

## „Sustainable on the go “

Practical Tips for a Greener Environment

### Introduction

Tourism has the potential to make a positive impact. It can benefit local communities and enhance our travel experiences. However, we all play a role. In addition to supporting communities, we must also minimize our carbon footprint and maximize our positive influence on nature during our travels.

Beautiful beaches, lush forests, and majestic mountains, teeming with wildlife, are popular vacation spots. Yet, when visiting such areas, it's vital to be mindful so that future generations can enjoy them. It's heartening to see more people considering their ecological impact, even while traveling.

### Before Your Trip

#### 1. Embrace Local Culture

Sustainable travel encompasses not only the environmental aspect but also involves showing respect for the culture, traditions, and customs of the community you are visiting during your sustainable journey. It is advisable to familiarize yourself with the traditions and beliefs of the local culture you are traveling to ensure that your conduct is respectful and does not inadvertently cause offense to the local residents.

#### 2. Learn Local Phrases

Learn some of the local language, even if it's just basic greetings like "Hello", in Greek "Yia Sas" and "Thank you", in just as you would appreciate visitors to your own country doing. By the way, in Greek, "Hello" translates to "Yia sas" and "Thank you" to "Efcharisto". Demonstrating that you have tried to engage with the country, its culture, and its language can bring joy to the local people you encounter during your travels.

#### 3. Go Digital

Travel planners, paper maps, or travel documents often end up discarded in the trash or stored away in a closet after the trip. Embracing digitization eliminates this waste and offers an eco-friendly opportunity. When you opt for digital travel tools, you can also contribute to sustainable travel practices.

#### 4. Pack Light

Pack only the essentials. Embrace the "less is more" approach. This not only eases your load but also reduces the carbon emissions generated during transportation by plane, train, or bus.

## During Your Stay

### 1. Use Public Transportation

Opt for walking or public transportation when covering shorter distances. If you must take a taxi, public transport provides a greener and more immersive way to experience local life. For additional information on directions and transportation, please consult your local representative during the welcome meetings. Alternatively, you can visit the central bus stations in each city.

### 2. Rent eco-friendly vehicles.

Exploring an unfamiliar country by driving on your own offers an indescribable sense of freedom. However, the choice of vehicle can impact pollution levels. Therefore, consider carefully whether a compact car would suffice or if you truly need a high-performance sports car or a large SUV. Electric vehicles are also excellent options for shorter trips, particularly in specific areas or within cities. Additionally, ensure that you adhere to responsible and safe driving practices, such as respecting speed limits, staying on designated routes, and turning off the engine when stationary. These are fundamental aspects to keep in mind.

### 3. Support Local Businesses

Your spending choices can significantly impact local communities. When you buy a keepsake from a street vendor, you're directly contributing to the local economy. This not only enhances the authenticity of your travel experience but also assists individuals in improving their lives. However, it's crucial to be mindful of international agreements related to species protection, biodiversity, protection against cultural property theft, and trademark protection. It's advisable to steer clear of exotic souvenirs and plants during your shopping excursions to avoid inadvertently supporting the exploitation of endangered animal and plant species.

As MP Cyprus, we do not allow the purchase of souvenirs containing threatened flora and fauna species, any illegally obtained historic/archaeological artefacts, drugs, or illegal substances, and abide by local and international laws in place to prevent this.

### 4. Savor Local Cuisine

Embrace the opportunity to explore new culinary experiences. Sample the local fare that reflects the region's specialties, such as coastal seafood dishes, forest-region game offerings, and fresh market vegetables and fruits grown in the vicinity. Opt for family-operated restaurants and explore weekly markets, which often provide a more affordable dining experience compared to tourist-heavy restaurants. These local spots are where residents typically dine and shop, offering a taste of authentic regional cuisine.

And always remember, a third of our food is wasted.

## 5. Tip Locally

Gratuities hold significance in numerous countries and contribute to socially sustainable travel. In many tourist-driven areas, tips for employees working in the hospitality and restaurant sectors often constitute a significant portion of their income, surpassing their base salaries. Those who serve, drive, and prepare meals during your vacation typically do not reap as many benefits from your trip as the companies that organize it. Therefore, leaving a tip for courteous staff is a thoughtful practice.

## 6. Respect Local Culture

Among the most significant rewards of our travels is the opportunity to gain insights into diverse cultures and religions. The world and its inhabitants are incredibly varied and captivating, and it's a remarkable privilege to have the chance to experience this diversity. It's crucial to remember the importance of demonstrating respect for the local customs and traditions as we travel. In numerous countries, there is a greater emphasis on conservative attire, and wearing short shorts or tank tops may be considered inappropriate, particularly in religious sites.

