

Summer Explorers Responsible Tourism Policy

Summer Explorers Pvt Ltd is a destination management and outdoor activities company in Sri Lanka committed to conduct tourism and outdoor activities in a responsible and a sustainable manner, with a significant contribution towards the welfare of the tourism industry, all stake holders involved including the local communities of the areas traveled, wild life and the eco-systems. Therefore the company implements an eco-friendly travel policy whilst ensuring the well being of its stake holders. The key focus on company's responsible tourism policy is on its guests, permanent/contracted employees, local communities, local wild life and eco-systems.

The company takes three key parties/factors in to consideration in implementing the policy:

- Nature & Wild life
- Our employees and local community
- Our guests

In doing so Summer Explorers follows the 'Leave No Trace' principals of outdoor skills and ethics (<https://Int.org/learn/7-principles>). The co-founder of the company is a certified 'Leave No Trace' trainer and the company contributes in creating awareness on 'Leave No Trace' concepts in Sri Lanka. All Summer Explorers activities, tours and adventures follow the 'Leave No Trace' principals and all their permanent and contracted staff are trained on following these principals.

Founders Summer Explorers comes from a strong Buddhist back ground where compassion, honesty, kindness and care is at the core of all practices. These qualities stays at the fore front of creating these policies by its founders.

Our give back policy

We believe that it's essential to give back to the nature, wild life, animals and local community, of which we earn our income from whilst conserving them as they are for the future generations. Therefore 10% of our profits are allocated for "Summer Explorers' Treasures" where we contribute to the well being of local communities in rural areas, wild life conservation, Reforestation & anti pollution activities, animal welfare, under privileged child care, environmental protection & conservation.

Our commitment towards Nature, wild life and animals

For the well being of wild life and animals the company have chosen not to promote the following tourism activities:

- **We don't promote elephant rides**

Elephant rides require captivity of wild elephants and putting them in harassing conditions to tame wild elephants. This also requires the elephants having to wear a heavy stage which

unhealthy for them. We do not believe that people can enjoy at the cost of harassment to another living being who's meant to be in the wild.

- **We don't promote Pinnawala elephant orphanage**

We don't see the purpose of elephant conservation happening in Pinnawala elephant orphanage or any sort of releasing to the wild. It puts the elephants on an unnecessary parade for tourism purposes and also keeps elephants in captivity unnecessarily for tourism purposes. A proper elephant conservation project needs to be located close to a national park where elephants live in.

- **We don't promote visiting of turtle hatcheries and releasing baby turtles to the sea**

There aren't any scientific evidence to support that baby turtles need to be conserved in cement tanks and trained for the sea for the amount of time they keep the hatchlings in cement tanks. In fact in a turtle's life the best time of immunity with the best possibility of survival is in the first two days.

- **We do not promote zoos or any animal carnival or shows**

We do not promote any place, zoos or shows where animals are kept in captivity as a tourist attractions. The only way we believe that wild animals should be seen is in their natural habitats in the wild.

- **We do not promote fishing**

We see that the intention of a fishing tour is causing harm or killing an animal for one's self satisfaction which is an unacceptable tourism activity. Therefore we do not promote or provide fishing boat rides or any fishing activity.

- **We encourage use of reusable and environment friendly material during tours**

When it comes to usage of drinking straws, plates, cutlery we encourage the use of products which are reusable or made with environment friendly material such as Arica, banana leaf or bamboo as alternatives to plastic disposable material. As a contribution to this movement we provide guests with a reusable bamboo straw at the beginning of the tour as a gift to be used during the tour and to take it with them for future use as well. We try our best to use biodegradable or compostable material as packing as much as possible, depending on the availability.

- **We discourage harm to trees & nature**

We thoroughly discourage harming trees, plants or any other parts of nature and irresponsible disposal of harmful material such as polythene. In order to avoid such situations, we provide our guests with certain items in the start of the tour such as reusable eco-friendly straws to avoid the use of plastic straws.

