



Traveling responsibly – a short guide for our customers

Karibu sana! We would love to welcome you to explore Tanzania and Zanzibar with us!

To get the most out of your stay, please take the time to read our recommendations below. They are intended to help you understand the people and culture you will encounter and give you some guidelines for a well-rounded, sustainable holiday. Following those guidelines will create a win-win situation: You will feel at ease and therefore be more open for authentic experiences, and your hosts will appreciate your attitude of respect and genuine interest for the culture and nature of your destination.

As in many other countries, travelers and holidaymakers are an important economic factor, providing employment for local people and generating revenue to raise the general standard of living. On the other hand, mass tourism with its exploitation of natural resources and disregard for local culture and customs can have serious negative effects on a society and on nature.

We promote a model of exploring your destination in a low-impact, sustainable way. If you are traveling with us, you will find that our activities take you off the beaten track, treat the natural environment and resources gently, and foster real encounters and a deeper understanding of the people and culture.

This is what we do. Below are our suggestions what you as a visitor can do to, and what we ask you to do. The local residents & nature will thank you.

“There are no bad tourists, but poorly informed travelers”

Lonely Planet, 1997.

I. Before traveling

Learn about your destination before you get there. You will understand much more of what you are going to experience, have a better rapport with the locals, and avoid misunderstandings and awkward situations.

- **Get informed about the basic facts of your destination:**
Guidebooks are very helpful at this stage: Which language/s are spoken (take a small dictionary!), climate (to pack right), predominant religions and cultural particularities, health and safety and so on. It will help your travel preparations, and make you feel much more familiar and at ease during your stay.
- **Find out about the various formalities and health and hygiene measures:**
Make sure you get your visa and required/recommended vaccinations in time. If you need prescription medicine, bring as much as you need, in case it may not be available locally. Follow the recommendations about food, drinking water etc. To preserve the local population, please respect doses of your treatment (e.g. overdosing malaria prevention drugs can increase strain resistance of the mosquito, to the detriment of locals).
- **Gather information about local traditions and customs**
Religion, traditions and culture are unique to each country; knowing at least the basics about your destination will go a long way to avoid misunderstandings or offense. For example, gestures that seem innocuous in some countries may be shocking in others. (e.g: wearing short, skirt or crop top, in a Muslim country could shock the residents.)
- **When planning your trip, choose to travel sustainably**
There is a whole range of brands out there that distinguish themselves from mass tourism, like Eco tourism, responsible tourism, fair tourism, solidarity tourism, etc. The important feature to look out for is their attitude towards nature and people, and how they act responsibly towards them.
- **Choose accommodations that are locally owned:**
Local business owners pay taxes locally and carry certain responsibilities for their community that international chains don't have. By giving your business to them, you contribute to the local economy and welfare of the community. And it will give you more authentic experience, too.
- **Learn a few words in the local language:**
Just some simple words of politeness such as "thank you", "hello", "goodbye", "please", "sorry" ... will open many doors for you. You show your interest and respect, and people will love it!

II. During your trip

During your visit to a foreign country, even small things will make a difference in what you experience and how the local people are experiencing you. Your gestures of respect and consideration will go a long way to making your holiday and your encounters a success; and being in tune with your environment will open many doors for you.

- *About contact with the residents*

- **Respect the customs and traditions of local life:**

Depending on the destination, wear suitable outfits. In Tanzania and Zanzibar, this means unrevealing clothes that cover your shoulders and reach at least mid-thigh – better to the knees.

Respect people's privacy and cultural/religious taboos. If in doubt, ask your guide or local people about the appropriate behavior.

- **Ask for permission to take pictures of people:**

Always ask permission before photographing or filming a person and accept a no as a no. If it is a child, ask the parents. Often there are religious and cultural reasons why people don't want to have their picture taken. Asking for permission in a friendly way may also initiate a nice contact.

- **Don't display your wealth:**

Don't flash large amounts of money, expensive jewelry and other valuables. Remember, your smartphone, camera or necklace may well be worth several months' wages for a local person.

- **Tips, presents and donations:**

Giving things, and especially money, away is not always a good thing. It is tempting in view of the imbalance of wealth travelers are often confronted with in poor countries. And it can happen that you are directly approached and asked for money. But there are some aspects to consider:

Tips are generally appreciated. They should reflect the service rendered and not be overdone. If you give the equivalent of a day's wage for a service that took 5 minutes, it can upset the social balance.

A specific case is handing out money to a child. If the child can earn more for being cute or posing for a picture than the parents earn for a full day's work, it may encourage them to send their children begging rather than to school. Never give money or valuable presents to children!

If you want to do something good in your host country, give to a charitable cause or project rather than to individuals.

- **Denounce the sexual exploitation of children:**

If you witness or have suspicions that a child is being sexually abused, do not hesitate to discuss it with your tour operator and/or the competent authorities.

- *About your consumption during your trip*

- **Choose to eat in local restaurants:**

They will usually offer a more authentic cuisine and experience. Also, as mentioned above, local businesses contribute much more to the community wellbeing than big international chains.

