



Your guide to being
animal friendly
on vacation

Planning your trip

Why it's vital to protect animals when you travel	3
Five Domains of Animal Welfare	4
Do's and don'ts	7
Ask these questions to avoid animal cruelty	9
Sanctuary checklist	10
What you can do to help	11



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 worldwide 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.

Five Domains of Animal Welfare

How do you know if an attraction or activity can harm an animal? We use the Five Domains of Animal Welfare, a global framework developed in 1994 and supported by many groups today. At a minimum, all animals should have the following conditions met:



1 Nutrition:
Does the animal have unrestricted daily access to appropriate food and clean drinking 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 Environment:
Does the animal have access to shelter and an environment that meets their species-specific needs? Can they seek privacy?
Wild animals used to entertain tourists are often chained and kept on uncomfortable hard floors. When performing or on display, they cannot retreat to a safe space. They are also often confined to small, barren cages or tanks that prevent them from expressing their natural behaviors.

3 Health:
Does the animal exhibit good health and fitness level?
Many captive 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 as part of being forced to interact with humans.



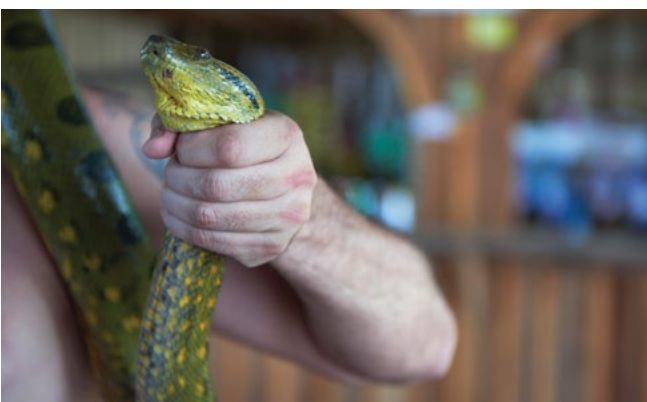
4 Behavior:
Can the animal move and exercise freely and maintain sufficient distance from other animals in case of conflict?
Captive wild animals are often kept in small cages that don't resemble their natural habitat. They get bored and frustrated when they can't express normal behavior. Many live in confined spaces with other members of their species that causes significant stress and may lead to conflict or other harmful social behaviors.



5 Mental state :
Does the animal display positive states, such as pleasure and comfort as opposed to negative states such as fear, hunger, or boredom?
Closed confinement, inadequate conditions, and cruel training methods cause fear, distress, and psychological trauma for captive wild animals. Interactions with and performances for humans are stressful and often done under coercion or by force.



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If you cannot easily identify that all Five Domains are being met, this is an indication that the animal is 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 or visit dolphin shows.

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.



Ask these questions to avoid animal cruelty



1 Are wild animals kept in conditions that restrict their food, health, behavior, or comfort?

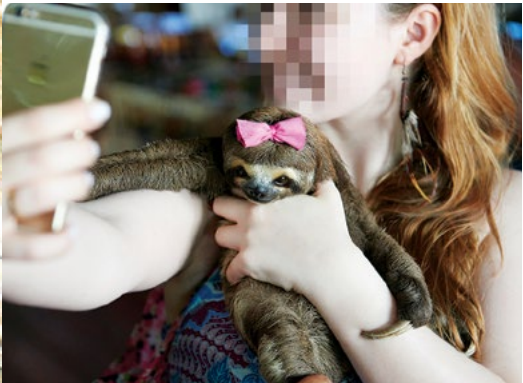
Photo: iStock. by Getty Images



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.



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 traveler by following these simple steps:

Sanctuary checklist



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

A true sanctuary:

- ✓ Does not allow interactions with wild animals, animal performances or shows.
- ✓ Does not breed animals for the purpose of raising them in captivity or to sell to others.
- ✓ Does not engage in the commercial trade of animals or animal parts.
- ✓ Discourages keeping wild animals as pets and using them for entertainment.

Tip: Check out the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), the current gold standard for ensuring animals are protected, with a database of over 150 sanctuaries accredited around the world.

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!

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 and Expedia to stop selling cruel wildlife attractions. Help grow the movement by visiting worldanimalprotection.us/WildlifeNotEntertainers



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