

A woman wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and a pink hat is standing in a lush green forest. She is holding a wooden staff or walking stick. The background is filled with vibrant green foliage and trees, creating a sense of being deep in nature.

Trekking Green's

Beginner's  
Guide to  
Ecotourism



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THE EFFORTS LISTED IN THIS GUIDE ARE AS COMPREHENSIVE AS POSSIBLE. IF YOU KNOW OF SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS OR COMPANIES THAT I MAY HAVE INADVERTENTLY MISSED, PLEASE LET ME KNOW. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO ADD THEM TO THE LIST. 



**I'M SO GLAD YOU'VE DECIDED  
TO JOIN THE ECOTOURISM  
REVOLUTION**

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*A mind that is stretched by a new experience  
can never go back to its old dimensions.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.



# 1. WHAT IS ECOTOURISM?

Ecotourism is defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education" (TIES, 2015).

You already know that ecotourism is the right choice and have your reasons for it; otherwise you wouldn't have signed up for this amaze-balls guide and Trekking Green's newsletter, but, I hear, "Amy, I have no idea where to even begin?". This guide will walk you through the steps of taking an amazing vacation from choosing a location to living it up in your locale without leaving your values behind.

*...supporting the 3 P's of People, Planet, and Profits*

Ecotourism begins with making a conscious decision to travel but leave the Earth better than you found it by supporting the 3 P's of people, planet, and profit. This can be through connections with people, helping save animals, working to preserve the natural environment for generations to come or any combination of those.

 As you read through the list of suggestions please note, that I don't expect anyone to be able to succeed at all of them, all of the time, but making a conscious effort is incredibly important. The decision is between your conscience and your wallet. 

## 2. DREAMY LOCATIONS

Think of the most amazing, interesting, exciting or relaxing place you want to go, then begin your trip by determining how you can best live that dream experience sustainably. Your path to sustainability may not be the same every time, but I know you will make the best decisions you can.

Start the process by looking at the [Ecotourism List](#) I have created for you! Keep in mind, some locations will be certified as ecotourism while some aren't. It is a extensive and expensive process, but the location you chose should strive towards all three goals of people, planet, and profits whether they are certified or not.

Didn't find what you were looking for on my Ecotourism List? Never fear there are more resources available for you.

### Africa-

- ❖ [EarthCheck](#)
- ❖ [Global Sustainable Tourism Council](#)
- ❖ [Green Global Travel](#)
- ❖ [Intrepid Travel](#)
- ❖ [Responsible Travel](#)

### Antartica-

- ❖ [Green Global Travel](#)
- ❖ [Intrepid Travel](#)
- ❖ [Responsible Travel](#)

Asia-

- ❖ [Destinet.eu](#)
- ❖ [EarthCheck](#)
- ❖ [Global Sustainable Tourism Council](#)
- ❖ [Green Global Travel](#)
- ❖ [Intrepid Travel](#)
- ❖ [Responsible Travel](#)

Australia and Oceania-

- ❖ [Destinet.eu](#)
- ❖ [EarthCheck](#)
- ❖ [Green Global Travel](#)
- ❖ [Intrepid Travel](#)
- ❖ [Responsible Travel](#)

Europe-

- ❖ [Destinet.eu](#)
- ❖ [EarthCheck](#)
- ❖ [Global Sustainable Tourism Council](#)
- ❖ [Green Global Travel](#)
- ❖ [Intrepid Travel](#)
- ❖ [Responsible Travel](#)
- ❖ [Visit21.com](#)



## North America-

- ❖ [Destinet.eu](#)
- ❖ [EarthCheck](#)
- ❖ [Global Sustainable Tourism Council](#)
- ❖ [Green Global Travel](#)
- ❖ [Intrepid Travel](#)
- ❖ [Rainforest Alliance](#)
- ❖ [Responsible Travel](#)

## South America-

- ❖ [Destinet.eu](#)
- ❖ [Global Sustainable Tourism Council](#)
- ❖ [Green Global Travel](#)
- ❖ [Intrepid Travel](#)
- ❖ [Rainforest Alliance](#)
- ❖ [Responsible Travel](#)

General searches are available on TripAdvisor using their [GreenLeader Program](#), just look for a green leaf next to the hotel listing. Alternatively, try staying in an [AirBNB](#), find an eco-resort, or [Couchsurf](#). Choosing to stay in a smaller place rather than a large resort will help you to connect with the local people. Talk with them and listen.

