

## Welcome to Your Sustainable Journey!

As you prepare for your visit to Ireland and the UK, we encourage you to travel responsibly and help protect the local environment, communities, and cultural heritage. By making small changes in how we travel, we can make a big difference. In case of accessibility needs or specific requirements, please let us know in advance so we can ensure the best possible experience for you during your visit.

Here are some useful guidelines and resources.

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### 1. Follow Sustainable Practices on Tour

Take a look at our [Tips How to Travel More Sustainably](#) so a summary of responsible travel practices.

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### 2. Practice "Leave No Trace"

- **Plan Ahead & Prepare** – Research the area, follow local rules, and be ready for emergencies.
- **Be Considerate of Others** – Keep noise down, yield on trails, and respect signage.
- **Respect Wildlife & Livestock** – Observe from a distance, don't feed animals, and control pets.
- **Stick to Trails & Durable Surfaces** – Avoid damaging vegetation and fragile ecosystems.
- **Leave What You Find** – Don't pick plants, move rocks, or damage heritage sites.
- **Dispose of Waste Properly** – Take all litter with you, including food scraps and pet waste.
- **Minimize Fire Impact** – Use designated fire pits or stoves and never leave fires unattended.



We invite you to learn more and take the [Love this Place, Leave No Trace Pledge](#)



And how to follow [the UK Countryside Code](#)

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### 3. Protection & Conservation of Nature

- **Protecting Habitats:** Avoid disturbing natural habitats, including plants, rocks, and bodies of water. Even small actions can have significant impacts on fragile ecosystems.



- **Supporting Biodiversity:** Learn about the unique flora and fauna in the area and why they are important to the ecosystem. Share this knowledge with others to inspire conservation.
- **Water Conservation:** Stick to established water sources and avoid polluting them. Use biodegradable soaps if washing outdoors is necessary.
- **Tree and Plant Preservation:** Refrain from carving into trees or damaging vegetation. Healthy plant life is essential for wildlife and soil health.

Click on the links to see the site specific guidelines for:



- [Ireland National Parks Service](#) when visiting any national park in the Republic of Ireland such as Wicklow, Killarney, Connemara, Glenveagh and the Burren
- [Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Geo Park](#) when visiting the Burren and the Cliffs of Moher



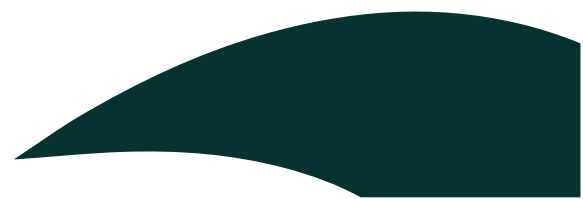
- [National Trust UK](#) when visiting the Giant's Causeway, Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge, Mount Stewart and many more sites in Northern Ireland as well as Stourhead, Lacock Abbey, Erdding and many more sites in Great Britain.
- [National Parks UK](#) when visiting national parks in the UK such as the Cairngorms, Dartmoor and the Lake District.
- [National Trust for Scotland](#)

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#### 4. Animal Welfare & Wildlife Interaction

To keep wildlife, and us, safe please follow these guidelines on tour:

- **Observe from a Distance** – Maintain a respectful distance from animals to avoid disturbing their natural behaviour. Respect nesting and breeding areas and use binoculars or zoom lenses for a closer view.
- **Do Not Feed Wildlife** – Feeding animals disrupts their natural diet, encourages dependency on humans, and can lead to aggressive behaviour.
- **Avoid Loud Noises and Sudden Movements** – Excessive noise and sudden actions can startle wildlife, causing unnecessary stress or flight responses
- **Do Not Touch or Handle Wildlife** – Physical contact can harm animals, transmit diseases, and lead to defensive behaviour.
- **Use Responsible Photography Practices** – Avoid flash photography and maintain a safe, non-intrusive distance when capturing images of wildlife.
- **Follow Local Regulations and Guidelines** – Respect rules set by conservation authorities, national parks, and wildlife reserves.
- **Do not buy illegal products or souvenirs derived from threatened species** – instead opt for pieces and products that are fair trade, made from eco-friendly material and by local artisans.



We also invite you to read the [Abbey Group's Animal Welfare Policy](#).

