

## Earth Changers @ Ethical Brand Directory

### Travel Going Green in 2018

*In conjunction with Fashion Revolution*

*As every destination is unique, here are some tips to help you think about sustainable tourism as a whole. How do we change our expectations and behaviour to influence change?*

#### **Tip #1. Know: Tourism is Big – and has a Big Impact**

You realise how your tourism choices and travel spend impact the world when you appreciate that

- Tourism makes up 10% of the world's GDP and 10% of the world's jobs (WTTC, 2016).
- There are over 1.2 billion tourists / year (UNWTO, 2016).
- Tourism reaches the far corners of most of the world's countries like no other industry.
- In Less Developed Countries, tourism can represent up to 40% GDP and jobs
- Tourism interacts with all Sustainable Development Goals significantly.

That's why the UN determined 2017 "The Year of [Sustainable Tourism for Development](#)", whose official slogan #TravelEnjoyRespect portrayed the balance of guest and host experience required.

It helped people all over the world see the importance of tourism not just as a 'leisure pursuit' but as the serious economic sector and important contributor to communities, culture and conservation it is.

**Tourism has the potential to negatively impact the world – or positively impact the world.**

More info:

- [The International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development](#)
- [#IY2017 - The Year that Sustainable Tourism Went Mainstream? Did it have an Impact?](#)

#### **Tip #2. Understand: What Sustainable Tourism is**

The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as,

*"Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities".*

It may also be referred to as Responsible Tourism:

*"making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit".*

Tourism needs to minimise negative impacts on the places it visits to continue, or face degradation.

The volume growth of tourism and host populations globally now means positive impacts are needed to maintain a status quo, and net positive impact so that tourism contributes to sustainable development.

At [Earth Changers](#), we focus on positive impact tourism that delivers serious positive impacts locally, otherwise called transformative tourism.

More info:

- [About Earth Changers](#)
- [Sustainable Tourism - What Does that Even Mean?](#)
- [Sustainable Tourism, Ecotourism, Responsible Travel, Conscious Tourism... What's the Difference?](#)

### **Tip #3. Recognise: Travel Sustainability Issues like Fashion's**

*“Take two very simple actions that we perform every single day: getting dressed and eating. Now start a journey backwards – to where your food and your clothes come from” – Livia Firth*

It's the same journey backwards in tourism, you just might have never thought about it.

But if you know about sustainable fashion, you'll have awareness of supply chain sustainability issues.

The many similarities with fashion can be demonstrated through the digestible chunks framework of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#):

- [SDG #1 Poverty](#) – in rich environments, can lead to tourist enclaves & local exploitation
  - [SDG #2 Hunger](#) – often countries we visit are ravaged by food scarcity; tourism can feed locals too
  - [SDG #3 Health & Well-Being](#) – not just for staff, but also destination hosts and guests / consumers
  - [SDG #4 Education](#) – Tourism income for communities & volunteers support schools and training
  - [SDG #5 Gender Equality](#) – women make up most of tourism's workforce and purchasing power
  - [SDG #6 Water](#) – eg. drinking, washing, swimming, watering - tourism uses more per tourist away than at home or than hosts, often at the expense of local access.
  - [SDG #7 Energy](#) – Tourism's consumption can lead the way on local access and climate mitigation
  - [SDG #8 Employment](#) – 1 in 5 new jobs expected in tourism; brings pay, benefits, training, dignity
  - [SDG #9 Infrastructure](#) – Tourism is a catalyst for development eg. Waste, utilities, Olympics...
  - [SDG #10 Inequalities](#) – between and within countries, economic or eg. social – human rights slave labour in hotel construction and house-keeping.
  - [SDG #11 Sustainable Communities](#) – from rural brain drain to urban over-population issues
  - [SDG #12 Sustainable Production & Consumption](#) – finite resources: do more better with less
  - [SDG #13 Climate Change](#) – Tourism is a big contributor (but not the biggest!)
  - [SDG #15 Life on Land](#) – sustainable management of land, ecosystems and biodiversity required
  - [SDG #16 Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions](#) – Injustice impedes sustainable development
  - [SDG #17 – Partnerships](#) – especially cross-sectoral – mean collaboration for common goals.
- Thanks here to Ethical Brand Directory, we're working together for a more sustainable world.
- Cross-cultural learning, influences and indigenous identification.
  - Buying cheap mass produced products (holidays) purely on price is likely to cost the world.

