

Green Holidays



Having a summer holiday each year is something all of us look forward to – sun sea, sand or ski – but is it possible to go on holiday bearing in mind the effects this is having on climate change and the environment? What with high carbon emissions created by air and car travel, it seems like there's no way of getting away without making an impact on the environment. But, like most aspects to our lives, is it possible to go holidaying and go green at the same time.

There are plenty of ways to have a relaxing holiday and keep your environmental conscience clear. So before you book your trip away this year, take a look at our top tips to becoming a green traveller:

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a growing market in the travel industry. Central to its philosophy is the idea of 'responsible travel' – a way of travelling that is fair to the local people and environment of where you are visiting, as well as being concerned with the larger implications to climate change.

Ecotourism focuses in particular on benefiting the local tourist industry of the country you are travelling to. An ecotourist company will, for example, enlist local tour guides to show you around an area and pay them a fair wage. An eco holiday will also get you involved in the local community to sample an authentic experience and meet new people and experience different cultures.

Alternative Travel Methods

If it's possible, try and use alternative modes of travel. Train travel, for example, is much more environmentally efficient, and you can use it to travel almost anywhere in the world. It can make for a unique holiday experience – for advice and to plan a journey by train, try the website seat62.com.

If you are travelling by plane, minimise the number of stopovers on your trip. More carbon emissions are created at take off and landing than any other time – so the less flights and transfers you make, the better for the environment.

Travel in the UK

Taking a trip in the UK is a great way of supporting local tourism and taking the family on a sustainable holiday. From the surf in Newquay, seaside fun in Blackpool and peace and quiet in the Scottish Highlands, there are plenty of destinations on the doorstep that you can enjoy, without the long or short haul flight. Keep it greener by using public transport to travel there and back.

Offset your Carbon Emissions

If you are planning on travelling by plane to go on holiday, offsetting your carbon emissions is one good way of compensating for the amount of CO₂ that your journey will generate. Air travel, though contributing currently around 5% of the UK's emissions, is also the fastest growing source of CO₂. Emissions from the aviation industry have doubled between 1990 and 2000. You can join an offsetting service such as Climate Care, which will calculate how much you need to pay to offset your emissions and then donate the money to sustainable projects across the world that counter the effects of CO₂ emissions. Many Ecotourism companies, such as Responsibletravel.com, factor the cost of carbon emissions into their prices.

Alternatively, you could get involved in a local tree planting project in your area. Trees convert CO₂ into oxygen and will again counter the emissions you've created.