- **We do not use single use plastic waterbottles**

We have stopped providing water for guests in single use plastic bottles as they are major contributors to ocean and land pollution. They end up in landfills without being decayed and we have realized that for a single day we will add 4 such bottles in a tour if we use them. Instead we provide a reusable water bottle and refills with filtered or boiled water along the way.

- **Carbon off-setting reforestation**

Although this may not be a permanent fix for Carbon Emission during tours, we try to be carbon neutral by contributing 1 tree for every 100km driven during a tour for reforestation programs in the Knuckles & Sinharaja Rainforest areas or Mangrove regrowth programs in Kalpitiya areas.

Our commitment towards local communities and employees

- **We source food, activities and assisting staff from local communities**

We have selected facilities and facilitators of activities from the respective region of people who are living there and from the local communities. Therefore we only operate with groups & companies who use local communities as staff.

- **We pay a fair price to the local communities for products and services**

We are well aware of the fair price of products and services in local areas. Therefore while ensuring that local communities do not over price products and services, we also ensure that a fair price is paid to the local communities. Hence we do not negotiate unnecessarily.

- **We believe in fair facilities for our employees**

Although outsourced, we believe that tourist drivers and tourist guides are also employees of [Summer Explorers](#). Therefore their well being, welfare and health is our responsibility. Our safety policies also consists of their safety & good health. For this, we are implementing the following measurements during our tours:

- The driver needs to be given a rest for 5-10 minutes minimum for every 2 hours or every 60km
- Unless there is a drier need or the final drop is due on the same day we do not travel after 8pm. The tours are planned for the guests to be dropped off at the hotel before 8pm. Once the guests are dropped and the driver retires to his quarters the driver should not be called, unless due to an emergency
- The drivers' quarters in most hotels in Sri Lanka are in poor conditions and does not provide quality food. Therefore we book accommodation for our drivers and

guides outside the guests' hotel, in comfortable places where they are able to take a proper rest.

- We ensure a fair daily allowance is paid to both the guide and the driver whilst their meals are also provided by the company unless the hotel of the guests provides acceptable accommodation and meals to both the driver and the guide

Our commitment towards our customers

Our customers are very important to us since it is because of them that we grow and are able to sustain our business.

- **We respect & protect a tourist's right to pay a fair price for excursions**

It is common in most countries of this part of the world to 'rip off' tourists by charging unfair amounts for activities and excursions. However, the same activities when requested by travel agents are offered with a much lesser price. Therefore when we are preparing tour packages, we include the activity cost provided to travel agents and charge the guests for the activities when finalizing the package. Then the travelers would have confirmed all excursions when finalizing the package and there is complete transparency on what they will do in Sri Lanka. The package price will always include the cost of activities. This way we protect our guests from being 'ripped off' by excursion providers.

- **We give a total experience which includes local food experience as well**

We believe that to experience a country, one must experience the local cuisine as well. Therefore our packages include all three meals and snacks for the guests to give a total local experience. This way we can also ensure food hygiene.

- **We ensure the safety of guests at the fore front of all services**

While ensuring that our guests have a good time in Sri Lanka, we also ensure the safety of our guests. Therefore we have strict safety and legal standards, especially during adventure activities. For this following measures are taken:

- We only partner with selected organization who employees experienced and qualified adventure instructors who are the industry leaders for activities where [Summer Explorers](#) Guides are not competent and qualified for
- We brief the guests of all safety protocols at the beginning of the activity. If a guests would tend to ignore such protocols, we will not carry forward with the activity

- Due to weather changes if the activities may look dangerous we will not carry out the activities and would consider a refund for the cost of the particular activity
- We only deploy vehicles which we consider to be safe. Under no circumstance do we compromise this factor
- Our drivers and guides are strictly advised on our safety standards. Therefore a guest is requested from unnecessarily influencing them to overrule the safety standards
- As per the regulations of Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, [Summer Explorers](#) tours will always be guided by a licensed tour guide holding a valid license. Where the service of a tour guide is not required by the guest a certified tourist driver or a chauffer guide will be the designated driver of the vehicle.