 *Most importantly, ask questions before you book. The more people who are asking questions and expecting to travel in a conscious way, the more likely locations will be to change.* 

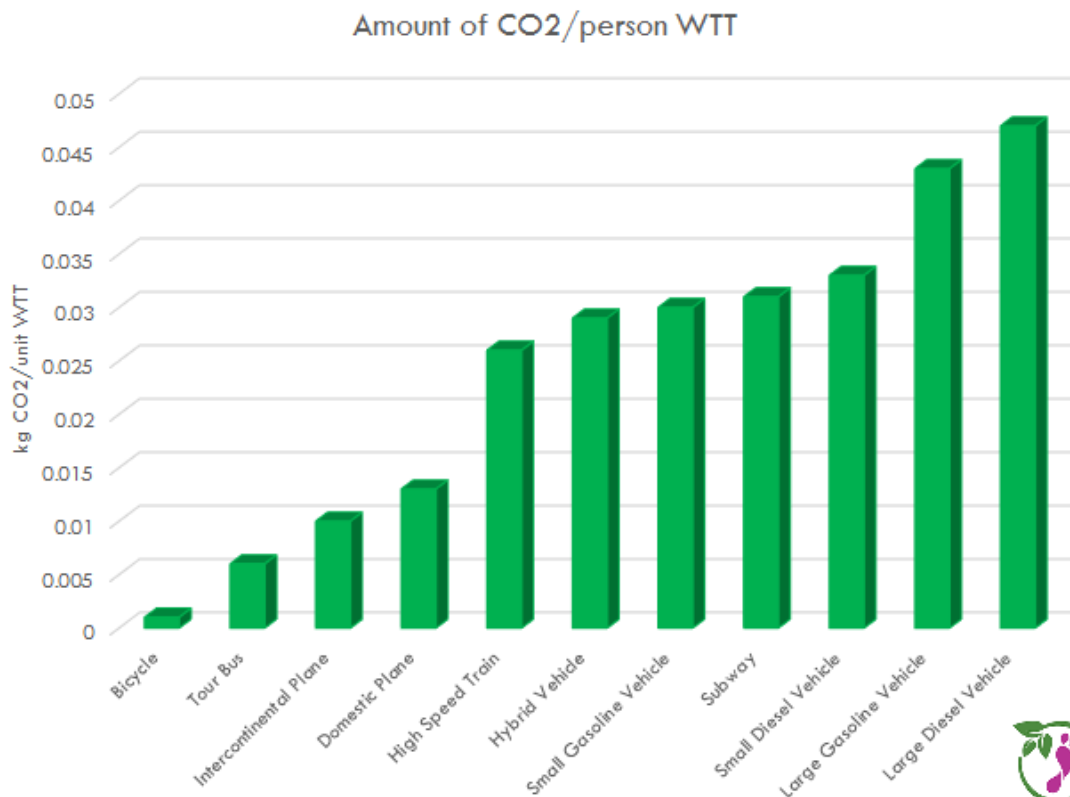


Here are some examples and points to take into consideration when choosing your dreamy location.

- ❖ The location should pay their employees well. Keep your eyes open and, if possible, ask the staff about their working conditions.
- ❖ The structure could have thick walls and/or multi-paned windows to help keep the rooms comfortable through increased efficiency.
- ❖ The location could have organic bedding.
- ❖ The location could utilize low-flow toilets.
- ❖ Does the location have a independent auditors conducting certifications such as [GreenSeal](#)? Many countries are also developing local standards and certifications.
- ❖ The location should have a high percentage of locals working in the facility.
- ❖ Ask them about their support for local community projects that benefit their area.
- ❖ The location may have on-site wind, solar, or water power.
- ❖ They could have an organic garden to provide food for guests.

### 3. FLIGHTS TO ANYWHERE

Now, that you have chosen your dream destination the next step is booking a flight. We all seem to know that air travel is a big portion of the carbon footprint of traveling, but I always wondered if the graphs that we know are accurate and complete pictures of the data, so I decided to do some research, so you don't have to. My questions specifically are "How much of the airplane's carbon footprint am I responsible for? and How does that compare to other modes of transportation?"



This graph shows the amount of carbon dioxide produced per person for the transportation method. WTT means Well to Tank and takes into account the amount of energy required to produce the fuel, transport it an average distance, and then be used by the consumer. I was surprised by the amounts for a plane trip once broken down by average number of passengers! Source: <http://co2emissiefactoren.nl/lijt-emissiefactoren/>

Now, that we know how much CO<sub>2</sub> we are really working with, what can we do to further decrease that footprint?

