

# Sustainable TRAVEL TIPS



Here are some ideas for how to tread more lightly on the planet while travelling. ✍️ **Kathryn Curzon**

As New Zealand opens its borders and we adjust to the new normal, exploring our world and reconnecting with loved ones is an exciting reality. Whether you choose to travel locally or further afield, now is a good time to make your travels more sustainable. It can seem daunting, but it's easy to make eco-friendly travel choices when you know what to do.

## EXPLORE CLOSER TO HOME

We all love a far-flung adventure, but travelling locally can be just as much fun. It is a great idea during Covid times when travel plans can change abruptly, and it helps you to be more sustainable by reducing your travel miles. Grab a map of New Zealand, drop a pin, and start exploring our diverse towns, cities, and wild spaces!

## CHOOSE ECO-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION AND TOURS

Staying at eco-friendly accommodation is one of the easiest ways to be a sustainable traveller. There are forward-thinking companies around the world that are carbon neutral, support their local communities, and minimise their impacts on the surrounding environment. We also have some great eco-resorts, environmentally friendly lodges, and sustainable

Airbnb accommodation here in New Zealand. Simply do a quick search on the internet for eco-accommodation at your chosen destination and have fun choosing a place that suits your needs. Once you've got your accommodation sorted, ask your host for some local activities and tours you can join that have great eco-credentials.

## DITCH THE SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

It's easy to slip into bad habits when you go on holiday and fill your luggage with plastic travel minis and disposable items. But with a bit of preparation, you can make better choices for the environment and avoid the need to use single-use plastics when you travel.

These are some beautiful nature-friendly items made by New Zealand companies to add to your luggage:

- reusable water bottle by Sol – go to <https://www.solcups.co.nz>
- ceramic coffee cup and bowl by Westcoast Stoneware – go to <https://www.westcoaststoneware.com>
- Moana Road bamboo cutlery set – go to <https://www.moanaroad.com>
- stainless steel straws and bamboo toothbrushes by Go Bamboo – go to <https://gobamboo.co.nz>
- Ethique solid hair, body, and skincare products – go to <https://ethiqueworld.com>.

## BUY SUSTAINABLE BEACH GEAR

A good set of togs and a quick-drying beach towel are essential for any summer holiday, but some products are more sustainable and ethically made than others. Here are some top swaps to make your beach gear eco-ready:

- quick-drying, organic cotton Turkish towel by New Zealand-based Ottloom – go to <https://ottloom.co.nz>
- swimwear made from recycled ocean plastics in Wellington by Nisa – go to <https://nisa.co.nz> – or ethical wetsuits and swimsuits from New Zealand-based Gemma Lee – go to <https://www.gemmaleeland.com>
- Kiwi artist Nikki McIvor's Wild Grey Fox organic cotton bags for groceries and beach gear – go to <https://www.wildgreyfox.com>.

## HELP PROTECT THE OCEANS FROM HARM

Clean, thriving oceans are vital for the health of our planet. Whether you like to hang out beachside or take part in water sports, there are a few things you can do to ensure you're not inadvertently damaging the oceans. Reef-safe sunscreens are a must to help protect our fragile ocean ecosystems – check out our article about them in the Summer 2021 issue. While many chemical sunscreens contain ingredients that are thought to cause coral bleaching, reef-safe sunscreens do not. As tempting as it is to collect beautiful shells that remind you of your holiday, make sure you leave them where they belong – on the beaches and in the oceans. Many marine species use those shells for essential shelter. Make sure you also avoid souvenirs made from natural materials such as shark teeth, shells, and starfish. These are often collected unsustainably in ways that damage ocean habitats and marine life.

## CONSERVE WATER AND ENERGY

Minimise your water and energy use on holiday to boost your sustainability credentials even more. It's as easy as doing the following:

- switch lights and TV off when not in use
- turn off the AC or turn the AC thermostat up when you're out
- minimise laundry by hand washing and reusing your towels for multiple days
- say no to changing your bed linen each day
- take short showers instead of baths.

## EAT SUSTAINABLY

Eating sustainably at home and on holiday helps to protect our oceans and land from harm.

You can do things like:

- choosing sustainable seafood at home by using Forest & Bird's Best Fish Guide – go to <https://bestfishguide.org.nz>

- checking out WWF's sustainable seafood guides for some popular overseas destinations – go to [https://wwf.panda.org/act/live\\_green/out\\_shopping/seafood\\_guides/](https://wwf.panda.org/act/live_green/out_shopping/seafood_guides/)
- not eating shark, skate, or rays
- buying organic local produce whenever possible
- choosing meat-free meals to reduce your carbon footprint.

## VISIT LITTLE-KNOWN DESTINATIONS

It's tempting and easy to visit the most popular destinations when you travel, but your curiosity will be rewarded if you venture off the beaten path. Visiting quieter destinations decreases the resource burden on tourism hotspots, and it helps spread the benefits of tourism to local communities. It's also a great way to avoid crowds.

## EXPLORE NATIONAL PARKS AND MARINE RESERVES

There are stunning protected parks, rainforests, and marine reserves at home and all around the world. These natural spaces play an important role in protecting the planet's biodiversity and help reduce the impacts of climate change. Entry fees to protected areas are used to ensure their survival and are also often used to educate others about conservation, conduct environmental research, and employ local people. Next time you travel, find the protected natural areas at your chosen destination and make it a priority to visit and support them. It will boost your wellbeing, and you will get to explore some of the world's last wilderness areas.

## OFFSET YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

Make sure you calculate your carbon emissions from your travels and offset them. If you travel with Air New Zealand, you can offset the carbon from your flight when you book your tickets. You can also calculate your carbon footprint online – go to <https://www.toitu.co.nz/calculators> – and donate to overseas tree planting schemes such as One Tree Planted – go to <https://onetreepanted.org>.

## MAKE A GIFT TO PROTECT NATURE

Please consider making a donation to Forest & Bird's conservation work before you set off on your travels. We have more than 300 nature restoration projects all over the country that are making a positive difference for New Zealand's climate. Last year, for example, our volunteers restored more than 48,000ha of nature, grew 37,000 trees and plants to donate to other conservation groups, and planted nearly 65,000 plants ourselves – go to [www.forestandbird.org.nz/donate](https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/donate).