



Recommendations for Responsible African and Eurasian Monkey Watching

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Introduction

These recommendations cover primate tourism over Africa, Asia, and Europe (Gibraltar). We provide advice on how to watch monkeys which spend lots of time on the ground as well as in trees.

While there are opportunities for well organised primate-watching in African and Asian national parks, there will also be many occasions when you will encounter monkeys opportunistically, both inside and outside protected areas. Many monkeys can be observed in urban areas and around temples in Asia. There are additional recommendations for unplanned, unmanaged primate-watching.

Below we provide recommendations for both organised and unplanned monkey watching in Africa and Asia.

Recommendations

Before Your Visit

- When choosing a tour operator/tour guide, enquire if they are aware of and follow the recommendations listed in this document.
- Check with your health provider which vaccinations and tests are needed against diseases that you could transmit to local people or monkeys.
- Avoid visiting primate tourism sites during disease outbreaks such as the COVID-19 pandemic (consider supporting the sites remotely during these periods).

- Be particularly conscious of personal hygiene on days prior to visiting monkeys, to avoid contracting or transmitting diseases. For example, wash your hands regularly, physically distance, and wear a mask in crowded places.
- Do not visit primates if you feel unwell or show any sign of illness, to reduce the risk of disease transmission.
- Bring masks and hand sanitisers; wear clean clothes to limit disease transmission. You might be asked to wash/sanitise your hands and soles of your shoes before the start of your visit.
- Bring a pair of binoculars to view the monkeys from a distance.

During your visit/when entering monkey habitat

- Stay on trails if they're available.
- Stay at least 7 metres (23 feet) away from monkeys. If the monkeys approach you, back away calmly.
- Avoid touching the animals or their surroundings for their safety and yours.
- Always wear masks. This is crucial, especially if there is a risk that the minimum distance (7 metres/23 feet) between you and the monkeys may be compromised.

Reduce the risk of aggression/stress/injuries for both you and the monkeys

- Avoid eye contact with monkeys, don't make sudden movements or point at monkeys as they might see these actions as threats.
- Be mindful of your surroundings: always leave monkeys an escape route; do not surround or overcrowd them. Do not put yourself between adult monkeys and their infants.
- Never feed monkeys. Avoid purchasing food from local vendors to feed the monkeys and bringing food and drinks to the area, when possible. Otherwise, ensure food and beverages are kept hidden in an enclosed bag. Never eat or drink when you are near monkeys.
- Be sure that each child under 14 years of age is with an adult.
- Do not leave any litter or body waste in the forest or tourist site.

If you are in a vehicle or boat

- Drive slowly (less than 10km/h; 6–7 mph) on roads where monkeys may be crossing.
- Do not leave your belongings unattended where monkeys can get into them.
- Keep vehicle doors locked and windows always closed to prevent monkeys from attempting to seek food.
- Do not leave any waste (personal or otherwise).
- If in a boat, turn off the engine as soon as it is safe to do so when sighting primates.

Respect monkey welfare

- Refrain from trying to attract monkeys' attention by gesturing, throwing objects or making a noise (e.g., snapping fingers, whistling, or shouting).
- Limit the time spent with each monkey group, so they can recover from your visit. We suggest a maximum of one hour per day.
- Support and enjoy tourist activities and venues that do not involve or keep captive monkeys in inadequate conditions or as entertainers.
- Avoid participating in activities that exploit monkeys as photo props.
- Avoid hotels, bars, and other tourist venues that display monkeys.
- When faced with monkeys kept in poor conditions, do not buy one because you will be assisting the illegal wildlife trade. Report to the local authorities and/or complain to your tour guide and operator.

After your visit

- Consider tipping your guides or donating to the conservation/rehabilitation/education centres you have visited to support local communities, and conservation efforts.
- Follow the [Best Practice Guidelines](#) for responsible images of people and primates if posting photos of your trip on social media.