

FYI ARE YOU A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELER?

To be a responsible traveler, you must respect the area to which you are going. Simply taking in the sights won't work. Before you leave home, consider these points to see if you are a responsible traveler or if your actions could cause adverse cultural, environmental, or economic impacts:

- Have you studied the culture or cultures of your destinations?
- Do you know the basics dos and don'ts of these cultures?
- Will you respect local citizens and refrain from all activities that might change local behaviors?
- Will you walk or use public transportation whenever possible (may be even rent a bicycle)?
- Will you make every effort to not disturb and preserve local flora and fauna?
- Will you reduce and conserve on your power and water consumption?
- Have you researched the names and addresses of local tourism service providers?
- Will you make the extra effort to seek out and support these local service providers?
- Will you make the effort to try locally grown and harvested foods and enjoy local food specialties?

There are many other things to consider, but knowing a bit of the local language, asking questions, and listening will take you a long way in your quest to blend in and enjoy any place your travels take you.

to be industrially developed to achieve a higher standard of living for the local people. It is the influx of tourist *piastres* (the currency of Egypt) that is providing Egypt with the funds necessary to uncover and preserve that culture's ancient past. Spain has similarly used tourism demand to aid in historic preservation. The Spanish government developed a system of inns—*Paradores de Turismo*—that utilizes the room capacity of many of Spain's historic castles, monasteries, and convents. By generating revenue from these classic buildings, Spain can afford to maintain them, preserving them for the future.

Using Culture to Attract Tourists

Remember that culture includes the practices of a society, including its material objects. These practices and objects can be grouped into three categories:

- material goods of culture,
- daily life activities of culture, and
- special expressions of culture (i.e., special events or sites of special historical value).

The material goods of a culture include its distinctive arts and crafts. Daily life activities of a culture include its food and dress forms, its language, and its special ways of playing, living, and working. Special expressions of culture are found in a culture's unique history, architecture, and special traditions. One of the most well-attended cultural expressions in the world is the daily changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace in London.

Think of the many destinations that you might have visited or heard about and consider how many of them attract visitors based on one or more of these elements of culture. Many destinations experience a substantial influx of tourists who are attracted by the local handicrafts and traditions of the area. The American Southwest, for example, is world renowned for its beautiful Native American crafts. The Bahamas are famous for the variety of straw goods produced by its people. Spain attracts tens of thousands of students each year who are studying Spanish. France attracts visitors eager to partake of its renowned cuisine and to view the wealth of art exhibited in its museums and galleries. Greece is a popular tourism destination because of its important historical role in the evolution of Western civilization. And the United States and Canada have turned into the world's playgrounds, attracting millions of international visitors who participate in the vast array of leisure activities available on the North American continent.

Need more examples of the importance of cultural elements in attracting visitors? The Middle East is the cradle of three of the world's most prominent religions—Christianity,