



## Respect NATURE!

Every time we visit nature, we have an impact on it with our actions. Therefore, it is crucial to minimise this impact to preserve nature for other visitors and of course, to keep it in a good state for the wildlife and the plants that inhabit it. In nature, we are only visitors, so it is our responsibility to keep it undisturbed.

Respect Nature will inform you how to behave outdoors to protect the nature you love as best as possible. Recreation can have a severe impact on the nature around us, and through the following nine guidelines you will learn how to minimise that impact.



Majella, Italy



## Know where you go

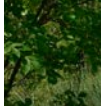
Inform yourselves about the area you want to explore. Before heading out, plan your trip carefully by looking at the maps, find places to rest, and pack your gear appropriately. Check the weather forecast and make sure to bring proper gear, such as warm clothes, hiking boots, gloves and hats, rain jackets, plenty of food and water as well as sun cream and in some regions of Europe insect repellent. Make sure to not take more things than you will actually need, as a heavy backpack will tire you out.

Depending on the length of your trip, be sure you have the needed skills, such as first aid or navigation in the back-country. Ensure you are of sufficient physical fitness and learn about any specific skills you may need to stay safe in the area you are going to. This is especially important in the mountains.

Always carry a map with you and be aware of your location. Do not just rely on your smartphone. If you do, take an extra power bank, or even better a solar panel, with you to charge your smartphone if needed. Also, let someone know your plan and give them instructions on what to do if you do not return as planned.



Kalkalpen, Austria



## Stay on trails



Majella, Italy



## Minimise camping impact

Outdoor camping in Europe is strictly regulated on a national level and often prohibited. Therefore, inform yourself on local regulations concerning outdoor camping before you head out. In case it is permitted, try to concentrate your activities in the designated area – have the cooking and sleeping area close by unless you are in bear country in the Carpathians, Scandinavia, Spain, Italy or the Balkans. If you are in an area where bears are present, all the food should be stored away from the sleeping area in such a way that access is prevented to bears. If there are no established outdoor campsites, try to find an area where the ground is rocky or stable. Take care to not damage trees when securing the tent or clothes lines.

After leaving the outdoor campsite, make sure that your camping left no trace and all waste including human waste is removed.



Zacharovanyy Kray, Ukraine



## Keep nature clean



Hohe Tauern Wilderness, Austria



## Make fire responsibly

If possible, avoid campfires completely and use a camp stove instead. It is safer to use, works in all conditions and it does not require any natural material to be collected. However, if you still decide to have a campfire, make sure that campfires are allowed in the area and try to use an established fire ring. Always attend the fire, burn the wood completely, scatter the remaining ashes widely and restore the appearance of the fire site. Additionally, only collect deadwood that is small enough to be picked up easily by hand – big logs are often an important habitat for animals – as such small wood will also burn completely.



Uholka Wilderness, Ukraine





Slovensky raj, Slovakia

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## 6 Show respect

Whatever you find in nature should stay in nature – take home just pictures and memories. This includes any natural objects such as nests, feathers, seashells, flowers etc. Show respect especially to archaeological or historic sites. Keep in mind that berry and mushroom picking might be subject to local regulations, so inform yourself in advance about them. Similarly, hunting and fishing is regulated almost everywhere in Europe, so obtain permits in advance if you plan to do this.



Majella, Italy

## 7 Respect wildlife

Only observe wildlife from a distance, using observation areas, platforms and trails when they are present. If an animal detects your presence, move quietly away and avoid quick movements. Do not touch young animals, as their parents may abandon them as a consequence. Additionally, avoid sensitive habitats and times, for example disturbing bats during their winter sleep or birds during the mating season. Never feed animals, as this is bad for their health, changes their natural behaviour, exposes them to predators and may infect them with diseases.

Make sure that your food is stored securely at your campsite, so that it is not attracting wildlife. Wherever you eat, make sure the area remains clean by putting away all trash and even the smallest food scraps.

It is best to leave your pets at home, but if they are travelling with you, always keep them on the leash. Remove your pet faeces either by using a cat hole, or by using a trash can. Also, make sure your dog has all the needed vaccinations.



Synevyr, Ukraine

## 8 Respect others

Respect other visitors by being cooperative with them and do not disturb them by being loud. Be friendly and polite, greet people you meet and wait on the side of the path for them to pass by. Do not disturb other people's equipment and announce your presence when you are passing. If possible inform yourself about their route and inform them about your route.

If you are riding a mountain bike, give hikers always the trail priority. Do not pass them at high speed. Also, do not bike cross country just to pass hikers, as this will damage more nature compared to when you just wait until the hikers have passed.

Also respect any signs informing about possible dangers or alternative routes.



Synevyr, Ukraine



Graubünden, Switzerland

## 9 Respect livestock protection

More and more farmers are protecting their livestock from predation by large carnivores with fences and livestock guarding dogs. Never cross or climb over an electrical fence since you may damage the protection. Also never cross a sheep or cattle herd that is protected by livestock guarding dogs. They protect the animals and see you as an intruder. Try to go around such a herd. Keep your dog very close to you on a leash. If you are approached by horses or cows, take your dog off the leash to not provoke an attack and endanger yourself.

If you are riding a mountain bike, always get off the bike when approaching livestock. Do not pass them at high speed. Never bike through a herd that is protected by livestock guarding dogs.

By following these guidelines, you will help nature stay wild for future generations and protect all its inhabitants. Enjoy your adventure, bring home wonderful memories, photos and stories, and Respect Nature!

# RESPECT NATURE

## Guidelines to enjoy the outdoors



Let's get Wild!!

www.wilderness-society.org