

DESTINATION ASIA

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT FOR ASIA'S TRAVEL CONNOISSEURS



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL TIPS & GUIDELINES

THAILAND | VIETNAM | CHINA | JAPAN | HONG KONG | INDONESIA | SINGAPORE | CAMBODIA | MALAYSIA | MYANMAR | LAOS

HOW TO TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY WITH DESTINATION ASIA



Everyone can be a part of the solution when it comes to responsible tourism. At Destination Asia we have made considerable efforts to involve local businesses and initiatives. By utilizing services that function with an ethical approach, travelers can experience areas that lie off the common tourist trail, discovering local crafts, workshops and education centers that have formed a positive relationship with tourism.

1 POSITIVE ACTION

- **Choose your options responsibly**
Give preference to any responsible tourism options as it is in your power to make a difference. Ask your guide for ideas.
- **Prepare yourself**
Make yourself familiar with the destination's dos and don'ts so you are aware of cultural differences.
- **Take it slow**
Traveling and immersing yourself in a destination by foot, bicycle, or local rickshaw does not only allow you to appreciate the local culture more, but also helps reduce your carbon footprint.
- **Children are not an attraction**
Giving away small gifts such as candies or money to kids is not the right way of helping, as it could encourage them to continue begging. The best way is to donate through registered organizations who will use the money for the right cause to build capacity for the younger generation in the long term (ask your guide for more details on local charities and non-governmental organizations).
- **Be an ambassador**
Travelers can report any misconduct or wrongly claimed responsible products to help uplift the standard of responsible tourism as a whole. Such information can be given to your guide who will advise our local office.

2 CONSUME RESPONSIBLY

- **Switch off**

Turn off the light, the air conditioning and the water when you leave your hotel. Be mindful to switch off when not using.

- **Practice the 3Rs**

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Be a part of minimizing the burden of waste management in the country you are visiting. If you need to throw away your trash, please dispose of it in the bin (preferable a recycling bin).

- **Indulge in local delicacies**

Trying local food is the best experience you can get when traveling. Refuse any excess packaging or eat in traditional establishments to get a truly local experience.

- **Carry reusable items**

Refillable water bottles, reusable straws, reusable chopsticks, or your own shopping bags. These are all the things that can help reduce. You can proudly say NO to all disposable goods!

- **Be aware of local regulations**

The use of illegal drugs is strictly forbidden and you could face severe punishment if convicted. Also, in some areas such as national parks or temples, alcohol consumption is strictly banned so be informed and mindful of local regulations.

- **Reduce your carbon footprint**

Compare the impact of each choice you make, whether traveling on a domestic flight for comfort or taking a train to slowly enjoy the journey.



3 SPEND RESPONSIBLY

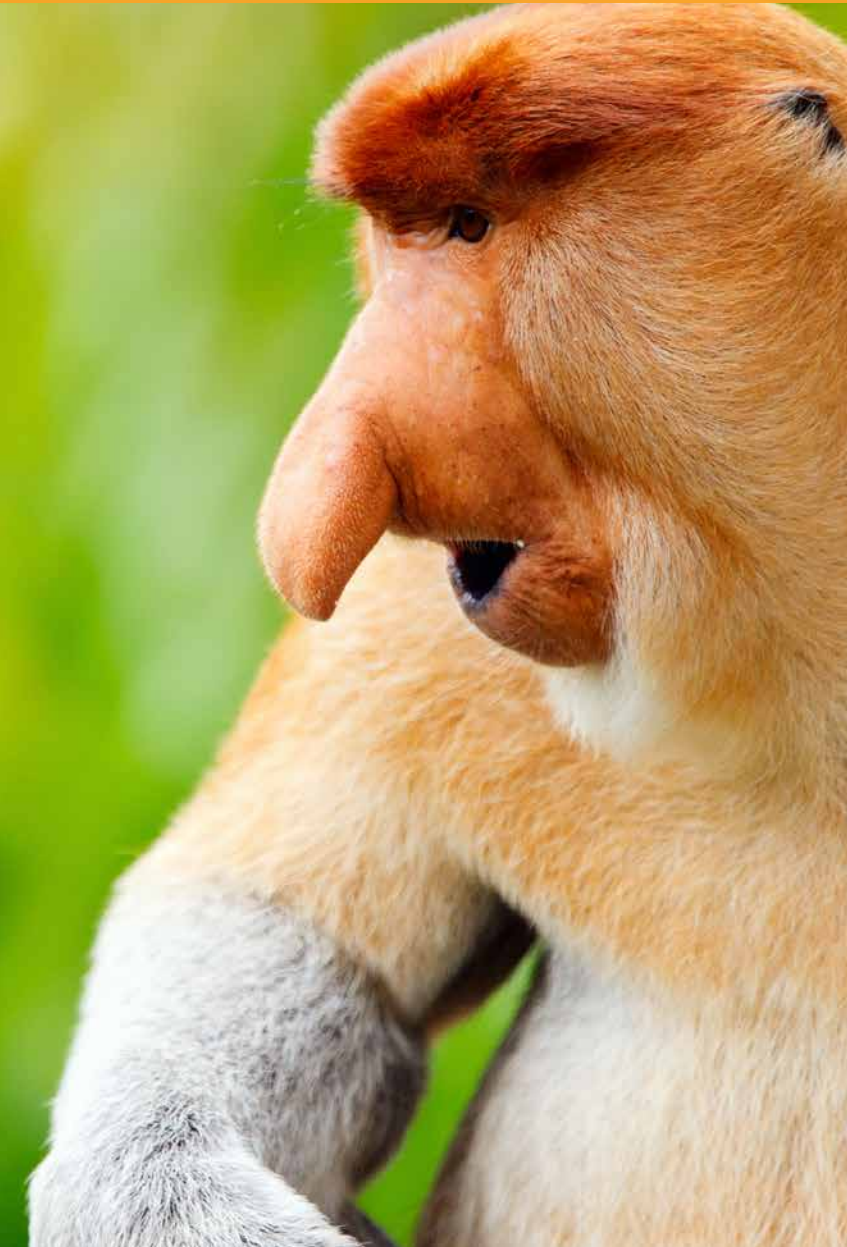
- **Carefully select souvenirs**
Be aware of illegal or unethical products. Always choose locally made items and avoid animal products related to the IUCN Red List (e.g. turtles, elephants, tigers, sharks, whales, etc.). Ask your guide for ethical choices of souvenirs.
- **Buy local**
Locally purchased food means greater support for the economy, and an opportunity to get a glimpse of local life. Visiting markets and craft centers is a great way to find something unique with an interesting story. Seek out opportunities to support local activities or initiatives, so your money is well spent towards supporting and nurturing local livelihoods.
- **Invest in local initiatives**
Whenever you travel there are opportunities to support conservation or social impact initiatives. Speak to your guide about a cause that you care about and go for it either in cash or in kind.