By staying observant and reporting concerns, you can play a role in protecting wildlife and animal wellbeing. If you have any concerns please report it to your tour guide or fill in our [Environmental & Community Impact Report Form](#).

Signs of distress or illness include:

- Visible injuries, missing fur or feathers. difficulty standing or walking, abnormal body posture, swollen or cloudy eyes
- Breathing difficulties
- Abnormal behaviour such as appearing lethargic, disinterest in food and water while others are feeding, excessive crying, whining or silence form a normally vocal species
- Isolation from group



Ireland's natural environment and wildlife are safeguarded by legislation, including the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2023 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2021. We fully comply with these regulations. For more information please visit: [Legislation | National Parks & Wildlife Service \(npws.ie\)](#)

Follow these links to learn more about the [animal species of Ireland](#) and which are [threatened](#) as identified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Please click on the links below to find out more about the wildlife interaction guidelines of three popular Irish sites:

### [Phoenix Park \(Dublin\)](#)

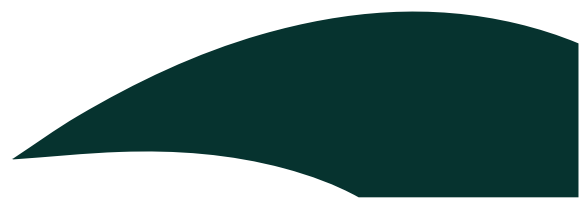
As one of the largest urban parks in Europe, Phoenix Park is a fantastic spot for wildlife watching. It is home to a herd of wild fallow deer that roam freely in the park. The park also has a variety of bird species, including woodpeckers, kestrels, and cormorants. Visitors may also spot squirrels, foxes, and rabbits within the park's lush landscapes.

### [Killarney National Park \(County Kerry\)](#)

This UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is known for its diverse wildlife, including red deer, the native Irish stoat, and the rare Kerry slug. Visitors can also spot a variety of bird species like the golden eagle, which has been reintroduced to the park, and the peregrine falcon. The park's lakes and woodlands offer a habitat for many creatures.

### [The Burren \(County Clare\)](#)

The Burren is a UNESCO Global Geopark with a unique landscape and an abundance of wildlife. It's a prime location for birdwatching, with species like the chough and peregrine falcon. You can also encounter wildflowers, plants, and unusual species like the Irish hare.





In the UK, there are current legislations that are also used to protect its environment and wildlife. These currently include [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) which aims to protect birds, plants and animals. To further safeguard our environment legislation also covers the [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#). There are 9 legislations on these matters and further reading can be found at [UK Legislation](#).

Please click on the links below to find out more about the wildlife interaction guidelines of three popular UK sites:

### [Cairngorms National Park \(The Cairngorms\)](#)

The UK's largest national park, home to rare species like the Scottish wildcat, capercaillie, and golden eagle. A mix of mountains, forests, and moorlands, offering incredible wildlife-watching opportunities.

### [Exmoor National Park \(Somerset and Devon\)](#)

Exmoor is famous for its free-roaming Exmoor ponies and red deer. It offers moorland, coastal cliffs, and deep wooded valleys. It also is home to rich lichen communities, rare fritillary butterflies, bats, and other species uncommon in southern Britain.

### [Lundy Island \(Devon\)](#)

Britain is surrounded by beautiful coastline, with unique wildlife and wonderful examples of Sealife. At Lundy Island you can encounter seabird colonies, including puffins and razorbills. It is also home to seals and unique marine life in its surrounding waters.

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## 5. Protection & Conservation of Cultural Heritage

Please follow these guidelines when visiting heritage sites during your stay:

- **Respect Historical Sites** - Avoid touching, climbing, or removing artifacts from heritage sites.
- **Follow Local Guidelines** - Adhere to site rules, signage, and visitor restrictions.
- **Do Not Deface or Vandalize** - Avoid graffiti, carving, or leaving marks on monuments.
- **Be Mindful of Photography** - Some sites restrict flash photography to protect artwork and artifacts.
- **Learn & Share Knowledge** - Educate yourself about the cultural significance of sites and share respectful tourism practices with others.

We invite you to read our [Abbey Group Policy for Historical and Archaeological Artefacts](#).

