



Animal-friendly Travel Animal Welfare Policy



Overview

From elephants and whales to dogs and donkeys, animals are a huge part of travelling and why some destinations make it on to people's bucket lists. By making a commitment to improve animal welfare in tourism, we have taken steps to make sure that on our trips animals, local communities and travellers stay safe and enjoy their adventures. Read on to find out more about our commitment:

As part of our commitment to eradicate cruel tourism practices that compromise animal welfare, we will aim to:

- Review our animal experiences regularly
- Continue following and developing our Animal Welfare Policy
- Continuously review our animal welfare criteria as and when new evidence comes to light
- Work with local partners to improve the welfare of animals in our trips
- Where the above is not possible, to remove any trips that fail to meet our animal welfare criteria
- Continue to support animal projects across our destinations
- Promote ethical animal experiences and awareness among our staff, our partners and our travellers

Where travellers view animals in the wild on tour we will work to ensure that:

- travellers keep a safe, quiet and respectful distance from wild animals
- deliberate direct contact with, chasing or harassment of wild animals doesn't occur
- no feeding of wild animals takes place (except wild birds, when permitted)
- unregulated plant and animal collection, or the sale of endangered species doesn't occur



Travel Do's

While travelling, make sure to enjoy wild animals in their natural habitat, rather than in captivity where possible, and only support genuine sanctuaries or conservation centres. If you are worried about an animal or institution – report it!

Also make sure that any domesticated animals like mules or horses that are ridden are clearly in good condition, provided with water and are well cared for.

Finally, do think about what you are eating or buying. Avoid buying souvenirs or products made from animals and don't support cruel practices like the dog and cat meat trade.



Travel Don'ts

Remember, if you can hug, ride, touch or take a photo with a wild animal, the chances are it has suffered some form of cruelty to make that happen.

Avoid feeding wild animals or supporting the use of animals to solicit money from tourists e.g. animal shows and performances, selfie opportunities or animals being killed for consumption or souvenirs.

Don't put yourself at risk! Big cats, elephants and other wild animal species are unpredictable and direct contact with such species poses a high risk to people.



Twelve tips to help protect animals while travelling

1. Photos

Photograph wildlife in the wild and while respecting their space. Don't support businesses that interact too closely with wild animals or charge for photos with animals.

2. Riding elephants

Elephants are wild animals and can't be "tamed" without cruel treatment. Don't try to ride them or visit businesses that offer this activity.

3. Look, but don't touch

Wild animals aren't pets looking for belly scratches. Holding or petting wildlife is never kind to the animal despite your best intentions. Close contact with wild animals could cause harm to their environment or to the animals themselves. And for your safety, this goes for stray or feral animals too.

4. Feeding animals

Feeding wild animals harms their ability to find food naturally and teaches them to get dangerously close to humans.

5. Animal care (sanctuaries or working animals)

Sometimes, you'll see animals in sanctuaries, farms or zoos that are substandard. If you are worried about the welfare of these animals, report it immediately to your tour operator, a local welfare organisation or report it on Red Flag:

www.bornfree.org.uk/raise-the-red-flag A true sanctuary does not breed animals, allow public contact with animals, and cares for the animals for the rest of their lives.

6. Animals in entertainment or shows

Please don't support cruel animal exhibits or shows like circuses, performances with marine mammals or any kind of show that involves wild animal performances. These animals are kept in inappropriate conditions and their performances are the result of dubious training methods based on domination or, at worst, based on violence.

Please don't support this torture. Avoid making fun of animals and understand that they are sentient beings who deserve our respect and compassion.



7. Animal products or trinkets

Do not buy trinkets or souvenirs made from animal parts. The illegal trade in wildlife parts and products includes items made with exotic leathers and fur, ivory and ornamental objects, food items, and traditional medicines. Buying these products encourages animal exploitation and poaching of animals from the wild. Products from endangered species are illegal and if detected by customs you can be fined.

8. Poaching and trophy hunting

It goes without saying that if you are an animal lover, you probably do not support trophy hunting. The killing of wild animals for sport is cruel and unnecessary. Enjoy animals in the wild where they belong, and support companies that offer eco-tourism trips or non-invasive photo safaris.

9. Working animals

Working mules and horses are commonplace in some countries. If you encounter those that are bred for work and are in doubt that these animals are well cared for, please report it immediately to a local welfare organisation or your tour operator.

10. Health and safety

It's important when you are abroad that you are aware and take care in the presence of animals. Many strays and wild animals are fearful of humans and if approached, handled or attacked, they can pose a real threat to you and your health. Rabies is a serious issue in some countries and can be transferred to humans. If bitten, wash the wound with soap and water, and seek medical attention immediately.



11. Animal meat

In some countries, animals we consider our companions, or endangered species, can be found frequently on the menu. These animals, such as dogs and cats, endure immense cruelty and barbaric treatment to end up on a plate, and in some cases could even be people's stolen pets. There are also risks to your health and diseases, or even poison, that can be present in the meat, as a result of improper slaughter practises or hygiene. Avoid eating at places, including street vendors, that sell dog or cat meat, bush meat and endangered species, such as shark fins, whale and turtle meat.

12. Eating out

Many countries and cities worldwide are providing more and more options for vegetarian and vegan travellers, so do look out for specialised establishments or at least veggie-friendly items indicated on the menu. It helps to learn food words like 'vegetarian' or 'vegan' in the local language, and smartphone apps like HappyCow and Vegman, or sites like Yelp, have lots of recommendations too!

For those looking to eat responsibly sourced meat or animal products on holiday, always ask the establishment or consult the internet for advice on what products have higher welfare standards. In some countries, exotic animals and even dogs and cats can make it onto the menu, so always be vigilant that you are not supporting this cruel trade.



About Us

FOUR PAWS is a strong, global and independent voice for animals under direct human influence. Our vision is a world where people treat animals with respect, empathy and understanding.

We are an animal welfare organisation with offices in 15 countries around the world. For more than 30 years, FOUR PAWS has worked tirelessly to create sustainable solutions for animals in need by changing consumer behaviour, driving legal change, and building effective partnerships to improve the ways in which animals are treated.