



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICY

### Our Company

At Buen Viaje Tours we're about the spirit of the journey. We take time to create connections with the country, know its people, and continually explore.

Our custom and small group tours are perfect for travelers seeking natural beauty, a cultural experience, and adventure. You'll meet people who live, work, and play in the places we visit. We'll visit their homes and communities. You'll learn about our host countries from the inside out, through the voices of their people, their complex history, and rich culture.

### Aims

Buen Viaje Tours focuses on small group tourism, adhering to the principles of Responsible Tourism environmentally, socially, and economically. We believe this approach can positively affect local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchange and the financial incentive to protect the areas natural environments and cultural traditions.

### Economic Responsibility

We:

- aim to continually improve our performance towards promoting sustainability as it relates to economic issues;
- conduct our business in a way that raises awareness of Responsible Tourism and economic good practice among tour participants, suppliers, and local communities;
- contribute economically to local communities by purchasing locally grown/produced products where possible;
- patronize restaurants and shops which economically benefit local communities (i.e., paying a fair wage, providing safe and healthy working conditions, produce products in a way that minimizes environmental degradation);
- make use of mass transportation;
- arrange homestays, where possible, believing that not only does the money from homestays directly benefit the local community, but guests gain a better understanding of traditional lifestyles;
- use, where possible, locally-owned accommodation rather than large international chains. This ensures that as much tourist revenue as possible remains in our host country;
- advise on a tipping policy for local guides and drivers which rewards excellent service;
- intentionally avoid the traits of 'mass tourism' such as organized shopping stops, dining exclusively at hotel restaurants, and sightseeing from large buses. We believe small group tourism is more economically beneficial to local communities;
- explore away from the tourist 'hot-spots' to areas not often visited, thus the tourist expenditure benefits broader geographic areas, rather than the more popular tourist destinations alone;
- hold an informal chat with newly arrived tour participants at the start of each tour. This is intended to inform participants of current environmental, economic, and social matters relevant to our host country;
- e-mail a travel tips sheet to all tour participants before they arrive, providing them with guidelines on how to travel responsibly when visiting Latin America.



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### Environmental Responsibility

We:

- aim to continually improve performance towards the prevention of pollution and the degradation of the environment;
- conduct our business in a way that minimizes negative environmental impacts and raises awareness of Responsible Tourism and environmental good practice among clients, suppliers, and local communities;
- strive to minimize waste (particularly plastic) in all our activities, and recycle where practical, in addition have a zero litter policy on all our tours;
- support conservation projects carried out in participation with local communities in areas visited by our tour participants;
- encourage our tour participants, suppliers and local communities to minimize water consumption (e.g. short showers, reduce laundry loads);
- encourage our tour participants, suppliers and local communities to minimize energy consumption (e.g., turn off lights, air conditioning, computers, and TVs when not in use);
- minimize the use of printed material (all our tour information is available on our company website), and when printing is undertaken to use the most environmentally friendly option locally available;
- continually source and promote community-based tourism, environmental, and other 'good cause' works in progress which our clients may visit. Many of our tours include options to visit local schools, orphanages, handicraft producers (often employing disadvantaged social groups), animal sanctuaries, centers for former street children;
- favor locally-owned accommodations which have an environmental policy in place, which addresses issues such as, re-using towels and sheets, electricity and water usage, waste management;
- form partnerships with, and support NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) which are working in the area of environmental conservation, and allow our tour participants to learn more about this work and visit areas of progress where practical;
- hold an informal chat with newly arrived guests at the start of each tour. This is intended to inform guests of current environmental, economic, and social matters relevant to our host country;
- e-mail a travel tips sheet to all tour participants before they arrive, providing them with guidelines on how to travel responsibly when visiting Latin America.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICY

### Social Responsibility

We:

- aim to continually improve our performance towards promoting sustainability as it relates to social issues;
- continually source and promote community-based tourism, environmental, and other 'good cause' works in progress which our clients may visit. Many of our tours include options to visit local schools, orphanages, handicraft producers (often employing disadvantaged social groups), animal sanctuaries, centers for former street children;
- patronize restaurants and shops which economically benefit local communities (i.e. paying a fair wage, providing safe and healthy working conditions, produce products in a way that minimizes environmental degradation);
- arrange homestays, where possible, believing that not only does the money from homestays directly benefit the local community, but guests gain an authentic insight into traditional lifestyles;
- form partnerships with and support NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) which are working in the area of local community/social development/empowerment, and allow our tour participants to learn more about this work and visit areas of progress where practical;
- contribute, annually, a percentage of our profits to one or more community-based, locally-run organization working towards a better future for all our host country's people. This annual commitment allows us to develop long-term relationships and engage our travelers on a personal level by visiting works in progress;
- hold an informal chat with newly arrived guests at the start of each tour. This is intended to inform guests of current environmental, economic, and social matters relevant to our host country;
- e-mail a travel tips sheet to all tour participants before they arrive, providing them with guidelines on how to travel responsibly when visiting Latin America.