

## **Green Travel Ideas**

Just because you go on vacation, doesn't mean you have to leave your green values and commitment to reducing your carbon footprint behind. There are plenty of ways to incorporate green ideas into fun travel plans and not only enjoy your vacation but feel good about it. Green living means that you strive to reduce your impact on the environment, not give up on living altogether.

Of course, if you're traveling locally, you know the hype for eco-friendly transportation: walk, bike, carpool, or use mass transit whenever possible. If you use your car, keep it religiously maintained and in the best working order possible. For minimum environmental impact, keep oil changes and tune ups up to date, stay off of the road during rush hour when at all possible, and maintain the air pressure of your tires.

For commuting or long distance travel, the best choice environmentally is the train. Many tour companies offer guided train tours in multiple countries. These are especially convenient if your plans are to explore a widespread area or over a long distance. To reduce waste and save money at the same time, you can bring packed lunches and reusable bottles on the train.

If you have plans to travel by airplane, research air carriers and travel options. Plane travel releases massive amounts of carbon into the environment. But there are actually programs available that help you offset the impact by allowing you to purchase carbon credits or by planting trees. There are also some websites such as [CarbonFund.org](http://CarbonFund.org) that offer tools to calculate your air travel footprint and offset it accordingly. Pack light and choose your luggage carefully. The heavier the cargo, the more fuel the plane will use because it has to work harder. Also do your part to reduce waste on flights by refusing the packaged peanuts and plastic cups and using your own reusable bottle and pre-packed snack.

When choosing the destination for your vacation, there are greener alternatives to choose from. The great outdoors always provide fun recreational opportunities for families, such as hiking, backpacking, and camping. Just reinforce the conviction that you always leave the area exactly like you found it. If it came with you, it must go with you, and nothing is taken but photographs. Enjoying nature is a great way to strengthen your family's resolve to treat the planet respectfully. While you're there, use solar power gadgets to lessen environmental impact. Flashlights and ovens are both available in solar power versions where outdoor equipment is sold.

If the great outdoors is just not your cup of tea, rest assured. Hotels and resorts are increasingly getting into the act of going green. Some have programs established to save energy, conserve water, recycle waste, and serve local foods. The relatively new but rapidly growing ecotourism industry keeps adding new lodges, inns, bed and breakfasts, and rental condos all over the globe and for every travel style, all dedicated to a cleaner environment. Not to be outdone, some car rental agencies are offering hybrid vehicles with better energy efficiency for your green use.

For your next trip or family vacation, consider some of these ideas. You can maintain green goals and ideals and have a great time with just a little forethought and planning.