

Green Days: Green Ways for Living



Contact: Merleanne H. Rampale
847-336-9340 x. 4
mrampale@co.lake.il.us



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Eco-Friendly Travel

With summer vacations just around the corner, many of us have already been thinking about far away places. If we're not thinking about far away places then, perhaps, we are thinking about just getting away for a few relaxing days. Here are some resources and tips you might want to consider to make your travels a bit "greener" this year.



Green Lodging

This site identifies hotels that are committed to reducing waste, conserving resources and reducing or eliminating the use of chemicals. It includes everything from hotels to condos and B&Bs. You will be surprised at the lodging options available that are committed to an eco-friendly lifestyle and policies and will learn that you do not always have to sacrifice comfort and luxury while practicing environmental care.

www.greenhotels.com



Travel Planning

Orbitz features energy-efficient hotels that have earned an "Energy Star" label. According to the EPA, buildings that have earned the ENERGY STAR use nearly 40 percent less energy than average buildings and emit 35 percent less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, offering a significantly smaller carbon footprint, perfect for the eco-traveler. You can also book hybrid car rentals, purchase carbon offsets for your travel or learn more about volunteer and other eco vacation opportunities.

Expedia launched their "Going Green" store that allows customers to browse for environmentally friendly hotels, hybrid car rentals and carbon offsets.

www.eco.orbitz.com

www.expedia.com/gogreen



Consider an Ecotour

Find travel opportunities that benefit local communities and preserve the environment. Here are two of a growing number of sites you might want to visit:

www.ecotour.org

www.ecotravel.com



Sustainable Destinations

National Geographic's website has a section dedicated to sustainable destinations. Check out their Center for Sustainable Destinations and see how your destination scored. The site also has numerous informational links to help you plan a wonderful and eco-friendly trip.

www.nationalgeographic.com

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Leave No Trace

When visiting the great outdoors on any of your travels, follow the Principles of Leave No Trace to minimize your impact on the natural environment you are passing through.

Visit www.Int.org to learn more.



Green Travel Tips

Here are just a few tips to make your travels a little greener:

- Unplug appliances to save energy while you're away. Many small and large appliances continue to draw electricity even when turned off when left plugged in. The Department of Energy estimates that this energy, sometimes called vampire energy, accounts for 5% of total electrical consumption in the U.S.
- If your home is vacant while you are away, turn up your thermostat in summer and turn it down in winter to a temperature that will be comfortable and safe for houseplants and pets that are left behind.
- If you are renting a car, consider a hybrid or a fuel-efficient one. If you are driving your own vehicle; drive the most fuel-efficient one you own. Remember to check your tire pressure once a month and before long trips to keep tires at their optimal pressure for better gas mileage.
- Travel by boat, train or bus when you can.
- When flying, book electronic tickets to reduce paper waste. Research your airlines – patronize the most eco-friendly airlines. Some airline companies actually recycle the waste that they produce on flights. Flyers can also consider buying carbon offsets to compensate for the emissions caused by the flight. (www.climatetrust.org is one site that can help direct your donations.)
- Although the tiny travel sized cosmetics and products may be convenient, the extra packaging they use is not environmentally friendly. Waste reduction is the first of our 4R's and a very important one. Consider using reusable containers for your travel sundries. Reduce & reuse!
- Select a hotel or lodging close to public transportation or nearest the places you want to visit.
- Once you arrive -- Enjoy the view! Walk or bike to your local destinations whenever possible.
- Opt not to have your linens and towels laundered on a daily basis. Hotels use an enormous amount of energy on laundry.
- Purchase a non-disposable camera and use rechargeable batteries.
- Return any map or brochures provided at tourist attractions for the next person to use.
- If you are camping, carry your trash out with you, take home and recycle anything that can be.
- Don't forget to pack your reusable shopping bags!



Happy Travels!