

# TOP 10 DREAM DESTINATIONS FOR ECO-TOURISTS



The year of 2017 was named the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development by the UN. Sustainable holidays are growing in popularity among all eco-tourists. A Dutch association called Green Destinations has established a list of the Top 100 sustainable destinations. Some of them however are located in countries that are among the biggest polluters, yet are known for extensive efforts to protect the environment. Tourism-review.com brings the top 10 such destinations in alphabetical order.

## Bariloche, Argentina

Bariloche is one of the dream destinations for many travelers. It is a city surrounded by forests, mountains and lakes, at the foot of the Andes mountain range, in the province of Rio Negro, 1,650 km south-west of Buenos Aires. It is above all known as a popular destination among Argentine students celebrating the end of the school year.

However, ecological concerns have not been overlooked in Bariloche. Elected officials are doing everything in their power to protect the environment in the city as well as in the surrounding areas, to attract eco-tourists, and to promote activities like kayaking, horseback riding, parachuting, mountain biking, skiing, hiking, scuba diving.

## Brittany, France

With 2,700 km of preserved coastline, Brittany is the only region in France where ecotourism has been recognized in the Green Destination ranking. Enormously popular with tourists all year round, Brittany has made efforts to follow a path of sustainable development over the course of the last ten years. To this end, 1,000 km of greenways and cycling trails have been created.

## Broads National Park, United Kingdom

The park is home to 300 kilometers of waterways, intersected by fourteen lakes which were born from the draining of marshes in the east of England during the medieval times. Boat rides allow visitors and eco-tourists discover this zone of preserved nature on the North Sea coast. A large portion is protected under international regulations and the inhabitants actively work towards the conservation of the region's natural and cultural resources.

## Cape Floral Region, South Africa

South Africa satisfies 90% of its energy needs by burning poor quality coal which is a source of air and water pollution. In spite of this ecological disaster, South African authorities are attempting to preserve the Cape Floral region, home to national parks and nature preserves which are visited by thousands of tourists every year. It is one of the most extraordinary regions in the world in terms of its diversity of plant life and one of the dream destinations of many nature lovers.

Since 2004, the area of the protected spaces has increased by 10%. Now seen as a factor in the

region's economic development, ecotourism in the private preserves has led to the creation of 4.5 times as many jobs as in the agricultural sector.

## **Great Bear Rainforest, Canada**

The Great Bear rainforest in British Columbia, is a natural wonder, and is home of the Kermode bear (rare sub-species of the black bear). Over a period of 25 years, the portion of protected forest has grown from 5% to 85%. Running along Canada's Pacific coast, this forest is one of the last remaining large expanses of temperate rainforest remaining on the planet.

Its preservation has been in large part due to the tremendous efforts made by the non-governmental organization Greenpeace. Threatened by the forestry and mining industries in the 1990s, the rainforest is now a nature preserve which attracts many eco-tourists.

## **Mount Sanqing National Park, China**

While China is the world's leading emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>, it is also home to the Mount Sanqing national park. It was classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2008. The park distinguishes itself by its respect for nature. It offers a unique diversity of fantastically shaped granite pillars and peaks, covered by lush forests.

This increasingly popular dream destination is actively working towards the preservation of its exceptional landscape by striving for sustainable development. While only 5% of Chinese tourists are currently seeking a "green vacation", ecotourism is poised to become a leading source of revenues in the years to come.

## **Suncheon Bay, South Korea**

A natural wetland, with marshes full of reeds, Suncheon Bay, in the south-west of South Korea, changes its appearance with every rise and fall of the tides. The expanses of reeds stretch for as far as the eye can see and help to purify the water, which allows the flora and fauna to proliferate in the mudflats. The region has been entirely protected since 2006 and is being promoted among eco-tourists.

## **Uckermark, Germany**

Respect for the environment has become an important criterion for Germans when choosing their vacation destination. Uckermark is a good example of taking advantage of everything ecotourism has to offer. Located to the north-east of Berlin, this zone is characterized by vast prairies through which visitors can trek on foot or by donkey, a specialty of the region.

Regional producers, energy providers as well as small family farms are the main players in the sustainable development of this "green" tourism region which is also the most vast and scarcely populated region in the country.

## **Wadden Sea, The Netherlands**

In Holland's northern region, eight islands form a natural safe haven. These bits of land, bathed by the Wadden Sea, are only accessible by ferry. The region is considered to have the world's largest uninterrupted system of mudflats and sand bars which help to shelter many species of plants and

animals.

Given that the regions surrounding it are heavily populated, it benefits from a total protection. Many human and financial resources are being dedicated to its proper management. Holland already had a reputation for being a “green country”, but in 2015, inspired by a public initiative, a Dutch court ruled in favor of a motion instructing the State to mandate a 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2020.

## **Yellowstone National Park, United States**

The emblematic Yellowstone national park is one of the last areas of the United States to have been able to preserve its unique ecosystem. As such it is a dream destination for many eco-tourists.

Among its fabulous natural treasures, Yellowstone is home to the highest concentration of geysers in the world. Visitors come to admire the Grand Canyon, numerous waterfalls as well as rare and endangered wildlife species. Protected from interference, the flora is maintained by natural processes. Tourists in search of large expanses of wilderness love this destination: more than 2 million people visit every year.

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