



Code of Conduct for Arctic Tourists

1. Make Tourism and Conservation Compatible

- The money you spend on your trip helps determine the development and direction of Arctic tourism. Use your money to support reputable, conservation-minded tour operators and suppliers.
- Get any necessary permits before visiting nature reserves or other protected areas. Leave these areas as you found them and do not disturb the wildlife there.
- Find out about and follow the laws and regulations that protect wildlife in the areas you will visit, and follow them. Learn about the endangered species in these areas, and avoid hunting and fishing of these species, or buying products made from them.
- Your feedback makes a difference. If a tour, tourist service, or supplier was environmentally sensitive and informative, or if it could have been better, tell the owner or operator.
- Become a member of Arctic conservation organisations, and support Arctic conservation projects.

2. Support the Preservation of Wilderness and Biodiversity

- Learn about efforts to conserve Arctic wildlife and habitat, and support them by, for example, giving money, doing volunteer work, educating others on conservation or lobbying governments and business.
- The large undisturbed wilderness areas of the Arctic are a unique environmental resource. Oppose development that fragments these areas or that may disrupt wildlife populations and ecosystems.
- Visit parks and nature reserves. Visitor demand and tourist expenditures support existing protected areas and can lead to the protection of additional nature areas.

3. Use Natural Resources in a Sustainable Way

- Walk or use skis, kayaks, boats, dogsleds or other non-motorised means of transportation as much as possible to avoid noise pollution and minimise terrain damage. In particular, minimise use of snow scooters, especially where the snow cover is thin.

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- View and photograph wildlife from a distance and remember that in the optimal wildlife viewing experience, the animal never knew you were there. Suppress the natural temptation to move too close and respect signs of distress such as alarm calls, distraction displays, laid-back ears, and raised hair.
 - Where laws permit hunting and fishing, obtain the necessary permits, follow all rules, and take only what you require. Fish and hunt only where it is biologically sustainable, and in a manner that does not disrupt local communities.
 - Undeveloped natural areas are a resource too - leave them the way that you found them so that others can enjoy them. Don't collect specimens unless it is allowed or you have a permit to do so. Use minimum impact camping techniques, and use existing campsites and trails rather than creating new ones.
 - If you travel with a tour, ensure that your tour operator briefs you properly beforehand on the area to be visited, and on what you should do to minimise damage to the site.

4. Minimise Consumption, Waste and Pollution

- Your choice of lodging and products and how much you consume makes a difference. Choose biodegradable or recyclable products and products with minimal packaging.
- Use recycling facilities where available. If you travel with a tour, choose a tour operator who recycles.
- Limit energy use, including your use of heat and warm water.
- Leave as little trace as possible of your visit and take your garbage with you.
- Choose transportation with the least environmental impact - avoid the use of fossil fuels and motorised transport.
- Choose lodgings that have effective waste treatment systems, that recycle, that are energy efficient, and, where possible, that use environmentally friendly energy sources such as solar energy or hydroelectric power.

5. Respect Local Cultures

- Learn about the culture and customs of the areas you will visit before you go.
- Respect the rights of Arctic residents. You are most likely to be accepted and welcomed if you travel with an open mind, learn about local culture and traditions, and respect local customs and etiquette.
- If you are not travelling with a tour, let the community you will visit know that you are coming. Supplies are sometimes scarce in the Arctic, so be prepared to bring your own.
- Ask permission before you photograph people or enter their property or living spaces.

6. Respect Historic and Scientific Sites

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- Respect historic sites and markers, and do not take any souvenirs. Even structures and sites that look abandoned may be protected by law or valued by local people.
 - Keep out of abandoned military installations.
 - Respect the work of scientists by arranging your visits to scientific installations beforehand, and by leaving work sites undisturbed.

7. Arctic Communities Should Benefit from Tourism

- The money you spend as a tourist can contribute to the economic survival of the communities you visit.
- Buy local, and choose tour companies, excursions, and suppliers that are locally-owned and that employ local people.
- Buy locally-made products and handicrafts.
- Choose accommodations owned, built, and staffed by local people whenever available.

8. Choose Tours With Trained, Professional Staff

- Select a reputable tour operator who employs trained staff, preferably with Arctic experience.
- Choose a tour operator with staff-client ratio of 15 clients or less per staff member for land-based tours, and 20 passengers or less per staff member for cruises.

9. Make Your Trip an Opportunity to Learn About the Arctic

- Learn about the Arctic environment, particularly in the areas you will visit, before you go. Make your trip an opportunity to learn about conservation in general and Arctic conservation in particular.
- If you travel with a tour, choose one that provides information about the Arctic environment, Arctic conservation, and ways to support Arctic conservation efforts.
- Choose tours and excursions that provide specific information about the climate, species, habitats, local peoples and cultures, and appropriate behaviour in the area you will visit.

10. Follow Safety Rules

- Polar bears, walrus, and muskox are all potentially dangerous and must always be treated with respect. Ensure that you or your group carries guns or other scaring devices in polar bear areas.

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- Sled dogs are working animals. Don't feed or caress them. Dogs and arctic foxes may also carry rabies.
 - Hiking over ice and glaciers demands specific skills in use of ropes, crampons, ice axes, and other safety equipment. Trained guides should be employed.
 - If you go on a trip alone or with others, be sure that local authorities know about your itinerary.
 - Be aware of weather conditions, and be prepared for weather that changes suddenly from pleasant to dangerous. Avoid becoming too cold, tired, or wet.
 - Basic equipment, even for short excursions, includes warm clothes, sturdy footwear, gloves, a hat, and windproof outer garments. A map, emergency rations such as chocolate, and a basic first aid kit are also essential

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