

Tourist Desiderata

Desiderata

Go safely upon your travels and rejoice in discovering new lands

Fear not for a place to rest when weary or to wash away the dust of your journey for you will find safe havens to refresh your body and your spirit and give you calm of mind in foreign lands

May you find cool waters to quench your thirst and fine fruits to feast upon

Should you stumble upon the road, know that help is at hand

For there will be those who will understand your ways and do you true service

Part gladly with your worldly goods for true value and exchanges in new lands; and give generously for you will grow in richness of the spirit.

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Be prepared for adversity in uncharted parts, and take great efforts in your planning; your researches will guide you to new places where fresh adventures await you

Take heed from those who may have gone before you and do not travel in ignorance

Once on the road, verily and virtually, know you hold the power to reach loved ones at home, even by your prayers alone

And be assured that news will also reach you of your homeland and the ways of the world

Seek learned guides from amongst the wisest and seek knowledge and guidance from those you can trust and who understand your tongue

What Tourists Need:

Essentials for tourism to take place

- **Personal security:** Ability for the tourist to realistically avoid personal injury or risk to health
- **Clean facilities:** Availability of clean accommodation and access to acceptable toilet facilities
- **Safe food:** Access to clean water and to food which is safe to eat
- **Health services:** Access to health facilities in emergencies
- **Essential contact:** Communication capability - at least the ability to contact authorities or embassies
- **Currency and Value for Money:** A functional currency which is accepted locally. A fair exchange rate and fair pricing for goods and services

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What Tourists Want:

Desirables to sustain tourism

- Ability to book accommodation and tours from abroad
- Good information available in advance regarding conditions, expectations, access.
- Ability to use telephone and/or internet to access home and/or help
- Access to news (print or media) in the language of the traveller
- Availability of guides, information and help in the language of the traveller

<p><i>And may you be led to safe houses for yourself and your possessions</i></p> <p><i>Bask in the warmth of genuine welcome from the stranger</i></p> <p><i>And may you be blessed with new friendships and find pleasure in new experiences</i></p> <p><i>May you find food for body and soul that gives comfort,</i></p> <p><i>And natural havens in which to rest and reflect</i></p> <p><i>Honour your debts and rely upon long-standing merchants who trust your worth</i></p> <p><i>May your chosen path be clear of all obstacles and may you be assisted by kind hands when needed</i></p> <p><i>Seek a path beyond boundaries and beware those who would set barriers or make false promises before you</i></p> <p><i>Do not assume that your chosen path is free of all foes and danger, but extend the hand of peace and friendship</i></p> <p><i>Above all, tread lightly and with great respect,...for you and the stranger are one.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure place to leave valuables (safe or deposit box) • Friendly local residents who welcome tourists • Availability of a variety of experiences in the destination with good value for money • Ability to purchase familiar food • Clean environment -particularly beaches, resorts • A functional exchange system - including use of credit cards, travellers cheques, electronic funds • Access for those who may need assistance to reach key attractions • Absence of paper barriers -requirements for visas, guarantees, deposits, etc. • Absence of harassment • Easy direct flights and convenient connections <p>Sustainable tourism means tourism which benefits both the tourist and the residents of the destination... where both gain from the opportunity to have new experiences.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tourisk Inc. and Wild International 2006</p>
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The Tourist Desiderata has been prepared by Margo Manning and Ted Manning of Tourisk Inc. and Carolyn Wild of Wild International as a stimulus for tourists and destinations to think about what tourists want, and what hosts need to consider. It is provided both in poetic and bureaucratic language, as tourism is not just an industry, but one which deals inherently in images and experiences.

Based on research and consultations in more than 60 countries, this compilation was begun based on work associated with the resurrection of tourism around the Black Sea in the early 1990s, and expanded through workshops and observations regarding tourism in new and mature destinations in Latin America, the Caribbean, South and East Asia, Africa, Australasia and North America. What is clear is that without a number of basics in place, communities and destinations can neither attract tourism nor maintain and sustain it. The practical form of the list is divided into two categories: essentials (which must be in place for any tourism to come) and desirables – which contribute to the ability of destinations to retain tourism and build upon it.

The list which follows takes the desiderata one step further – in what is essentially an applied tool which can help destinations to determine how they fare relative to the Desiderata.

Are you tourism ready?

