time, **travel fatigue or excitement can unintentionally make us come across as unfriendly or impatient.** For example, when communication does not go smoothly, we might frown without realizing it, or speak to a staff member more sharply than intended when in a rush. These small behaviors, even if unintentional, can leave a negative impression on the people we meet.

Remember: every interaction shapes how locals perceive travelers as a whole. **That is why it is important to always be mindful of your words and behavior, and to show kindness and consideration—even in the smallest moments.**

### 35 Support local efforts and travel with gratitude and respect



**When you travel, consider participating in local sustainability initiatives led by communities and small businesses.** For example, in Costa Rica, the CST (Certification for Sustainable Tourism) program recognizes accommodations and tour companies that meet high standards of environmental care and cultural respect. Choosing a business with this certification means you are indirectly supporting efforts to protect nature and local communities.

Similar certification systems exist in many parts of the world, each tailored to local values and challenges. As you plan your trip, look out for these eco-labels or sustainability marks—they can guide you to more responsible travel choices.

When interacting with local people, be mindful of their daily routines and lifestyles. Some residents may welcome travelers with heartfelt hospitality. **If you experience such kindness, be mindful not to take it for granted, and consider offering a small gift, writing a thank-you note, or expressing your gratitude in another meaningful way.** These gestures show respect and appreciation, and help create mutual, lasting memories of the journey.

Travel becomes even more fulfilling when it is built on thoughtful connection, gratitude, and genuine participation in the places you visit.

**36 When you see a survey, take a moment  
— your feedback helps build better communities**



While traveling, you may be asked to fill out a survey at tourist spots, airports, or hotels. It is easy to skip when you are in a hurry, but participating in these surveys is a meaningful way to contribute to a better travel experience for future visitors.

Through surveys, **tourists can share inconveniences, observations, or suggestions, helping local tourism officials and businesses better understand what needs improvement.** For example, in North America, airport satisfaction surveys revealed that passenger congestion was a key factor affecting user experience. This insight helped airports develop more targeted solutions.

By collecting the voices of many travelers, local governments and service providers can make informed decisions that improve infrastructure, hospitality, and the overall visitor experience. Your input—even just a few words—can become part of a larger movement to make tourism more welcoming and sustainable.

So next time you see a survey form, consider taking a moment to respond. Your feedback might help bring a better smile to the next traveler's journey—and support the growth of the community you have just visited.

A cartoon illustration of a young girl with dark, wavy hair, wearing a grey t-shirt. She is holding a clipboard with a pen in her right hand, appearing to be writing or checking something. She is standing next to a large sheet of white paper with horizontal lines, which is partially visible on the right side of the page.

37 Mourn with respect and silence in places marked by loss 

While travel often brings joy and discovery, it may also take you to places marked by deep tragedy and loss—sites where many lives were lost, and where painful memories remain. In such locations, **it is essential to act with quiet respect, and when taking photographs, always check if photography is permitted while being mindful of others around you.**

For example, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum in Poland stands on the site of a former Nazi concentration camp, where countless lives were taken during World War II. Visitors are expected to refrain from wearing revealing clothing, and eating, drinking or smoking. Entering under the influence of alcohol is strictly prohibited. In some areas, even mobile phone use is restricted to preserve the solemn atmosphere. Any behavior or speech that disrespects the victims, such as attempting to justify Nazi actions, is absolutely unacceptable.

This same level of respect is required at memorials for natural disasters. For instance, the Canterbury Earthquake National Memorial in New Zealand honors those who lost their lives in the devastating earthquakes of 2010 and 2011. Visitors are encouraged to visit not only with the intention of remembrance for the victims, but also with empathy for survivors, and gratitude toward the people who contributed to recovery. Quiet reflection is the most meaningful way to honor such places.

No matter how far away the tragedy may seem, geographically or historically, visiting these sites offers a powerful opportunity to reflect on the value of life and the weight of history. As travelers, let us show compassion not only by taking memories home, but also by leaving behind a moment of silent solidarity with those who once suffered there.

38 Learn the shared history between nations 

Across the world, there are museums and memorials dedicated to remembering the painful legacies of war and conflict. These institutions serve as powerful spaces for learning, where visitors can reflect on the past to help ensure such tragedies are never repeated.

When visiting such places, it is important to approach with an open heart and a sincere attitude. **Avoid dismissing, minimizing, or denying the historical events presented. Show respect to the victims and survivors by refraining from any remarks or behavior that could be perceived as offensive, sarcastic, or disrespectful.** Regardless of your nationality or perspective, visiting with humility allows for meaningful learning and fosters understanding.

In addition to learning about conflict, **discovering moments of international friendship can also enrich your travels.** For example, Japanese travelers to Turkey may find deeper connection by learning about the Ertuğrul Frigate incident—a historical episode in which the crew of a Turkish warship shipwrecked off the coast of Wakayama, Japan, and was compassionately rescued by local villagers. This event is still remembered in Turkey today and has even been featured in school textbooks. **Learning stories like these not only deepens your appreciation for the country you are visiting, but can also serve as a bridge for conversation and connection with locals.**

By understanding the historical ties—both painful and positive—between your country and the one you are visiting, and by approaching those stories with honesty, empathy, and respect, your journey becomes more than sightseeing: it becomes a gesture of peace and mutual recognition.

Section D



**In this chapter, we introduce ways to care for and protect the natural environment in the travel destination. The focus lies on showing respect for nature and wildlife; following rules and regulations when engaging in nature activities - particularly in fragile mountain and ocean environments; and reducing overall environmental impacts.**

### 39 Explore nature with a guide or a nature interpreter

When exploring nature during your travels, one of the best ways to gain a deeper understanding of the local environment is to learn from trained guides and nature interpreters. These experts do more than simply explain facts—they help you connect with the natural world by revealing its stories, rhythms, and hidden meanings. A nature interpreter, in particular, acts as a bridge between people and nature, encouraging a sense of wonder, awareness, and care through direct experiences.

In North America, the role of nature interpreters is widely recognized as a professional field. In Canada, they work in zoos, museums, parks, and protected areas, often leading programs for schools and the general public. Their work helps people of all ages appreciate the value of the natural world in engaging and accessible ways.

