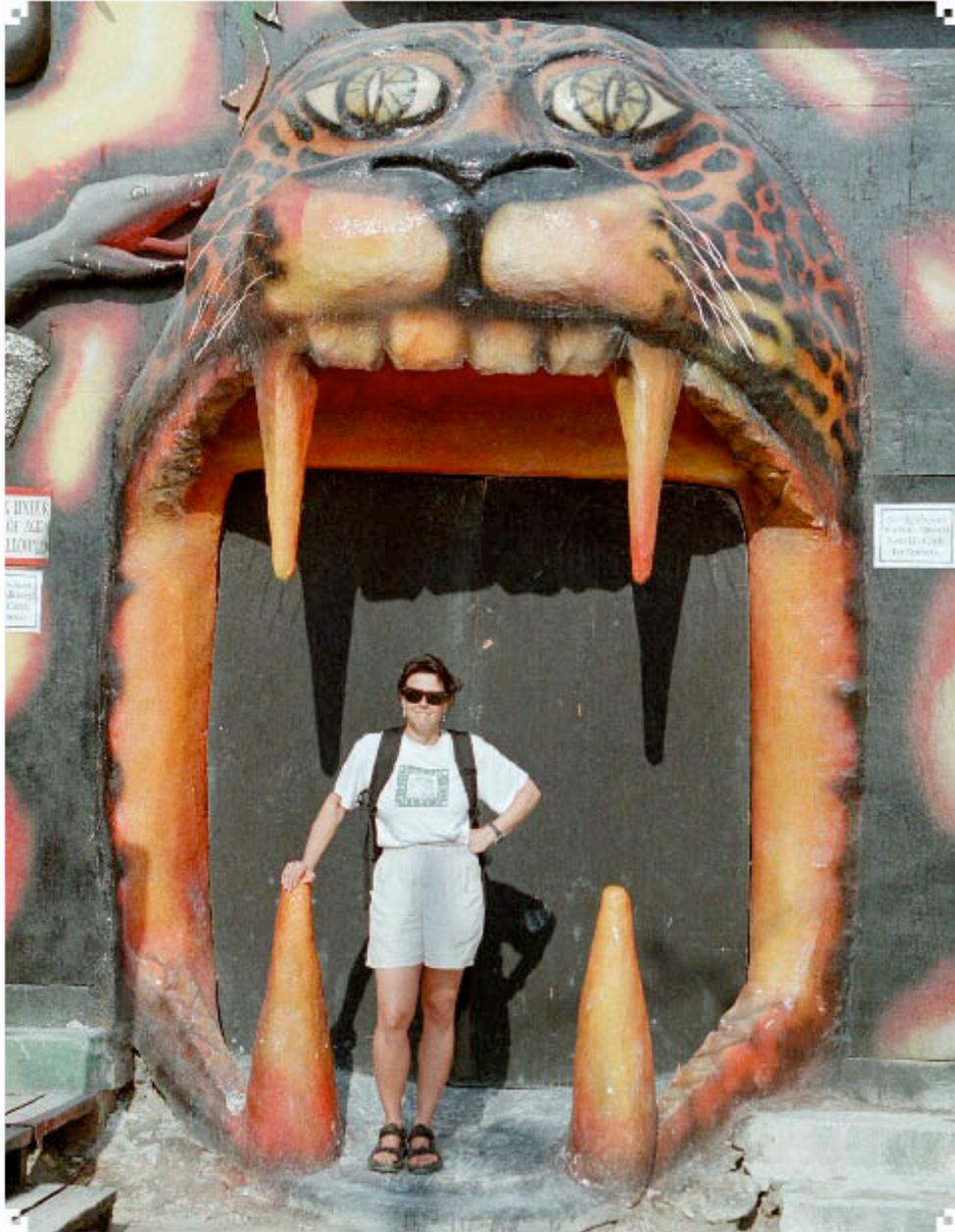


## How To Be The Best Tour Guide On The Planet



### Easy Steps & Guidelines For Success by Debbie Jacobs

*The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality; the last responsibility is to say thank you.*

*In between the leader shall be a servant.*

Max DePree

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## So You Want To Be A Guide

Being a tour guide is seen as a luxurious job; exotic places, different cuisine, hotels and beaches, all on the company's tab. While being a tour guide can be a fun and fulfilling job, it's a job nonetheless. And a job that's not for everyone. I have created this manual to help you discover if it's the right job for you and to help you move along the path to fulfilling your dream of becoming the best tour guide on the planet.

### Learn about

- The basic skills all guides should have
- The skills and experience that are most attractive to companies when hiring a guide
- Where to get training to be a guide
- The jobs that exist for guides
- A guide's responsibilities
- What to focus on in a job interview or on your resume
- The legal liabilities of being a guide
- Leadership styles
- What to do in an emergency
- How to run a fun, safe tour
- How to deal with challenging personalities on tours

### Know Yourself, Know Your Options

It's important to think of this as a 'working with people' job, not an 'I get to travel' one. There are a myriad of different tours being offered, each focusing on a different population. If you think that teenagers are spoiled, whiny brats you shouldn't be leading a group of them to build houses in a developing country. If you can't stand going a day without a shower and cringe at the thought of toilets that don't flush than

skip trips that require that kind of 'roughing it'. If you are overwhelmed by a crowd then leading a 40 person bus tour is not likely to be your cup of tea.

## A Guide's Responsibilities

A tour guide is responsible for the logistics of a tour, and the clients they are traveling with. The lodging, meals, transportation and activities have usually been prearranged, but in some cases a guide may be responsible for any or all of these details. It may be a one day or multi-day tour.

Guides usually-

- Meet their clients at the airport
- Accompany them to hotels & activities scheduled during the tour
- Manage meals & transportation throughout the tour
- Assign rooms
- Deal with luggage
- Explain the itinerary and schedule
- Provide information about the areas visited
- Lead activities specific to the tour
- Handle health emergencies
- Manage last minute changes, conflicts and mix-ups
- Are responsible for keeping everyone in the group happy and ready to sign up for another tour
- Manage a budget
- Generate reports for the tour company

Guides may be hired as employees of a company or as sub-contractors. In the U.S. employees have taxes taken out of their paycheck and may be eligible for company benefits. Most often guides work as subcontractors. No taxes are taken from their salary. Subcontractors in the U.S. earning over \$600 will need to file a 1099 tax form to report their income.

A **step-on guide** joins groups (sometimes already with a guide) for portions of a tour. They are the local expert and the term refers to the guides who get on motor coaches to narrate tours of local sights and attractions.

A **trip or trek leader** has all the responsibilities of a tour guide but may work with a smaller group, often in the adventure travel segment of tourism. They may be required to teach certain skills to the group and prepare meals.

A **tour director** is responsible for the set up and planning of a tour and may or may not also be the tour's guide.

In the case of this manual I will use the terms 'guide' , 'leader' and 'escort' interchangeably, all referring to the person directly responsible for traveling with clients.

### **Who Travels With A Guide?**

There are group tours for almost any demographic of traveler. Some groups consist of people with a shared interest, such as bird watchers or photographers. People who travel with a group may be looking for a relaxing holiday, an educational experience, or the fulfillment of a life long dream. Knowing the goals and expectations of your clients will help you to deliver the kind of experience they have paid for.

Tourists who travel with a guide may be called; guests, participants, clients or group members. Derogatory terms are used by some guides but it goes without saying that good guides don't use them.