



**explore places no one else goes!**

*sustainable, responsible & ethical trekking*

## **Traveler's Code of Conduct**

As a trekking agency and tour operator dedicated to [Responsible Tourism](#), we want you to take a moment to consider the impact that tourism can have on local communities and the natural environment. The decisions you make as a tourist can have a significant influence, one which continues to be felt long after you leave.

Responsible tourism practices are especially important in off-the-beaten-path areas which are vulnerable to environmental damage and cultural change.

Make sure the trace you leave behind is a positive one. In the following guidelines, we outline

- how to minimize your impact on the areas you visit with Apus Peru
- what is and isn't acceptable behavior
- how to allow for and respect cultural differences

Please take the time read and understand this **Traveler's Code of Conduct**. Don't be shy if you have questions – we are always here to help! And once you've taken this Code to heart, be a positive example to other travelers who haven't!

### ***Day to Day...***

#### **1. Book Early!**

As part of our commitment to responsible tourism, we try to schedule guides, chefs, porters and muleteers at the beginning of each month. Why does this matter? Scheduling in advance builds a more balanced program for our staff, and allows them to plan – very beneficial for those with families!

#### **2. Be sensitive to Local Customs**

Conduct that may be acceptable at home may not be in the Andes! Please be aware that things like recreational drug use, nude sun bathing, loud public conversation and boisterous public behaviour is not appropriate here.

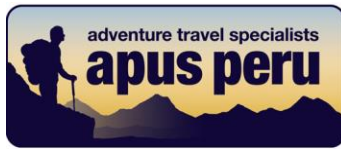
Be aware of your own cultural values, and how they affect your judgement of others. In the Andes, different concepts of time, personal space and communication norms exist. These are not wrong or inferior, just different.

If you encounter some of these cultural differences and notice yourself getting frustrated, try to take a step back and remember that you are the one visiting this new landscape.

#### **3. Be a Positive Cultural Ambassador**

Often our perception of other cultures is skewed by tv and other media. Now is your chance to let everyone know what it's *really* like in your home country! Look for those special moments where you can really connect with someone, whether that's the person next to you on the bus or the person serving your meal, and learn from each other. These are some of the most rewarding experiences you will have on your trip!

Cultural exchange is great, but be mindful about what you choose to share. Photos of your home or on holidays could end up emphasizing difference rather than highlighting similarity and promoting solidarity.



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#### 4. Be Respectful and Responsible

- **Churches** are first and foremost places of worship for local residents. Please be quiet and respectful when you visit them.
- **Photography.** Do you like your photo being taken without your permission? Always **ask first** before taking someone's photo!
- **Do not support** businesses that utilize forced or child labor.
- **Archaeological artifacts and endangered species.** It is **illegal** to remove archaeological objects or artifacts made from exotic or endangered species. **Do not** purchase or take any such items!
- **SAY NO** to sex tourism and human trafficking of any kind, especially that involving children and teens.

#### 5. Be Flexible

One of the best things about traveling to new places are the unexpected and often serendipitous things that can happen. Travel with an open mind and you will *not* be disappointed! When plans change, go with the flow – you never know what amazing new experience it might lead to!

#### 6. Be a Good Shopper

Many visitors to Peru come with the expectation of finding really good deals. While in the urban centres it is often okay to bargain a price down, don't forget that the handful of soles you might be saving actually make a difference to the seller and their livelihood. In remote communities, haggling is not done and can actually seem insulting to the seller. If you are offered a price for something, it is expected you will pay that price.

#### 7. Giving Gifts

Visitors to Peru are often painfully aware of the different standard of living that many Peruvians experience, and feel compelled to do what they can to help. This is a very noble and understandable sentiment, but you must be very careful about what and how you give gifts as they can create undesirable side effects, like corruption, jealousy, and a begging mentality where none existed before.

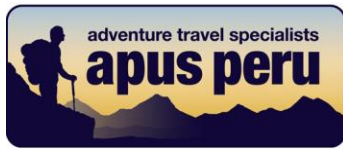
##### Gifts to Avoid

- sweets and candies
- loose change
- anything packaged – packaging will inevitably become litter
- fridge magnets (most rural families do not have refrigerators)

##### Recommended Gifts

- fresh and dried fruit – oranges, peaches, apples, raisins
- bread
- hats, t-shirts
- shampoo, toothbrushes and toothpaste (though the packaging will become litter)
- Spanish language reading books or picture books. Please be sure to give books to the local school. Your guide can accompany you to meet with the teacher. **Do not** give books to individuals.