4 ACT RESPECTFULLY

- **Keep calm and enjoy the unexpected**
Traveling can sometimes present you with the least expected experience whether good or bad. Whatever the situation is, staying calm and courteous rather than getting upset will lead to a more desirable resolution.
- **Stay curious**
Enjoy exploring the stories of the destination you visit. Interact with locals to educate yourself about their way of life and how they are managing and conserving their hometown.
- **Respect the culture**
Educating yourself about cultural practices of the destination is a great way to gain an insight into what makes the destination and its people unique. Feel free to share your own culture with the locals as this is the essence of travel.
- **Understand local rules**
Local rules and regulations might not make perfect sense to you, but an understanding of the dos and don'ts of local etiquette will help you avoid unintentionally offending others. This includes the right dress code to respect sacred places.
- **Avoid supporting the sex industry**
Hostess bars may present the risk of supporting human trafficking and other unintended consequences. Consult with your guide if unsure which local bars to visit.
- **Protect the natural world**
The best way to enjoy nature is to appreciate in its natural state. Avoid disturbing wildlife and respect the rules of national parks. Do not pick plants or disrupt natural environments such as coral reefs.
- **Ask before acting**
Ask permission before taking photos or recording any local way of life as some ethnic groups have their own belief that taking a photo would take a way a part of their spirit. It is also polite to ask permission before taking a photo or filming people. In the rare case they refuse, please respect their wishes.



❖ TIPS AND GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC SENSITIVE ACTIVITIES



1 WILDLIFE VIEWING AND ACTIVITIES IN PROTECTED AREAS

- Follow all rules and regulations of the protected areas as informed by your guide.
- Prepare reusable kits such as a water bottle, cloth napkin, and lunchbox to minimize waste.
- Do not touch any animals or insects or pick up any flora and fauna as it might be poisonous.
- Do not initiate contact with wild animals or attempt to feed them. This can pose a danger to both the animal and traveler.
- Keep a safe distance from all wild animals; do not chase or restrict the space of a wild animal.
- Do not support any activity that involves animals fighting each other or the killing of wild animals for 'sport'.
- If viewing wildlife from a vehicle, keep your distance. Also stay on designated roads – do not drive off-road in search of wildlife.
- Avoid using a flash when taking photos of wildlife and always use designated bins for rubbish.

2 MARINE, SEA LIFE, CORAL REEF AND WATER ACTIVITIES

- When swimming, snorkeling, or scuba diving, make sure you don't touch or step on coral.
- Do not feed marine animals as this can change their behavior and effect the marine ecosystem.
- Do not chase, touch, poke, spear, or capture marine life.
- Do not litter or throw anything in the water.
- Do not support or collect marine life souvenirs as it could be illegal.
- When taking underwater photos, make sure all equipment is secured to avoid hitting or dragging things over the reefs.
- Choose environmentally-friendly sunscreen when you go swimming.
- Always wear a life jacket when on a boat or snorkeling.
- Report any environmental violations to your guide.

3 VISITING LOCAL COMMUNITIES OR INDIGENOUS VILLAGES

- Learn to say “Hello” or “Thank you” to break the ice and engage in conversation.
- Respect local beliefs and ways of life. Be sure to ask your guide about local etiquette for insight.
- Try tasting local food, but it is also ok to say “No” politely if you don’t want to.
- Pay a fair price for goods. Bargaining is ok but be mindful that this may be their only source of income.
- Always ask before taking a photo as it could be a sensitive issue for some cultures.
- Dress respectfully, especially when visiting sacred places.
- Don’t give candy or toys directly to children as it can encourage begging habits. Donating through recognized foundations is a better option.
- Don’t offer money to those who ask directly on the streets as this act may be supporting human rights violations and human trafficking.
- Consult with your guide to make a donation where 100% goes directly to those who are most in need.

4 VISITING CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES

- Ask your guide about local etiquette as not to disrespect local beliefs and culture.
- Learn the story behind the heritage sites from your guide.
- Pay attention to signs and boards and always seek permission when taking pictures or videos.
- Don’t climb, write or do anything causing damage to ruins, buildings or any attraction.
- Follow the instructions of your guide regarding responsible practices and do not wander away from the assigned path.
- Do not support or buy antiquities as it could be illegal.
- Minimize your footprint by keeping your garbage with yourself or put it in a recycling bin.
- To make a donation, consult with your guide to make sure 100% goes directly to the heritage site’s conservation fund.