Like fashion, tourism's "journey backwards" is complex outfit of many materials and supply chains, provenance and procurement, with much sustainability behind the scenes and not many 'easy fixes'.

More info:

- [What are The Sustainable Development Goals and what have they got to do with Tourism?](#)
- Links included above for each Sustainable Development Goal and how it interplays with tourism

#### **Tip #4. Be Aware: Sustainability Issues NOT like Fashion's**

Travel & tourism has unique challenges which add to its complexity:

- The product is Intangible and Experiential: You can't touch it, feel it, or smell it, only experience it
- Tourism can only be consumed at the point of production: You can't just try it on or take it back
- [SDG #14 Life below Water](#) – The marine environment is key to transport, holidays & activities.
- Food: an integral part to the tourism experience, brings challenges of organic & packaging waste
- Overtourism: Destinations are targeted on volumes, now too great from cities to national parks
- Transport – we have to take ourselves to the product, and we can't take it home.

More info:

- [Food waste](#)
- [Tourism for food security & nutrition](#)
- [Over-tourism and readjusting tourism - what's being done](#)

#### **Tip #5. Consider: Carbon and Climate Change**

Our everyday actions impact the climate – and therefore holidays – the other side the world.

Problem: So do our trips' transport, accommodation and activities.

Is 'sustainable tourism' a contradiction in terms? Yes and no.

- Any tourism can be more sustainable.
- It's a journey of continuous improvement, never a final destination reached.

This is where it's good to know what sustainability is: a balance for people, planet and profit: Because if you cut off flying, you cut off the tourism lifeline of communities and conservation.

Which is particularly important for Lesser Developed Countries, such as with 40% GDP from tourism. But they are also often the ones suffering most from the impacts of climate change.

Which is why we at Earth Changers focus on positive impact tourism – for net positive effects.

Tourism perhaps gets a disproportionate criticism for its Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

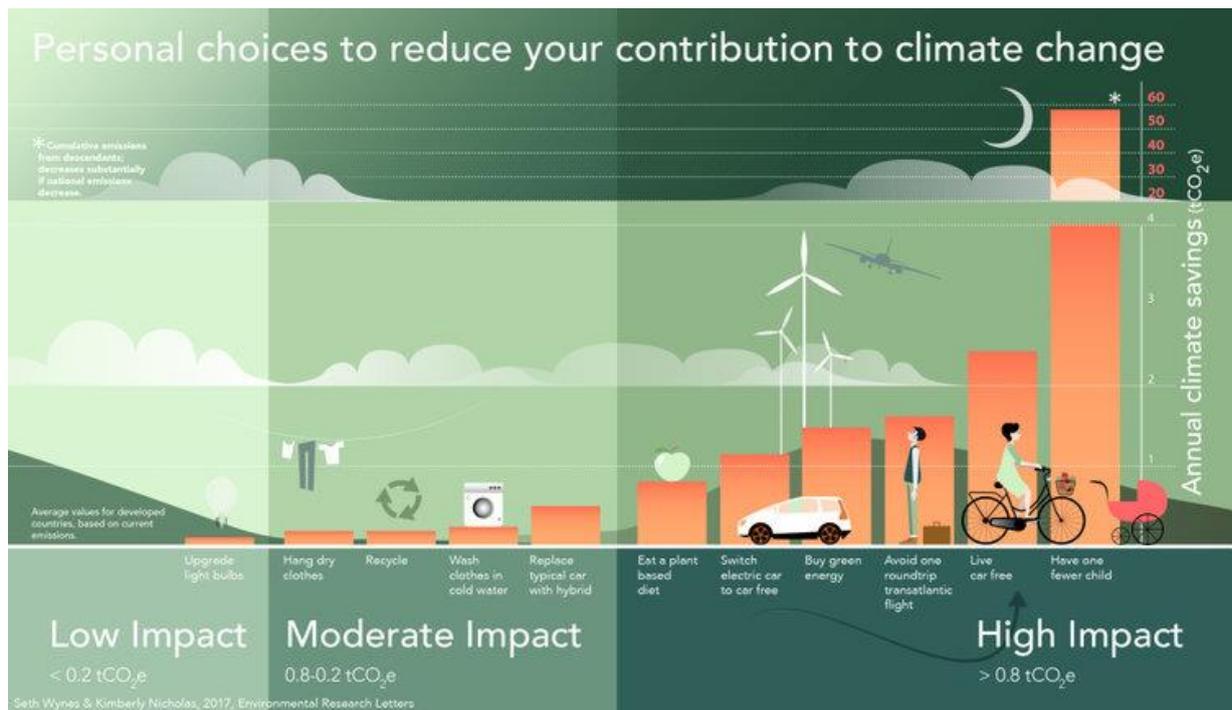
- By industry: #1 Oil & Gas 24.9%; Agriculture 13.8%; Road transportation 10.5%; Fashion 8%

