

Reducing Waste When You Travel:

Making Environmental Choices



Travelers create a lot of waste, even with the best intentions. Whether you're traveling for business or pleasure, you can do a few simple things that will reduce your waste, conserve resources, and minimize the overall environmental impact of your visit. What's more, you won't have to sacrifice comfort or convenience to do them.

Before You Leave

With a little planning and a few simple changes to your habits, you can make a big difference when traveling.

- Stop your newspaper subscription while you're away. Some newspapers will let you donate these papers to a school or other group. Check with your newspaper publisher.
- Use electronic tickets whenever possible for plane, train, boat, and bus trips. They generate less waste and cost less to replace.
- When planning a road trip, make sure your vehicle is "road-ready" to improve fuel efficiency, prevent pollution, and save money. Make sure your engine is properly tuned and your tires are properly inflated. If you change your own motor oil, be sure to recycle it at any "quick lube" shop, gas station, or auto parts store that accepts used oil for recycling.
- When booking your guestroom, campsite, or meeting location, consider locations within walking distance of planned outings or that are easily accessible to public transportation.
- If you have one, remember to take your own camera, so that you don't have to rely on a disposable one. To reduce packaging waste, try to use film with more exposures since 12-exposure film uses the same amount of packaging as 36-exposure film.
- "Down-size" your toiletry items for travel by reusing and refilling small bottles and jars you already have with products you already have, such as mouthwash, shampoo, or other necessities.

Did You Know?

Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) and mature travelers made over 241 million trips in 2002. Mature travelers (age 55+) made about 75 million of those trips.





T R A V E L

Hotel Tips

- Many hotels have waste reduction and energy conservation plans. Book your trip with one that does. Otherwise, try these easy things to help hotels reduce waste.
- Participate in the hotel's recycling program. If they don't have a recycling program, ask them to start one.
 - Let the hotel know that it's not necessary to change your sheets and towels every day.
 - When you're out of your room, turn off the lights, radio, TV, computer, and other electric devices, and adjust the air conditioner and the heat to use less energy.
 - On cold nights, draw curtains to keep heat in the room, and similarly on hot days, draw curtains to keep the heat out of the room.
 - If the hotel provides a complimentary newspaper, or if you buy your own, ask the hotel to see that it's recycled.
 - Take partially used shampoo, soap, and other complimentary hotel items with you when you check out; leave unopened items in the room.
 - If available, use the hotel's electronic check-out program on the television or over the telephone to reduce paper waste.

Camping, Fishing, or Hiking

- When camping, avoid disposables whenever possible. Rent equipment and pack waste-free by bringing reusables and recyclables home with you.
- To keep lead out of the environment, don't use lead sinkers when fishing.
- When hiking, carry an extra bag, so you can pick up and carry out any trash along the way.

Be Energy Efficient When You Can

If renting transportation, ask about alternative fuel vehicles. Although such rentals may be limited in availability, some companies do offer natural gas, hybrid-electric, or clean-air gas powered vehicles.

Sightseeing, Outings, and Dining

- Sightseeing brochures, food, and packaging account for most of a traveler's trash. By taking some simple steps, you can eliminate or reduce this kind of waste, as well as cut down on other types of pollution.
- Plan sightseeing activities where you can use public transportation or the hotel van, or walk, bike, or rideshare.

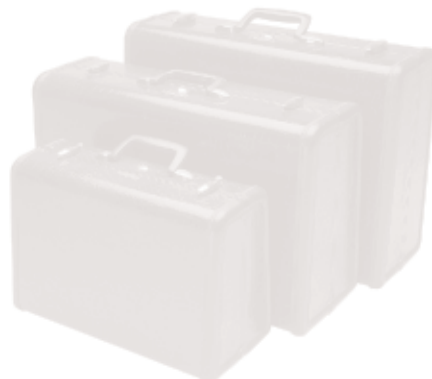


- Resist the urge to grab more brochures than you need. Be sure to recycle the ones you don't keep as souvenirs.
- Don't litter. Carry your trash with you until find a waste container.
- Buy recyclable products for your trip, or as souvenirs. Be sure to recycle them when you're finished using them.
- Dine at "eat-in" restaurants and hotel dining rooms whenever possible to decrease the number of disposable items associated with meals.
- When eating at carry out restaurants, take only the condiments, napkins, and utensils you need. Try skipping a straw altogether, or declining a bag when you don't need one.
- Take reusable plates and flatware on picnics.
- Clean up after picnics and other outings. Dispose of all waste in trash receptacles to prevent debris from accidentally fouling the land, the water, or harming wildlife.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a traveling philosophy to help people minimize their impact on the places they visit. It doesn't take much to be an ecotourist or a "green" traveler. You can set an example by following these few simple practices.

- Leave only footprints. Take everything out that you brought with you.
- Don't take anything from natural areas, historical areas, or hotels.
- Value wildlife. Leave animals and their habitats undisturbed.
- Protect and respect endangered species and wetlands.
- Conserve and preserve natural resources.
- Don't litter. Pick up and properly dispose of trash when you see it.





RESOURCES

■ *Special thanks to:*

The Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance, which provided most of the information in this fact sheet.

www.reduce.org

■ *For more information on the environmental practices in the hotel and lodging industry, visit:*

Green Seal, an independent, nonprofit organization that strives to achieve a healthier and cleaner environment.

www.greenseal.org

Green Hotels Association, an organization dedicated to bringing together hoteliers interested in reducing solid waste, saving water and energy, and protecting the earth's beautiful destinations.

www.greenhotels.com

■ *For more information on ecotourism and being a responsible traveler, visit:*

The International Ecotourism Society, which promotes responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.

www.ecotourism.org

■ *For more general information about protecting the environment, visit:*

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

www.epa.gov

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Solid Waste and
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