

Responsible travel

See *[Sustainable travel](#)* for the ecological and appropriate technology dimension of travel sustainability.

A growing number of travelers want their journeys to be less invasive and more beneficial to the local community. They want to better understand the culture of the people they meet in the places they visit. Visitors should be mindful that we are entering a place that is someone else's home. Sounds complicated? Try this — imagine what irresponsible tourism looks like and then imagine its opposite.

Understand

Responsible tourism has several goals: sustainability, environmental integrity, social justice and maximum local economic benefit. Responsible tourism asks individuals, organizations, governments and businesses to take responsibility for their actions and the effects of their actions. Everyone involved must be responsible for sustainability.

There is an overlap between the concepts of responsible travel and ecotourism. Responsible travel is trying to get the whole picture, from environmental issues to cultural and economic effects. Responsible travel means not just being mindful of the impact that the lodge you stay at does not harm the environment, but that the businesses you interact with (tourism providers, shops, hotels, etc) care about the local people and cultures as much as their bottom line. When you shop, you're putting your money in the hands of locals in a sustainable way, not staying at chain hotels, where revenue isn't spread around.

Most principles of responsible tourism were put forth in the *[Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations](http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/cape-town-declaration-on-responsible-tourism/)* (<http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/cape-town-declaration-on-responsible-tourism/>) (Responsible organization (<http://www.icrtourism.org/>)).

In the development of many tourism projects, indigenous people have not been considered as valued stakeholders from the start. Even in the development of 'charitable' projects, they are sometimes not listened to. Adequate consultation is a must.

Indigenous peoples manage more than 40% of all IUCN-recognized protected areas in the world, and many of them – if not most – use tourism as a complement their economic benefits from these areas. Yet the challenge for travelers is finding which communities wish to be visited and with which protocols. In 2012 the Global Workshop for Indigenous and Local Communities: Biodiversity, Tourism and the Social Web took place at the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Responsible travel vs Ecotourism

Ecotourism generally focuses on environmentally-friendly travel, where nature reserves and facilities are doing their absolute best to provide access for tourism, but in the most environmentally-friendly way. Responsible tourism goes hand-in-hand with ecotourism, focusing not just on being conscious of the

environment, but also of locals. Responsible travel means not just being mindful of the impact that the lodge you stay at does not harm the environment, but that the businesses you interact with (tourism providers, shops, hotels, etc) care about the local people and cultures as much as their bottom line. When you shop, you're putting your money in the hands of locals in a sustainable way, not staying at chain hotels, where revenue isn't spread around.

Economic impact

There are concerns that tourists in authoritarian countries support and legitimize government oppression. Others make the argument that tourism requires the government to uphold some level of openness and rule of law. In the end, the choice of whether to visit an authoritarian country falls on the traveller's own judgment. These countries might restrict visitors' freedom of movement, and their opportunities to fraternize with locals.

Cultural impact

Environmental impact

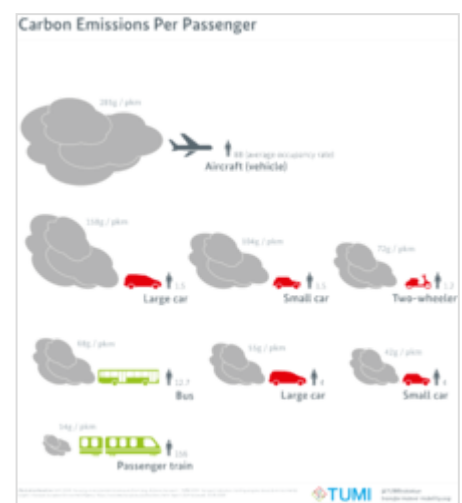
See also: [*Sustainable travel*](#)

Climate change

Overtourism

“ They took all the trees, put 'em in a tree museum,
And they charged the people a dollar and a half just to see 'em.
Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got till it's gone?
They paved paradise and put up a parking lot. ”

—Joni Mitchell



Carbon Emissions Per Passenger

Some cities, national parks and other destinations have at occasion had so many visitors that the natural or cultural environment gets compromised, in some cases causing public protests against visitors, or transforming famous venues into overpriced tourist traps. This has been the case for the Faroe Islands, Venice, Amsterdam, Kyoto and some other destinations. Visitors can avoid the crowds and contribute to a

more stable economy by visiting off-season (outside vacation time, public events and holidays), or spending time in a less-visited district or neighboring city. Individual destination articles can contain advice on when, where and how to visit places at risk of overcrowding.


