

Best Ways To Preserve Nature While Hiking

Hiking is now the most popular outdoor sport. From multiple day hikes on national trails to day hikes at the local park more people are hiking than ever. Spending time outdoors is good for your body and good for your mind but it's not so great for the [environment](#). More than 10 million people every month are hiking for at least a day. That can put a big strain on the local ecosystem. If you want to do your part to minimize the impact that you make on your favorite hiking trail here are five ways to make sure you're not damaging the landscape when you're hiking:

1. Don't Feed The Wildlife

It's a smart thing to bring some snacks with you when you're hiking because you will get hungry from all that exercise. However, don't ever attempt to share your snacks with any of the local wildlife. Don't throw food on the ground in case some animal is hungry later and finds it. Animals in the wild can't digest human food and some of it could make them very sick. Eat carefully and don't deliberately leave food out or drop food on the ground.

2. Take Pictures, Not Things

When you're hiking you will probably see some pretty flowers, unusual looking branches, or beautiful rocks that you might want to take home with you. Don't take them. If everyone took just a few rocks or picked a few flowers the area would soon be destroyed. Take photos of the pretty things that you see or the unusual rocks or branches but leave the actual items in the environment.

3. Take Your Trash with You

No matter what you bring on a hike with you everything that you bring with you should leave with you. That includes food wrappers, water bottles, packages, napkins, and other trash. If you pack a sandwich or snacks in a reusable cloth bag you can put the trash in that cloth bag and take it with you again. Most trails have trash and recycling bins at the beginning and end of the trail so use those and don't litter or leave trash on the trail.

4. Leave the Animals Alone

Animals in the wild are not there so you can take selfies with them. Most of them are going to be terrified of humans. If you find animals with their babies always leave them alone and don't disturb them. Don't try to approach them or get them to come to you. You can take photos if you do it quietly and don't make a big fuss. Don't shout at the animals, throw things at them, or harass them. Just leave them alone and let them go about their business.

5. Camp Only In Shelters

If you're going on a multiple day hike and you're going to be camping you should only camp in designated shelters or designated camping areas at night. This is for your protection and to protect the natural environment from fires and other accidents. The shelters or campsites should be located about a day's hike from each other so you should easily be able to get from one to another in the course of a day.

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