

Best Ways to Preserve Nature While Hiking

Getting outdoors to hike is a fantastic way to reap the benefits of spending time in nature. Studies have shown that spending time in nature will cause your stress level to drop. And the physical exercise of hiking will keep your heart healthy and give you a great workout without the boredom of working out in the gym.

Every year more than 40 million people go hiking, and that number is increasing rapidly. But, all of those people hiking can cause serious damage to the natural world if they're not careful. Even hikers who don't mean to can damage the ecosystem of the trail or cause damage in the area without knowing it. When you're hiking take care to do these five things so that you're [preserving nature](#) and not hurting it:

Use A Trail Map

These days some hikers think they don't need a trail map because they have a GPS on their phone or fitness tracker. But in some remote areas those might not work, or your battery might die, or something else might happen and then you'll be stuck. If you end up off the trail you may need to wander through the wilderness trying to find it again, damaging plants, grass, and trees as you do. Keep a paper trail map with you so that you don't get lost and you can stay on the trail at all times.

Don't Bother the Animals

As cute as that little fox is, or as carefree as that bunny seems to be, they don't want to interact with you. When you see animals as you're hiking [leave them alone](#). You can grab a quick photo of them if you want to, but do it from a distance and don't bother them. Don't try to scare them, either. If you leave them alone, they will leave you alone. Don't try to lure them with food, and don't leave food out for them. Your food could make them very sick. Just enjoy seeing animals in their natural habitat and then keep hiking.

Pack It In, Pack It Out

You have probably heard many hikers say this, because it's something that is important for hikers to do. It means whatever you bring into the hiking area [should leave with you](#). Water bottles, food containers, napkins, food scraps, and anything else that you bring with you should be taken out with you and thrown away the right way. Don't leave your trash behind, even food scraps. Food doesn't decompose as quickly as you might think.

No Souvenirs

Have you ever seen a field that should be filled with wildflowers but has been stripped of flowers by hikers taking flowers as souvenirs? It doesn't look good, but more importantly when all the flowers are gone it means that bees can't pollinate those flowers and plants in the area and ultimately, the animals, too, will suffer. Never take flowers, rocks, sticks, or other items

from the natural world when you're hiking. Take photos of the things you see that you want to remember, but don't take the actual things.

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