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Being Conscious of your Animal Tourism

How to plan an animal-friendly vacation or adventure

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It's an unpleasant topic, but animal cruelty in the tourism industry is widespread and incredibly heartbreaking. Problems ranging from neglect to outright cruelty and abuse are common around the world where non-human creatures are used as entertainment for humans. If you're looking for vacation and travel fun that's also cruelty-free, and concerned about the kinds of experiences you choose for yourselves, check out our tips for enjoying all the amazing creatures of the planet without inflicting unkindness.









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Principles for Cruelty-Free Vacation Adventures

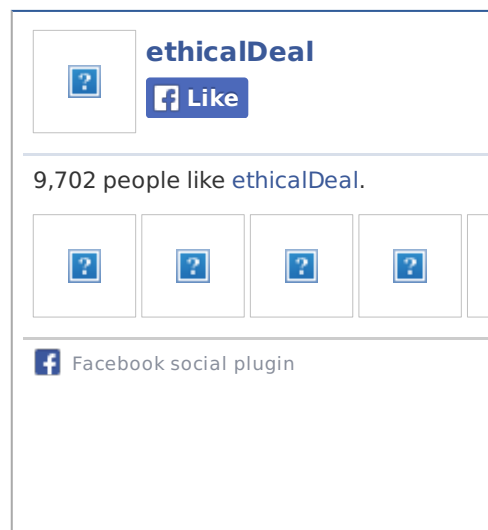
It's impossible to cover all the potential ways animals and marine creatures are subjected to cruelty in this article, but these general principles will help guide you regardless of the activity you're considering:

- 1. Remember: Culture Doesn't Mean Justifiable Cruelty:** Some may argue that a particular custom such as bullfights, camel or elephant rides, or horse drawn carriages are cultural artifacts, but that doesn't mean they're justifiable or being conducted to humane standards. Do some research in making sure the animals you're interacting with are being treated humanely. Respect cultural boundaries while upholding a value that animals shall not be harmed.
- 2. Avoid Confined Animal Activities:** But for a few rare exceptions,

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chances are that if the animal is contained in a cage or an enclosure, it has been taken out of its wild environment against its will and is living in unnatural, limiting, unfamiliar conditions. In many cases, abuse and cruelty are everyday realities for these creatures. Ensure that the program you are attending practices cruelty-free conditions.

3. Forego Performing Animal Shows: Avoid these events, too, to protect animals and to withdraw your support from corporations interested in only making money from animals rather than protecting them.

4. Don't Buy or Eat Endangered Animal Products: Even if it's the local delicacy like foie gras or shark fin soup, many local food traditions come with a high environmental and cruel price.

5. Lodge Complaints if You Witness Cruelty: You cannot always know ahead of time whether animals will be mistreated, but if you witness such abuse, be sure to report the tour operator or facility to a local tourist office, the police, animal welfare societies, or management. Also be sure to provide feedback for the wider community using online tourism forums.

Wherever you're going, try to research ahead of time some of the pitfalls in your destination related to animals in tourism so that you're aware of and can avoid things that will result in the suffering or endangerment of animals. You can find out more about the atrocities of common tourism activities involving animals and what you can do to stop them through these organizations:

[Responsible Travel](#)

[World Society for the Protection of Animals](#)

[Humane Society International](#)

[People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals](#)

Safer Animal Tourism Activities

Though you should always do your research to ensure the following activities

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are conducted by trustworthy and animal-conscious organizations, you're more likely to find that these options can be enjoyed without cruelty to non-human creatures:

- Whale watching
- Dolphin watching
- Seal watching
- Canoeing or kayaking
- Trail walking or biking
- Cross-country skiing or snowshoeing
- Bird watching
- Camping
- Wildlife preserves and sanctuaries
- National and state or provincial parks
- Voluntourism at a wildlife rescue centre or sanctuary

No matter what type of trip or adventure you're taking, attempt to learn as much as you can, treat animals with the respect they deserve and leave no footprint that will be detrimental to future generations of such creatures.

About the Author:

Maryruth has been seeking the keys to environmental justice—both at home and at work—for over a decade. Growing up adjacent to wild spaces, Maryruth developed a healthy respect (and whimsical appreciation) for things non-human, but her practical mind constantly draws her down to earth to ponder tangible solutions to complex eco-problems. With interests that range from green living to green business, sustainable building designs to organic gardening practices, ecosystem restoration to environmental health, Maryruth has been exploring and writing about earth-matters for most of her life. Of special interest is the subject of ecopsychology and the role the

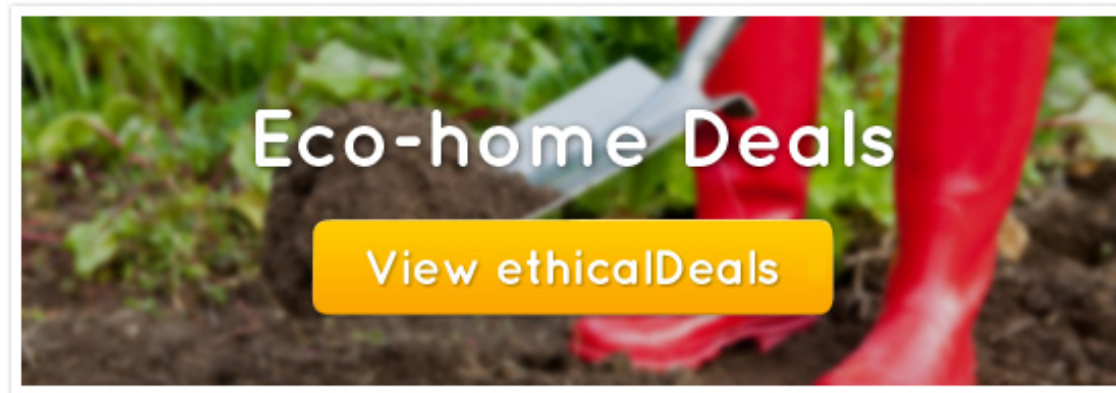
natural world plays in the long-term health and well-being of humanity. You can learn more about Maryruth's work by [visiting her site](#).

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