- ❖ Fly non-stop, when possible. It takes more energy to put a body into motion than to stay in motion.
- ❖ Purchase carbon offsets for your trip. Many airlines now have programs to encourage passengers to participate in carbon offset program directly through the airline, or you can purchase them independently. Google Carbon Offset Programs and find one that you like.
- ❖ Pack lighter. If each person packed less it would help to reduce carbon emissions by reducing the total weight of the plane which requires less fuel to get the plane into the air.
- ❖ Use electronic airline tickets to save paper.
- ❖ Choose the airline that aligns with your values, destination, and wallet using the legend and graph on the next page.

<a href="#">Aeroflot</a>														
<a href="#">Air France</a>														
<a href="#">Air New Zealand</a>														
<a href="#">Alaska Air</a>														
<a href="#">All Nippon Airways</a>														
<a href="#">American Airlines</a>														
<a href="#">British Airways</a>														
<a href="#">Cathay Pacific</a>														
<a href="#">Delta Airlines</a>														
<a href="#">Etihad Airways</a>														
<a href="#">Finnair</a>														
<a href="#">Iberia Airlines</a>														
<a href="#">Japan Airlines</a>														
<a href="#">Jetblue</a>														
<a href="#">KLM Royal Dutch Airlines</a>														
<a href="#">Korean Air</a>														
<a href="#">LAN Airlines</a>														
<a href="#">Lufthansa</a>														
<a href="#">Nature Air</a>														
<a href="#">Singapore Airlines</a>														
<a href="#">Southwest Airlines</a>														
<a href="#">Thomson Airlines</a>														
<a href="#">United Airlines</a>														
<a href="#">Virgin Airlines</a>														

**Legend:**

- ❖ Biofuel:
- ❖ Carbon Offsetting (Airline directly buys carbon offsets, on top of passenger purchases):
- ❖ Efficient Planes (Ex. Winglets, Lighter Planes):
- ❖ Electric Ground Fleet (Ex. Ground fleet used to transport luggage, food, and waste are electric):
- ❖ Energy Efficient Buildings (Ex. LEED Certified buildings, switch to low energy light bulbs):
- ❖ Flight Plan Efficiency/ Route Optimization (Ex. Using science to determine the most efficient approach routes):
- ❖ Natural Conservation (Ex. Planting Trees, saving rivers):
- ❖ Noise Reduction (Less noise around airports from planes):
- ❖ Other Fuel Efficiency Measures (Ex. Uses fewer engines for taxiing, continuous descent):
- ❖ Purchasing sustainably sourced goods:
- ❖ Recycling Program (Ex. Reuse, Recycle, Compost):
- ❖ Reduced Weight (Ex. Eliminate drink carts, switch to tablets for manuals):
- ❖ Social & Community Engagement (Promoting education, building hospitals):
- ❖ Water Conservation (Ex. Low-flow faucets):

## 4. SAVVY LUGGAGE AND PACKING

Now that you have your dream destination or your flight booked, you will need to start packing and why not make it fabulous with these sustainable options?



Lite Gear Bags- uses recycled materials



Traveler's Choice- Made with Hemp and Environmental friendly PVC free foam.



Patagonia- uses fair trade practices and sustainable materials, when possible



Heys- made with recycled materials.

# AHH, FINALLY ARRIVED!

Time to grab some street food and a local beverage, and head out to see the sights. I hear you asking though, "How do I live sustainably in this crazy, foreign place?"

- ❖ Shop in local markets from individuals. Pay a fair price for anything you buy and try to buy directly from the artisan, when possible. You can try to determine this by asking where the item came from, who made it, and specific details about how it was made, then use your judgement about whether the person sounds authentic or not.
- ❖ Keep in mind the local customs and values. Strive to be an inviting person for the locals to get to know also. You are not just visiting a new culture, but you are also an ambassador for your home.
- ❖ If you have time, volunteer or work with a local organization to support a cause you believe in. (Keep in mind if you are considering an orphanage that the kids get attached to visitors and become very disappointed when they can't leave with us. If you want to help, send money, or adopt a child.)
- ❖ Stay on marked paths or trails. If you create a new path and others later follow your path mistaking it for the real one, it can leave some serious impacts on the local environment.
- ❖ Use ecofriendly, biodegradable, or organic bath products that are made locally for the guest bathrooms and spas.
- ❖ Set reasonable temperatures in your guest rooms.
- ❖ Recycling bins should be easily available.
- ❖ Wash towels less frequently when you stay more than one night.

- ❖ Recycle.
- ❖ Conserve water in any way you can.
- ❖ Turn off lights. The location should be using energy efficient lighting.
- ❖ Carry a reusable bag.
- ❖ Travel lighter. Your wallet (paying fewer baggage fees) and your back will thank you!
- ❖ Use reusable shampoo, conditioner, and body wash bottles.

