

The student guide to traveling responsibly

With your tour approaching, there's a lot to look forward to. Seeing new places, meeting new people, and encountering new ways of life are all incredibly exciting.

Travel has the power to change lives in amazing ways. And while you can't really prepare for what those effects will look like, you *can* prepare to maximize each moment of your tour. At EF, we're committed to taking a responsible approach to travel. By adopting an open-minded attitude and remaining respectful to everyone and everything you encounter, you'll make the most of your experience and begin to understand what it means to be a citizen of the world.

Before departure, use this sheet to inform your actions and behavior on tour. Each individual item is small, but when practiced together, they make a big impact.



Supporting local communities

People and communities are the heart of every destination, breathing unique life into a place. By taking time to understand a new culture and by being thankful for its hospitality, you'll amplify the positive impacts of your adventure and forge deeper personal connections.

Interacting with local communities

- Talk to your Tour Director about when it's appropriate to take photos.
- Ask people for permission before taking their picture, and if taking a picture of a minor, talk to a responsible adult first.
- Gifts can have unintended negative consequences in local communities. Consult with your teacher, Tour Director, or EF beforehand for specific instances where it might be appropriate.
- Remember to always be respectful of the cultures, races, and viewpoints of students, teachers, and other adults who are traveling with you, too.

Make a positive impact with your spending

- Support local businesses to ensure your money is invested back into the community.
- Be aware of monetary norms (tipping and negotiating are at the top of the list) in your destination.
- Shop at stores offering products made by local artisans—and pay fair prices.
- Eat at locally-owned restaurants, where the food is more likely to be locally-sourced. (*EF selects locally-owned restaurants for group meals whenever possible.*)

Pay respect to local culture

- Take time to educate yourself about your destination, its history, and its culture before you go.
- Learn a few common words and phrases in the local language. ("Please" and "Thank you" are appreciated everywhere!)
- Remember that when you're traveling, you're a guest in the communities you visit and there to understand a new perspective.
- Wear appropriate clothing for the community or surroundings you're visiting, being especially respectful when visiting religious sites. (Your Tour Director can help with specifics, such as wearing long pants or covering your shoulders.)

Reflect when you return home

- Consider how you tell the story of your experience—be careful about generalizing.
- Reflect on what you learned, how the tour changed your perspective, and what you're going to do with your new knowledge.

Respecting wildlife

Actually seeing something you've only previously seen in books is often a tour highlight, and we want to make sure our fuzzy and furry (and slimy and scaly) neighbors stick around to keep it that way for years to come.

Be conscious about taking photos

- Photograph wildlife in the wild while respecting their space.
- Don't support businesses charging for photos with animals. The animals are often subjected to harsh conditions beforehand in order to be willing to pose with humans and are typically poorly cared for when not in public.

Understand the importance of natural habitats

- Feeding wild animals harms their ability to find food naturally, impacts their nutrition, and teaches them to get dangerously close to humans.
- Enjoy wild animals in their natural surroundings, rather than in captivity, wherever possible.
- Visit responsible sanctuaries and conservation centers. Not all zoos and sanctuaries are created equal, so do research to make sure you're visiting genuine, responsible venues.
- Avoid activities that involve obvious animal cruelty, like bullfighting, elephant riding, or crocodile wrestling.
- Respect natural habitats by keeping them litter free and causing as little disturbance as possible.
- Don't support the use of animals for soliciting money (like snake charming or posing for selfies).

Coming into contact with animals

- Wild animals aren't pets. Holding or petting wildlife can be dangerous and is not in the animal's best interest to survive in the wild, despite your best intentions.
- Only ride domesticated animals such as horses, donkeys, or camels because they have been conditioned to work with humans over centuries. Always make sure the animal is well cared for.
- Don't handle, touch, or come into close contact with wild animals (even those in captivity).
- Don't feed wild animals as it alters their behavior to be dependent on humans and causes them to become aggressive.
- Don't visit any attraction offering performances or shows involving wild animals as the training they go through to perform is cruel and unnatural.
- Don't consume any endangered species, buy souvenirs made from their body parts, or purchase products that involve cruelty.

Protecting the environment

Even the littlest things add up to make a significant difference when it comes to making sure the earth (our home no matter where we are) is safe to keep traveling for years to come.

Keep sustainability top of mind

- Bring a reusable water bottle, plus a water filter (or just a water-filtration water bottle!) if tap water isn't drinkable in your destination.
- Reduce waste by avoiding single-use plastics as much as possible.
- Use your new EF backpack to carry items you purchase instead of taking a plastic or paper bag from the store or vendor.
- To actively participate in conservation or reforestation efforts around the globe, consider participating an EF Service Learning tour for your next adventure.

Always reuse and recycle when possible

- Travel with a reusable water bottle.
- Avoid extra printing by opting for digital documents whenever possible and recycling necessary paperwork.
- Bring recyclables and trash back to your hotel if you can't find any proper waste receptacles when out for the day.
- Reuse hotel towels and turn the lights off when you leave your room.

Limit your impact with what you pack

- Pack your own toiletries and grooming products.
- Use environmentally friendly beauty products (soap, shampoo, etc.) that don't pollute local water streams.
- Apply reef-safe sunscreen when swimming in the ocean.
- Bring your own headphones to use on the plane.

Ask yourself

How might I act so that the people I meet in my destination would invite me to return?

