



Tourissimo

Group Travel Etiquette Guide

7 Must-Have Tips to Enjoy Your Holiday Vacation, Build Great Relationships with Your Travel Buddies and Not Aggravate Your Guide!

by Beppe Salerno

Introduction

Ah, travel etiquette!

Each country has a list.

Let's take a look.

French expect their guests to come on time, leave no leftovers on their plate and never ask for a doggy bag.

The Japanese find it sweet when guests bring gifts from their home country.

In China, it's a big no-no to place chopsticks upright in the bowl because it symbolizes death.

When dining in India, always wash your hands before eating and don't ask for pork or beef if they're not on the menu.

Just as different cultures have different expectations, group travel has its own set of rules people have to follow. It doesn't matter if you're travelling with someone you know or with complete strangers.

Russians consider slouching and dawdling as a sign of laziness. So it's best to train yourself on good posture before booking a flight to Moscow.

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own set of rules people have to follow. It doesn't matter if you're travelling with someone you know or with complete strangers.

I will give you some general tips and some specific ones on active travel in small groups, the area that I know best having witnessed many sketchy behaviors since 2000 when I started my career.

My goal is that by the time you're done with this eBook, you'll be able to learn how group travel works and what is the proper guideline to traveling with a group.

I hope you have a great time.

Sincerely,

Beppe

Meet and Greet

I always encourage my guests to arrive 10 - 15 minutes ahead of schedule.

My belief is that we have to be in the moment and have the chance to collect ourselves; bask in the excitement around us and see the smile on other people's faces.

That alone feeds us with a positive energy to bring down our shield and open up ourselves to our travel companions.

The etiquette in meeting and greeting your travel companions is quite simple.

Smile.

Make eye contact.

Offer your right hand with palm facing left, ready to shake hands.

The grip should be firm.

Introduce yourself.

Tour leaders will be instrumental in facilitating the first meeting with the group.

Address the other person by their preferred name. They will love it and will definitely respect you for doing that.

In a group travel, humor is your secret weapon. But it's important to keep it as light as possible so as not to offend the other person. In a multi-day vacation, formalities will naturally fade. But do not force this because we all have different personalities and for some travelers it could take a little time to feel comfortable with humor and jokes.

By all means, be yourself and most likely people will allow your bond.

Be sure to meet your group leader, driver and guide. Give them a short compliment for making this trip possible. Take time to recognize their efforts and tell them how grateful you are for this experience.

Offer some help, but do not insist if other travel companions or guides say that they are fine.

Have a positive attitude. I understand that group travel could be a pain. But trust me, with the right attitude it can be awesome. I witnessed people (complete strangers) becoming friends for life (even husband and wife!).

Complaining, griping or whining is not a good strategy to make your vacation better. In fact, it's better if we keep a cheerful attitude to defuse any tension. Rely on your tour leaders to mitigate conflicts, even potential ones.

Being on Time and Respect Other People's Schedule

This is the most basic etiquette to follow in group travel.

I always suggest to talk with your travel consultant ahead of time. Inform them how and when you plan to arrive. That way, the guides on the ground can plan ahead and adjust the itinerary to accommodate everyone (as much as possible).

Sync your watch or smartphone with your guide and provide an extra cushion for deadlines. Always make an effort to arrive 5 to 10 minutes earlier.

If you wish to spend a night at a local bar, be sure to watch your alcohol intake and avoid crashing by drinking too much. The last thing you want is waking up way past your group's schedule and being the cause of the delay.

Remember, group travel is sharing. Always think about what's best for your group instead of yourself. And that includes how you spend your free time.

I never had any guests be super late; no matter how much wine they had the night before. Although, I just learned of an instance where one person would show up 30 minutes, sometimes an hour late. That is unacceptable.

Hotels and Accommodation

First things first, you should talk with your travel provider regarding hotel and accommodation.

The reservation and services should already be taken care of; all you have to do is go straight to the counter and get the keys. But you should pay your own extras like room services and hotel facilities since most travel providers don't cover that.

Hotel and accommodation are a little bit tricky when you're sharing a room with somebody else.

If you have (or chose) to share, cleanliness should be a priority at all cost. As a traveler myself, I always try giving courtesy to one another by keeping toilets clean after use. Keep toiletries inside the bag unless you want to share it with your roommate. Keep everything clean ... much cleaner than when you found it.

Got snorers in the room?

Don't hesitate to talk to your roommate and ask if they snore. And if they do, ask permission to nudge them gently if they start snoring. Now if your roommate is the one who is on the "receiving" end, then tell them how they can stop you from snoring.

If you like to bring midnight munchies back to your hotel, especially smelly foods, it's better to eat them outside and spare your fellow travelers from offensive odor you might produce.

And please, leave your phones on vibrate mode. Nobody wants to hear loud, beeping noise in the middle of the night. And if the call is important, take it outside and spare everybody from your late night chat.

