
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

OUR POLICY

At Discover Adventure we have always been committed to responsible and sustainable tourism practices.

We put this in action on each and every trip and through our ongoing partnerships with in-country operators through;

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Discover Adventure operates a policy of working very closely with the local communities through which we pass. Usually the guides, cooks, porters and drivers etc. employed for our trips come from the surrounding villages, as does much of our food and supplies. We aim to aid the local economy at a direct level as much as possible.

'LEAVE NO TRACE' TOURISM

We understand the potential harm that can come from taking groups through many of the delicate environments in which we operate and insist on a policy of 'leave no trace' tourism. We go to great lengths to ensure that we do not harm the areas we pass through and therefore help to promote responsible, sustainable tourism. We put a lot of effort into informing our participants, both before and during their trip, about the impact they can have on a community and environment.



WELFARE OF PORTERS AND LOCAL CREW

Issues surrounding the welfare of porters in developing countries is a topic which has attracted a considerable amount of media attention in recent years. The general welfare of porters - and guides, drivers, cooks and any other local personnel employed on our trips - as well as the standard of their equipment and level of pay, is very important to us and to our ground crew, who generally recruit local staff for our groups. They have a good understanding of these issues and consider them vital to long-term tourism in their local regions - that is one of the reasons we choose to work with them.

RESPONSIBLE GROUND OPERATORS

Our choice of who to work with locally is influenced by such quality-related approaches; while price is important to us (and you), we do not always work with the cheapest supplier. We have long-standing relationships and a good rapport with all our ground crew teams, which involves a strong mutual trust and respect. Many of our ground handlers have been actively involved in setting up schemes for local people and porters, such as clothing banks and education schemes, and are very committed to ensuring that the local people benefit through tourism.

IMPACT IN THE UK

When we plan our charity treks and cycles, any impact on the environment and local communities is always taken into account.

As an experienced tour operator, we can operate group events in rural areas of the UK responsibly and sensitively, all aspects of any event will have been carefully thought through and controlled where deemed necessary – such as the size of the group. In many areas we liaise with the official bodies managing the land, such as Hadrian's Wall Heritage or National Trust. Issues such as car-parking and consideration of local people can be discussed in advance.

Discover Adventure and the experienced tour leaders we employ, many of whom are professional mountain guides, are very aware of environmental issues caused by outdoor pursuits – to say nothing of the safety issues when inexperienced people can underestimate the risks in mountain environments. We are wholeheartedly committed to ensuring that such areas remain for our enjoyment in the decades to come

ACTIVELY SUPPORTING COMMUNITY PROJECTS

In recent years we have become more actively involved in supporting the Vilcanota [tree planting project in Peru](#) where along with donations from our challengers, we have helped to plant over 67,000 trees.

More recently, we have sponsored, Respick to go through mountain guide training in Tanzania so he is now qualified to lead groups of challengers on the mighty trek to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro (look out for him on your next challenge!).

“I've been working on mountain Kilimanjaro since 2009 and I am now 26. I began working as a porter and went on to become first aid trained in 2010. This was when I first worked with a Discover Adventure group – carrying the first aid kit!

Thanks to Discover Adventure and their sponsorship, I am now a qualified mountain guide and now I work as a guide for many different clients on the mountain.

Once again huge thanks to my dear friends Jane & Jonathan Bryan along with the rest of Discover Adventure for your support. Maximum Respect... Hakuna matata, Asante sana .”

Respick

Following the devastating earthquakes in Nepal, April 2015 we have donated funds to the re-build effort. Working with [Support Rural Nepal](#), we have put donations towards the re-building of Nuwakot village.

We are proud to say this was met with overwhelming support and generosity from our clients, who over the years have travelled to Nepal and like us, have many friends there whom they wanted to

support directly. This inspired us to set up our [Nepal Project Trek](#), which will take participants to Nuwakot Village where they will contribute to the building work, whilst also helping to bring the much needed tourism back to Nepal.

We always ensure that our help goes to a worthwhile, long-term project and is managed fairly and with sustainable development in mind.

As well as our own help, whether that's in the form of money, goods, practical help or raising awareness, we encourage many of our groups to bring unwanted books and clothing to be distributed to our porters and other staff if they wish to do so.



PRACTICAL ADVICE

Where environmental issues are concerned, we ask that all of our challengers support us in protecting to the best of our ability the eco-systems through which we travel, by doing the following;

- Keep to designated trails
- Do not take any natural 'souvenirs' – e.g. coral, shells, flowers, fossils, etc. Sometimes coral or other protected and endangered natural products are sold in the tourist markets – please do not support this by buying anything.
- Do not approach wild animals too closely as it narrows their escape route and may alarm or disturb them – and therefore harm you
- Dispose of any rubbish properly during the day or within camp. Even biodegradable matter takes years to decompose in many mountain environments, so please don't just leave it. The

best way to dispose of it should be made clear by your tour leader – if it isn't please ask

- If you are still a smoker, take cigarette butts with you, they take hundreds of years to decompose
- Look after your rubbish and take it with you, even if the local communities you are passing through seem slow to protect their own environment – they often have more immediate issues concerning them.

INTERACTION WITH OTHER CULTURES

Part of the fun, and reward, of discovering new countries and cultures is in meeting the local people and communicating with them – whether with simple smiles and gestures or a few words of the local language. Passing through villages or meeting individuals on remote trails may create a level of interest not witnessed by tourists touring in vehicles, which can provide some fun interactions!