Don't forget that you are *already giving a gift* to rural families when you book a trek with Apus Peru! \$20 of your trek price is donated to [Threads of Peru](#), a local organization dedicated to providing economic opportunities to rural indigenous women and to preserving the Andean weaving tradition.



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## ***On the Trail...***

Even on the trail, there is lots you can do to minimize your impact and promote responsible tourism. This includes minimizing your consumption of resources, creation of waste, and impact on the natural environment.

### **1. Leave No Trace**

Follow the [International "Leave No Trace" Principles](#):

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Respect wildlife – this includes limiting noise and minimizing light after dark.
- Be considerate of your host and other visitors.

### **2. Respect Environmental Laws**

Many of our treks occur in and around protected areas, and it is important that we all comply with environmental protection laws. We will make you aware of any restrictions or special circumstances at your pre-trek briefing. Your guide will additionally provide you with specific information regarding the protected species you may see on the trail.

In addition,

- Stay on the trail. Don't trample delicate vegetation or remove any form of plant or animal life.
- Do not pick flowers or collect local seeds.
- Don't approach, surround or chase animals you may observe in order to get a photograph.
- Don't attempt to feed animals, and be careful not to leave food around the campsite.
- Relieve yourself in designated areas, or at least 70 meters from any water source. This helps to reduce the contamination of rivers, lakes and streams.

### **3. Properly Dispose of Solid Waste**

Solid waste on the trail is one of the biggest environmental challenges: there is no garbage pickup in the Andes! We organize 8-12 [Clean-Up Treks](#) per year, where passengers give back as they hike by collecting trash left behind by other trekkers. But in between these treks, here are some things you can **do any time** to help keep our trails clean and safe:

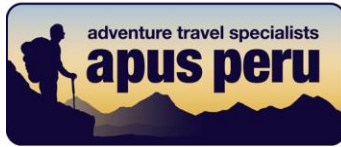
- If you see litter on the trail, collect it.
- Carry out **all trash**. This includes used toilet paper; we recommend bringing a resealable bag to carry it in! Before you leave the campsite in the morning, pick up any small pieces of plastic or other trash you see.
- **Separate organic and inorganic waste**. We compost organic waste wherever possible. Please put all your food waste into the **green plastic bag** provided in the dining tent, and inorganic waste (wrappers, tissues, etc) into the **red bag**.

### **4. Say NO to Plastic Water Bottles and Bags**

Plastic is a huge problem all over the world. **Did you know?** In addition to the water that goes inside, a 1L plastic bottle takes **2L of water and 200mL of oil to produce!** Nearly 200 million bottles are produced **every month** in Peru alone. Empty plastic bottles end up in landfills or, worse, contaminating waterways and natural environments.

**Do your part** to help address this problem and

- **Carry a reusable water bottle** (glass, metal, or BPA-free plastic) and fill it with boiled or treated water.
- Purchase water or soda in reusable glass bottles.



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- Ask your hotel to provide water tanks (*bidones*) or boiled drinking water for refills.
- If you can't avoid carrying a non-refillable plastic water bottle on the trail, **please leave them** with us! We will carry them back to Cusco to make sure they are properly recycled. We participate in a recycling program that **helps provide employment** to men recovering from addictions, helping people and the environment at the same time!
- Reduce the number of plastic bags that get used by **using the cloth snack bags** we provide, using your own reusable bags for groceries, or reusing plastic bags over and over instead of accepting new ones. You can also buy one of the brightly colored "market bags" which doubles as a great souvenir!

## ***In Transit and in Your Hotel...***

### **Conserve Energy and Water**

- Follow your hotel's **towel washing policy** by clearly indicating which towels can be reused to cut down on the amount of laundry it does.
- **Turn taps off** properly and report any leaks or other issues.
- **Turn the lights off** when you leave the room.
- **Don't use electric devices** when not needed.
- Select hotels with **sustainable water and energy use policies**, or encourage your hotel to adopt them!
- Wherever possible, purchase **carbon offset credits** to offset the carbon emissions from your flight.

**Thank You for Being a Conscientious Traveller!**