Lastly, it pays to return room keys. Make sure to hand it over to the counter before you leave. And remember to return your room keys when you depart!

Every year we end up with a collection of hotel keys or had to mail them back. Not cool. And I don't think the hotel key collection will ever be worth much.



Personal Hygiene

The old saying goes like this, “Cleanliness is next to godliness.”

Well, let me rephrase that: Cleanliness is next to friendliness.

If you’re wondering why your fellow campers are avoiding you like a plague, there’s a big chance that you really are. Polyester fabric and other non-natural fibers used in active wear can smell unpleasantly no matter how neat you are.

Nobody wants to sit beside a smelly camper; especially if you’ve been on the road for 6 straight hours under the sweltering heat of an Italian summer.

By now, you should already know the rules:

1. Change your clothes often
2. Shower at least once a day
3. Brush your teeth
4. Wash your hands regularly

And tuck smelly clothes inside a plastic bag or send them straight to the laundry, or give it to the hotel if they provide such service.

Or, bring along a little laundry soap and take care of it yourself. But, do not hang clothes in a way that are visible from the street, if at all possible. If in doubt, ask.

Borrowing and Loaning Items

I'm a big proponent of packing light when traveling. That means when you're in doubt, you better leave that item out.

But that shouldn't excuse you from leaving behind bare essentials like toiletries. Never make it your buddy's problem to keep you clean and smelling fresh. A day of borrowing is okay, but 5 days of using somebody else's shampoo or a multi-tool can bring flare-ups among the group.

Next, never use somebody else's property without their consent, however small these items are. If they do end up letting you borrow their stuff, return it in the exact condition as you borrowed it – even better.

I've seen a lot of travelers lending their bike gear to their group mate only to find their tools in someone else's hands. Unacceptable.

The first thing you have to remember is to never lend anything that you borrowed. And if somehow you did lend it to another person, it's your responsibility to get it back yourself.

Last thing. If you're confused whether it's okay to lend things or not, keep this in mind:

“Only lend things that you'd be okay with never seeing again, and that includes money.”

Money Issues

Speaking of money, settling obligations before you get back home is necessary.

It could be in cash or in check. The important thing is to pay right away to avoid hurt feelings.

Tipping etiquette in each country is as unique as their customs. So, you'd better study the tipping etiquette of the country you're visiting. This is a very good resource on tipping in foreign countries. <http://www.cntraveler.com/stories/2008-11-11/etiquette-101-tipping-guide>

The only advice I can give you, though, is to tip in local currency.

Lastly, I am often asked how much to tip tour leaders for escorted active tours. Take a look at this post for more info: <http://www.tourissimo.travel/blog/what-you-should-know-before-booking-an-active-travel-tour>

Skipping a meal or a dish

I'm thankful to live in a country with a rich food culture.

And I always welcome my clients to try the wonderful flavors of Italian cuisine.

But I'm also aware that not all people can and will appreciate foreign foods.

Part of the reasons are religion, customs, beliefs, health and lifestyle.

I understand that.

Which is why I listed these 4 food etiquettes when skipping a meal or a dish.

Though we are covering travel group etiquette right now, I believe these guidelines are applicable in any situation.

Here they are:

- Inform your tour leader ahead of time about your diet restrictions
- Bringing your own meal is fine especially on a group tour. Sharing your meal could even win you a new set of friends



- Divert the discussion if you're talking with someone who is giving you a hard time about the food you can't or don't eat
- Be polite and courteous. If you're a vegetarian, don't scoff at a slab of juicy steak in front of you. Pass it on to the next person and say, "No, thank you."

And remember ...

Italians expect their guests to eat everything on the plate. They consider it an insult to the cook if you leave a hefty pile of food on your plate.

It is ok to offer others at your table untouched food on your plate. If the food is still on your plate and on its way back to the kitchen, think of an excuse fast!

And Finally...

Before I forget, I've got one final group travel etiquette that you should follow:

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Yes, the Golden Rule.

Honestly, you can scrap these 6 rules and it's totally fine.

Just keep this last rule in mind and you'll find yourself enjoying your vacation even more – with your newfound friends, of course.

Be gracious.

Be thankful.

Be nice.

Be respectful.

Be truthful.

In a world where everything is digital, one of the few remaining human activity is a vacation. Cherish every moment of it and treasure the experience of spending this momentous occasion with your fellow travel companions.

Thanks!

Thank you for reading “Group Travel Etiquette Guide.”
[Click here](#) to learn more about our custom active travel services.

About Tourissimo

Tourissimo creates active vacations that are full of intense meaningful experiences. Our tours are designed (or modified) to suit the ability level of the group. Sometimes we offer two partially different rides or hikes in a day (for participants of different levels), and rest days mid way through the tour.

It takes passion, drive and attention to detail to deliver a superior experience for guests. We are experts in many Italian destinations and we have several decades of combined experience in all facets of the adventure travel industry.

You can learn more at our website:

www.tourissimo.travel