

A Guide to Being A Kinder Traveler

Much has been written about “hacks” when it comes to being a better traveler. One piece of travel that’s important is how to be kind. Following are a few suggestions from travel and hospitality workers on how you can be a kinder traveler.

ADDRESS WORKERS BY THEIR NAMES “Remember that kind words cost you, the traveler, absolutely nothing, but the benefits can be so rewarding,” said Deserene Miller, who has driven a taxi on Grand Cayman for 31 years. “There’s nothing nicer than having a guest get in my vehicle and say, ‘Morning, Ms. D., how’s your day going so far?’”

OFFER COMPLIMENTS Michaela Octave, who has been a butler at Sugar Beach, a Viceroy Resort on St. Lucia, for 10 years, said she feels motivated by compliments such as “You are the best” and “You are awesome,” and loves when guests ask: “Do you mind if we write something about you on TripAdvisor?”

If writing a note slips your mind while on vacation, the appreciation for email or snail mail is just as strong.

BE CURIOUS ABOUT CULTURE “A kind traveler is always respectful and curious about the cultural significance of the places and people they visit,” said Heather Arnold, the owner of Routes Bicycle Tours of New Mexico. “Sometimes achieving this requires stepping back from the stresses of travel and any personal preconceptions — which can be difficult — but establishing these roots ultimately allows you to better embrace the ‘spirit’ of a place.”

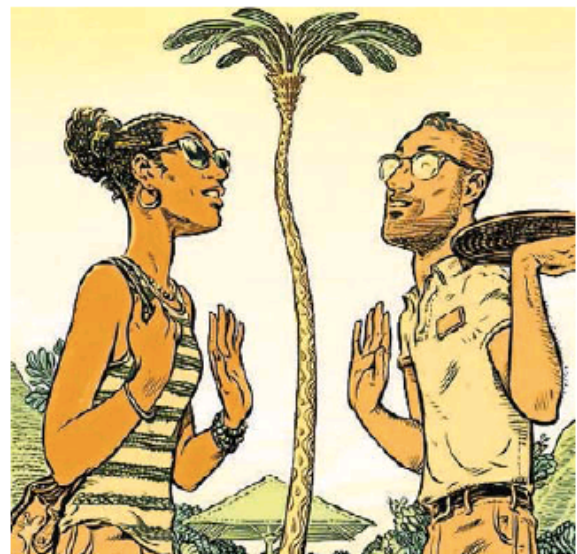
On a similar vein, learn the language or some common phrases. On a trip to Costa Rica, I used my rusty Spanish with the sales manager giving us a tour of the hotel. The manager, Darling Delgado, said it was the first time in four years that someone had really tried to speak her language.

MAKE CONSERVATION EFFORTS In Hawaii, water is considered sacred. “We were taught at a very young age that our waters came from heaven,” said Luana Maitland, the director of cultural programs at the Outrigger resorts in Waikiki, Hawaii. “Don’t leave the faucet running, don’t throw trash into our stream and if you see trash, pick it up.”

REMEMBER THE ART OF SMALL TALK “I always think it is very kind of the guests to ask me to join them for a glass of wine during their stay or event,” said Mimi VanDyk, the catering and conferences services manager at the Harvest Inn in St. Helena, Calif.

After 18 years as the executive chef of Spotted Salamander Cafe in Columbia, S.C., Jessica Shillato has advice that ties it all together: “Behave as if your grandma is at the next table. People should be as nice on the road as they are at home.”

ERINNE MAGEE



LARS LEETARU