



ANIMAL WELFARE AT A HOLIDAY LOCATION

10 behaviour tips for animal lovers



Holiday time is the most beautiful time of the year. Sunshine, beach, sea and rest, cultural highlights and sightseeing – pure bliss! Relaxing, switching off and refuelling – these are the main reasons for going on holiday and we all want to enjoy this time without a care in the world.

But it is precisely when on holiday that many animal lovers are confronted with animal suffering. In many countries, the suffering of animals is part of everyday life and barely noticed by the locals, often even caused by them.

On beaches, on the street, in hotel compounds – wherever you look, you will see countless stray dogs and cats searching for something to eat or hoping to get a few cuddles. At markets, in the scorching heat, various animals are offered for sale, often sick and emaciated in their far too small boxes and cages, longing for an owner. For entertainment, programs using animals are advertised on the streets and in hotels. Photo opportunities with elephants, snakes, birds and monkeys, horse rides on the beach, animal competitions and other activities are supposed to provide tourists with variety and entertainment and lure money out of their pockets. Restaurant menu items also cause some animal lovers distress when they see exotic, and often protected, animals prepared in all manners.

Things some people find upsetting in their home country will often go unnoticed or be actively ignored when on holiday. They might try exotic delicacies in foreign countries without even realising that this will increase demand.

An attentive animal lover will not miss these animal welfare violations and will want to do something about it, which is why we have compiled the 10 most important tips for animal lovers on how to act while on holiday.

LOCAL ANIMAL WELFARE ORGANISATIONS

1

Support local animal welfare organisations

Before or during your holiday, find out whether there are any local animal welfare organisations at your destination. The website www.worldanimal.net has a list of worldwide animal welfare organisations. Your local travel agent may also be able to give you valuable advice on this. Find out what is needed most urgently. Your donation will probably be the most effective way to help fight animal suffering on a local level.

2

EXPRESS YOUR DISCONTENT

- Complain to the hotel or restaurant management, your tour operator, and the appropriate embassy if you witness animals being abused.
- Document these incidents with photos and make a note of the place, date and circumstances.
- Report animal cruelty to local authorities or the police.

All holiday destinations depend on tourists and are keen to take care of the image they portray to the outside world. The more people denounce animal suffering, the more likely it is that something will change for the better. Never think that you alone cannot make a difference. React and make your contribution!

3

NEUTERING INSTEAD OF FEEDING

Feeding campaigns may be well intended and bring joy to many a cat and dog's heart for a brief moment, but unfortunately, they also contribute to a faster reproduction. Countless street cats and dogs are disposed of after the tourist season – beaten to death, poisoned or shot. Try to arrange the neutering of the animals at your holiday destination. This is the best way to contribute to animal welfare. Neutered animals may also be fed.

Talk to local animal welfare organisations or the hotel management. Often, neutered cats are marked (e.g., with the tip of the ear docked during anaesthesia), giving them a true chance of survival. The hotel management may be willing to tolerate and even care for the neutered animals on the premises.



NO ANIMALS OR ANIMAL PARTS AS SOUVENIRS 4



Animals or their parts are all too readily offered to tourists as souvenirs. Key rings with baby alligator heads, impaled butterflies, preserved snakes and pickled juvenile sharks are sure ways of identifying animal suffering. However, many souvenirs will not be identified as animal products as easily. Bracelets made of elephant hair, earrings made of turtle shell, pictures made of shells, and other items are offered and still enjoy great popularity. 'Medicines' and 'aphrodisiacs' of animal origin will lead some tourists to believe that they will be healthier or more potent after taking them. Hands off anything of animal origin! As a rule, any such item will have caused great animal suffering, and the sale will confirm to the traders that they urgently need to replenish their supplies – so the suffering continues and increases. Besides, there is a risk that the import of the souvenir is prohibited by law and the goods will be confiscated by customs. Instead, take photos of the flora and fauna on holiday and enjoy them.