In nature-rich destinations like the Galápagos Islands, traveling with a certified guide is mandatory to protect the environment and ensure safety. This is because natural ecosystems are delicate, and even small, unintended actions can disrupt them. **When visiting areas that are home to diverse wildlife, it's best to explore with a guide or nature interpreter—even in places where it is not required.** It's also important to check local guidance and rules in advance.

## 40 Check access and food policies – respect nature and culture

**In protected natural areas, it is equally important to read signs and rules displayed at entrances or visitor centers.** These provide essential information about how to behave safely and responsibly in that specific ecosystem. For example, at Togakushi Shrine in Nagano, Japan, social media exposure has led to a surge in visitors—some of whom risk their safety by entering avalanche-prone areas just to get a better photo.

In North Sentinel Island (India), a 5-kilometer exclusion zone has been established to protect the isolated Indigenous population from disease and outside intrusion. An incident involving a tourist who illegally entered the restricted zone highlighted the serious consequences of ignoring such boundaries.

Many natural areas around the world, such as Montague Island in Australia, are designated as protected zones to preserve ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and water sources. In these areas, certain places may be off-limits to visitors in order to avoid damage or allow for natural recovery. If you realize that you have entered a restricted area by mistake, it is important to leave immediately. These rules exist for good reason: to protect both people and the environment, and respecting them is essential to responsible travel.

**In some regions, rivers, waterfalls, and other natural sites are also considered culturally or spiritually significant.** For example, the Ganges River in India is believed to be a sacred river flowing down from the heavens. For many people, it plays a central role in religious rituals and is seen as a source of spiritual purification. In such places, visitors should avoid eating nearby, and behave with respect for local beliefs and customs.



## 41 Travel responsibly with pets: check the rules in advance

In recent years, more destinations have become pet-friendly, making it easier for people to travel with their beloved companions. While it is wonderful to enjoy a trip with your pet, **it is equally important to consider how their presence might affect the local environment and native wildlife.**

Many domesticated animals are non-native species in the places they visit. When introduced into natural areas, even temporarily, they can disrupt the local ecosystem—by disturbing native species, competing for food, or altering habitats. This is especially true in coastal areas, grasslands, and forests, where wild animals may become stressed or frightened simply by the presence of pets.

**Before entering a natural environment with your pet, always check the local regulations.** For example, beaches certified by the Blue Flag international program typically prohibit all pets except assistance animals to help protect sensitive coastal habitats and bird populations. In the United States, 42 out of 50 national parks enforce pet restrictions to protect both wildlife and ecosystems. These rules are part of a global effort to balance tourism with conservation.

If you plan to enjoy nature with your pet, make sure your actions are kind to both the environment and your animal companion. Following rules and practicing good manners ensures a pleasant experience for everyone—and helps protect the natural wonders we all value.

Traveling with pets can be a beautiful experience—but only when done with care, respect, and awareness of the world around you.

## 42 Minimize light pollution

**Light pollution refers to excessive or misdirected artificial light that brightens the night sky, making it difficult to see stars and disrupting natural rhythms for both humans and wildlife.** In areas known for stargazing or rich biodiversity, especially where nocturnal animals live, minimizing artificial light is critical.

Many animals, insects, and even humans rely on an internal circadian rhythm to regulate behavior. Exposure to artificial light at night can throw this rhythm off balance. When spending time in natural environments, such as in eco-lodges, rural inns, or campgrounds, it is important to use only the minimum necessary lighting, helping to preserve the natural night environment.

Designated International Dark Sky Places are regions that actively reduce light pollution to protect the beauty and ecological function of the night sky. As of October 2023, there are 211 certified areas around the world. Well-known examples include Lake Tekapo in New Zealand, County Kerry in Ireland, and Iriomote-Ishigaki National Park in Japan. These places take community-wide actions, such as shielding lights to prevent outward glare and eliminating unnecessary night lighting, to protect the dark sky environment.

These efforts symbolize a global commitment to preserving the night sky and nocturnal environment for future generations.

When visiting nature-rich destinations, be mindful of your use of light at night. A gentle approach to lighting not only enhances your own experience - for example when star viewing - it also shows respect for the ecosystems that thrive in the dark.

Streetlights



Left: Typical streetlight  
Right: Dark sky-friendly streetlight

43 Follow basic beach rules 

Swimming in the ocean is one of the great pleasures of travel, but it is essential to act with care for your safety. **Unauthorized vehicle access to beaches is often prohibited to protect people and nature.** For example, in Bournemouth, UK, accidents caused by bicycles and skateboards in beach areas led to a complete ban. **Another serious issue is human waste in the ocean,** which can significantly pollute the water and harm both marine life and people.

A U.S. study found that over half of the tested sites had bacteria levels above safety standards, putting swimmers at risk. According to the report, about 3.2% of people who swim in contaminated water for a day may develop an infection.

**Moreover, many beaches have strict regulations regarding alcohol.** For instance, Hawaii state law prohibits drinking alcohol on beaches and in nearby parks. Even being intoxicated in these public spaces is illegal and may result in fines. Additionally, swimming after drinking is extremely dangerous. According to the Japan Coast Guard, the risk of drowning doubles for those who swim under the influence of alcohol. For your safety and others', never enter the water after drinking.

The beach may seem like a place of complete freedom, but let's not forget that rules are in place to ensure everyone can enjoy it safely and comfortably.

44 Care for fragile beach environments 

**Beaches are not only for human enjoyment, they are also important habitats for wildlife.** Shorebirds nest in the sand, and sea turtles often come ashore to lay eggs. In many regions, there are designated protected zones to prevent accidental disturbance. Always check local signs and regulations. For example, in Kochi Prefecture, Japan, a special ordinance protects nesting sites of the endangered loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), and vehicles are strictly prohibited from entering designated areas.

**Fire use is another key concern.** Open flames and beach bonfires are often restricted due to safety and environmental reasons. In many areas, such as South Carolina, USA, beach fires are banned unless part of a permitted event. Direct fires can also stain white sand black, impacting the scenic value of the area. Always follow local fire regulations and avoid setting fires directly on the beach.

When enjoying coastal environments, a little awareness goes a long way. By respecting local rules and natural spaces, you help ensure that beaches remain safe, beautiful, and thriving—for wildlife and for future visitors alike.

