

Responsible Travel Code of Conduct

Hetta Huskies aims to provide fun, affordable and sustainable travel.

We are committed to responsible travel principles - to operate and travel in a way that is culturally, economically and environmentally responsible.

We aim to:

- Use locally owned infrastructure for accommodation, transport, equipment and food where possible.
- Provide safe wilderness experiences for Hetta Huskies staff and clients.
- Educate clients and our operators about how and why we choose to travel this way.
- Respect local customs and culture and thereby limit negative impacts to the daily lifestyles of local people not involved with our groups.
- Limit the physical impact of trips in all destination communities - particularly in sensitive natural and cultural environments.
- Provide fun enjoyable trips to our clients.
- Give our travelers the best possible activity value in all senses of the word.
- Use local operators that adhere to Hetta Huskies' Responsible Travel Philosophies
- Provide the best possible service to Hetta Huskies travelers and staff.
- Actively discourage the participation of Hetta Huskies groups in activities which exploit animals - wild or domestic.
- Actively ban leader and passenger participation in or endorsement of commercial sexual activities or illegal drug use on Hetta Huskies trips.
- Work to prevent the exploitation of children in tourism.

Responsible Travel Guidelines for Travelers

We ask all of our visitors to respect local rules and values.

Hopefully you have read about the area's cultures and religions prior to visiting since that will no doubt improve your travel experience.

As responsible travelers, we want our type of tourism to be sustainable for the areas we visit, so future travelers can enjoy similar wonderful experiences.

Respecting cultural differences

Things are done differently here!

- Please make sure in your dealings with local people you accept these differences and not try to change them for your own benefit or comfort.
- Remember that many places operate on different concepts of time - things happen when they happen!
- The traveler who wishes to have a happy and successful trip should keep as calm, cheerful and friendly as humanly possible.
- Patience, courtesy and smiles are virtues that open many doors.

Friendships

Making new friends will be one of the greatest joys of your travels but this area receives a large number of tourists so please don't expect special treatment.

On the other hand, accept and enjoy offers of hospitality when you can - by taking the time to chat with the locals you will learn about their daily lives, culture and attitude to life, plus have a very enjoyable time and a few laughs.

This is a chance for them to learn about your culture too.

Consider ways to reciprocate hospitality - e.g. post photos back to their social media platforms.

Don't make promises that you can't keep.

Be prepared for either lots of questions or silence. The natural reticence of the Finnish people will probably override their curiosity so you are not likely to be asked things that you will consider rude or an invasion of privacy. Regardless, respond with patience and a cheery manner. Do, however, be careful about the questions you ask. Concepts of privacy in some countries can be very different to your home country and asking a reindeer herder, for instance, about the number of reindeer they have in their herd, can be considered offensive.

Etiquette

There are a few general codes of behaviour that apply universally when travelling. In most countries it is inappropriate to express anger in a raised voice. Becoming angry is embarrassing to the local people with whom you are dealing - they will not be embarrassed for themselves, but for you making a fool of yourself. 'Keeping face', that subtle but important quality of personal dignity, is important!

Cameras and video cameras

Be aware of the impact of photography. Sensitivity is the key. Please ensure that you ask permission before videoing or taking photographs of people and respect their wishes if they refuse. Minority groups in particular are often unhappy to have their photo taken. If you do take photos, send back copies through your group leader or direct to the people themselves. The locals gain a great buzz from seeing themselves in photos and it encourages a 'sharing' rather than 'taking' attitude towards photography.

Environmental responsibility

Pollution and waste management is a huge problem throughout the world. Try to avoid plastic packaging where possible and take along your own bag when shopping.

The natural environment is also very important. When in the wilderness, we need to make sure our human waste is either buried or smeared away from waterways. Burying or carrying out used toilet paper is a must. Tampons and sanitary pads must also be taken out of the area and disposed of appropriately. Minimise the use of soap or shampoos near rivers and lakes.

