

How To Be A More Sustainable Traveler

By Lilly Kerekes and
Rodolfo Alvarado, Servas Mexico



1 COOK TOGETHER

Cooking is essential to share our gastronomy and heritage culture, it could be more organic and healthy, since we know its origin and how they are cooked. Besides, all can participate and it is a great moment to talk and share. If you decide to go out go to markets where you can find local food such as fruits and vegetables that are unique, different and organic. For your health and for the planet avoid garbage food.

2 RIDE A BIKE OR WALK

For short or medium distances bike riding is a fun way to know a place. It's cheap, you'll get exercise and will be helping the planet by reducing pollution. Walk for short distances and you'll have a great opportunity to talk.

3 DON'T USE PLASTICS, BUY WATER

It is easier to carry a water filter (available at camping stores) and a cylinder. Use recycled and/or reusable carry bags.

4 BUY LITTLE, BUY LOCAL

It's always better to avoid buying things since we live in such a devastating consumer society. You don't need to buy things to show friends or family you care but if you do, buy local, in markets or villages, direct from the producers. You'll support the handcrafts of local people who survive on it, plus you'll have an original present at a fair price, as well. It's also an opportunity to meet local artists and learn about their techniques, materials and lifestyle.

5 SHARE YOURSELF

Leave something behind as a remembrance of your visit, something not touchable. Prepare a conference, a performance, teach a local dance or how to cook traditional food. Focus on ecological issues that care about surroundings so your travel can have an armonic and spiritual trace, for example to plant a tree!

6 ORGANIZE AN EVENT

Ask the National Secretary to help you organize a little event when you can share something special and unique about your culture: it's gastronomy, celebrations, habits, language phrases. Ask your host to organize a small gathering of their family and friends where you can share your pictures, knowledge and special talents (and, as a host, you can do the same).

7 TAKE AN ALTERNATIVE TOUR

Go beyond the typical tourist routes! By going deeper we truly have a bath of local culture. Keep an open mind and see behind the typical scenes. Discovering those secret or folkloric places can be an amazing, funny or even a rewarding adventure. Plan to visit sustainable projects around the community. If your host doesn't know of one in his or her area use the opportunity for you both to do some research and maybe even become involved in one.

8 MAKE A GOOD TRAVEL PLAN

Try to reduce your air travel as much as possible. Airplanes generate more pollution than any other kind of transport on the planet. Air travel may be increasing around the world but we SERVAs travelers can help reduce the carbon footprint by taking buses, ferry boats, car pooling and - when it's safe to do so - even hitchhiking.

9 RESPECT THE ANIMALS

The animals are an essential part of the planet so do not feed them, avoid visits to zoos and circuses. At home or on the streets respect them at any possible way, and, if possible, do not eat them!

10 PLANT A TREE

There is not a better symbol to unit you with the nature of a place and also with the hosts. Invite the community to do so, film it, share it. Let's make a great campaign of our own.

11 SHARE SUSTAINABILITY CONCEPTS AND EXPERIENCES

Any personal point of view about ecology and alternative ways of living and respecting nature will be always beneficial for everyone, especially if you want to be a an ecology responsible traveler.