- Travel: 5-6% (UNWTO-UNEP-WMO, 2008).
  - Of which 75% (4% total global emissions) from transport:
    - 40% (2.5% total) aviation
    - 32% (1.5% total) cars
    - 21% (1% total) accommodation
    - The rest from activities.

Deforestation in comparison accounts for roughly a fifth of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Also consider your Carbon impacts within your other activities:

- Have one fewer child
- Live car free
- Avoid one round-trip transatlantic flight
- Buy Green energy
- Switch electric car to car free
- Eat a plant based diet



**Alternative energy**-powered planes are around a decade away. In the meantime, reduce your impact:

- Walk, bike or take public transport over private transport
- Take the train or bus over plane
- Fly less often: Take fewer trips for longer
- Fly economy not business or premium classes (latter are more emissions/passenger seat)

### Offsetting – isn't an easy solution

- Offsetting does not reduce emissions: Offsetting does not solve the problem
  - But it appeases guilt and therefore can create avoidance and complacency
  - This diverts attention from addressing real mitigation
- Newly planted forests don't replace primary forest habitats
- An EU study in 2016 found 85% of then-current offsetting schemes don't work and 73% of the potential 2013-2020 schemes have low likelihood.
- Only 2% of projects and 7% of potential projects had likelihood of ensuring emission reductions.
- Consider deforestation prevention instead, such as UN mitigation strategy REDD+ 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation' - incentivising good forest resource management.

More info:

- [Climate Change](#)
- [The first REDD+ Carbon Project for Maasai communities: a 30 year project protecting 410,533 ha](#)

### Tip #6. Beware: Greenwashing

*Greenwashing is making unsubstantiated ethical claims; a form of spin in which green marketing is deceptively used to promote the perception that an organization's products, aims or policies are environmentally friendly.*

Just because something is called 'ethical' or 'green' or 'ecotourism', doesn't mean it is.

The term even originated in the tourism market, regarding the hotel industry's promotion of towel reuse ostensibly to "save the environment", whilst little or no effort toward reducing energy waste was being made —as evidenced by the lack of cost reduction this practice effected.

How do you know what is and isn't greenwashing?

- **Look for substantiation:** factual evidence to back up marketing claims
- **Sustainable tourism standards** exist around the world: confusingly, there are over 200, with more or less integrity. Check out the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's recognised standards.
- **Consider the core values** and message of the organisation. Do they live and breath sustainability?
- **Ask a lot of questions:** Good, responsible suppliers won't shy away but answer with facts
- **Research reviews:** Not just consumer, but sustainable travel professionals
- **Ask Earth Changers:** We're happy to suggest the most sustainable, positive impact tourism

As consumers start to better understand sustainable tourism and awareness is raised, so hopefully greenwashing will get flushed out.