45 Use reef-friendly sunscreen and swim with care for marine life



When enjoying activities like swimming or snorkeling in the ocean, it is important to consider how your actions may impact marine ecosystems. **One often-overlooked issue is the effect of sunscreen chemicals on ocean health.** It is estimated that 14,000 tons of sunscreen enter the world's oceans each year, and ingredients such as oxybenzone and octinoxate have been shown to cause coral bleaching—a stress response in which corals expel the algae that live within them, losing their color and vital energy source.

In Belize, for example, a 2 km<sup>2</sup> section of the Barrier Reef Reserve experienced coral bleaching in 2019 partly due to sunscreen use by tourists. In response, Belize introduced a sustainable tourism certification system. Other places have enacted even stronger measures: Palau banned harmful sunscreens in 2020, and Hawaii followed in 2021. **As a result, many countries now promote or sell “reef-safe” sunscreen**—look for these labels when purchasing sun protection products.

When swimming near coral reefs, **avoid touching the seafloor, kneeling, or kicking coral with your fins.** Coral is extremely delicate, and even a small impact can take years to heal. Always aim to float above the reef without contact, and never touch or disturb marine animals.

**Some marine creatures, such as stonefish, Portuguese man o' war, or blue-ringed octopuses, can be dangerous.** In many coastal areas, being informed about local marine wildlife helps you protect both yourself and the environment.

Small acts of awareness, like choosing reef-safe sunscreen or swimming responsibly, are the first steps toward enjoying the ocean in a safe and environmentally respectful way.

46 Make sure swimming is permitted and wear a life jacket



Water-related accidents continue to occur around the world. Before entering the water, always check if swimming is officially allowed. In countries like Japan, most beaches prohibit swimming before the official opening of the season, known as “Umi-biraki”. This designation is only given once water temperature, quality, and safety conditions have been thoroughly inspected.

Additionally, in many cases, **the lack of proper life jacket use has been a major factor contributing to injury or death.** A study conducted in Japan found that among people who accidentally fell into the ocean, the survival rate was 89% for those wearing life jackets, compared to just 48% for those who were not. This shows how a single piece of safety equipment can mean the difference between life and death.

The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) requires that all vessels carry life jackets for everyone on board and that they can be worn properly in case of emergency.

**Tips for Proper Life Jacket Use:**

- Tighten all straps and buckles snugly against your body
- Always fasten the crotch strap to prevent the jacket slipping off in the water

Before you begin any water activity, take just a few minutes to check that your life jacket fits properly and is correctly secured. It is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect your life.

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47 **Cover up when leaving the beach  
— respect local norms in residential areas**



Wearing a swimsuit at a beach resort can feel refreshing and liberating. **However, when leaving the beach and entering residential or public areas, it is important to cover up appropriately.** In many places, walking around in swimwear outside the beach is considered disrespectful or even illegal.

For example, in Naples, Italy, a regulation was introduced in 2022 banning people from walking around streets in swimwear near the Bay of Naples. In France, some municipalities prohibit public exposure such as shirtless or swimwear-only attire in town centers. Likewise, Barcelona, Spain, enforced a city ordinance in 2022 targeting beachgoers who walk through the city center without proper clothing. Violations can result in fines of up to €300, even if done unintentionally.

Even in resort areas, it is essential to adjust your behavior depending on the setting. **Before heading to the beach, bring a light cover-up or shirt so you can quickly dress appropriately when moving through public or residential spaces.**

Showing respect for local customs and the daily lives of residents not only helps avoid trouble but also contributes to a more meaningful and harmonious travel experience.

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48 **Choose the right path and avoid bringing in soil or plants to protect ecosystems**



When hiking through mountains, forests, or grasslands, it is important to not only enjoy the beauty of nature, but also to be mindful of how our footsteps can impact the environment. **Stepping off trails or walking on fragile soil can damage root systems, cause erosion, and disrupt the natural recovery of the land.** In addition, trekking poles (hiking sticks) are useful for stability and support, but their pointed tips can damage wooden walkways, fragile plants, and soil. To prevent this, rubber pole caps should be used—especially in sensitive areas like wetlands or wooden boardwalks. In Japan's Oze National Park, for instance, hikers are required to use rubber tips on their poles to preserve the integrity of the wooden trails and protect delicate ecosystems.

Always stay on designated trails or durable surfaces such as rocks, gravel, or dry grass. Avoid walking through areas with vulnerable vegetation or damp soil, even if it looks like a shortcut.

Also, be aware that soil and seeds stuck to your shoes, clothing, or equipment may carry invasive species from one region to another, even unintentionally. These foreign species can threaten local plants and wildlife by outcompeting them or altering their habitat. In some sensitive areas, such as Japan's Ogasawara Islands, hikers are asked to use sticky rollers or mats to clean their gear before entering trails.

To preserve the health of natural environments, do not bring in potted plants, flowers, or soil from other places. **Even a tiny insect or seed hidden inside could have a large impact over time.**

By choosing the right path and being careful not to introduce anything foreign, you can help ensure that ecosystems stay balanced and thriving for generations to come.

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## 49 Be mindful not to disturb insect habitats when exploring nature

Finding insects in the wild can be an exciting part of outdoor adventures. Observing them up close or photographing them offers a unique way to connect with local biodiversity. **However, insect collecting, if done carelessly, can unintentionally harm both individual species and the ecosystems they belong to.**

In the UK, the Joint Committee for the Conservation of Invertebrates encourages people to avoid over-collecting, even if the insects are not officially protected. This is because some species may be rare, declining, or only found in specific areas, making them vulnerable even if they seem abundant at first glance.

One key concern is the destruction of insect habitats during collection. For example, tree hollows—formed when bark peels or the trunk decays—provide shelter for light-sensitive or nocturnal insects. Forcibly opening or breaking these hollows can destroy essential homes for many species.

Likewise, rotting logs and stumps (known as coarse woody debris) serve as critical winter shelters or hiding spots from predators. **Cracking open these logs in search of insects can displace or harm the creatures that depend on them.**

Instead of collecting, focus on watching, learning, and appreciating the creatures you encounter. Nature is filled with incredible stories—sometimes, the best way to connect with them is by observing gently and leaving no trace.

