

How to Plan an Eco-Friendly Summer Vacation

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Eco-friendly vacations are for individuals who'd like to travel and minimize their carbon footprint at the same time. Eco travel doesn't mean sacrificing comfort or taste. In fact, it could save you money in the long run which means you'll have more money to spend on souvenirs or dinner. Travelers forget that hotels, hostels, resorts, etc. pass costs onto guests in order to stay in business.

All travel requires fuel. It's better to take public transportation such as the train, rickshaw, or bus. If you must fly to your destination, choose a direct flight or a flight that has one-stop. The more stops you have, the more pollution that spews into the atmosphere. If you're planning a road trip, travel with as many companions as possible. Not only will you decrease the amount of vehicles on the road, you'll decrease the amount of pollution released into the air.

Tips on Planning an Eco-Friendly Summer Vacation

1. Visit a U.S. National Park. Many National Parks have become known for their landscapes and wildflowers. You don't have to be an experienced hiker to experience the beauty of nature. Glacier National Park, Olympic National Park, Isle Royale National Park, and other parks offer the best scenery in the world. Visit

http://www.travelchannel.com/Places_Trips/Travel_Ideas/Road_Trips_And_National_Parks/American_National_Parks/National_Parks_The_Best_Wildlife_Viewing to learn more.

2. Stay in a 'green' hotel. You can find a list of 'green hotels' at <http://greenhotels.com/index.php>. Green hotels use water saving techniques such as low-flow toilets and showerheads. Staying in a green hotel can save you money because hotels are reducing energy, waste, and other costs that are usually passed onto guests.

3. Guilt-free camping. You can still camp as long as you bring items such as reusable water bottles, canteens, washable plates, silverware, and glasses; biodegradable dish washing detergent and soap, and LED flashlights and lanterns. Pack extra reusable garbage bags because garbage cans could be filled; you don't want to leave trash around campsite.

4. Eco bike tours. If you'd like to visit New England in the summer, check out Coastal Biking Adventures in Narragansett, RI. Six-day 'eco biking' trips include Trek bicycles, wine tasting, nature hiking, and much more. Visit <http://www.coastalbikingadventures.com/ecotravel.php> for more information.

Travel tip #1: Before you leave on vacation, adjust your heating and cooling and unplug all appliances.

Travel tip #2: When in doubt, leave it out. Don't pack all of the clothes in your closet – take what you need. You can wash your clothes at a Laundromat or use a hotel's laundry service. You can purchase toiletries and other items. Bring the ones you can't live without or may not be able to find in another country. Shopping is a good way to meet the locals.

No matter where you go, you leave a carbon footprint. However, this doesn't mean you have to give up travel. You need to be more conscious of how and where you travel. Sometimes paying more for a direct flight is better than paying for a flight that includes two or three stops. You either pay now or pay later with a more polluted atmosphere and planet. Be respectful of the environment and people around you. Do what you can to preserve the Earth it for generations to come.