You are certainly more likely to see ways of life which are more traditional and untouched by going on our type of trip. In some cases you may pass through villages or nomadic settlements which have very little contact with other tourists. Most people you will meet will be incredibly friendly, but all cultures are different, so please be aware of the following points to ensure that you do not unwittingly cause offence. If in doubt at any time please just ask your Discover Adventure tour leader or local guide.

DRESS

What you would wear on a hot day in the UK is not necessarily acceptable in countries of different cultures. Women in particular should be modest in dress - avoid tight or 'strappy' tops in favour of regular T-shirts. Shorts should not be too short, and trousers are preferable in rural areas. Men should wear a top at all times. Remember that as well as people you meet along the way, the local support crew will have the same cultural views and while they may be more used to tourists, they may still be offended by inappropriate dress.

As well as shocking local sensibilities and creating offence, in some cultures you (women in particular) will experience hassle from the local people if you are dressed inappropriately by their standards. Some men will not view you as someone they should treat with the same respect they accord their own women. Please do not add to the perception that women from developed countries are 'fair game.' Women out alone at any time, especially in towns, should dress in order to draw as little attention to themselves as possible. In other cultures people are incredibly polite towards tourists and will not show that they are offended, but do not take this to mean that they do not care.

DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

For the same reasons, in many cultures you should tone down any displays of affection in public, especially in rural, more traditional areas, to holding hands – anything more may raise a few eyebrows or make local people feel uncomfortable. In many countries people hold hands with others of the same sex – this does not signify a homosexual relationship but is quite normal among friends.

ALCOHOL

Usually in camp we have some kind of (primitive!) bar system, and sitting around camp with some local wine or beer is a great way to relax after a long day's trek and to get to know your fellow trekkers. Please do keep consumption to fairly moderate levels – behaviour does tend to become less controlled when drinking (!) and not only will you find it harder-going the next day if you drink too much, but drunken behaviour may also offend or confuse the local guides and crew. Bear in mind when celebrating at the end of the trip that towns and cities are not necessarily safe places in which to lower your defences.

HAGGLING

It is expected in many countries that you will haggle for prices. You are not ripping locals off if you knock their prices down, but you will risk damaging the structure of their way of life and economy if you do not. It is also great fun and a good way of interacting with local people. A good rule of thumb is to offer a third of the asking price and meet somewhere in the middle. Learn some numbers in the local language for more successful shopping!

PHOTOGRAPHING LOCAL PEOPLE

Always ask before taking photos of local people; do not point cameras in their faces. They may look very authentic and traditional, but they are still ordinary people who may or may not wish to be photographed – some cultures have superstitions about being captured on film, others may simply be shy or reluctant for other reasons. Some people more used to tourists may ask for payment in exchange for a photo – it is entirely up to you whether you do this or not, but if you agree to pay them, please don't then break the agreement. On the whole we don't encourage paying for photos as it does encourage begging from tourists.

BEGGING

Please do not give money, sweets or pens to children, however cute they look, as it encourages them to beg and creates problems for future travellers. It also encourages parents to take their children out of school as they can bring in more income through begging. A long-term view of education is hard for families who are struggling with poverty. Giving sweets, moreover, leads to dietary and dental problems which parents cannot afford to deal with. What seems like generosity is not. If you feel you would like to give something, make a donation to a local school or hospital – your tour leader or local guides may be able to suggest a way to do this.

LANGUAGE

It is well worth learning a few words of the local language, such as 'hello' and 'goodbye', 'sorry', 'please' and 'thank you', a few numbers, and so on. Something as simple as being able to greet a local person in their own language makes a huge difference to the way they will view you, and you may be surprised by the warmth of their response. Don't worry if you aren't very good at languages

– if you get it wrong you will be appreciated for trying, and being laughed at is a very good ice-breaker!

VOLUNTEER IN THE UK

Discover Adventure and The Conservation Volunteers - responsible teamwork!

Concerned about the environmental impact of your challenge? Already offsetting your carbon emissions but want to do more?

Discover Adventure has teamed up with The Conservation Volunteers - the UK's largest volunteering charity - to encourage you to take practical action to reduce the environmental impact of your trip.

Volunteer with The Conservation Volunteers after your challenge and you could be constructing footpaths, dry stone walling, creating wildlife habitats or planting trees in your local community.

It's the practical way to reduce the impact of your trip.

Check out the volunteering opportunities in your area or call 01302 388883 for more information.

CARBON OFFSETTING

At Discover Adventure we work hard to ensure we provide a first-rate service to the charities and organisations we work with, and all of you who come on our trips. Your safety and trip enjoyment are our priorities. We believe that our trips have many positive advantages for the worldwide communities we work with, the charity you are raising money for and, of course, for you! We are committed to looking after the environment on every level we can, such as reducing and offsetting carbon emissions when possible, and by encouraging you to do the same.

OFFSETTING Co2 EMISSIONS

Climate Care is a service that helps us to repair the damage our activities do to the climate. It does this by 'offsetting' the greenhouse gas emissions, such as CO₂, from our activities by reducing an equivalent amount of CO₂ on our behalf.

These reductions are made through a range of projects in renewable energy and energy efficiency, which not only fight climate change but bring benefits to communities round the world. You can offset emissions from flying, driving and household energy use. The carbon footprint on our trips overall is very low; communal cooking and transport makes a small impact compared to your normal fuel consumption at home and of course your main transport is by foot or bike!

We would like to invite you to make your flights climate neutral by offsetting your flight emissions. Simply use the flight calculator shown here. You can also offset your transport emissions (if, for example, you are taking part in a flight-less challenge, see below) if you wish by using one of the other calculators on [Climate Care's website](#).