## 50 Avoid picking plants, and treat bird nests and culturally significant flora with care

Collecting plants in the wild may seem harmless, but it can have serious consequences for ecosystems, especially in protected areas. For example, the Cape Floral Region at the southern tip of Africa is home to a remarkable variety of plant life, with over 70% of species found nowhere else on Earth. In such places, it is essential to refrain from collecting or disturbing any plants, even small ones, in order to preserve their unique biodiversity.

It is also important to consider the animals that rely on plants for shelter and reproduction. Birds, for instance, often build nests in tree branches or dense shrubs. Approaching or touching these areas unknowingly can frighten the parent birds away or expose their young to danger. Across the world, conservation organizations work to protect wild bird nests and even install artificial nesting boxes to support breeding efforts.

In addition, some plants have deep cultural or spiritual significance. In Japan, for example, cherry blossoms are a cherished symbols of beauty and renewal. People gather for hanami (flower viewing), a long-standing tradition. Climbing cherry trees or shaking their branches to make petals fall is considered disrespectful and inappropriate.

In nature, there is life that cannot be seen at first glance. **That is why the best approach is often to look without touching, to observe quietly, and to pass by gently.** Such respectful behavior allows wildlife and culture to thrive—while offering travelers a deeper, more mindful connection to the places they visit.

## 51 Be well-prepared for the mountains: submit your climbing plan and bring a portable toilet

Hiking in the mountains is a rewarding way to enjoy breathtaking scenery and fresh air, but it also means entering a unique and potentially hazardous environment. **Proper preparation and cautious behavior are essential.**

Before setting out, first check if the mountain is officially open for climbing. Attempting to hike during the off-season can increase the risk of accidents, as emergency response services may not be available. No matter how short your route, always submit a climbing plan to local authorities or through online systems if available. In New Zealand, for example, there is an online form that hikers can share with friends or family to aid in quick response in case of emergencies.

**Mountain weather can change quickly, and temperatures at the summit can be drastically lower than at the base.** On Japan's Mount Fuji, for instance, summer temperatures near the summit can drop to single digits (Celsius). There have been cases where hikers with inadequate clothing had to seek emergency shelter due to the cold. That is why it is crucial to wear proper clothing, including layers, waterproof gear, and warm jackets, and to carry other essentials, such as a map, compass, flashlight, and first-aid kit.

**High-altitude environments also put strain on your body.** Rapid ascents—often called “bullet climbing”—can lead to altitude sickness, as your body does not have enough time to adjust to the reduced oxygen levels. Instead, take your time, pace yourself, and prioritize gradual elevation gain.

In addition to safety, respecting the natural environment is vital. Use designated campsites or mountain huts when staying overnight. Avoid camping in unauthorized areas or relieving yourself in nature without proper facilities. In absence of facilities, carry a portable toilet, and make sure to bring waste back down or dispose of it at approved sites. On Mount Everest, improper human waste disposal has caused serious contamination of rivers that feed local water systems. Astonishingly, it is estimated that there are around three tonnes of human excrement between the camp at the base and the one near the summit.

## 52 Before backcountry skiing, check avalanche risks and prepare thoroughly

Backcountry skiing offers the freedom to explore untouched snow beyond groomed slopes—but with that freedom comes serious risk. Avalanches, falls, and getting lost are real dangers in natural, unmanaged environments. **Enjoying the experience safely requires thorough preparation, up-to-date information, and personal responsibility.**

Certain snow conditions and terrain features can significantly affect avalanche risk. Before heading out, check local avalanche forecasts and evaluate whether your skills and gear match the environment. For example, in areas like Whistler and Revelstoke (Canada) or Zermatt (Switzerland)—where deep snow and steep terrain are common—public institutions like Avalanche Canada and SLF (Swiss Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research) provide real-time risk levels, often on a 5-point scale. Be sure to consult these resources on the day of your trip.

Keep in mind that accidents not only endanger you, but can also put pressure on local search and rescue teams, often composed of volunteers. Acting responsibly protects not just yourself, but the community around you.

To further minimize risk:

- Never go alone—travel with others and share your plans.
- Carry appropriate equipment, including an avalanche beacon, probe, and shovel.
- Know how to use your gear before venturing out.
- Consider hiring a local guide, especially if you are unfamiliar with the area.

Backcountry skiing is an incredible way to connect with nature, but nature demands respect. With proper planning, awareness, and humility, you can enjoy the backcountry safely and sustainably.

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## Respecting animals



### The Five Freedoms are:

- These freedoms aim to ensure animals live in environments where they feel secure and respected.

This framework goes beyond simply avoiding suffering. It encourages creating conditions where animals can thrive and experience positive states of being.

These principles are closely linked to tourism and community development. For example, in rural Guatemala, donations from tourists are used to support working horses and donkeys. Local organizations dispatch veterinary teams to provide free check-ups, vaccinations, nutritional care, and hoof maintenance. This addresses several of the Five Freedoms, such as freedom from hunger, illness, and discomfort.

**55** **Observe wildlife quietly and at a distance – never feed them**

Encountering wild animals in their natural habitats is often one of the most moving and memorable parts of travel. But to protect these moments, and the animals themselves, it is essential to engage with them responsibly.

**Always maintain a respectful distance from wildlife**, and avoid any actions that might startle or stress them. Animals are especially sensitive during mating, nesting, and child-rearing periods; even approaching them can cause serious disruption.

**Feeding wild animals is strongly discouraged.** While it may seem kind, offering food can alter their behavior, make them dependent on humans, and disrupt the ecosystem. For example, in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, officials have urged locals and tourists not to feed wild foxes. Such behavior has led to foxes losing their natural wariness of people, resulting in increased human-animal conflicts and even euthanasia in some cases.

There are, however, exceptions when feeding is part of a carefully managed conservation effort. In Norway, climate change has reduced the availability of natural food sources for Arctic foxes. In response, a national recovery program has been in place since 2006. Over 470 foxes have been bred in captivity, and more than 30 feeding stations have been set up in Hardangervidda National Park to support their survival.