Get in

Main article: [Sustainable travel#Get in](#)

By plane

While nearly all forms of transport a traveler uses will release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, aircraft are especially notorious offenders and the aviation industry is the fastest-growing contributor to the acceleration of climate change. This is not just due to the vast distances traveled, but because they release greenhouse gases high in the atmosphere where their effects are more potent. On long-haul flights, the amount of carbon dioxide released is roughly equivalent to a car traveling the same distance with one passenger. A flight from England to Australia releases the equivalent of 4.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide, or about half the average yearly emissions of a person in the U.K. Shorter flights have higher emissions than longer ones per km traveled due to the amount of fuel used taxiing, and during take off. (See: [Environmental impact of aviation](#) on Wikipedia). When travelling by air, flights flown by turboprop aircraft tend to be slightly slower and more noisy in the cabin than turbofan or jet aircraft but turboprops are more fuel efficient, emit less greenhouse gas and less noise pollution on the ground. Newer aircraft are also more fuel efficient and less noisy. Also, aircraft produced by Western manufacturers such as Airbus and Boeing tend to have higher fuel efficiencies than formerly-Soviet (e.g. Tupolev, Sukhoi) or Chinese (e.g. Comac, Xian) manufacturers.



Greenhouses gasses emitted at the altitude of aircraft are more potent than an equivalent amount emitted on the ground. 

The benefits of travel in increasing an individual's cultural awareness and knowledge are immeasurable. Thus, in spite of the carbon footprint, doing a journey may still be worthwhile, even if it involves flying – especially for far-away destinations, flying is often indeed the only realistic option. To justify the emissions, one should do the most out of the journey. Plan and prepare well, and stay longer instead of flying often. Make sure you indeed can increase your cultural awareness and knowledge in a way you couldn't closer to home.

In places where there are good rail connections, such as Western Europe and East Asia, those will provide a more environmentally friendly way to travel. For long-distance journeys, [sleeper trains](#) are an option. When [high-speed rail](#) is available, you can even travel long distances quickly without flying. Especially for cities within 1000 km from each other, when the time taken to get to the airport, go through security, and board the plane is taken into consideration, flying often doesn't buy much time. This allows you to use your one long flight to explore a whole region, given that you have enough time at hand.

In addition to making sure that the flight indeed is worthwhile, one can try to use airlines that are rated more environmentally aware and perhaps use carbon offset schemes. These schemes collect money which is transferred to projects, like installing renewable energy or planting trees. In theory, by purchasing carbon offset "credits" through these schemes, travelers would reduce carbon emissions somewhere, equivalent to the amount emitted on their flight. In practice many carbon offset schemes have less impact than advertised and the field is riddled with controversies; do your research and find one that you can trust.

Carbon offset can be calculated and purchased by individuals, through an agency like [ClimateCare](http://www.climatecare.org) (<http://www.climatecare.org>), or through your carrier. Airlines offering carbon offset programs for their passengers include: [British Airways](http://www.onedestination.co.uk/environment/climate-change/one-destination-carbon-fund/) (<http://www.onedestination.co.uk/environment/climate-change/one-destination-carbon-fund/>), [Cathay Pacific](http://www.cathaypacific.com/cpa/en_US/faq/flygreener) (http://www.cathaypacific.com/cpa/en_US/faq/flygreener), [Delta Air Lines](http://www.delta.com/content/www/en_US/about-delta/force-for-global-good.html) (http://www.delta.com/content/www/en_US/about-delta/force-for-global-good.html), [easyJet](https://www.easyjet.com/en/sustainability) (<https://www.easyjet.com/en/sustainability>), [Lufthansa](https://www.lufthansa.com/us/en/offset-flight) (<https://www.lufthansa.com/us/en/offset-flight>), [Qantas](http://www.qantas.com.au/travel/airlines/fly-carbon-neutral/global/en) (<http://www.qantas.com.au/travel/airlines/fly-carbon-neutral/global/en>), & [United Airlines](http://www.united.com/web/en-US/content/company/globalcitizenship/environment_faq.aspx) (http://www.united.com/web/en-US/content/company/globalcitizenship/environment_faq.aspx).

