

# WORLD MONUMENTS FUND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLEDGE

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*Tourism is damaging many of the world's cultural sites. Visiting responsibly starts with these ten simple guidelines developed by World Monuments Fund.*

- **KNOW THE HISTORY** Before you travel, read up on the history and culture of your destination. Use the internet to get leads on local specialties and off-the-beaten-path sites from locals and other travelers. Learn a few basic phrases in your destination's local language.
- **REDUCE YOUR (CARBON) FOOTPRINT** Walking, biking, and trekking or exploring one place in-depth is a good way to reduce your carbon footprint. At urban destinations, walk or take public transit whenever possible. You'll see more and avoid getting stuck in rush-hour traffic!
- **BE ECO-FRIENDLY** Conservation should always be on a traveler's mind: whatever helps the environment, such as recycling or staying in an eco-friendly hotel, also protects heritage.
- **RESPECT THE LOCAL CULTURE** Show respect for the local culture. At sacred sites, dress modestly, speak softly, and be mindful of people who are there to worship. Seek out local celebrations and festivals—they can provide a unique glimpse into local culture and are a fun way to meet locals, sample traditional foods, and learn about your destination's heritage.
- **GO OFF THE BEATEN PATH** Visit lesser-known places—they may be far more rewarding (not to mention less crowded) than tourist hotspots. The Taj Mahal may be a must-see, but India also has more than 25 other spectacular World Heritage Sites.
- **BE GENTLE IN YOUR TRAVEL** Be mindful of visitor wear and tear. Visiting crowded sites at off-peak hours or popular destinations in the off-season will reduce your impact. Stick to marked paths. Wear comfortable footwear such as sneakers; heels can damage fragile sites. Don't climb on monuments or touch rock carvings, as it can damage them.
- **DON'T BE FLASHY WITH PHOTOS** Take only photographs, and make sure that a flash is permitted because a flash can damage centuries-old artwork. Be aware of local traditions when photographing people and when in doubt, ask permission before snapping a picture. Never remove anything from a site: you may think one stone won't be missed, but if every one of Pompeii's two million annual visitors took something home, soon there'd be nothing left.
- **BUY LOCAL** Support the local economy by buying crafts from local artisans as souvenirs. Be wary of "antiquities" as these could be looted or forgeries. Patronize smaller hotels and local restaurants—that way the money you spend boosts the local economy and helps preserve heritage.
- **JOIN THE CAUSE** Help threatened sites, either through donations to organizations like the World Monuments Fund or by volunteering—either in your community or on a "voluntourism" trip. There are many opportunities to combine travel and volunteerism, and ways to help range from building houses to participating in archeological digs.
- **EDUCATE** Tell friends and family about responsible heritage tourism. Raise awareness by sharing your experiences on social media sites like Facebook and Flickr, or your own travel blog. Start a global conservation conversation!

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