## Tip #7. Don't forget: What you do at home!

Just because you're on holiday doesn't mean you should stop caring about the planet!

On your travels remember to:

- **Refuse:** Plastic straws, bags, guest toiletries, single serving sachets, takeaways > dine in!
- **Reduce:** chemical deodorants, sunscreen in plastic > use natural alternatives in a tin or jar
- **Reuse:** towels, water bottles, keep cups, face cloths (not wet ones), refill travel miniatures
- **Repurpose:** Holiday destinations are full of entrepreneurial repurposing: support artisans!
- **Recycle:** Ask about bins if they you don't see any; give goods directly to grassroots charity

More info

- [Earth Changers 5Rs for more Responsible Tourism](#)

## Tip #8. Take action: to do more!

As you're on holiday, with your time, why not connect and care for local place, people & planet more?

- **Slow down:** take leisurely walks, talks, meals and travel. Appreciate the moment.
- **Volunteer:** where there are clear positive impact local benefits – but this can be tricky to discern.
- **Beach cleans:** All around the world, clean-up operations can be a fun activity to occupy the kids as well as setting a great example. Even better, always clean as you go and prevent the need! It not only keeps the environment nice for holidays, but prevents loss of nature by pollution.
- **Gamify your consumption:** Ask if your accommodation individually monitors energy and water – we'll start to see more of this in future, so everyone's a winner!

## Tip #9. Just Say No. Don't:

- **Buy into animal entertainment:** it's not natural, kept captive often in bad conditions
- **Ride elephants:** the training they undergo to 'break their spirit' is tortuous
- **Swim with dolphins:** Causes stress and disturbs natural groups (captive) & habitat (wild)
- **Get a tiger selfie:** Trained by torture and likely drugged. Even Tinder's banned them.
- **Pet cubs or walk with lions:** they are being groomed for the canned hunting industry.
- **Buy endangered animal product souvenirs or food:** turtle shell, shark fin soup etc
- **Volunteer or visit an orphanage:** demand creates child trafficking and psychological issues
- **Give money and presents to kids:** It creates a culture that fosters tourism begging & dependence
- **Wear inappropriate clothing for the culture:** baring your flesh might not be acceptable
- **Take photos without asking:** Locals are not a tourist attraction. How would you like it?
- **Use what you don't need:** Towels, water, food, toiletries, beds (linen), lights, air con

## Tip #10. Do

Think more deeply about your travel to have deeper, better, more valuable travel experiences:

- **Purpose:** Read up and ask questions about how your money contributes to local issues
- **Places:** Buy local transport, food, accommodation, souvenirs; Respect local culture, environment
- **People:** Learn some local lingo, talk, share stories, find out about local lives; Give positive reviews

The real difference in the impacts tourism creates will come when consumer demand says #sustainable.

- Our community is of the mindset of our [Manifesto](#). Are you?

#BeTheChange

## About Earth Changers

[Earth Changers](#) research and promote the best **positive impact, transformative tourism** for people to find & book trips that truly change the world. We curate and feature **life-changing** places, with **world-changing** people, for **extraordinary experiences** with purpose.

If you like the thought of truly sustainable tourism, but don't know where to go, Earth Changers' unique destinations demonstrate **commitment to community and conservation** for sustainable development through tourism.

Whether it's a [5\\* safari run by the Maasai in Kenya](#) or a [raw camp in rural Madagascar](#) for the benefit of conservation, health and education; or a top [ecolodge in Costa Rica](#) to preserve primary rainforest; or a [private island in Indonesia](#) supporting indigenous culture; educational grassroots learning about the [Sustainable Development Goals in Malawi](#); or see the plastic gyres on [epic sailing trips](#) to help marine conservation. Want to go somewhere you can't see? Let us find the Earth Changing trip for you.

We're purpose-driven, values-based, and put people in the middle to connect positive impact mindsets committed to top sustainability.

Earth Changers make a sustainable tourism choice easy for you by curating the very best worldwide options, and facilitating your booking so your money goes direct to the people and places that need it most.

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