- **Buy souvenirs that are locally and sustainably produced:**

In each country, there are typical objects that are rooted in tradition and crafted locally. By preferring these, you will bring back home something authentic from your holiday destination, rather than nondescript items that are produced en masse in sweatshops and exported worldwide. You also show appreciation for the culture of your destination and support local small industries.

Do not buy objects whose production damages nature or encourages poaching, like shells, ivory, protected plants, precious timber etc.

Unique sacred or heritage objects should remain in the country where they belong. International “collectors” encourage the locals to sell them, which results in degradation of heritage and loss of parts of the country’s history.

- **Avoid waste:**

Just a few easy gestures will reduce your ecological impact: Buy drinks in deposit bottles rather than cans or one-way plastic bottles, favor large water bottles over small ones, minimize the use of plastic bags (which are banned in Tanzania), and buy local products to avoid long-range transport.

- *About the environment*

- **Be thoughtful about your use of resources:**

Switch off lights, fans and air conditioners if you are not in the room, and conserve water.

- **Recycle:**

Not every country has an advanced recycling system, and of course avoiding waste is always the preferable option. What can be recycled should be recycled, so please inform yourself about the applied policy in your destination and comply with it. Minimize the use of hard-to-recycle materials: batteries, syringes, medicine and other hazardous materials. In most developing countries, they may end up in open garbage dumps that humans and animals scour for food and usable things. If in any doubt, take these items back home and dispose of them safely.

- **Do not disturb ecosystems:**

Please do not touch or feed wild animals; it may change their natural behavior patterns and consequently endanger them. Sand, shells, coral, wild plants etc. are all part of a sensitive ecosystem. Taking them away disturbs the balance of this system. Enjoy them, but please leave them where they belong.

- **Reduce your own emissions:** Please use environmentally friendly toiletries, sunscreen, cleaning products etc., so as not to pollute the waters and soil.

- *About tourist activities*

- **Don't go where everyone goes, when everyone goes:**

Many of the main tourist attractions suffer from too many visitors, cars, feet stomping around, waste left behind etc. Often there are alternative activities "off the beaten track" that are just as interesting. If you are ready to try something new, you won't be sharing the place with busloads of other visitors and won't contribute to the environmental damage over-frequenting can cause.

For the "main track", chose the quieter hours of the day or the low season.

- **Choose environmentally friendly activities:**

Favor activities that have a low ecological footprint.

Some activities disturb or damage the eco-system, like quad, jet-ski, or motocross. Try more ecologically sound alternatives, like horse riding, cycling, parasailing, stand-up paddling, canoeing etc.

Consider using public/shared transport when feasible.

- **Be sensitive about animal treatment:**

Some activities that are offered for tourists involve the mistreatment of animals – keeping wild animals in captivity, chasing them or training them to perform for the amusement of visitors. Please do not encourage this kind of market! If you wish to be in touch with animals, favor providers and activities that have animal welfare at their heart. It is much more fulfilling to watch animals in their habitat or interact with animals that are treated well and in accordance with their natural behavior.

- **Respect the laws and standards of your destination:**

Rules usually have some sense and meaning. Even if those are not entirely clear to you, please follow the instructions given to you by officials, security personnel or your guide. If something is forbidden or discouraged, please don't do it. It is simply good practice for a visitor to respect rules and boundaries; apart from that, it's not funny to get into tussle with local authorities. So, pay your entrance fees, follow instructions, and don't try to bribe your way.

- **Sex tourism and prostitution:**

In short: Please don't make use of it. It undermines traditional values, mutual respect and the health and wellbeing of everyone involved.

- **Treat the places you visit with respect and circumspection:**

When visiting a monument, don't climb statues, walls, etc., and don't take a piece as a souvenir - however tempting all this may be.

Particularly places that see a lot of visitor's daily benefit even from small gestures of consideration: stay on the paths, watch your steps, your bag or backpack, so as not to cause accidental damage; and take photos or use flashlight only where it is allowed.

III. After your trip

Once you have returned home from an exciting holiday, full of memories, stories and new experiences, there is still some good you can do:

- **Honor your promises and commitments:**
If you have promised to send photos, letters or a gift, please keep your word. Your local acquaintances love receiving a package or even just a postcard from the other side of the world - we have often been shown such a trophy with pride.
- **Offset some of your travel-related emissions:**
If you wish, you can support local and/or green initiatives to offset emissions from your trip.
- **Promote better ways of travelling:**
Tell people about your experience with sensitive, slow and sustainable tourism. If more and more people become aware of, and choose, alternatives to mass tourism, it will gradually change the market.
- **Share your experience and inspire others:**
Re-telling and re-living your adventures is a big part of the fun. And it may do some good, too. Your stories may foster a better understanding and a deeper interest for your holiday destination among your friends.
Whether on social networks, a family reunion or an exhibition, talk about your trip, the richness and fragility of our planet, and help raise awareness what we can do to preserve it.

*“Only the imprint of our steps must remain behind us, let our hosts
have the best of memories.”*

Quote from the first ethical charter of the traveler, 1996.

Amo Zanzibar Tours & Safari's Team
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