



The following responsible travel policy is written with the best intention to help us all make a new world, where no threats will endanger the fragile links between humans and nature. We, at Penguin Travel, would like to welcome you aboard, attempting to reach together this general purpose.

Aims of Penguin Travel:

- to make our products better than our competitors'
- to keep our clients informed and satisfied, to meet their expectations and to create for them memorable and enjoyable experiences
- to spread the idea of the responsible travel and the sustainable tourism among other tourist, travel agencies, social groups and stakeholders
- to conserve resources, to prevent environmental harm and if possible to improve environmental conditions
- to foster public awareness of the environmental and social significance of tourism
- to keep our groups smaller and flexible, being able to provide each particular client with more personalized attitude; this also leads to less impact both on the environment and the people that we visit
- to respect local people, their cultures, traditions, religions and environment

Ethos/mission of Penguin Travel:

We believe that what we have now as an environment is not a legacy from our ancestor but something we have borrowed from our children. We will do our best to preserve it and improve it as much as we can.

Travellers' code of conduct:

- guests are provided with pre-departure information containing detailed trip dossier with day-by-day tour note, pack list, dress code (where applicable), notes about local habits and etiquette instructions (where applicable), weather details, health care, extension suggestions
- guests are given the choice to try local organic food and to taste specific local meals/drinks that represent the local cuisine at its best; also some tours are made to pass through traditional guesthouses where clients could experience the local way of life and to provide opportunities for genuine interaction with natives
- guests on tours with sensitive elements or fragile ecosystems (e.g. areas of breeding rare birds, trails on national parks and reserves, protected areas, caves etc.) are instructed to follow specific on-trail behaviour that would minimize the risk of environmental damages
- wildlife tours are designed to pass through visitors centres in protected areas, where guests can donate directly for nature conservation projects
- guests are given the possibility to visit local crafts and souvenirs shops and also to become a part of local celebrations if such appear by any chance en-route
- guests are insisted to collect their waste if they try to leave such en-route and to keep it until the first appropriate disposal facilities appear
- guests are insisted not to take any wildlife samples with them (flowers, insects etc.)

Guides code of conduct:

- guides are native, positive, responsible, in possession of respectful attitude dealing with guests and the local people

- guides ensure the tour goes smoothly, without any risks either for guests or for the environment or local people
- guides help guests to choose souvenirs or food that represent the local area at its best
- guides ensure that guests are well prepared for the tour and provide advice in case compensation measures should be taken to improve the guests' preparation
- guides try to raise environmental awareness in both guests and locals
- guides are doing their best to help guests understand more of the culture, history, traditions and language which then helps everyone to feel comfortable and relaxed in the environment and facilitates more interaction

Environmental responsibility:

- we directly support nature conservation projects, donating money, or providing vehicles for different NGO actions like forestation activities, monitoring of waterfowl, winter counts, research projects on specific species/habitats etc.
- we do provide local nature conservation NGO-s with discounted prices on our rent a car services or hostel accommodations for their every day job, workshops, training etc. common initiatives
- we do recycle paper and reuse paper in our office; all printer cartridges (incl. laser jets') are also subjects of regular recycling
- we have adopted a variety of energy efficiency measures at our offices like outer wall insulation, energy saving light bulbs etc.
- a bird feeder, supplied with huge amount of seeds, is always available by our office in severe winters
- a .pdf version of our printed brochure is available for online viewing at the website, which reduces considerably our paper consumption in terms of print runs and mailing envelopes
- refillable plastic water bottles are used whilst on treks; when up in the mountains very often we use natural springs for drinking water
- in our hostels we use professional washing machines for sheets, clothes etc., tuned to wash with the minimum possible water supply
- we neither do enter bird colonies on our birdwatching tours nor visits to rare bird species nests
- on our fishing trips we always endeavour to make clients practise "catch & release"
- on our Brown Bear viewing trips we pay more than usual to the local providers in order to make them see that the profit of several groups per year equals the profit of a hunted bear trophy, but this way the bear still stays alive generating more and more income through the years
- we cooperate closely with one of the biggest Bulgarian nature conservation NGO-s – Balkani Wildlife Society (www.balkani.org), helping them directly or indirectly on many initiatives

Economic responsibility:

- we try to engage local guides not only because they know the paths and local habits better, but also because they know personally the local people, which helps our groups to get a comprehensive insight into their beliefs, problems and concerns
- we encourage the owners of the accommodation facilities we use to demonstrate our guests the merits of their own production (e.g. food, clothes, devices etc.)
- we use small, family run hotels and guesthouses, where guests have a chance to meet and talk with local people

- for our birding tours we pay to local people who do organized feeding of vultures; this scheme has not just doubled the vultures population in the region during the last 15 years, but has also secured a continuous income for the people engaged with their protection; also we pay to use local facilities like hides for taking pictures, observation towers etc.
- for our stationery tours we pay directly to local providers of accommodation and food but on the other hand they earn additionally from clients offering them a variety of attractions (daytime activities like horseriding, rafting, boat trips etc.)

Social responsibility:

- details of the political situation in each country are available at our trip dossiers, that our guests receive prior departure; it is also mentioned there if specifics occur regarding the local dress code, habits and etiquette instructions
- although our clients are suggested many sources to read more about the political situation and the local people, the guides always try to react on the spot in order to prevent any offences that may occur as a result of the interaction with the natives
- in different countries we always use local guides for our group departures but also sometimes send a company representative who accompanies the party
- donations to local churches and monasteries are regularly done by guests if advised by the guide that this is not at variance with the local religious apprehensions
- we always try to make use of local means of accommodations, food and specific entertaining activities
- our guides try to teach guests on common phrases like “Hello”, “Thank you”, “Good morning” etc., which helps a lot to break the ice with the locals