In general, the best way to care for wild animals is to let them stay wild. Do not feed them because you feel sorry—respect them because you want them to remain as they are in nature. Quiet observation from a distance is one of the most compassionate choices a traveler can make.

**56 Interacting with large animals:  
Choose only certified or government-sanctioned facilities**

Experiences involving large animals, such as riding elephants or taking selfies with tigers, remain popular tourist attractions in many parts of the world. **However, such activities are increasingly being criticized for their negative impacts on animal welfare, with many countries now introducing regulations or outright bans.** If you are considering participating in such an experience, be cautious and selective. Look for facilities certified by credible programs such as the Asian Captive Elephant Standards (ACES), or visit government-approved sanctuaries and educational centers that prioritize animal care.

In Thailand, for example, a training method known as Phajaan has raised significant concern. This cruel practice is used to break an elephant's spirit, often involving separating baby elephants from their mothers, confining them in small cages, chaining their limbs, and stabbing them with sharp hooks in sensitive areas until they submit to human control. These elephants are then forced to perform tricks or carry tourists.

Another heartbreaking case involves a tiger named Firmin in Spain, who was repeatedly exposed to camera flashes during tourist photo sessions. The repeated exposure led to severe eye damage, ultimately resulting in blindness and surgical removal of both eyes. In response to such cases, China's Sichuan forestry authorities have issued a ban on close-up photos and feeding of pandas for commercial purposes.

To combat these harmful practices, some organizations and companies have stepped up. Booking.com, for example, has implemented animal welfare standards and now removes listings for facilities that violate those standards. The German animal protection organization Four Paws has also issued a public statement that “selfies with sensitive and emotionally complex wild animals violate their comfort zones” and urges tourists to reconsider such actions.

As travelers, our choices have the power to support or undermine animal welfare. By choosing ethical alternatives, we help promote a form of tourism that is both sustainable and compassionate.

57 In large animal habitats, check for wildlife alerts and know how to respond



When spending time in areas where large wild animals live, **the most important rules for safety—for both people and animals—are: avoid encounters, do not approach, and never engage unnecessarily.**

Before hiking or exploring in such regions, always check for recent wildlife sightings or alerts. Simple precautions like using a bear bell or speaking softly while walking can help alert animals to your presence and reduce the chance of surprise encounters.

In areas inhabited by bears such as Hokkaido or the Japanese Alps, travelers should follow basic rules like never feeding wildlife and taking all garbage back. In Shiretoko, Japan, tourists feeding bears caused them to associate people with food. Eventually, some bears began appearing near roads and parking lots, becoming a danger to both people and themselves. As a result, authorities were forced to euthanize those animals to protect human lives.

A similar case occurred in Chobe National Park, Botswana, where in 2018, tourists approached elephants too closely. This led to a serious incident in which a safari vehicle was attacked by a herd, highlighting the risks of disregarding distance and respect.

Rather than fearing large wild animals, we should aim to understand and respect them. With knowledge, preparation, and reverence, travelers can enjoy the richness of wildlife while preserving the safety and dignity of all beings involved.



58

Say no to souvenirs made from endangered species – choose ethically sourced alternatives



**One of the most powerful actions we can take is to refuse purchasing products made from endangered species or protected natural resources.**

For example, in the Pacific island nation of Palau, a unique initiative called the Palau Pledge was introduced in 2017. Upon entry, all travelers must sign a declaration promising to protect the country's natural environment. This includes a ban on purchasing souvenirs made from endangered species. Thanks to this effort, the illegal sale of shark-based products has dropped by 72%, clearly demonstrating the impact that travelers' choices can have on conservation.

Ivory products are another common example. Despite their appeal as decorative items or jewelry, these products come at the cost of elephant lives—an endangered species. Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the commercial trade of ivory is largely prohibited. However, legal loopholes or illicit markets may still exist in some countries. Travelers should avoid buying ivory altogether, even if it appears to be legally sold.

When faced with a beautiful souvenir, pause and ask: Where did this come from? If it is made from an endangered animal or plant, consider saying no. Your choice not to purchase could help preserve biodiversity and support ethical tourism.

Ultimately, sustainable tourism is not just about where we go—it is about how we behave when we get there. **Choosing not to buy is sometimes the most powerful act of respect we can offer to nature and future generations.**

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59 Respecting culturally significant animals: know before you go



Many animals you may encounter while traveling are not just part of the natural landscape—they are deeply woven into the culture, history, and religious beliefs of the region. Understanding this context is essential to showing respect both to the animals and the communities that value them.

For example, the deer in Nara Park, Japan are regarded as messengers of the gods. These animals have been protected for centuries and are now designated as a national natural treasure under Japanese law. During the Edo period, harming a deer was considered a capital offense. While feeding wild animals is generally discouraged, Nara allows a unique exception: visitors are permitted to feed deer only with special “shika senbei” (deer crackers) sold at the park—reflecting a tradition of coexistence between humans and deer.

Similarly, in India, cows hold sacred status in Hinduism. It is common to see cows freely walking along roads and through markets, where drivers and pedestrians respectfully give them the right of way. This is not simply a matter of traffic management—it is an act of religious reverence. Tourists should avoid approaching or touching cows, and if taking photos, do so quietly and respectfully from a distance.

These examples illustrate how interactions with animals vary greatly depending on local cultural and religious values. As travelers, it is essential to learn the context and observe any regional rules or customs regarding animals. **Showing respect to animals is also a way of honoring the people and heritage of the places we visit.**



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60 Choose eco-friendly transportation to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions



When traveling, choosing low-carbon transportation methods is one of the most effective ways to reduce environmental impact. Walking, biking, electric scooters, public transport, and other eco-friendly transport options help minimize CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during your journey.

It is also becoming more common for travelers to offset their carbon footprint through “carbon offset” programs. Some travel platforms, particularly those selling flights, now offer easy carbon offset options at the time of booking.

While carbon offset programs can make a positive difference, poor quality control and misleading claims are frequent criticisms of such programs. As such, it is best to avoid or minimize high-emission transportation options in the first place, as far as possible.

When choosing a travel destination, consider places that offer sustainable transportation systems, such as electric buses or trams. Many local governments and tourism organizations now publish information on their environmental initiatives, so it is worth doing a bit of research before your trip.