Educate by example, rather than through lecturing. You will notice that our guides are generally very good at minimizing their environmental impact when in remote areas.

Dining & shopping

Local culinary delights are part of the joy of travelling! Eat local food and drinks and your money supports the locals, rather than seeking out imported familiar snacks and drinks from home. Buy

handicrafts and art directly from the makers in local villages when you can, rather than from department stores. This may help the maker obtain a better price.

Be careful buying reindeer skins that you buy the treated skins which will be easier to take through customs than the roughly-treated skins used on safaris. In many counties you should avoid contributing to illegal or detrimental trade in wildlife by not purchasing wild animal meats on restaurant menus but in Finland hunting is strictly regulated so if elk, for instance, is on the menu, it will have been shot to maintain the appropriate population size. For anything more exotic than elk, (eg bear), this may not be the case so beware.

Drugs

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any Hetta Huskies trip and the group leader has the right to expel a member of the group if drugs are found in their possession. It must be understood that possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land, but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Similarly, it is pretty inappropriate to come to a safari drunk – it puts the lives of the dogs in particular – but also the lives of the other clients and guides at risk.

The right to develop

Every area obviously has the right to develop and locals in remote places see the materially rich lives of others in the media and naturally yearn for those riches without maybe thinking about the benefits of the small communities and society in which they live. It is important in interactions that a balanced view of development is presented.

Being a responsible traveler doesn't end when your trip does...

At Hetta Huskies part of our travel philosophy is to develop tourism as a two-way means of communication. When you return home from a developing country in particular, we'd like you to think about how you can give something back to the country you visited. You've obviously just spent quite a bit of money on giving yourself a great time by experiencing another culture and meeting the people. Your spending has certainly helped the local economy, but now that you are more aware of the environmental, social, political and cultural problems that the local communities you have visited face, maybe there are other things that can be done to help on an ongoing basis? Money is not the only way you can assist, as simply providing your time and/or skills might be as valuable and useful. Things you could do:

- Become more aware of social media and how the perceptions created through it are often false. Think about the Saami-Lappish-Finnish-Foreign stakeholder groups you encountered in Lapland...the story of who is right and wrong in any given situation is never that simple. Think about the dogs learning to be safe and untangled by living on chains and educate against strident PETA postings advocating against the use of sled dogs since you know the reality having seen how happy it makes them to run and pull.
- Become more aware of your own government's policies and how they influence the 'two-thirds world'.
- Become a volunteer and donate time to aid groups or animal shelters.
- Join a development agency or other group devoted to concerns in developing countries.

- ❑ Be a more environmentally friendly household and help to use the world's resources more efficiently. (Consider becoming vegetarian!).
- ❑ Buy your birthday or Christmas presents at shops run by charitable groups.

Voluntourism and Hetta Huskies

Volunteering is a popular way to be able to 'give something back' to the world - whether to a local community or organisation, the world 'as a whole' or to the natural environment. People give their time, skills and sometimes goods or money towards a positive outcome.

A worthwhile volunteering experience is one that:

- ❑ Brings real benefit to the host community and the volunteer.
- ❑ Doesn't take away a paid job from a local person.
- ❑ Is working with a local partner organisation or community.
- ❑ Is not a 'one hit wonder' but is rather contributing to a structured longer-term program.
- ❑ Offers support and training to the volunteer, so their contribution is appropriate and relevant.
- ❑ Has the right attitude - the volunteers' approach needs to be about what they can learn from the local hosts and the experience.

Worthwhile short term volunteering opportunities are hard to find and expectations should be modest. Motivated volunteers may bring new ideas and solutions together with a fresh perspective which can reinvigorate and inspire those around them – but they also bring the need to constantly train (and therefore longer working hours) and increased risk linked to their lack of knowledge. It generally takes some months before a volunteer adequately understands enough about the culture and working life, to move on from their own steep learning curve and bring positive benefits.