#### Food/ Drink:

- ❖ Eat locally. It's usually cheaper and tastier, A bonus: it gives you the opportunity to support the local economy and meet and talk with the locals over a meal and perhaps a drink.
- ❖ Pack your own airplane snacks and always carry a water bottle.
- ❖ Eat local and/or organic food.
- ❖ Compost wasted food.
- ❖ Treat your own drinking water with either a Steri-pen or iodine tablets.

Getting around your new locale can be difficult, just keep the transportation graph from page 10 in mind and try to take these forms of transportation as often as possible:

Transportation:

- ❖ Walk.
- ❖ Ride a bicycle.
- ❖ If available, take a ferry.
- ❖ If you want to go old school, or are in Amish country, ride or drive a wagon.
- ❖ Take public transportation such as buses or subways.
- ❖ Ride in a pedal cab.
- ❖ Ride a horse or camel.

*All of these things expand our minds  
into new shapes.*

Amy Mank



# LINK LIST:

**TIES-** <https://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism>

**Ecotourism List-** <http://trekkinggreen.com/ecotourism-list/>

**Earth Check-** <http://earthcheck.org/about/our-clients/>

**Global Sustainable Tourism Council-**

<https://www.gstcouncil.org/en/gstc-partners-2/gstc-destinations.html>

**Green Global Travel-** <http://greenglobaltravel.com/>

**Intrepid Travel-** [http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/click?id=GkK\\*coLdvNc&subid=&offerid=358957.1&type=10&tmpid=18038&RD\\_PARM1=http%253A%252F%252Fwww.intrepidtravel.com%252F](http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/click?id=GkK*coLdvNc&subid=&offerid=358957.1&type=10&tmpid=18038&RD_PARM1=http%253A%252F%252Fwww.intrepidtravel.com%252F)

**Responsible Travel-** <http://www.responsibletravel.com/>

**Destinet-** <http://destinet.eu/who-who/destinations>

**Visit21-** [http://www.visit21.net/VISIT\\_Ecolabels\\_Ecolabels.html](http://www.visit21.net/VISIT_Ecolabels_Ecolabels.html)

**Rainforest Alliance-** <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/travel>

**TripAdvisor Green Leaders-** <https://www.tripadvisor.com/GreenLeaders>

**AirBNB-** [https://www.airbnb.com/c/amank1?s=8&cdn\\_locale\\_redirect=1](https://www.airbnb.com/c/amank1?s=8&cdn_locale_redirect=1)

**Couchsurfing-** <https://www.couchsurfing.com/>

**Green Seal-**

<http://www.greenseal.org/FindGreenSealProductsandServices/HotelsandLodgingProperties.aspx>

**CO2 Emissie Factoren-** <http://co2emissiefactoren.nl/lijt-emissiefactoren/>

**Lite Gear Bags-** <http://litegearbags.com/product/20-hybrid-carry-on/>

**Traveler's Choice Luggage-** [http://www.amazon.com/Travelers-Choice-Eco-Traveler-Expandable-Carry/dp/B00ZB8XJ54/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=sl1&tag=trekgree-20&linkId=1fe7a84072fc73294da683ac427dea2a](http://www.amazon.com/Travelers-Choice-Eco-Traveler-Expandable-Carry/dp/B00ZB8XJ54/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=sl1&tag=trekgree-20&linkId=1fe7a84072fc73294da683ac427dea2a)

**Patagonia-** [http://www.amazon.com/PATAGONIA-Black-Hole-Duffel-90L/dp/B00P2TNT1Q/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?s=apparel&ie=UTF8&qid=1454361293&sr=1-1&nodeID=9479199011&keywords=patagonia+luggage&linkCode=sl1&tag=trekgree-20&linkId=c023263c947dc5413c3deae36ac65d1b](http://www.amazon.com/PATAGONIA-Black-Hole-Duffel-90L/dp/B00P2TNT1Q/ref=as_li_ss_tl?s=apparel&ie=UTF8&qid=1454361293&sr=1-1&nodeID=9479199011&keywords=patagonia+luggage&linkCode=sl1&tag=trekgree-20&linkId=c023263c947dc5413c3deae36ac65d1b)

**Heys Luggage-**

[http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001GA09N6/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=sl1&tag=trekgree-20&linkId=38159550ec2bb638551b4add90d6a87f](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001GA09N6/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=sl1&tag=trekgree-20&linkId=38159550ec2bb638551b4add90d6a87f)



**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR  
JOINING THE ECOTOURISM  
REVOLUTION. I'D LOVE TO HEAR  
YOUR THOUGHTS OVER ON  
TREKkingGREEN.COM**



**Trekking Green LLC**  
**BIG ADVENTURE, TINY FOOTPRINT**