THE RESPONSIBLE TRAVELER

Taken from The International Society for Travel Medicine - to help ensure cross-cultural travel remains safe and beneficial to visitors as well as host countries.

1. Be an Informed Traveler
   - Travelers should utilize all the valuable resources to educate themselves on the specifics about potential health risk, environmental and lifestyle differences, and the cultural and ethical codes of the host country.
   - By educating ourselves and being respectful of a host country’s lifestyles and cultural codes, travelers can remain “good neighbors” and keep traveling safe, fun and educational for the visitor as well as the visited.

2. Be Patient.
   - Not all countries have the rapid pace that we are accustomed to!

   - Many aspects of life will differ when you leave home, this is one of the main reasons for travel – to learn and absorb the culture of other countries.

4. Know the Dos and Don’ts of a Country
   - In many countries the dress code is much more conservative than in Western cultures. Be respectful and adhere to local dress codes.
   - Public displays of affection often cause embarrassment for local residents in countries. Likewise, visible anger may be perceived as offensive.
   - Listen to the way the locals address each other, the senior residents and those with religious affiliations. By being respectful of those titles and mannerisms, often times, unintentional ill will can be avoided.
   - Gestures can also be misinterpreted or carry a different meaning.
   - Be aware of religious holidays and observances and be respectful of the customs that accompany those events.
   - Don’t take souvenirs from a historical, cultural, natural or archaeological site.

5. Respect your Host Country
   - Avoid obvious displays of wealth or handing out money, this may create an immediate barrier and build resentment between you and locals.
   - Bargain for food/products only if it is an acceptable custom, but do not be too aggressive, for many local people these sales are their livelihood.
   - Avoid exploitation of the residents of your host country. Many local employees receive very low pay for long hours, so you want to be sure that you reciprocate fairly when they provide assistance.
   - Avoid the use of renewable resources – don’t insist on a daily shower if water is a scarce commodity.

6. Stay Healthy
   - Many travelers are concerned about the health hazards that will be posed to them, they may not realize that they may also present health issues to the persons they are visiting.
   - Use your common sense. If you are ill with more than a mild cold, do not go out into the public and share your germs. Wash your hand frequently, cough into your sleeve.

   Remember, you are visiting someone else’s home.
   The local people are the core of any destination, respect and be considerate of them so they can make your trip a pleasant, enjoyable experience.