

Candelaria Tours Sustainability Report 2017

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Over the years, Candelaria Tours has become extremely conscious of our impact in the environment and our surrounding community. For this reason, we have made a number of changes and compromises to ensure we are able to provide top rate services while remaining as sustainable and responsible as possible. To do this we have made sustainability a core focus in our mission and values as a company. We have also sought out suppliers and purchases that reflect our interests in sustainable travel. Our entire staff has committed to maintaining the changes towards more sustainable practises and this report will detail the ways we are making these changes. A team member has been designated as the Sustainability Coordinator and this person will update this report as needed to be sure all staff are aware of our progress and all information is current.

MISSION

To provide high quality services while trying to leave as small a footprint on the environment as possible, creating positive experiences for our visitors as well as positive opportunities for local people and the indigenous communities that surround us.

Human Resources & Discipline

While our customers are our top priority, here at Candelaria Tours our staff is considered very important to us. We acknowledge that in order to create positive impacts through our company we must ensure our staff is comfortable, safe, and taken care of. Because of this we have done many things to make sure they are treated fairly while employed with us. All staff have legal and medical insurance. They are given fair hours at fair wages regardless of the larger economic situation in Bolivia. We do not discriminate when hiring and we prefer to hire locally to create jobs for people in our community. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated in our office or on any of our tours and managers make themselves available to employees and clients at all times to ensure any concern or discomfort can be voiced in a private setting. Discipline is handled in a professional manner. Employees are given a Code of Conduct and understand our expectations. Situations that require discipline are handled discretely. Stealing, lying, and harassment are never tolerated and result in immediate termination.

Management of Resources

Candelaria Tours is committed to monitoring and reducing the amount of energy, water, waste and fuel consumed and produced each year in order to maximize our efficient use of resources and minimize our carbon footprint. We have taken many steps to work toward our goal of being as sustainable as possible. We have replaced our original lighting with more efficient LED bulbs, and turn off all our electrical equipment at the end of every shift and during weekends. We have reduced the amount of printing in the office and when printing is required we use only black ink and print on both sides of the page whenever possible. We have also taken steps to reduce the amount of CO² going into the atmosphere by buying locally instead of internationally to eliminate the need for extra fuel used when transporting products.

As water is an important factor in the safety of our customers, especially when visiting sites like the Uyuni Salt Flats, we have come up with ways to provide the necessary water while doing so in as sustainable a way as possible. When taking tours to various sites, we provide a single water bottle and ask the visitors to refill their bottle when the water is gone. In this way, they have water to keep them hydrated but we are not wasting multiple bottles and creating excess waste. We never leave our waste when we take groups to different locations. All waste is brought back in reusable bags to the city where there are better facilities for recycling or properly disposing of it. We also use local produce grown at Hacienda Candelaria to make meals to reduce wasting excess packaging.

SUPPLIERS & PURCHASING

Whenever possible our company seeks to do business with organizations and individuals who mirror our values and efforts of sustainable practice and positive impact. Our suppliers, and the products we purchase, are carefully selected due to their efficient use of resources, their locality within Bolivia, and their positive position within the community. We also refuse any business that exploits people or does harm to our communities, landscapes, and wild life.

In order to ensure that the money generated by tourism goes back into local and indigenous villages, we take clients to the markets of Tarabuco and Candelaria where they can buy textiles, foods, and other items of interest directly from the people produce them. On our longer trips out of the city of Sucre we also have contacts who can provide the same type of experience for travellers passing through their cities and towns.

LOCAL COMMUNITY & THE ENVIRONMENTAL

One of the most important factors in any country and for any travel organization is community. Bolivia is a very traditional country and working alongside our community is crucial to our success as a business. Candelaria Tours is committed to working with the community and creating only positive impacts with the people and communities surrounding us. We hire locally to create jobs in our surround area and also purchase locally to generate money in our local economy. Beyond providing for our community we also allow local businesses to promote themselves by leaving flyers in our office. We have started a museum in Candelaria where the local women work and sell their textiles ensuring they are given fair wages for their beautiful work. We encourage our clients to make their purchases here and at the local markets instead of at big shops geared towards tourists that do not provide for the local population but profit off of appropriating their culture.

Another important element of our commitment to sustainability is our commitment to protect and respect the environment. As our tours often take clients into very unique and precious landscapes it is important to us that we keep these spaces clean, healthy, and unharmed. We encourage clients to reuse all plastic items (water bottles, bags, etc.) whenever possible to keep these products out of the environment, reduce waste, and keep habitats healthy and safe for the wildlife. We collect all our trash and return it to the city where there is appropriate means of disposing of it. We discuss local expectations on how to visit sites without negatively affecting the animals, plants or people, and we report any abuse or wrongdoing that could result in negative impacts to the environment to the appropriate authority.

CLIENTS

Our clients have come to expect high quality service from our tours and trustworthy and sufficient information when communicating with us. Though this communication we are clear about our dedication to becoming as sustainable as possible. When recommending transportation or activities to clients we always suggest alternatives that leave a smaller carbon foot print and that helps generate money in the local economy. We also inform them of the local laws, local etiquette, and local expectations so they are prepared for their travels but also able to show respect to our local community and environment.

The safety and health of our clients is of paramount importance. Many of the sites we visit are in extreme landscapes and we take it upon ourselves to be responsible for everyone's health and security. This includes our customers, drivers, staff, and the locals who we encounter in our travels. Some of the precautions we take to ensure safety on ours trips are as follows:

- Taking oxygen in all of our cars to Uyuni (and to all other locations) both for in car use and use while walking around the highly elevated sites

- Satellite phones are available in all of our vehicles so even in case of an emergency we are never unable to communicate with our groups and they are always able to call for help
- Water bottles are provided for proper hydration
- All clients are asked about food allergies or restrictions ahead of time so we are able to substitute foods on the journey that cater to their personal needs

OUR PROMISE

As detailed above, our promise to move toward more sustainable and just practices are deeply rooted in our mission and values. We are clear with our providers, staff, and clients about the necessity to conserve water, reduce energy use, and minimize waste. We inform them of our commitment to have only positive impacts on the environment and on our local communities, who we provide social and economic support. As a company who also values the importance of fair labour we pay our employees at fair wages and refuse to participate in activities and practices that objectify, exploit or abuse people and their human rights, especially the rights of children. Anyone who suspects a child's welfare is at risk has been instructed to alert the proper authorities.

By continuing to model the guidelines set by Travelife we are able to promise exciting, tailor made tours that our clients and our staff can feel good about. We will update the information in this report annually so that the information accurately depicts our continued pledge of sustainability and so we can continue to monitor our progress.