



Dear Traveller,

I belong to the Green Travel Professionals Program. It is my pleasure to provide you with some Green Travel Tips that may be helpful as you plan for your next travel experience. If you require further information, please contact me.

Happy Travels!

GREEN Travel Tips Check [✓] the ideas you will use the next time you travel

- Reduce, reuse, recycle - simply put, do not throw anything away while travelling that can be recycled. If necessary, put it into a bag and bring it home for recycling
- Re-use towels during stays in hotels. Take a re-usable tote bag along for shopping to avoid having to use plastic bags.
- BYOB - bring your own bottle/blanket and best. The best of you is free and can always be passed on to the next lucky person you meet on your travels.
- Travel with green-friendly airlines and tour operators – check out their Web sites to see what they are doing!
- Only print what you need to have with you; Abide by the old saying "Take nothing and leave only footprints". It works everywhere; Try Biking, Hiking, Walking tours
Take public transportation when possible while traveling—go for the experience of using local transit.
- If you must use a plastic water bottle; squish them and bring them back home to recycle, if you cannot find a recycle bin while you are travelling abroad!
- Re-use plastic cups at the self-serve drink stations at all-inclusive resorts—even if you use the same cup only twice you will cut in half the number of cups you use.
- Consider taking the train
- Some tour companies believe that North Americans 'expect' lots of space in the touring vehicles. Remember the environment—if a 9 passenger van arrives to pick up you and your traveling companion, request that the tour company change to a smaller vehicle.
- I learned this in Galapagos and have never forgotten it and always practice it - never throw your garbage on the ground - no tissues, no plastic water bottles, no anything - never litter. If you cannot find a waste paper basket or container then take your garbage with you until you can dispose of it, at a hotel or where ever you are staying. It's only a small thing but everyone needs to practice it.
- Find a carbon credit company of your choice and balance out your travel
- Take a look at websites and have your travel counsellor email information that you need - no reason for brochures and copious amounts of paper
- Pack toiletries in smaller reusable bottles; pack light as it saves fuel costs and the environment! Rent bicycles at destinations instead of hiring a vehiclestay at eco lodgesconsider something different, such as working farm vacations and nature resorts.

- Get involved in **Voluntourism**. Look into companies that provide meaningful travel experiences where you give back something, Remember that Green travel also refers to how 'people' are treated (social welfare and human rights). Companies such as GlobeAware.org and Childhaven.ca offer a travel experience with a difference.
- People still seem to think that if they are on a cruise, they should put a message in a bottle and throw it overboard. Not such a good idea. There is enough trash in the seas and oceans. Don't throw anything overboard. Remember the Seinfeld episode where Kramer drives golf balls into the ocean and one gets caught in the blow-hole of a whale and almost kills it? Think about it!
- Ask about a hotel's Green Policy. If you arrive at a hotel or resort and have not already determined that it practices 'green tourism', then ask the front desk manager about the hotel's policies or speak with the general manager. Hotels and resorts who are not practicing green tourism will soon get the message if enough people raise the issue.
- Social welfare. People are part of the concept of Green travel & tourism. The person that cleans your room is probably the lowest paid on staff. He/she does not receive a lot of tips from hotel clients—certainly nothing to compare to those received by the bellboys and concierge staff who have a more high profile exposure to the guests. Consider giving your room cleaner a TIP in the true sense of the word. "TIPS" is an acronym that stands for "To Insure Prompt Service". Therefore, give them a tip when you arrive and another tip when you leave, if the service has been satisfactory.
- Education. There is so much talk of green these days that some people have already started to turn off instead of turning on. Make it your goal to read a few articles each day or each week to learn more about green travel and how you can show leadership-by-example when you travel.
- Limit energy use. Amazing how people will turn off lights at home to conserve electricity but on holiday they leave lights and televisions on when they leave their room. The world is your immediate neighbourhood so treat it with respect and turn off the lights.
- Respect the environment—stay on marked trails; don't remove plants. Never feed a wild animal. Many Canadians are familiar with the slogan "To feed a bear is to kill a bear"—well the same holds true with any wildlife. They become dependent on humans for food or think that all humans have food. Respect for wildlife is part of Green travel.
- Say "No" to bad souvenirs. These souvenirs consist of items made of endangered species—animal hides and horns, tortoise shell, sea shells, ivory, coral—and many of these may not be imported into Canada anyway.
- Leave history where you found it! In many countries/cities, it is simply illegal to remove historic stones, tiles, rocks and carvings. It doesn't matter how small it is. If everyone removed a small souvenir, then there would be no history left. Case in point? If you chance to visit Angkor Wat in Cambodia, you will see hundred of empty niches where beautifully carved statues used to reside—but they were taken as souvenirs before you got there. The thieves have robbed not only the culture of Cambodia, but also robbed you of the visual feast of looking at these statues. Next time you are tempted...remember... that is what cameras are for!
- Digital Cameras. If you don't have a digital camera, consider the effects of using a digital versus a "film" camera. Film comes in boxes—which, when opened, become trash. Then some film is housed in a protective plastic container—which also becomes trash. Then you have to develop the film—which involves chemicals—which inevitably get flushed into our water system. In a digital camera environment, you buy memory cards (which also come in packaging that becomes trash) but each card may be the equivalent of 12 or more rolls of film. There is no processing at the end of the trip—you just upload the photos to your computer and print the ones you like. All in all, digital cameras are less of a drain on our environmental resources. Something to think about.

