

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL TIPS

Responsible travel maximizes the benefits of tourism while minimizing its negative consequences. This guide from the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) shares practical actions you can take before, during, and after your trip.

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 and sustainable travel options.
- Check if the companies you are considering have achieved recognition in leading responsible travel competitions – such as the World Travel & Tourism Council's Tourism for Tomorrow Awards or the Skål International Sustainable Tourism Awards.
- Check if the companies have eco-certifications or labels.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions of the companies you're considering – hotels and tour operators that are truly working to protect the environment and support the local community should be happy to share their practices.
- If using Airbnb or another home sharing site, check to see if home sharing is legal and what the regulations are in that particular destination.
- If you're interested in "voluntourism," carefully investigate the local projects – see CREST's [Impact Tourism Handbook](#) and [Dos and Don'ts of Travel Giving](#).



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, book in economy class and choose direct, non-stop flights.
- Offset the carbon emissions from your flights to mitigate your carbon footprint.
- If you have the opportunity to choose your airport, select "green" airports, like Boston Logan International, Denver International, and San Francisco International, which are taking steps to be more sustainable.



WHILE YOU'RE THERE



Be Responsible With Buying and Giving

- 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 in which children are sent to beg rather than school. Instead, donate to organizations that support local youth and their families.



Be Culturally Sensitive

- Ask for permission before entering sacred places, homes, and private land.
- Always ask for permission before taking photos of individuals. Don't take pictures of or with children unless you have permission from a parent or guardian.
- 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.
- Bring your own reusable water bottles, bags, straws, utensils, and takeaway containers.
- Use limited resources wisely, 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 [Born Free's Compassionate Travel guidelines](#), and avoiding circumstances that endanger animal welfare.



WHEN YOU RETURN



Help Perpetuate Responsible Travel

- Share your experiences with others and promote responsible practices to your networks on social media. Your friends, family, and co-workers will benefit from learning about your travel choices.
- Consider making a donation to responsible programs that give back to and benefit the local community you visited.

HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL TRIP PLANNING

Animal Welfare: [Born Free](#) and [Intrepid Travel](#) provide informative guidance for being an animal-friendly traveler.

Child Welfare: Developed by G Adventures in partnership with the ChildSafe Movement and the Planeterra Foundation, the [Child Welfare Traveller Code of Conduct](#) provides a full list of dos and don'ts for travelers.

Certification Programs: The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) accredits and recognizes certification for both hotels and tour operators, and these programs can be viewed on the [GSTC website](#). A growing number of tourism businesses are also joining the community of Certified B Corporations, and you can find them in the [B Corp Directory](#).

Flights: The [International Council on Clean Transportation \(ICCT\)](#) and the [David Suzuki Foundation](#) provide concrete tips on how to reduce your carbon footprint when you fly.

Hotel Booking: [Kind Traveler](#) is a socially conscious hotel booking site, aimed at empowering travelers to positively impact the places that they visit.

Learn the Latest: Through their blog, the [Impact Travel Alliance](#) shares timely stories about how travelers can make mindful choices so that their experiences empower locals and protect the environment.

Leave No Trace: The [Seven Leave No Trace Principles](#) provide guidelines for reducing your impact on the natural environment and apply to almost every recreational activity.

Travel with Care: Pledge to travel with care by following the [Travel Care Code](#), which outlines specific steps individuals can take to travel more consciously and sustainably.

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Center for Responsible Travel



HOW TO PURCHASE CARBON OFFSETS

When deciding how to get to your destination, first consider public transportation, then driving, and lastly, flying. If flying, we recommend choosing direct, non-stop flights in economy class and purchasing carbon offsets to mitigate your carbon footprint.

Follow these simple steps when purchasing offsets:

1. Calculate Your Carbon Production

Visit a site such as [Atmosfair](#), [The Nature Conservancy](#), or [Cool Effect](#) and enter your flight information into the carbon footprint calculator in order to determine your total emissions from your flight.

2. Choose a Project

Once you have calculated your total emissions, visit sites like [Carbonfund.org](#) or [Cool Effect](#) to see a list of projects to which you can donate to offset your emissions. These sites have various projects listed by location and offset type. Try to find a project in your destination, or choose a project that is close to your interests. The most important thing is to ensure that the project is [Gold Standard Certified](#), which uses UN protocols and the Sustainable Development Goals to assess every project. Review the project's goals, impacts, and benefits.

3. Purchase Your Offsets

Once you've chosen your project, you can choose how much you'd like to donate to the project either by entering the amount of emissions you need to offset or by entering the commensurate dollar amount. The site will then take you through a normal checkout process!