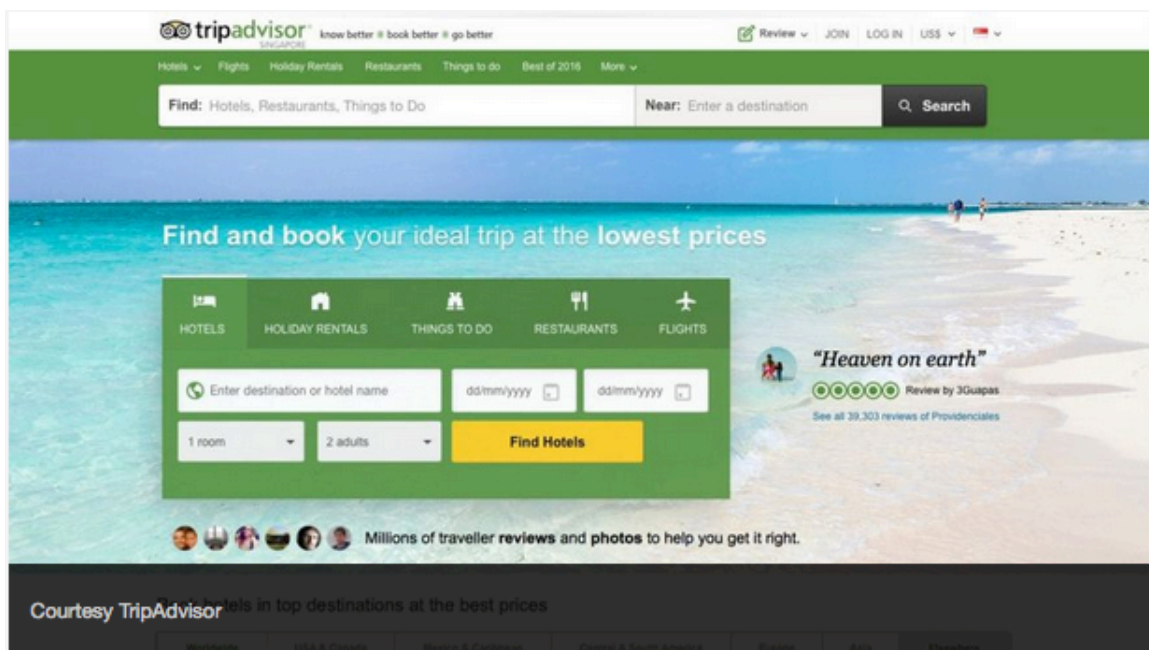


TRAVEL TIPS

## TripAdvisor to stop selling tickets to hundreds of global animal-based attractions

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Travel website [TripAdvisor](https://www.tripadvisor.com) says it's taking a stand against animal exploitation by no longer selling bookings to attractions where travelers can make physical contact with captive wild animals or endangered species.

The new policy, which has been developed over six months, came about as the result of ongoing discussions with animal welfare and conservation groups including the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The site also says it considered the millions of traveler reviews posted to the site that reported concerns about animal welfare over the years.

“TripAdvisor’s new booking policy and education effort is designed as a means to do our part in helping improve the health and safety standards of animals, especially in markets with limited regulatory protections,” Stephen Kaufer, TripAdvisor’s president and CEO, said in a statement.

He noted that the company wants to continue to “celebrate those destinations and attractions that are leaders in caring for animals and those in the tourism industry who help further the cause of animal welfare, conservation and the preservation of endangered species.”

The company, based in Needham, also will start providing links on its site to take users to educational research on animal welfare and conservation. With the announcement, TripAdvisor has become the first major travel booking site to institute such a wide-reaching policy but not everyone is celebrating the company’s latest move.

Kathleen Dezio, president of the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums, said she was "disappointed" TripAdvisor never consulted her Virginia-based organization, whose members include branches of the SeaWorld and Six Flags theme parks and dozens of other marine life parks, aquariums and zoos internationally.

"It's an unjust demonization of the interactive programs that are at the heart of modern zoo and aquarium programs," said Dezio. "They give guests the magic, memorable experiences that make them want to care about these animals and protect them in the wild."

But TripAdvisor’s policy is in line with increasing public concern over the use of wild animals as entertainment. Last year, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus last year stopped using elephants. Since 2013’s documentary “Blackfish,” SeaWorld has been dealing an onslaught of negative public sentiment and announced this year it would stop using killer whales in theatrical performances. It will also [no longer breed killer whales in captivity](#) meaning that this generation of whales at its parks will be the last.

TripAdvisor will cease booking some attractions immediately, but the policy, which may affect hundreds of businesses, takes full effect early next year. The new rule also applies to the affiliated booking site Viator.

In a press release, the company noted that the new policy does include the following exemptions:

--Domestic animals, e.g. horseback riding, children’s petting zoos with domestic animals like rabbits, etc.

--Aquarium touch pools used for education purposes where tourists are under the supervision of zoo, aquarium and or wildlife officials

--Feeding programs where tourists are under the supervision of zoo and or wildlife officials

--Voluntourism programs for endangered species preservation at zoos, aquariums or sanctuaries where it is possible that there might be some level of physical interaction with an animal

TripAdvisor will still publish user reviews of tourist attractions that feature animals but it has long banned reviews of businesses or events where animals are put in potentially lethal situations, like bullfights.

Many animal advocacy groups including PETA, the Global Wildlife Conservation and the UN World Tourism Organization have praised the move. TripAdvisor said if a wildlife attraction changes its business model it would consider selling tickets again.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*