In areas with abundant natural beauty, fragile ecosystems are often close at hand, and greater care for the environment is needed. For instance, In Zermatt, Switzerland, cars are banned from the town center to protect the iconic Matterhorn’s scenery from air pollution caused by exhaust fumes.

In addition, in the Andes region of Peru, a locally operated walking tour provides two options: a walking route and a bus route. The walking option is set as the default, and 85% of travelers choose it—naturally promoting eco-conscious behavior. In Austria’s Wilder Kaiser region, accommodations provide a “carbon footprint visibility sheet” and it has helped increase environmental awareness and even improve guest return rates.

These examples show that tourism providers around the world are working behind the scenes to support sustainability.

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## 61 Make waste-free choices



Caring for the environment begins with small decisions. One such step is to check local information about drinking water before you travel. **Where tap water is safe to drink, using a reusable bottle can help to significantly reduce single-use plastic waste such as PET bottles.** However, since water quality standards vary by country, always prioritize hygiene and safety.

In addition, many countries—including the U.S., EU nations, and China—are tightening regulations on plastic products. Some accommodations no longer provide amenities like single-use toothbrushes or razors, so it is a good idea **to bring your own reusable items such as toothbrushes, chopsticks, and spoons.** These items are especially helpful if you are planning to eat in your hotel room during a longer stay.

**Bringing your own shampoo or conditioner is another effective way to reduce waste.** Choose eco-labeled or non-toxic products to further minimize your environmental impact.

When shopping, opt for reusable containers, minimal packaging, or package-free options. Using your own eco-bag also helps reduce disposable packaging.

In addition, it is important to be conscious of reducing food waste wherever possible. For example, if you are not likely to be hungry, consider opting out of an in-flight meal ahead of time. If you plan to eat something right away, choosing items with a shorter shelf life helps prevent unsold products from going to waste. On the other hand, when buying souvenirs to bring home, be sure to check that the expiration date allows enough time for safe consumption after your return.

In many countries, opening a product before purchasing it is considered poor etiquette and may lead to misunderstandings. If you open a package without permission, you may be asked to purchase it regardless of your intent. If you really need to check the contents, always ask a store staff member for permission first.

These small habits add up, contributing to meaningful environmental preservation.

## 62 Conserve water and electricity during your stay

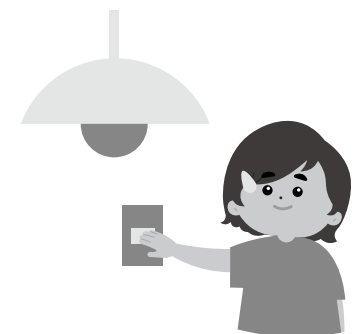


While staying at a hotel, **you can help reduce water and energy consumption by opting out of daily towel changes, bed-making, and room cleaning unless necessary.** Studies show that washing 10 kg of laundry can use over 50 liters of water and 1.2 kWh of electricity, generating about 1 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per load depending on the detergent. One hotel reported a 17% reduction in laundry volume after encouraging guests to reuse linens.

Being mindful of personal water usage is also important. Turning off the tap while brushing your teeth or shortening your shower by just one minute can save approximately 12 liters of water. In fact, data shows that guests use more than 2.5 times their usual water consumption while staying in hotels. To reduce usage, some hotels even lower shower water pressure as a conservation measure.

You can also reduce electricity use by setting air conditioning or heating to moderate levels and ensuring windows are closed while in use. Adjusting the temperature by just 1°C can reduce energy consumption by about 10%. Don't forget to turn off lights and appliances when leaving your room. In rooms with power controlled by a key card, simply removing the card when you go out has helped hotels cut electricity use by up to 30%.

Small choices by each traveler can go a long way in protecting essential resources like water and electricity. Let us do our part to preserve the resources of the places we visit.



# Civic Support



Section

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**At times, we are travelers ourselves, but we are also residents who support travel culture. In this chapter, we introduce ways to warmly welcome visitors and contribute to community-based tourism development.**

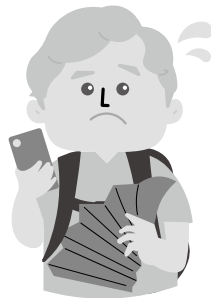
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### 63 Travelers may seem tense — respond with understanding



When welcoming travelers into your community, it is important to remember the stress they may be under. Being in an unfamiliar place, dealing with tight schedules, navigating unknown streets, or simply feeling tired can leave **visitors short on patience or unintentionally abrupt in their behavior.**

Of course, this does not mean all behavior should be excused. But recognizing the reasons behind a traveler's attitude—whether it is nervousness, fatigue, or disorientation—can foster a more compassionate and thoughtful response. **A little empathy and imagination can go a long way in building a warmer connection between locals and visitors.** When both sides make the effort to understand one another, travel becomes more meaningful, and everyday life in the community becomes even more rewarding.



### 64

### Understand that travelers may have reasons behind their food choices



For many travelers, food is one of the highlights of a trip, but it can also be a source of stress or uncertainty. **Unfamiliar ingredients, dietary restrictions, and religious or health-related considerations may all influence what a traveler chooses to eat.** For example, Muslims follow halal dietary laws, which include specific guidelines on how animals are slaughtered and which ingredients are permissible. Some Christian denominations observe fasting periods or avoid certain foods, making religious beliefs a key factor in meal selection.

In addition, **price differences between countries and travelers' economic capacity can strongly influence travelers' choices.** In higher-cost destinations, visitors may limit their spending by bringing food from home or relying on affordable chain restaurants. Long-term travelers or students, in particular, may prioritize low-cost dining options to stay within their budget.

Moreover, food can serve as a source of comfort amid cultural unfamiliarity. When people feel homesick or overwhelmed by a foreign environment, they often seek familiar tastes. It is not uncommon for travelers to prefer restaurants serving food from their home country, especially during longer stays.

By recognizing these possible reasons behind a traveler's dining choices, hosts can avoid misunderstandings and build more respectful, inclusive relationships. **Rather than judging unfamiliar behavior, consider that it may stem from personal, cultural, or practical needs—this awareness helps create a more welcoming and thoughtful travel experience for everyone.**



## 65 If someone needs help, lend a hand



Have you ever been saved by a local's kindness when you were lost or anxious during your travels? For many travelers, being helped by someone at their destination leaves a deep impression, shaping their trust in and satisfaction with the place.