Several organisations and government bodies work together to safeguard Ireland's and the UK's cultural heritage for future generations:



1. [National Monuments Service \(NMS\)](#) – Protects archaeological sites and national monuments.
2. [Heritage Council](#) – Advises on heritage conservation and funds local projects.
3. [Office of Public Works \(OPW\)](#) – Manages historic sites and national monuments.
4. [National Museum of Ireland \(NMI\)](#) – Preserves and exhibits cultural artifacts.
5. [Irish Georgian Society](#) – Advocates for historic architecture conservation.
6. [English Heritage](#) – Protects and promotes England’s historic environment
7. [Historic Environment Scotland](#) – Responsible for the care and the promotion of Scotland’s historic Environment
8. [CADW](#) – The Welsh Government’s historic environment service.
9. [The Heritage Fund \(National Lottery Heritage Fund\)](#) – Funds heritage projects across the UK, including natural heritage, historic buildings, and cultural traditions.
10. [UNESCO](#) – Oversees Ireland’s and Britain’s World Heritage Sites under global conservation standards.
11. **Local Authorities & Heritage Officers** – Implement heritage plans at county levels.

  Please take a look at the Irish government’s [Code for Caring for our Monuments](#).

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## 6. Cultural and Local Sensitivity

Fill your mental suitcase with knowledge by immersing yourself in resources about the destination and its history, geography, religion, customs, traditions, and language. Keep an open mind and a curious heart.

1. **Respect Local Customs and Traditions** – The Irish and British value their heritage, so be mindful and respectful of cultural traditions, music, and storytelling.
2. **Be Polite and Friendly** – The Irish are known for their hospitality; a warm greeting and friendly attitude go a long way.
3. **Avoid Stereotypes** – Refrain from using clichés or making assumptions about Irish and British culture, history, or accents.
4. **Understand Pub Culture** – Pubs are social hubs; it’s customary to buy drinks in rounds and not rush through conversations.
5. **Respect Gaelic (Irish Language)** – While English is widely spoken, Irish (Gaeilge) is also an official language. Respect efforts to preserve it, and learn a few words like “Sláinte” (cheers). Whilst Gaelic is not an official language in Scotland it may be spoken and in Wales you may hear them speak their Welsh national language.
6. **Be Mindful of Religion** – Ireland and the UK has a strong religious history; respect places of worship and religious traditions.
7. **Follow Tipping Etiquette** – Tipping is not as rigid as in other countries, but a 10-15% tip in restaurants is appreciated if service is good. Tipping tour guides and drivers is also common practice in Ireland and the UK.
8. **Respect Local Businesses & Services** – Be mindful in shops, restaurants, and public transport, ensuring locals can access services without inconvenience. Where toilets in shops and service stations are used, please support these businesses with a small purchase if you can.



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## 7. Take a stance against exploitation

Be aware of the signs of exploitation, including human trafficking and sex tourism. While Ireland and Britain are generally safe, no place is entirely free from such issues.

- Be mindful of situations where individuals, especially children or vulnerable adults, appear to be coerced into work or interactions.
- Avoid engaging with businesses or activities that seem exploitative, such as unregulated entertainment or tours involving questionable labour practices.
- If you witness anything concerning, report it to local authorities, your tour guide, booking contact or [info@abbeygroup.ie](mailto:info@abbeygroup.ie).

We also invite you to read the [Abbey Group's policy on Child Sex Trafficking](#) and visit the website of [Ecpat](#), the world's largest influencing network fully dedicated to ending the sexual exploitation of children.

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## 8. Safety and Environmental Care

- Follow your guide's instructions at all times.
- Avoid risky activities that could damage the environment or endanger your safety.
- If you see any hazards or environmental issues, inform the guide immediately.

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## 9. Join the Conversation

- **Ask questions and stay curious** - Your tour guide and local hosts are happy to answer any sustainability-related questions.
- **Sustainability is a group effort** - If you have any questions or suggestions about how we can be more eco-friendly, please speak up. Let's learn from each other!

Thank you for taking the time to embrace these sustainable practices and with it joining us in preserving our planet's biodiversity and supporting our local community. Together, we can ensure an enhanced, responsible travel experience for everyone.

If you have any questions, need more information or want to report any concerns, feel free to reach out to your booking contact, contact us at [info@abbeygroup.ie](mailto:info@abbeygroup.ie) or fill in our [Environmental & Community Impact Report Form](#).

