

Best Ways to Preserve Nature While Hiking

Hiking has become even more popular because people are looking for safe ways to get out of the house and get some healthy exercise. Even when the trails are crowded there's plenty of room to social distance. But now that more people are hiking there is a bigger strain on the natural world, and that could cause some natural ecosystems to get wiped out. Hikers can help mitigate the damage that they do when they're hiking by always doing these five things:

Keep Dogs Leashed

Hiking with your furry friend is healthy for both of you, but you are still responsible for your dog when you're hiking. Dogs that aren't leashed can cause chaos in the natural world. Dogs can trample plants, dig up grass and soil, destroy animal's homes and nests, chase or even kill small animals, and bother other hikers. [Keep your dog on a leash](#) when you're hiking and always clean up after your dog the same way that you would anywhere else.

Don't Leave Food Behind

A huge number of hikers think that they're being ecologically responsible by leaving food scraps behind because they assume the remnants of their snacks will decompose and enrich the soil. And it's true, they will, but not for a long time. Before they do they are a risk. As they decompose they create bacteria that can make animals sick and spread disease. Animals who try to eat the leftovers can become sick from eating food not made for them. Don't risk it. Take all of your trash with you when you leave even the food scraps.

Use Reusables

Another way to protect the environment when you're hiking is to pack your food in [reusable containers](#) and use a refillable water bottle. Don't use wasteful single use plastic packaging. You can buy or make handy canvas bags to hold snacks and sandwiches or bring fruit to eat. A large refillable water bottle will ensure that you have enough water to stay hydrated on your hike.

Always Walk On The Trail

Hiking trails were created so that hikers would be able to walk easily through nature while also minimizing the amount of damage those hikers are doing to the environment when they hike. If hikers don't walk on the trails they can do massive damage to the environment in that area. Never make your own shortcuts through the woods or fields. Walk single file on the trail and not next to the trail so that you don't contribute to soil erosion along the trail. Even if the trail is muddy or wet stay on the hiking trail.

Don't Bother The Animals

It's fun to see [animals in the wild](#) when you're hiking but remember that this isn't a zoo. These are wild animals that live in that habitat. You're a guest in their home so you should act like a guest. Walk softly. Don't talk loudly. Don't try to lure the animals over to you. Don't offer them food or try to take photos with them. Take a few photos of them if you want but then move along quietly.

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