



Responsible Travel Tips

Responsible travel maximizes the benefits of tourism while minimizing tourism's negative consequences!

Before you leave:

Do your research

- Consult guidebooks and online resources about your destination's environmental, social and political issues
- Look for websites specializing in responsible/sustainable travel options
- Check if the companies you are considering have achieved recognition in leading responsible travel competitions (such as World Travel & Tourism Council's Tourism for Tomorrow Awards and ResponsibleTravel.com's World Responsible Tourism Awards)
- Check if the companies have eco-certifications and eco-awards or labels
- Ask about environmental policies and practices of hotels & tour operators you are considering
- Ask if the tour operator or hotel supports any local conservation or community-development projects (see CREST's www.travelersphilanthropy.org)
- If you're interested in 'voluntourism' carefully investigate the local projects (see CREST's [Dos and Don'ts of Travel Giving & Travelers' Philanthropy Handbook](#))

Make your transportation count!

- Explore eco-friendly transportation– Are low-carbon or public transportation options available, such as trains or buses?
- When traveling short distances, try not to fly. When flying, choose direct flights when possible, on larger planes and/or newer, more fuel efficient fleets
- "Offset" the carbon emissions from your flights to mitigate your carbon footprint
- Choose "green" airports, like Seattle-Tacoma International, Baltimore-Washington International, and San Francisco International, which are taking steps to be more sustainable

While you're there:

Give and buy, Responsibly

- Eat in locally owned restaurants, and stay in locally-owned lodges, hotels and B&B's
- Buy locally made handicrafts and products
- Never buy crafts or products made from protected or endangered animals
- Hire local guides – make sure they are licensed and live locally
- Pay the fair price – don't engage in overly aggressive bargaining
- Think twice about giving money to children – this can perpetuate a cycle where children are sent to beg rather than school

Be Culturally Sensitive

- Ask for permission before entering sacred places, homes, and private land
- Always ask for permission before taking photos of individuals
- Dress appropriately for local customs
- Learn some words and phrases in the local language

Be Environmentally Conscious

- Refrain from taking seashells, coral or other natural objects
- Always carry your trash away from natural sites to dispose of properly
- Recycle and compost waste when possible
- Use wisely limited resources, such as water, fuel, and electricity
- Stay on designated trails and observe set distances from wildlife – never provoke, touch, or otherwise engage animals
- Be an animal-friendly traveler; we suggest at *minimum* following the 5 Freedom, explained by [Born Free](#), and avoiding circumstances that endanger animal welfare

When you return:

Help perpetuate responsible travel

- Share with others your experiences and promote responsible companies, destinations, and practices (blogging, social media, etc.)
- Consider making a donation to programs that give back and benefit the local community you visited
- Integrate further responsible travel suggestions into future trips

Helpful Internet Resources for Responsible Travel:

- Center for Responsible Travel (CREST): www.responsibletravel.org
- CREST's Travelers' Philanthropy program: www.travelersphilanthropy.org
- The International Ecotourism Society (TIES): www.ecotourism.org
- Rainforest Alliance –Green Your Travel: www.rainforest-alliance.org/green-living/travel
- Rainforest Alliance –Verification: www.rainforest-alliance.org/tourism/verification
- Ecoclub.com: <https://ecoclub.com/>
- Eco Tour Directory: <http://www.ecotourdirectory.com/>
- European Network for Sustainable Tourism Development (ECOTRANS): <http://www.ecotrans.org/>
- "Green" Hotels Association: www.greenhotels.com
- Mesoamerican Ecotourism Alliance: www.travelwithmea.org
- Planeta.com: www.planeta.com
- ResponsibleTravel.com: www.responsibletravel.com
- The Travel Foundation: www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern: www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- VISIT (Voluntary Initiative for Sustainability in Tourism): <http://www.visit21.net/>
- Born Free (Animal Welfare): <http://www.bornfree.org.uk>

Carbon Offsets Projects to Explore:

- The Ocean Foundation: <https://www.oceanfdn.org/calculator>
- Sustainable Travel International: www.sustainabletravel.org/programs/carbon-emissions-and-offsets/
- Atmosfair: www.atmosfair.com
- NativeEnergy: www.nativeenergy.com
- My Climate: www.myclimate.org
- Terrapass: www.terrapass.com
- Carbon Fund: www.carbonfund.org
- The Nature Conservancy: www.nature.org
- Carbon Neutral: www.carbonneutral.com

Responsible travel tips drawn from the following resources: Center for Responsible Travel (www.responsibletravel.org), Global Sustainable Tourism Council (www.gstcouncil.org), Intrepid Travel (www.intrepidtravel.com), EcoTour (www.ecotourdirectory.com), and Expedia (www.expedia.com).

