

Reduce Emissions & Save Money while Traveling

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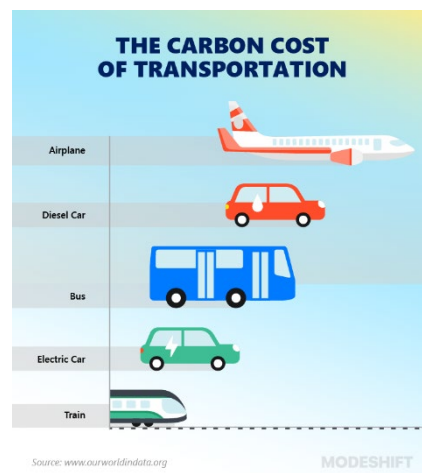
Summer travel season is upon us! Travel can bring so many wonderful benefits, but did you know travel also contributes 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, can burden natural resources, and harm wildlife? Transportation accounts for the largest environmental impact, producing nearly 50% of travel's carbon emissions. In every choice along the journey (accommodations, dining, tours, souvenirs, etc.), there's opportunity to minimize negative impacts...and it may even save you money along the way! Consider the tips below the next time you travel.

Choosing a Destination and Packing

- Learn about the place you're visiting. Understanding how your behaviors impact the local community can help you be a respectful visitor and reduce negative impacts.
- Look for accommodations, restaurants, tour guides, etc. that are proactive in reducing waste, minimizing emissions, and positively impacting the local community.
- Pack reusables like water bottles, utensils, and tote bags to reduce waste.
- Pack light. It lessens the weight on vehicles which reduces fuel consumption.

Transportation

- Walk or Bike. Any human powered mode of transport is the best option whenever possible. Not only does it account for the lowest environmental impact, but it also has low-to-zero cost and is great exercise.
- Train. When it comes to traveling farther distances, train travel accounts for the lowest greenhouse gas emissions. From Chicago, Amtrak travels to 46 states and parts of Canada. And countries around the world have robust and efficient train systems.
- Bus. In general bus accounts for greater fuel emissions than train, but public transportation is always a more sustainable choice compared to car or airplane.
- Car. When traveling by car, share a ride and choose electric whenever possible.
- Air travel. When you must fly, fly non-stop as takeoff and landing use the most energy. Google Flights is one example of a website that shows the carbon emissions of flights so you can factor that into your booking choice. Public transport is a great way to get to and from an airport. Pace Bus travels from Westchester to both O'Hare and Midway Airports.



Before Leaving Home

- Unplug appliances and devices. Did you know electronics use energy even when turned off (i.e. TV, toaster, printer, etc.)? In addition to reducing energy use and saving money, unplugging reduces risk of fire.
- Turn air conditioning off or turn up the temperature to conserve energy
- Close blinds and drapes to keep your home cool
- Lower water heater temperature or set it to vacation mode
- Set light timers to protect the home and ensure lights aren't on all day

Learn any sustainability tips during your travels? Implement them at home and share what you've learned with friends and family. For questions on this article, email me at kroberg@westchester-il.gov.

Kari Roberg has twenty years of experience working in the tourism industry with a focus on leveraging community voices, research, and encouraging sustainable practices that respect local cultures and natural resources. She holds a master's degree in Community Resources and Development from Arizona State University and a bachelor's degree in Recreation, Sport and Tourism from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.