



# “Green” Hotels Association®

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

Contact: Patricia Griffin, 713/789-8889

## **HOW GREEN ARE YOUR TRAVELS?**

### **Help Protect Your Favorite Travel Destination**

“Green” Hotels Association® is encouraging all travelers to green up their travel. The U. S. Travel Data Center estimates that 43 million US travelers are “ecologically concerned.” These travelers will be especially interested, but all travelers can take part in this important mission—the greening of the travel industry—whether away for business or pleasure.

Managers of all businesses react and respond to requests of guests, customers and clients who voice their concerns. So, when you write a note or speak directly to management regarding our environment, you are casting a vote. You can write a note to the general manager of the hotel, to the captain of the airplane and to the manager of a tour company or cruise line with compliments or comments regarding their green program. Thank them for their green program if they have one. Or, ask why they don't have a green program. As a paying customer, it is important that you let them know that you want them to lower water and energy usage and reduce solid waste—and that you want to participate.

"Encourage businesses to think as you do by choosing where to spend your travel dollars. Spend your dollars with travel businesses that are interested in protecting the beautiful destinations we all love to visit," suggests President Patricia Griffin.

Hotels and airlines which have an environmental agenda deserve your patronization. Book your guestrooms and meeting rooms with hotels that are clearly interested in protecting our environment, and let management know that's why you've chosen their hotel. “Green” Hotels Association® member hotels are encouraged to implement water-saving measures, execute energy-saving techniques and reduce solid waste. Rather than putting all these measures into effect “behind the doors”, GHA encourages all lodging accommodations to get guests and clients involved. Hotels can offer towel and sheet-changing options, soap and shampoo dispensers, guestroom recycling baskets and reduced food-related waste. Almost all guests realize that we need to help protect our favorite destinations. Those guests are more than willing to participate in a hotel's green program. Choose “green” hotels by visiting GHA's website at [www.greenhotels.com](http://www.greenhotels.com).

"Further ideas for greener individual travel," says Patricia Griffin, "include: during your hotel stay, let management know that it is not necessary to change your towels and sheets every day. When you leave the room, turn off the AC/heat, lights and TV. Leave the little bottles of shampoo, if you don't use them. Take used bar soap home with you. Avoid room service."

Book flights with airlines that recycle the waste created when serving food and beverages to passengers. British Airways, for instance, has a very strong environmental agenda. Southwest Airlines recycles all cabin waste, and was the first to offer electronic ticketing systemwide.



Use the hotel van instead of renting a car. Use public transportation in your destination city.

Before you leave home, you can take the first steps to green up your travel by turning down the thermostat on your hot water heater, adjusting your AC/heat thermostat and stopping your newspaper.

You can help protect the beautiful business and pleasure destinations we all love to visit. You can help protect Mother Earth. You can help protect our environment for future generations. For a free list of "green" ideas for travelers or a free list of member hotels, contact "Green" Hotels Association by writing to P. O. Box 420212, Houston, TX 77242-0212, faxing 713/789-9786, calling 713/789-8889 or visiting [www.greenhotels.com](http://www.greenhotels.com).

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## “GREEN” TRAVEL

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME:

- Turn water heater to “Vacation” or lowest setting.
- Turn off AC/heat or adjust the thermostat to protect plants, etc.
- Turn water off at outside connection (to prevent flooding should a pipe break while you're gone). When you return, turn on the water slowly and check for problems.
- Appliances, such as TVs and cable converter boxes, should be unplugged because they can draw or “leak” as much as 40 watts per hour even when they're off.
- Turn icemaker off (lift wire) to prevent flooding should it break while you're away.
- Lower the temperature of waterbed heaters at least ten degrees.
- Stop your newspaper. You may be able to donate it to a school.

### TRAVEL:

- Purchase electronic-tickets for airline travel whenever possible. Less waste. If paper tickets are lost, they may cost \$75-100 to have replaced.
- Enjoy walking tours. Walk where sensible.
- Use public transportation when available.
- Use the hotel van instead of renting a car. Use the bus or local transit system. Share taxis. Less pollution, and you can leave the driving to others.
- If you're driving, turn your motor off instead of idling. Encourage tour/bus drivers to turn the motor off instead of idling.
- Don't allow anything to be thrown out of your car windows—ever.

### HOTEL STAYS:

- Let the hotel know that it's not necessary to change your sheets and towels every day.
- To keep track of which towel belongs to which family member, pack a handful of safety pins and small colored beads. Attach a pin and bead or ribbon to each towel, using a designated color for each family member. Remove the pins before checkout.