By boat

While boating is rarely in the climate change spotlight, it should be, because cruise ships are the dirtiest of the major travel industry sectors, polluting at roughly double the per passenger per mile rate of airlines (they are much heavier per passenger, and to reach many ports in a short time, they cruise too fast to be fuel-efficient). According to [Marine Insight](https://www.marineinsight.com/environment/8-ways-in-which-cruise-ships-can-cause-marine-pollution/) (<https://www.marineinsight.com/environment/8-ways-in-which-cruise-ships-can-cause-marine-pollution/>), "A medium-sized cruise ship uses about 150 tonnes of fuel daily, emitting as much particulate as one million cars." Emissions aren't the only problem though, cruise ships damage the environment by dumping trash, discharging sewage, and physically destroying natural resources.



Royal Clipper Karibik can use sail power, which reduces pollution – but that doesn't in itself make it responsible

Emissions are the environmental factor most travelers are aware of. Cruise ships burn bunker fuel and a ship's exhaust can accelerate the warming of cold environment in the form of black carbon. Black carbon is the result of incomplete combustion after the engine consumed the fuel. With large quantities of the microscopic black carbon exhaust falling to the ground, they increase the warming rate of ice and snow by decreasing the amount of sunlight reflected back into the sky. To minimize the impact, choose a less destructive type of vacation or look for ships that use fuel with low sulfur content and those that installed exhaust scrubbers.

By car

Automobiles are suitable for travelling short to medium distance. However, it often contributes to traffic congestion (especially in the core of major cities) because most cars are single occupant. Instead, consider travelling by public transit (bus, train, subway, ferry). Not only is the carbon emission per capita lower because the emission is divided among all riders, you can also read a book, browse on the internet or take a nap while the driver navigates through the city. Without worrying about traffic jams or learning

the local driving habits, you are less stressed when you arrive at your destination. Cities often encourage public transit usage by offering incentives (such as dedicated lane to cut commute time or bypass high traffic areas) or disincentives for automobile usage (e.g. tolls, congestion charge in London, restricted access, high parking fee or lack of parking spots).

If you are travelling with coworkers or friends, consider booking as a group for public transit. Some companies offer group discount. If your destination cannot be reached by public transit, consider meeting up at a designated location and carpool to the final destination to cut down on fuel cost of having everyone drive their own car to the final destination and pay parking fee for each car.



Mass Transit is often more responsible and practical than taking a personal car.

Do

Community-based tourism

Community-based tourism (CBT) is a form of sustainable development where small, rural communities set up accommodation and activities to generate tourism. CBT allows travelers to experience life in such communities—taking part in language or cooking lessons, eating freshly-prepared meals, experiencing local music and dance, and venturing with a local guide to nearby nature/landscape attractions—while the community gains much-needed revenue. NGOs and aid organizations (like the U.S. Peace Corps) help villages establish CBT facilities, organize appropriate activities, and establish governance of the project to ensure that revenue is shared with the community. Local villagers earn money for providing homestay accommodation, becoming guides, providing lessons, growing extra produce, and creating art and crafts for sale, while a portion of revenue (20–50%) is typically reserved in a community fund that can be used to improve the CBT experience or be used for development purposes. The number of CBT projects is growing. CBT is established in Central America, Central Asia and many countries in Africa; countries with well-established CBT projects are Guatemala, Costa Rica, Kyrgyzstan, Ghana and Uganda.

Travelers who participate in CBT will typically book a package online for a stay of one day to one week. Bookings are handled by someone in the community, *not* a commercial tour operator. Accommodation is simple but sufficient by Western standards, with a private room, bed, telephone access, and a private bathroom (don't expect a toilet and shower, but at least an enclosed room with a hole in the ground and water; you should *not* be left to do your business outdoors or in a grotesque community toilet). Food will consist of local snacks, lunches, and at least one meal will be a smorgasbord of local dishes to taste (a dozen or so dishes are prepared, but it's there for everyone to share). Travelers can take lessons from locals in activities such as cooking, drumming, singing, dancing, body-painting, hunting and fishing (traditional methods), native medicines, or playing a traditional game with some of the village children or

elders. A local guide will be able to take you to nearby attractions, like waterfalls or rainforest, or walk along trails or ride horseback. In some communities and especially during longer stays, travelers may have the opportunity to volunteer on development projects.

Indigenous tourism

Events

There is an annual Responsible Travel conference (<http://www.icrtourism.org/events/>), held in a different country each year.

World Responsible Day is celebrated in Europe on June 2.

Responsible Tourism Day is held on November 7.

See also

- Air pollution
 - Animal ethics
 - Begging#Do instead
 - Leave-no-trace camping
 - Sustainable travel
 - Volunteer travel
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