



**Your guide to being
animal friendly
on vacation**

Planning your trip

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Why it's vital to protect animals when you travel

Seeing wild animals when you travel can be such a memorable part of any travel experience. However, you may not be aware these animals often suffer unseen cruelty and abuse.

Wild animals all over the world are being taken from their natural environments to be exploited for entertainment and profit.

Whether bred in captivity or captured from the wild, animals suffer physically and psychologically from not being able to move and behave as they would naturally in the wild.

On your vacation, you may see wild animals performing in shows. You may be approached to pose with animals for photos or be offered souvenirs made from animal skins, shells or bones. Often, the worst cruelty is hidden from view.

Many animals like monkeys, tigers and elephants endure painful training to force them to do unnatural things like give people rides, perform tricks and allow people to get close to them for a photo. These animals typically live their entire lives in conditions that don't even remotely resemble their natural habitat.

Sadly, many tourists who love animals may actually contribute to animal suffering simply because they're unaware of the hidden cruelty.

This guide lets you know what to look out for so you can make informed decisions about animal experiences on your journey.



How do you know if an animal is being treated well ▶

The Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare

How do you know if an attraction or activity can harm an animal? We use the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare as our test. At a minimum, all animals should have the following Five Freedoms:



1 Freedom from hunger or thirst:

Do the animals have ready access to appropriate food and clean water? Many wild animals used to entertain tourists, like elephants and monkeys, are forced to work long hours with limited access to food and fresh water. They may suffer heat stress, exhaustion and dehydration.



2 Freedom from discomfort:

Do the animals have shelter and an adequate place to rest? All animals must be able to stand and lie down comfortably and have shelter. Wild animals used to entertain tourists are often chained and kept on uncomfortable hard floors.



3 Freedom from pain, injury or disease:

Do the animals appear to be injured or in pain? Many wild animals suffer from poor nutrition, lack of veterinary care and injuries as a result of being chained, trained and kept in uncomfortable cages. Some have their jaws tied shut, teeth pulled or claws clipped so they are safer to handle.



4 Freedom to express normal behaviour:

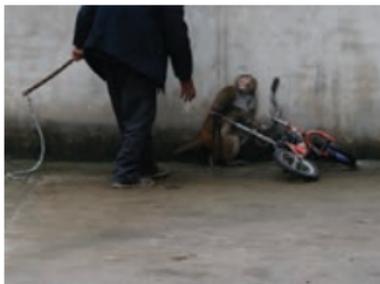
Can the animals move and behave naturally – as they would in the wild? Are they kept in natural social groups? Captive wild animals are often kept in small cages that don't resemble their natural habitat. They get bored and frustrated when they can't express normal behaviour.



5 Freedom from fear and distress:

Do you see signs that the animals are scared? Are they biting the bars of their cage, pacing back and forth or showing other signs of poor mental health? Captive wild animals suffer from fear, distress and psychological trauma caused by close confinement, inadequate conditions and cruel training methods.

Photo: Yongzhi Chu



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If the Five Freedoms aren't being met, this is an indication that the animals are suffering and the attraction or activity is cruel.





Do's and don'ts

DON'T hold wild animals for selfies.

DO take lots of photos of wild animals from a safe and respectful distance.

DON'T watch wild animals perform tricks.

DO watch humans perform tricks in animal-free circuses.

DON'T ride an elephant.

DO watch elephants grazing with their herd in the wild or in a genuine sanctuary.

DON'T swim with dolphins.

DO see them in the wild from a safe and respectful distance with a responsible dolphin-watch tour company.

DON'T buy souvenirs made from wild animals.

DO buy local souvenirs and give back to the local community.

Photo: ©WDabrowka, Kwang @birdexplorers.com



What to look for to ensure an animal attraction is cruelty-free ►



Ask these questions to avoid animal cruelty



- 1 Are wild animals kept in conditions that don't meet the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare?

Photo: iStock. by Getty Images



- 2 Are wild animals forced to perform tricks in shows?



- 3 Are you able to ride, walk or swim with wild animals?



- 4 Are you able to touch, hold or interact with wild animals?



- 5 Does the tour guide chase or lure wild animals closer with food?



- 6 Does the tourist attraction sell parts or products made from wild animals?

If you answered yes to any of these, it's not an animal-friendly attraction.

A simple rule to remember is: if you can ride, hug, or have a selfie with the wild animal, the chances are it's a cruel venue. Don't go.



Sanctuary checklist



Beware of tourist venues that call themselves a sanctuary, rescue centre or park but don't meet the Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare. This checklist will help you recognize a genuine wildlife sanctuary.

A good sanctuary:

- ✓ Does not breed animals unless they are being released into the wild.
- ✓ Does not engage in the commercial trade of animals or animal parts.
- ✓ Does not force animals to perform unnatural acts (like rides, shows and tricks) or to interact with people but instead lets the animals behave naturally.
- ✓ Discourages the keeping of wild animals as pets and for entertainment.
- ✓ Does not take in more animals than it can take care of humanely.

What you can do to help



You can protect animals on your vacation by being informed of the impact of your travel decisions and avoiding cruel attractions. You can be an animal-friendly traveller by following these simple steps:

Do your research and consider the animals: Find out if animal encounters are offered at your hotel or on your tour. Use our guidebook and checklists to assess whether there might be animal cruelty involved before you book.

Think before you buy: Consider what may be a locally-produced souvenir may come from animal skins, shells or bones. Whether the animal is endangered or not, the souvenir may have involved animal cruelty and can drive demand for the illegal wildlife trade.

Only book with travel companies that have committed to protecting animal welfare: Check to see if your travel company or tour operator has an animal welfare policy. If they do, then they have done the research for you! See our list at worldanimalprotection.ca/WildlifeNotEntertainers

Ask your tour guide or travel company to take our pledge to only offer animal-friendly experiences: If the company you are travelling with is not on our animal-friendly list, ask them to sign our pledge committing to never sell, offer or promote cruel tourist attractions or activities.

Join our movement and help us keep wildlife in the wild and end cruel wildlife entertainment: Increased demand for wildlife selfies, elephant rides and other cruel tourist activities means animals continue to suffer for entertainment. Tourists have significant power to help stop this cruelty. Supporters like you helped us convince TripAdvisor to stop selling cruel wildlife attractions. Help grow the movement by visiting worldanimalprotection.ca/WildlifeNotEntertainers



Learn more at

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