Identifying key barriers which impede tourism establishment and development:

Access

- Entry documents: Is a visa required. If so, how easy is it to obtain (time required, ease of access to issuing office, documentation required, cost).
- Border procedures: How difficult is it to pass through the border (time, cost, level of formalities, certainty that a traveler will be admitted, allowed to depart). What are the restrictions on export of personal possessions, currency, souvenirs and artefacts?
- Language and communication: To what extent can tourists expect to be able to operate in their own language(s)? If foreign languages are not spoken, what are the provisions to accommodate those who do not understand the local language?
- Ability to arrange travel from abroad: To what extent can travel be arranged from other countries via travel agents, internet, hotel or transportation companies with reasonable assurance that it will work as booked?
- Transportation access: To what extent is the destination accessible by direct flights from key markets? Can transport (to and within the destination) be booked and ticketed from the countries of origin of tourists? Are safety certified transportation modes available?
- Image abroad: What is the perception of the destination by prospective travellers? Does it accurately match the likely experience? Are there elements (crime, disease, security, recent disasters) which will negatively affect the decision at point of purchase?
- Awareness: Is tourist information available from agents, embassies etc. to aid travellers in their decision and understanding of the destination and expected experiences?

Conditions in the Destination

- Personal safety and security: How safe is the destination for tourists? (Key indicators are, health, public security issues) Do tourists feel safe in the destination? Are there frequent reports of crimes, harassment or difficulties with authorities reported in the international press or in the press in places of origin of tourists.
- Currency issues: Can money be easily changed? Is the currency traded internationally? Can international credit cards and travellers cheques be used easily? How accessible is the banking system for foreign tourists? Can the currency be reconverted upon departure?
- Environment and public health: Does the destination have a clean water supply, and functioning sewage treatment system. Is there easy access to clean bottled water? Is there access to satisfactory medical facilities?
- Public environment: Are public areas (roads, beaches, parks) kept clean? Are the attractions and their surrounds maintained? Are clean washrooms available for tourists in most areas they are likely to visit (e.g., beaches, monuments, museums, parks, restaurants)?
- Regional access and internal travel: What is the state of public transport? Do tourists have access to safe vehicles, scheduled transport service which can be reserved? Can tourists obtain help in bus, train or air terminals? Are local taxis or car rentals safe and easy to use?
- Organized tours: Is the tourism industry organized to provide tours for travellers? Are these easily accessible from major hotels or transport nodes? Are they available with trained guides? Are guides able to provide services in the languages of the tourists?

Accommodation

- Hotel accommodation: Is clean, well maintained hotel accommodation available in the destination? Do hotels provide basic services (functional plumbing, hot water, working elevators, climate control)? Is pricing in line with hotels in other tourism destinations with similar quality)? Do hotels provide good security (guards, in-room safes, locked access doors)?
- Service levels: For larger hotels, is a range of services available (e.g., international TV channels, business centre, food services, room service, international telephone access, internet)?
- Food: Is good quality food available and accessible? Are international and local cuisines available? Is the food good value for the price paid?
- Booking: Can accommodation be booked in advance from other countries and cities? Are reservations normally honoured?

Attractions

- Variety: Are there natural assets and cultural assets which are attractive to visitors? Are these easy to get to, and organized to receive tourists? Is information regarding these attractions readily available to visitors – in transport nodes, accommodation, and other sites visited by tourists?
- Maintenance: Are natural and cultural assets managed to sustain their quality? Are there means in place so that tourists can contribute (voluntarily or via entry fees) to the maintenance of the assets?
- Accessibility: Are tourism attractions accessible and affordable? Have provisions been made so that children, the elderly or mobility impaired visitors can have access?
- Cultural impact: Are the local community involved in the planning and maintenance of the attractions? Are they content with the number and behaviour of tourists? Are measures in place to ensure that tourists are not harassed or made to feel uncomfortable when visiting the sites?

Management

- Accountability: Is there a clear authority in charge of the planning and maintenance of the destination and of specific sites
- Control of tourists: Are tourists controlled and managed while in the destination? Is the management suitable and acceptable to most tourists?
- Information: Is information and interpretation available on key sites? Are guides and interpreters trained? Are tourists satisfied with the information?
- Do sites and enterprises have an effective environmental management system in place?

Note that this checklist is a work in progress and is best used in an adapted form to be applied to the specific conditions, assets and issues of any destination. Tourisk Inc. welcomes any suggestions for additions or amendments. See also the 2004 WTO Guidebook on Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations (developed by Tourisk for WTO) for specific measures which can be applied to these criteria.