NO ANIMALS AS ENTERTAINMENT 5

For some tourists, cultural events are simply part of holiday enjoyment. However, many customs and traditions cause animal distress and should be boycotted because the animals are subjected to unnecessary suffering and are rarely kept in humane conditions. Some events even result in the death of the animal. Things that you should particularly boycott are:

- Bullfights, bear fights, dog fights
- Cock fights and other fights between animals or between humans and animals
- Circus performances or shows using wild animals
- Horse and dog races
- Dancing bear shows
- Photo opportunities with animals
- Elephant and horse trekking
- Feeding shows
- and many more



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ANIMALS AT MARKETS

In many countries, all sorts of animals are offered for sale at local markets. Whether puppies, kittens, birds, rabbits or turtles – almost everything is up for sale. Very often the animals are sick, kept in cages that are far too small, exposed to the elements without any protection, and clearly suffering. Freeing an animal from such a predicament will mean a lot to the individual animal. Unfortunately, this will only boost the sales of the trader, who will feel validated in his actions and get more supplies. Instead of buying, contact local authorities or animal welfare organisations. Many countries have animal protection laws – there simply is a lack of enforcement. Please remember: demand drives supply, so do not buy. Do, however, vent your displeasure and make it clear that you will certainly never buy there, precisely because of how badly the animals are kept.



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BEWARE OF IMPORTING ANIMALS

Of course, the temptation is great to take one of the distressed animals home. Before taking such a step, however, you must ensure that the animal has a suitable place to go to in your home country. Bear in mind that not every stray will feel comfortable living in an apartment. There is no point in bringing animals to your country, only for them to end up in an animal shelter. In addition, you must ensure that the animal does not bring any diseases that can be transmitted to other animals or humans. And finally, you will have to observe various regulations, from transport and customs to chipping, vaccinations, and many others. If you do not comply with them, the animal may be confiscated and killed. Check in advance with the authorities of your country about the applicable import regulations.





As romantic as a carriage ride through an old town or horse riding on the beach might sound –these things tend to come at the expense of the animals. Medical care, hoof care, the correct equipment, sufficient food and water, rest periods – these things are often lacking.

In addition, even if this is often done out of ignorance, many tourists know nothing about riding – heavy people will sit on light, often weakened, animals, randomly pulling the reins and injuring the animals' sensitive mouths.

If you have no experience with these types of animals, don't go for a ride or a carriage ride.

If you have experience with these types of animals, check their condition and the material beforehand.

If something isn't right, make a complaint and tell the owners/organisers that you will not go on the ride. If everything is in order, you have luckily found someone who genuinely cares about his or her animal.



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KEEP THE ENVIRONMENT CLEAN

Environmental protection goes hand in hand with animal welfare. Tourists are often a heavy strain on flora and fauna, both on land and in the water. If you follow the following recommendations, you will leave the least negative impact on your holiday destination:

- Enquire about rubbish disposal facilities. If there are none, for example on some islands, take your personal rubbish back home with you, especially batteries, cosmetic bottles, etc. Otherwise, your rubbish will end up in the sea and you may well encounter it again on your next dive.
- Do not touch any marine life, neither fish nor turtles nor corals. Corals are alive and take many years to grow; even an unintentional touch is often enough to kill them. In the underwater world, you are the intruder. Look and admire, but leave no trace!
- Cigarette butts NEVER belong on the ground or in the water. A cigarette filter takes 200 years to be broken down by nature. By then, it will have been eaten by curious animals, who will perish miserably.
- Save energy even while on holiday and only use water, lights and air conditioning when you really need them.

Be mindful of what you eat. Your breakfast egg will often come from a battery farm – something you would condemn at home. The meat is likely to come from factory farming as well. Ask for organic products. Here, again, the rule is: little strokes fell big oaks!

THANK YOU!



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LEAD BY EXAMPLE

When on holiday, act as you would expect tourists to act in your hometown. Make others aware of practices that are dangerous or harmful to the environment or animals.



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