In Melbourne, Australia, for example, local volunteers proactively offer guidance to visitors, and the feeling of "someone is looking out for me" has become a key factor in the city's positive reputation.

**As former travelers ourselves, when we are in the position of hosting visitors in our own community, simply offering directions or kindly explaining local etiquette can be a small yet powerful way to support sustainable tourism.**

Of course, this does not mean we have to accept all forms of bad behavior. However, if we take a moment to consider why someone may be acting a certain way and communicate with empathy, we may help them notice and change their behavior.

Offering the same hospitality we once received is a simple, meaningful way anyone can contribute to making travel a lasting and enriching experience for all.

## 66

## Proactively share information and create systems for responsible tourism



When travelers act without knowing the local culture or rules, they may unintentionally cause harm to the community or environment. To prevent such misunderstandings, many places around the world are taking proactive steps to educate visitors and establish clear guidelines.

For example, in the U.S. state of Hawaii, inappropriate behavior at sacred sites like volcanoes and ancient temples led local authorities to introduce educational programs for tourists. These programs emphasize the importance of respecting sacred places, including areas where photography is prohibited or where shoes must be worn. In Paris, France, excessive photography in art museums has raised concerns about potential damage to artworks, prompting some institutions to limit or prohibit photography. Clear guidance is provided at entry to help visitors understand and follow the rules.

In Vancouver, Canada, feeding wild animals has become an issue as it alters their natural behaviors. The city launched a public awareness campaign to discourage this practice and protect wildlife integrity.

**When local communities take the lead in preparing environments and communicating expectations, travelers are more likely to understand and act responsibly.** Through active involvement and clear messaging, communities can help visitors recognize what matters and encourage respectful, sustainable travel behavior.

**67 Value each traveler's memories and engage with care and respect**



As more tourists visit popular destinations, the way local residents interact with them can begin to change. While the first travelers may be welcomed with smiles and enthusiasm, repeated problems such as poor manners, littering, or noise can wear down the community's goodwill, leading to feelings of frustration or fatigue, like "Not again..." or "We've had enough."

When such situations persist, **the emotional connection to each individual traveler may weaken.** Locals might respond with less care, or react too harshly to mistakes that happen frequently. However, for the traveler, that moment is part of a once-in-a-lifetime journey. The people they meet and the conversations they have become lasting memories.

**That is why, even during busy or tiring times, taking a moment to interact with each traveler sincerely and respectfully is so important.** These small acts of kindness help build a positive impression of the destination, encouraging visitors to return and recommend it to others.

Consistent, thoughtful hospitality not only enriches the visitor experience, it also strengthens the identity and appeal of the community as a welcoming and memorable travel destination.

## 68 Get involved in community-based tourism development



When people hear the word “tourism,” they often imagine bustling towns filled with visitors, economic growth, and a vibrant local atmosphere. Indeed, tourism can bring positive impacts—economically, culturally, and environmentally. For example, in El Salvador, 40% of tourism revenue from a sea turtle sanctuary is used to support local healthcare services. In Sri Lanka, proceeds from a tourism-driven soccer tournament are directed toward managing wildlife reserves. In Nagasaki, Japan, local residents lead city walking tours for travelers, helping to share the cultural significance of the city’s heritage sites.

However, tourism is not always positive. In Dubrovnik, Croatia, a surge in tourism following its appearance in a popular TV series led to serious issues with noise and waste, causing some residents to move away. In India's Jim Corbett National Park, rising visitor numbers have led to traffic congestion, creating tension between tourism and daily life for residents. On Boracay Island in the Philippines, overdevelopment caused severe environmental degradation, prompting the government to close the island for six months in 2018. During this time, the community reassessed its relationship with tourism and worked toward environmental recovery.

**As these examples show, tourism has the power to transform a community—sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. Whether tourism enriches a place or becomes a burden depends on how the local people engage with it. When communities take an active role in shaping tourism, it can become a true source of value, pride, and sustainability.**

## Checklist

### Section A Travel Basic

#### a. Take care of your health

- ☐ 01. Bring medications and hygiene supplies to prevent illness caused by unfamiliar climate or food
- ☐ 02. Do not forget travel insurance and vaccinations
  - medical costs abroad can be extremely high

#### b. Be prepared in case of emergencies

- ☐ 03. Plan a relaxed and flexible itinerary
- ☐ 04. For your safety, check local security and risks in advance
- ☐ 05. Protect your valuables
- ☐ 06. In case of natural disasters: stay safe, be flexible, and prepare
- ☐ 07. Learn how to help others in need

#### c. Have fun—but know your limits

- ☐ 08. Be cautious with alcohol and illegal substances
- ☐ 09. Be quiet, clean, and respectful
  - so you do not disturb the local community
- ☐ 10. Be mindful of waste disposal
- ☐ 11. Share responsibly — be accurate and considerate when posting
- ☐ 12. Check before you carry — some foods and plants are prohibited

### Section B Socioeconomic Sustainability

#### a. Move responsibly, the local way

- ☐ 13. Know the local etiquette when using public transportation
- ☐ 14. Know the local rules when driving or cycling abroad
- ☐ 15. Use segways and e-scooters responsibly

#### b. Shop with purpose

- ☐ 16. Buy local, support regional producers and traditional craftsmanship
- ☐ 17. Choose certification labels wisely
  - look for credibility and transparency

#### c. Manage crowds thoughtfully

- ☐ 18. Avoid peak times and book in advance if possible
- ☐ 19. Be considerate during crowded times: travel light, wait in line, and share space

#### d. Respect and protect children's rights

- ☐ 20. Protect children's safety and well-being
- ☐ 21. Visiting orphanages and care facilities requires caution
- ☐ 22. Don't give money directly to children begging on the streets

#### e. Join disaster relief volunteer efforts

- ☐ 23. Support disaster-affected destinations through your actions
- ☐ 24. When visiting disaster-affected areas, go prepared and be respectful