Reduce the amount of water used for bathing or showering—take shorter showers.

When you leave your hotel room, turn off the AC/heat, lights, TV and radio. Close the drapes.

Participate in hotel recycling programs by placing recyclables in appropriate bins.

Carry a dry cleaning or grocery bag with you in which to carry dirty laundry home.

Carry a few plastic bags with so for any purchases you may make.

Bring favorite toiletries from home rather than using hotel's small bottles.

Leave little bottles of amenities in the guestroom if unopened.

Pack a permanent marker and write each person's name on the cups in the hotel bathroom. It's also handy for writing names on water bottles and lots of other things.

Keep bar soap wrapper so you can take used bar soap home.

Let hotel management know, by speaking directly to management or writing them a note, that you want them to conserve and that you want to participate.

Patronize hotels, airlines, tour operators who support “greening” programs. (contact “Green” Hotels Association® at 713/789-8889 or go to their web site for a current listing of hotel members ([www.greenhotels.com/members.htm](http://www.greenhotels.com/members.htm)).

Instead of leaving bathroom lights (and fans) on all night, it's wise to pack night lights for hotel stays.

If the hotel provides complimentary newspapers, pass yours on to someone else, or leave it in the lobby for another reader. Ask the hotel to see that it's recycled.

Be sure to turn off exercise equipment, sauna, whirlpool, Jacuzzi or tennis court lights when you're through.

Check out of the hotel via the hotel's electronic program available on the TV in some hotels.

You can view your bill, approve it, and help reduce paperwork.

Environmental programs or events may be listed on "things to do in the area" portion of the in-house TV programming.

### **FOOD/RESTAURANTS:**

Carry bottled water with you. Refill as needed.

Patronize local restaurants. Order regional beers and wines. Choose seasonal specials instead of "flown in fresh daily."

Reduce fast food waste whenever possible.

Pack a few plastic bags. They come in handy for saving half-eaten treats, used hotel bar soaps, keeping salt and pepper packets dry in the cooler, and many other uses.

Avoid styrofoam. Carry your own cup/bottle.

Avoid room service and carryout.

When offered individual packages of condiments, take only what you'll use.

If you commonly take home leftovers from restaurant meals, carry a container, a square of aluminum foil or waxpaper with you. You'll be responsible for putting less styrofoam into the waste stream.

### **ECOTOURISM:**

Take only the brochures or maps necessary. Return others to the brochure stand.

Don't buy endangered species products such as tortoise shell, ivory, animal skins or feathers. Don't purchase star fish or turtle-shell related souvenirs or any creature that may have been put to death for the sake of a gift shop sale. These animals may have been killed specifically for tourist trade. Sea shells are questionable. The US Customs office offers a list of items which cannot be imported or brought into the country.

Make a pledge to yourself not to maim or kill any living creature other than enemy or pest insects. Educate yourself as to which are "beneficial" and which are truly "pests."

Use binoculars and cameras to "hunt" animals.

Take only photographs. Do not take "souvenirs" from natural areas, historical areas or hotels.

Leave only footprints. Take everything out that you brought with you. No graffiti, no litter.

Support conservation programs.

Pick up at least one piece of litter every day—especially at national tourist locations which are vulnerable to huge tourist populations.

### **OTHER:**

Take photos with a digital or regular camera. Disposable cameras are very wasteful and expensive.

Buy rolls of film with 36 shots rather than 12 or 24. Packaging waste is reduced, and you'll save about 40%\*. Share digital photos via e-mail.

Write legibly on your film package. Kodak discards 400,000 rolls of film annually because the return address is illegible.\*

Expensive cosmetic bags are unnecessary and often do not prevent or control spills. Use zippable plastic bags for cosmetics. Separate bath needs and makeup needs.

Rather than buying small size toothpaste tubes, squeeze some toothpaste into a clean contact lens case or contact lens cleaning capsule. These are also handy for carrying salves or pills. Be sure to mark appropriately.

Recognize green efforts. Applaud businesses that you think are doing great work. Compliment owners, managers and staff. Offer suggestions.

Give yourself a pat on the back for doing all you can to help protect the beautiful destinations we all love to visit and Mother Earth!

- ULS Report, Use Less Stuff, P. O. Box 130116, Ann Arbor, MI 48113

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts Green Partnership Program recognized by World Travel and Tourism Council, Greenlight, Summer 06, p. 3

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