- Respect when and where you are permitted to use a flash on your camera and where you are asked not to use a flash. Flashes, over time, can destroy delicate paintings and frescoes. Buy a camera that allows you to shoot in the dark with no flash (with an 800 ASA setting or higher), or buy film that allows this (if you *must* buy film). If this is not possible, then buy postcards at the site.
- History can live without you! Ever been to a breathtaking historic site with ancient paintings and carvings and walls full of graffiti? Sally loves Billy. Well you did not travel half way around the world to see this kind of damage. Pilgrims may have done this thousands of years ago—and their record has become part of history—but history can live without your message carved into it. Leave the spray paint and the pen knife at home. Don't destroy another country's heritage and trees with your carved messages.
- Check the distance. There I was in southern Taiwan, wanting to eat at a particular restaurant for dinner. I asked the hotel concierge for directions and he said that I better take a Taxi, as the restaurant was far away. I ignored the advice, walked in the direction of the hotel and literally, 5 minutes later, I found it. I assume that in some countries, there is a perception that tourists don't like to walk. The lesson? Find out how far you need to walk to arrive at that restaurant or museum or attraction. Sometimes you may need to take a taxi—but remember a local bus ride could be a lot more adventurous and more environmentally responsible.
- **Walk** the World. Walking a city is without doubt the best way to learn about it-to understand the neighbourhoods, to see how people live, and to get your directions straight. When I travel with a group, I always wake up extra-early so I can discover the hotel neighbourhood before the traffic starts—and with camera in hand I usually find some amazing photographic opportunities. Walking is good for you and for the environment. Try it!
- **Wok** the World. Trying local cooking is part of the joy of travel and discovery. It helps the local population and gives you a whole new perspective on the people and the culture. Try to steer clear of those Group-everyone-eats-the-same-western-food restaurants. Go out and explore. Some of my most memorable experiences have been in restaurants where I can't read the menu, don't speak the language, and don't really mind the dog or chicken that has decided to sleep at my feet while I am eating. Support those people who are not on the hotel's recommended list of 5 star restaurants. Give your taste buds a vacation too!
- **Wat** in the World! For those who have been to Thailand, you know that a "Wat" is a temple. Part of being green is respecting local tradition and culture. To you, the temple may be a tourist attraction. To the Thais, it is a religious institution that must be revered and respected. Therefore, always check on what is considered to be appropriate dress before you enter. Sometimes shorts are permitted, other times they are not. Almost always, shoes are not to be worn in the temple itself. Likewise it is sacrilegious to pose with your head in the place of an ancient Buddha statue who may have lost its head hundreds of years ago. You think it makes a funny photo, but in reality you are insulting the local religion, the people and the culture. Always be an ambassador of respectful travel habits.
- Digital Camera Fun. One of the great things about a digital camera is that it can help you make the world a smaller place. How do you do that? By showing photos from your home (postcards and books can do this too) and by taking photos of people, with their permission, and immediately showing them to the subject of the photo. Some people in some countries rarely get a chance to see themselves in photos, so share a laugh and a smile with them. Then you can ask if they would like a copy—and you can send it to them either in the mail or by email. But if you promise to do this—you must fulfill that promise. It is really wonderful to get a thank you letter from the kid on the mountain in Nepal that you photographed while you were trekking.

- Disposable cameras. The companies that sell them refer to them as 'single-use' cameras. While these types of cameras may be useful in an emergency when your own camera is lost, stolen or broken, they should be avoided as your regular camera for the trip. Aside from the packaging that surrounds the camera when you buy it, there is even more waste produced when you turn the camera in to have the photos developed, Consider buying an inexpensive digital point-and-shoot camera, that you can use on multiple vacations for many years. It is the green photography option.
- Tuk-Tuk Pollution. In Thailand the three wheeled motorcycle taxis are called Tuk-Tuks (imitating the sound of the bike). In other countries they may have different names. But in most countries, they pollute the atmosphere. Some travellers need to draw a fine line between supporting local people (in this case, Tuk Tuk drivers) and not contributing to pollution. Of course, in Bangkok, one of the solutions is to take the new subway system where you are still supporting local jobs but reducing your impact on the environment. In more rural areas of Thailand and other Asian countries, pedi-cabs are still used (similar to rickshaws but powered by a bicycle). Of course this is a great way to support local jobs as well as see the city—and to gain some personal insight into the area. My pedi-cab driver in Mandalay, Myanmar showed me a great place to have banana pancakes for breakfast and we wrote to each other for a time after I returned to Canada.
- Barking up the wrong tree. When we were kids at summer camp, the big thing to do was to peel some bark off a white birch tree and write a letter home on the back of it. Very rustic, very unique—but very damaging to the trees. Just because you are in another country—respect the plant life. Leave the tree bark where it is. The tree needs it to survive. You can easily buy a unique postcard for that unique letter home.

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