

Top Ways To Preserve Nature While Hiking

Hiking is already one of the most popular outdoor sports and that popularity is increasing every year. From experienced hikers to beginners who have never hiked before everyone can go for a walk in the natural world and get the same health benefits. Hiking is great exercise and it also can boost your emotional state and help fight the symptoms of depression. However, when you're hiking there are some things that you should always do in order to avoid causing damage to the park, nature preserve, or trails that you're hiking through. When you're hiking you should always:

1. Leave No Trace

When you're hiking you should take a reusable water bottle instead of a plastic water bottle. If you do bring a plastic water bottle throw it out using the trashcans at the head of the trail or at one of the shelters along the trail. Never litter in the hiking area. If you bring snacks pack them in reusable containers instead of plastic wrap or plastic bags. If you're bringing fruit to snack on don't throw the peels or cores on the ground thinking they will break down. Throw them away correctly or take them home and compost them.

2. Stay On The Trails

You might be tempted to walk around slow hikers or avoid parts of the trail that are muddy and wet. Stay on the trails. The trails are designed to allow hikers to move through the area with as little disruption to the natural landscape as possible. Walking off the trail can eventually cause soil erosion and other damage to the area.

3. Clean Up After Yourself

If you are on an overnight hike and you stay at one of the trail shelters always clean up after yourself. Don't leave trash behind that might attract rodents or pests. If you have broken or unusable equipment don't just leave it there. A good rule of thumb is that everything you bring with [you should leave with you](#).

4. Wipe Your Feet

You may not realize that if you hike frequently in different areas your hiking boots could be covered in bacteria and soil and seeds from other areas. But if you are hiking in a new area and your boots have contaminants from other areas on them they could deposit bacteria and other things into the natural landscape and kill plants and trees or deposit seeds from plants that don't grow in that area normally which can change the environmental landscape. After hiking always wipe your boots off or wash them off so you don't cause contamination.

5. Leave The Animals Alone

If you see animals when you're out hiking don't approach them or try to coax them to come out. This isn't a zoo, and those animals are probably not used to humans. You should also

not try to deliberately scare them or shoo them away from your area. Just keep hiking and [leave them alone](#). They will go on about their business and leave you alone as well.

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