

# Ethical code for travellers

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Advice aimed at making a trip both an experience of personal enrichment to the traveller and a source of happiness to the people who are welcoming him.

## *Introduction*

The following ethical code is not intended to be read as a list of rules, but rather as the expression of strong ethical convictions which tour operators and travellers would be expected to share in regard to their approach to travelling, that is to say: respect, moral values, sustainability, protection of the environment and different cultures, and the capacity to make comparisons between them in order to get to know, understand and share them.

## *The trip*

Travelling involves accepting comparisons and differences, of being aware that anyone who is in a country other than their own is there as a guest and leaves important traces behind.

Visiting a foreign country involves, most importantly, confronting another world, often with different cultural norms, religions or traditions. It involves acknowledgement that we will have to call many of our convictions into question, that it is necessary to understand and to accept, but, above all, to avoid the temptation to try and change that reality by bending it to our vision of the world. It is an extremely subtle approach on which depend both the success of the trip and, above all, the protection and development of the world as a whole.

## *Making small efforts to sustain and develop: the role of the tour operator*

Sustainability in the organization of the trip also includes:

- using local amenities
- giving help to develop those amenities, to bring them up to the standards required by travelers
- training local personnel and the staff who look after the travelers
- making use of local food

## *Respect for others*

If you wish to get to know and understand different cultures, religions and traditions you need to approach them with humility, and this involves respecting local rules and customs. This often only relates to small things, requiring just a little attention. It is good to be aware of them.

- See the way you dress through the eyes of your hosts. Dressing in a way that is inappropriate to the customs and beliefs of the place you are visiting is a grave offence to its people, culture and religion. When you enter a Catholic church, for example, it is a good idea to be properly covered, even when the weather is hot, or otherwise, simply refrain from entering.

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- Respect the rhythms of life in the country you are visiting: they are often slower, and nearly always different from your own. In Southern Italy, for example, shops, commercial enterprises and private businesses, churches and some museums are closed for about three hours in the middle of the day, especially in summer. People traditionally have their lunch and a daily rest at this time.
- Respect the traditions and local folklore without voicing judgements regarding the validity or acceptability of certain practices.
- Taking photographs without asking permission or, worse still, against the will of others, is seriously offensive, and counterproductive. A good photo is the result of sympathy and interaction and derives from the certainty that the subject is not simply suffering us.

### *Respect for ways of life*

Each country, place, and people pursues life in a way which is right for them. It is not the business of the traveller to pass judgement or to intervene. On the contrary, it is up to him to accept and adapt, to understand that people's lifestyles are different and that naturally this can cause incomprehension and confrontation. In the same way, the value of money and its use can lead to bad relationships.

- Do not flaunt yourself: dressing in an ostentatious way can cause misunderstanding and bad relationships.
- Bargaining is admissible, and sometimes is part of the local culture. The important thing is to show respect and be honest in your dealings.

### *Leave small footprints*

Anyone who travels to a foreign country leaves traces behind. The important thing is that these traces are small, and have a positive, rather than a negative impact. It is only necessary to take a little care, behaving in a normal way, to safeguard the planet and the people who inhabit it. Sustainability is not just environmentalism: it is a relationship between cultures and civilizations, and an encounter between peoples and individuals. Safeguarding the environment, which is often a country's most important asset, involves safeguarding and helping that country and its people, and giving them support.

- Reduce to a minimum what you leave behind in the country you are visiting, especially whatever is difficult to recycle or dispose of directly and immediately (packaging, containers, plastic, batteries...).
- If you use aluminium cans and come to a recycling point, leave them there all together, to make it easier for the people who carry out the recycling. Otherwise, put them in a bag, together with other refuse, to be disposed of at the next rubbish bin.
- Helping to sustain places and the people who live there also extends to paying the appropriate fees to enter Parks or Reserves: this money goes towards protecting and developing them.

### *The sea, the lakes, the rivers... water*

Safeguarding the environment does not only apply to the Parks and Reserves.

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- Avoid fishing where it is forbidden and do not deface or foul beaches and sandy shorelines. Fishing should not be undertaken during the closed season. Also, one should not pressurize local fishermen to catch prohibited or protected species.
- Do not throw plastic or combustible material into the water. Also, one should not use motorboats close to the shore or on inland waterways where they can cause damage to the surrounding flora and fauna.
- It is important not to forget that water is a precious resource, and in certain areas and, at certain times of year, it is indeed a scarce resource. It should be used with care: one way to ensure you do this is not to waste it even when it appears to be plentiful.

### *Respect for the history of places*

Sites of archaeological, historical and natural interest often constitute one of the main sources of income for an area and its inhabitants because they serve to attract visitors. People often imagine that taking flash photos does not cause any damage, whereas in fact flashlight has a greater negative effect than sunlight.

In general, when visiting any of these sites, bear in mind the following:

- do not deface them by writing graffiti on them
- avoid touching them (particularly important when visiting limestone grottoes). Remember that thousands of people doing the same thing can cause serious damage
- do not purchase or remove any pieces from the site, whatever their apparent importance
- do not change the site by moving stones
- avoid climbing on objects
- do not leave litter behind

In this way the sites can be preserved and so remain sustainable.

### *Obligatory communication under the terms of Article 17, Law no. 38/2006*

We wish to inform you, or remind you, that under Italian Law the crimes of sexual exploitation or child pornography, whether committed in Italy or abroad, are punishable by imprisonment.