

ASTA - The American Society of Travel Agents' Ten Commandments on Eco-Tourism

The Guidelines for Responsible Environmental Tourism are prepared and distributed by the American Society of Travel Agents to all customers who book holidays through their members' branches.

The Guidelines assert that 'Tourism is a natural right of people and is a crucial ingredient of world peace.' They aim to 'encourage the growth of peaceful tourism and environmentally responsible travel through adherence to these guidelines.'

The Guidelines include ten recommendations to encourage all tourists to act responsibly and show respect for their hosts and the environment of their destination, regardless of the purpose of their trip.

Ten Commandments on Eco-Tourism

Whether you're travelling on business, pleasure or a bit of both, all the citizens of the world, current and future, would be grateful if you would respect the ten commandments of world travel:

1. Respect the frailty of the earth. Realize that unless all are willing to help in its preservation, unique and beautiful destinations may not be here for future generations to enjoy.
2. Leave only footprints. Take only photographs. 'No graffiti! No litter! Do not take away 'souvenirs' from historical sites and natural areas.
3. To make your travels more meaningful educate yourself about the geography, customs, manners and cultures of the region you visit. Take time to listen to the people. Encourage local conservation efforts.
4. Respect the privacy and dignity of others. Inquire before photographing people.
5. Do not buy products made from endangered plants or animals, such as ivory, tortoise shell, animal skins, and feathers. Read 'Know Before You Go,' the US Customs list of products which cannot be imported.
6. Always follow designated trails. Do not disturb animals, plants or their natural habitats.
7. Learn about and support conservation-oriented programs and organizations working to preserve the environment.
8. Whenever possible, walk or utilize environmentally-sound methods of transportation. Encourage drivers of public vehicles to stop engines when parked.
9. Patronize those (hotels, airlines, resorts, cruise lines, tour operators and suppliers) who advance energy and environmental conservation; water and air quality; recycling; safe management of waste and toxic materials; noise abatement; community involvement; and which provide experienced, well-trained staff dedicated to strong principles of conservation.

10. Encourage organizations to subscribe to ASTA Environmental Guidelines. ASTA urges organizations to adopt their own environmental codes to cover special sites and ecosystems.

Travel is a natural right of all people and is a crucial ingredient of world peace and understanding. With that right comes responsibilities. ASTA encourages the growth of peaceful tourism and environmentally responsible travel.

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