

ECO-FRIENDLY TOURISM RELIES ON SUSTAINABILITY



Eco-friendly tourism implies a way of traveling that follows the principles of environmental, social and economic sustainability. A commitment to low impact on the environment and culture. In fact, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as “one that completely considers the economic, social and environmental repercussions to satisfy the needs of visitors and the host communities”.

A traveler that follows the eco-friendly tourism principles respects the people and places he or she visits. **The traveler also contributes to the economic development of the area** in places managed by the community, consuming products from fair trading and –if possible– collaborating with solidarity projects.

Tourism is usually presented as an engine for economic development, even though the landscapes tend to suffer from alterations, getting even to exploit natural resources. All tourism activity aspiring to be defined as sustainable has to make adequate use of the natural resources and respect the socio-cultural diversity.

Furthermore, the trend of green hotels has grown all around the world: they save energy and water and they sort the trash. According to the WTO, approximately 1% of the total polluting emissions from the planet are related to tourism activity.

These types of hotels have developed from vegetarian hotels; not only do they offer vegan or vegetarian food but they provide a natural lifestyle. They also save energy, control wastes, select quality materials, etc.

The Decalogue of eco-tourism

Favoring products that minimize the negative impact and maximize the positive impact on environmental, socio-cultural and economic dimensions. Facilitating the incorporation of good practices of sustainable tourism from operators and service providers. Promoting development processes that protect the earth and landscapes. Performing actions to improve the tourism management capacity of protected areas. Fomenting the inclusion of women and young people in the work market in an equitable manner. Creating channels for the participation of the local community for the control of eco-friendly tourism development. Giving value to the natural and cultural patrimony of the region. Respecting the free determination and cosmopolitanism and culture of the towns. Generating direct and indirect economic benefits in the host communities. Fomenting fair trade.

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