

Tips for responsible tourism

Traveling to World Heritage sites allows you to explore unique environments, experience different ways of life, and build lasting memories. Follow these travel tips to enhance your trip and support the World Heritage sites you visit.

Before you travel

- **Find out as much as possible.** The more you know about a World Heritage site, the more the site will come alive. Look into the site's history, culture, natural environment, customs, legends, advisory notices, and more. Our Find a World Heritage site page is a great place to start.
- **Learn a few words in the local language.** Make an effort to speak the local language. Simple words like "Hello," "Please," and "Thank you" can go a long way to help you communicate with the people who know the site best—they'll appreciate your efforts and your interest in learning.
- **Pack light.** It's tempting to pack everything you think you might need, but remember to be smart about your necessities. Packaging items like the plastic wrapping of your new toothbrush simply consume space in your bag and can create excess trash for the World Heritage site.
- **Choose lodging thoughtfully.** Look for hotels that have written procedures for environmental impact, employment, and cultural policies.
- **Explore transportation options.** Traveling affects the environment. Wherever possible, try to minimize your impact by looking to alternative transportation and off-setting your carbon emissions.

During your trip

- **Engage in local culture.** The saying, "When in Rome do as the Romans" still applies today. Your trip provides a unique opportunity to explore a new culture and to see the world through a different perspective. Enjoying local foods, shopping in local markets, and attending local festivals are all part of experiencing the culture.
- **Buy local products and services.** Choosing to support locally-owned businesses, community tour operators, and artisans means that you'll have a one-of-a-kind experience and your money will go directly to the community. Before purchasing goods, ask about their origin. Avoid buying products made from threatened natural resources and report poaching and other illegal activities to the local authorities.
- **Refrain from aggressive bargaining.** It's often difficult to know your limits in bargaining, so if you're not sure, ask your hotel for tips. Remember that the purchases you make directly affect vendors' livelihoods, so decide if you really need to hang onto that extra dollar.
- **Hire local guides.** Enrich your experience by choosing local guides who are knowledgeable about the destination. Ask local tour operators and hotels for recommendations.
- **Tread lightly.** These destinations are World Heritage sites because of their exceptional natural or cultural splendor. Do your part to keep them that way by following designated trails, respecting caretakers, and not removing archaeological or biological treasures from sites.
- **Respect the natural environment.** Reduce, reuse, and recycle. Even though you are just visiting and not paying the utility bill, disposing of your garbage properly and minimizing your consumption of water and energy will benefit the overall destination.
- **Think of the Big Picture.** While it is important to support local economy, certain tourist activities and souvenirs can damage a fragile World Heritage site. Say "no" to a souvenir that's a piece of the site itself, and to tourist activities that may be harmful to a site's longevity.

After returning home

- **Share tips about responsible travel.** In addition to telling family and friends about the wonderful memories you made, also consider sharing tips on how they too can positively impact these destinations while having an amazing journey.
- **Explore more.** Travel is just the start of learning. Once you return home, continue exploring and being involved with the issues or region that captured your attention. Build your knowledge.
- **Give back.** Traveling often opens our eyes and our hearts. Help to preserve these inspirational destinations for generations to come by making a donation to programs that give back and benefit the local community.