## Checklist

### Section C Cultural Sustainability

#### a. Learn and respect local cultural, religious, and facility norms

- ☐ 25. Check local customs: clothing, dining etiquette, and hand gestures
- ☐ 26. Understand and respect local toilet and bathing etiquette

#### b. Help preserve local culture

- ☐ 27. Try learning and using the local language
- ☐ 28. Experience local culture and history with respect
- ☐ 29. Check entry and photo rules before visiting
- ☐ 30. Take part in local traditions
- ☐ 31. Check whether eating and drinking is allowed in religious or cultural sites
- ☐ 32. Avoid buying counterfeit artifacts
- ☐ 33. Choose accommodations that preserve cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship

#### c. Connect with the local community

- ☐ 34. Greet others with a smile: a simple “Hello” or “Thank you” goes a long way
- ☐ 35. Support local efforts and travel with gratitude and respect
- ☐ 36. When you see a survey, take a moment  
—your feedback helps build better communities

#### d. Learn about local history

- ☐ 37. Mourn with respect and silence in places marked by loss
- ☐ 38. Learn the shared history between nations

### Section D Environmental Sustainability

#### a. Protect the natural environment

- ☐ 39. Explore nature with a guide or a nature interpreter
- ☐ 40. Check access and food policies — respect nature and culture
- ☐ 41. Travel responsibly with pets: check the rules in advance
- ☐ 42. Minimize light pollution

#### b. Activities in oceans, lakes, marshes, and rivers

- ☐ 43. Follow basic beach rules
- ☐ 44. Care for fragile beach environments
- ☐ 45. Use reef-friendly sunscreen and swim with care for marine life
- ☐ 46. Make sure swimming is permitted and wear a life jacket
- ☐ 47. Cover up when leaving the beach — respect local norms in residential areas

#### c. Mountain and grassland activities

- ☐ 48. Choose the right path and avoid bringing in soil or plants to protect ecosystems
- ☐ 49. Be mindful not to disturb insect habitats when exploring nature
- ☐ 50. Avoid picking plants, and treat bird nests and culturally significant flora with care
- ☐ 51. Be well-prepared for the mountains: submit your climbing plan and bring a portable toilet
- ☐ 52. Before backcountry skiing, check avalanche risks and prepare thoroughly
- ☐ 53. Campfire responsibility: burn completely and choose local charcoal

## Checklist

### Section D Environmental Sustainability

#### d. Respecting animals

- ☐ 54. Understand the basics of animal welfare: the “Five freedoms” and the “Five domains”
- ☐ 55. Observe wildlife quietly and at a distance — never feed them
- ☐ 56. Interacting with large animals: choose only certified or government-sanctioned facilities
- ☐ 57. In large animal habitats, check for wildlife alerts and know how to respond
- ☐ 58. Say no to souvenirs made from endangered species —choose ethically sourced alternatives
- ☐ 59. Respecting culturally significant animals: know before you go

#### e. Minimize environmental impact

- ☐ 60. Choose eco-friendly transportation to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- ☐ 61. Make waste-free choices
- ☐ 62. Conserve water and electricity during your stay

### Section E Civic Support

#### a. Understand travelers

- ☐ 63. Travelers may seem tense—respond with understanding
- ☐ 64. Understand that travelers may have reasons behind their food choices

#### b. Let's offer hospitality as a local resident

- ☐ 65. If someone needs help, lend a hand
- ☐ 66. Proactively share information and create systems for responsible tourism
- ☐ 67. Value each traveler's memories and engage with care and respect
- ☐ 68. Get involved in community-based tourism development

# Acknowledgments

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## Afterword

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Most destinations we visit and enjoy as travelers are someone else's home. Just by being a little more mindful of this fact, your journey can take on a whole new meaning. This mindfulness lies at the heart of this guide. If, while reading, you find yourself thinking, "I would like to try this," or "I have not really thought about that before," then those small realizations may lead you to a new and more enriching way to travel.

The term Touristship is gradually gaining recognition. Lately, we have often been asked, "Does this kind of behavior count as Touristship?" As the idea spreads further, we believe more and more people will begin to wonder, "What more can I do?" and "How can I take part?" This guide is especially for those individuals.

The Japanese word for tourism (観光) literally means "to view the light." We travel to discover light—whether in breathtaking landscapes, unique cultures, or encounters with people. But as travelers, we must also remember that we ourselves are being seen by the local people. What if we, as travelers, could become a light for those living at the destinations we visit?

That is the essence of Touristship: choosing to travel in a way that brings light—in form of kindness, respect, and connection—to the places and people we encounter. We hope this guide helps spark such a light in your journey and in your relationships with the communities you visit.

And if you ever find yourself thinking, "This was not mentioned in the guide, but is it not also part of Touristship?" we would love to hear from you. We hope to continue growing this guide together, with you.

Chieko Tanaka  
Yasuhiro Sakurai  
Nanami Haruta  
Sara Uesato

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We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the many individuals who provided invaluable guidance and advice in the creation of this guide. As a small organization, we were only able to bring this project to completion thanks to the generous support of all those involved. Thank you truly from the bottom of our hearts.

This book was originally created in Japanese and has been translated into English. We would like to thank Ingo Janowski for assisting us with the English language translation.

### Message from Ingo Janowski

It has been a pleasure to assist with this English language version of the Touristship Action Guide. I am a big advocate of tourism, because of the many tangible and intangible benefits it can bring - for the traveler, the destination, and society - if done right. Economic development, wealth distribution, appreciation and protection of our natural environment, cross-cultural awareness and exchange... these are just some positive aspects that tourism can facilitate. This Touristship Action Guide provides guidance for responsible travel and promotes critical thinking that goes beyond the featured applications and examples. As such, it is an invaluable resource.

I would like to thank the Touristship Team and particularly Representative Director Chieko Tanaka for the opportunity to contribute to this guide.

**Dr. Ingo Janowski**

Tourism behavior guideline for a sustainable future

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### Travel Destination Quiz



Now recruiting volunteers for the TD Quiz Event!

**The Travel Destination Quiz is a fun event where participants enjoy a quiz while learning directly about local Touristship practices at each destination. Organized by the General Incorporated Association TOURISTSHIP, this event is held in tourist areas across Japan.**

For details on dates and locations:

<https://touristship.jp/tabisakiquiz/>



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