

Ecoguide for a responsible tourist

1. Check if the hotel where you are staying :
 - Complies with all the legislation and regulations in force (among them, the work, environmental, and health and safety conditions).
 - Observes the natural or cultural patrimony that surrounds the complex, as well as including the design, impact evaluation and the rights and purchase of the land.
 - Provides information to the clients regarding the natural surroundings, the local culture and cultural patrimony, and explains to them the required behavior while they are visiting the natural areas, the cultures or the cultural patrimony areas.
 - Actively supports the initiatives for the social and infrastructure development of the community –which includes education, health, and sanitary services, among others.
 - Has a purchase policy that favors environmentally friendly products, such as construction materials, capital goods, food and consumables.
 - Encourages the use of renewable energy.
 - Treats its waste waters in an efficient way.
 - Does not consume, sell, negotiate using, or show, protected, rare or endangered species.
 - Has local species in its green areas and takes special measures to avoid the introduction of exotic foreign species.
 - Supports the conservation of biodiversity, including natural protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value.

2. Do not hire All Inclusive Vacation Packages
 - Watch out with the All Inclusive Packages! Sometimes they could seem to be cheaper; nevertheless, these packages usually do not generate a real benefit for the local community. The majority of the money that you pay will be kept by the transportation and accommodation companies. Besides, what they are looking for is to keep you captive in their premises so you consume only their products. If you consume local products, besides enjoying the local cuisine and culture you're contributing to the local economy and in the survival of an authentic tourism.

3. Protect the flora and fauna
 - Protect the wild flora and fauna and its habitat. Do not buy souvenirs or products manufactured from wild or endangered plants or animals, neither take pictures of them – doing so promotes their capture.
 - Do not take with you souvenirs such as conchs, corals, shells, stones, plants, etc. Remember that the next tourist would like to find the place in the same conditions as you found it.

4. Use land transportation means.
 - If possible, use land transportation means. Airplanes are the main cause of green house gases emissions in the tourist sector. You can calculate how much CO₂ you are sending into the atmosphere in a airplane trip by using this website :
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 - http://www2.icao.int/public/cfmapps/carbonoffset/carbon_calculator.cfm

5. Reduce the consumption time.
 - Water: A hotel room might require up to 2,500 liters of water per day. Reduce your consumption of this resource and leave specific instructions if you do not wish your towels and bed sheets to be washed every day.
 - Electricity: Make sure you turn off the lights and do not use air conditioning if it's not necessary to do so. Remember that although you're not paying for the electricity, it generates green house gases and so you will be contributing to climate change.

- Reject products which have unnecessary wrappers and containers.
- 6. Do not commit environmental crimes.
 - Obtain information about the legislation in force, so you do not commit any action which is considered a crime in the area you're visiting. If you visit a protected area, remember that the regulations in place were created to preserve areas and species of high environmental value and that might be endangered.
- 7. Go local.
 - Your trip can contribute to the economic growth and social development of the local community. Buy local handicrafts and products –this will support the locals' economy, and abide by the principles of fair trade. If you bargain, keep in mind the fair wage concept.
- 8. Respect your surroundings
 - All the places we travel to have a history, a culture, natural and their own values. Get information regarding those issues and behave in a way you do not damage them.
- 9. Don't litter.
 - Put the garbage in the places assigned for such purposes. Remember, if you throw organic wastes in natural areas you're affecting the wild fauna's habits. Inorganic wastes can take years to be degraded and, during that time, they can pollute the environment and damage the local fauna and flora or the aquifers.
- 10. Look for low impact alternatives.
 - Keep in mind that ecotourism is the kind of tourism which has a lesser impact on the environment. If you're really looking forward to visit the place, look for outdoor activities such as hiking or wild fauna and flora spotting. Choose walk, bike, or horse trips for your excursions. These alternatives are more respectful of the cultural and natural environment of the area. All terrain vehicles cause soil erosion and produce atmospheric and noise pollution. Ask the driver not to use beach areas or pathways that affect the local flora and fauna.