## 7. Respect People's Privacy

While it may appear to be a matter of common sense, it seems that some individuals overlook proper etiquette when traveling. Responsible travelers refrain from causing inconvenience to the locals. It's important to seek permission before capturing someone's photograph and inquire about their consent to share it on social media. Special care should be taken when it comes to images of children. In essence, following the golden rule, which encourages treating others as you would like to be treated, is a guiding principle.

## 8. Reduce Waste

Waste management can pose significant challenges in many developing countries, and as travelers, we sometimes unknowingly contribute to this issue. The level of awareness and education regarding recycling and waste reduction in other countries may not be on par with what we are accustomed to in our home countries. Therefore, it's vital for us to take proactive steps to support the environment. One of the most pressing ecological issues worldwide, if not the largest, is the proliferation of plastic waste. To combat this problem, it's advisable to decline plastic bags from stores and opt to use a backpack or cloth bag for your items. Additionally, consider dining in cafes rather than opting for takeout, and carry a reusable water bottle with you. You can refill it from the large water jugs commonly available in many hotels and restaurants.

## 9. Be Cautious with Giving

This can be a challenging issue to address, as witnessing people, especially children, begging in the streets often evokes strong feelings of compassion. However, it's crucial to bear in mind that giving money to beggars can inadvertently perpetuate the cycle of asking tourists for financial assistance. In some cases, individuals may feign greater need than they actually have to extract money from foreigners. When it comes to children who solicit money, in

the most severe instances, this could be part of a larger network operated by unscrupulous individuals who pocket the funds themselves. While exercising discretion is important, if you genuinely wish to assist, consider offering the person food or water instead of cash.

#### **10. Leave Nature Untouched**

Show respect for the natural environment by preserving it in its original state. This ensures that countless travelers who come after you can fully appreciate the region's natural beauty. Always clean up after yourself, dispose of trash appropriately, and avoid leaving any litter behind.

#### **11. Conserve Resources**

In many countries, access to reliable water and electricity services is considered a luxury, and it's not a universal standard. Therefore, it's crucial to use these resources responsibly when traveling. We should strive not to overburden the local environment and prioritize the well-being of the region. It's essential for all of us to be mindful of our resource consumption while staying in accommodations. For instance, remember to turn off the air conditioning and lights when you're not in your room and try to reuse towels. In some destinations, water is a precious commodity, so opting for a shower over a bath can help conserve water resources.

#### **12. Promote Animal Welfare**

When it comes to wildlife encounters during your travels, it's essential to approach them with sensitivity and ensure the well-being of the animals involved. Seek information from your tour guide, as they not only set a positive example but are also responsible for reporting any mistreatment of animals. Their role includes explaining to travelers why certain experiences with captive animals should be avoided and promoting alternatives that prioritize the welfare of animals. As responsible travelers, it's crucial to steer clear of attractions involving animals unless you have verified in advance that the provider follows ethical practices without compromise.

#### **13. Address Human Rights Issues**

The tourism industry can sometimes bring about adverse effects on local communities, such as limiting access to land and resources and contributing to a rise in criminal activities, including sexual exploitation. This can also pose threats to the preservation of social and cultural traditions and values. Regrettably, in numerous tourist destinations around the globe, both children and women often become victims of appalling sexual abuse, violence, and degradation, often orchestrated by unscrupulous traffickers and offenders from various origins. If you encounter severe issues related to human rights abuses or the exploitation of wildlife, you may consider reaching out to relevant charitable organizations or contacting the Ministry of Tourism in the respective country for assistance and intervention or visit <https://dontlookaway.report/> to report a violence.

## After Your Trip

### 1. Provide Feedback

Participate in your travel company's customer satisfaction survey and be sure to respond to inquiries related to responsible travel, along with other questions. Feel free to share your suggestions or constructive feedback as well, as this contributes to improving your future experiences.

### 2. Share Positive Reviews

Support local businesses by leaving positive reviews and recommendations online.

### 3. Offer Feedback

Share any feedback related to the destination or your experience with MP Cyprus at [customer.service@meetingpointcyprus.com](mailto:customer.service@meetingpointcyprus.com), or rate us under <https://mycyprus.holiday/rate-us/>.

### 4. Human rights violations

In the case of significant concerns related to human rights violations or the exploitation of wildlife, consider reaching out to appropriate charitable organizations or even contacting the Ministry of Tourism in the respective country.

### 5. Continue Sustainability at Home

Continue to incorporate sustainability into your daily routines and endeavor to inspire others to do the same.

## Final Word

We don't need to forgo travel and vacations entirely to make a positive impact on our planet. Sustainable travel is achievable with minor adjustments in our travel planning and at the destination. The list of sustainable travel tips serves as inspiration for making our vacation more environmentally conscious, enriching, and sustainable through small actions. With these changes, we can enjoy an eco-friendly vacation without compromising our travel experience.