

## Planning a trip? Think green

Lisa Iannucci For the Poughkeepsie Journal 10:54 a.m. EST December 30, 2015



(Photo: Kodiak Greenwood/Courtesy photo)

You do what you can to help the environment while you're at home, but what about when you travel? Can you continue your green energy-saving habits while you're enjoying your well-earned vacation?

"Travelers should care about traveling green because every little bit will help our environment," said Coral O'Buckley, an authorized Disney Vacation planner, and a full service travel agent specializing in cruises, all-inclusive resorts and Disney vacations

([www.coraljoytravel.com](http://www.coraljoytravel.com)). "U.S. transportation is responsible for about 40 percent of our nation's fossil fuel-related carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. This is one of the gases responsible for climate change. Being more mindful while traveling isn't as difficult as one might think. As a travel agent in New York's Hudson Valley, we can be eco-friendly and environmentally conscious while travel planning for clients."

From the time you begin to plan your trip, all the way to your return home, you never have to stop being environmentally conscious. To do so, Laurie Szostak, founder of Organic Hudson Valley, recommends that travelers do a little pre-vacation work and contact the local tourism departments when they are at the planning stage of their trip.

"They will refer you to the right places, tell you what to do, where to stay and what businesses are reputable," said the [Union Vale](#) resident.

Once you decide on your destination, take the most direct route to get there.

"For air travel energy efficiency, take the most direct route possible, as taking off and landing use the most fuel," O'Buckley said. "Also, flying coach is better than flying first-class in terms of better fuel efficiency. More people can fit on the plane, resulting in better bang for the fuel's buck. In this case, feeling like a sardine is a good thing for our environment."

### **Eco-friendly hotels and motels**

When searching for a hotel with your travel agent, look into eco-friendly options.

“While it’s critical to look for things such as energy/water conservation and recycling initiatives when selecting a green hotel, there’s so much more to it,” said Mary White, CEO and founder of BnB Finder.com. “Many B and Bs, for example, make a commitment to preserving the environment by composting, offering an optional linen reuse program, serving locally grown or organic food, donating unused soaps and shampoos, and many other initiatives.”

BnB Finder created an online search feature dedicated specifically to finding eco-friendly inns, such as the Stanford Inn by the Sea ([www.bnbfinder.com/StanfordInn](http://www.bnbfinder.com/StanfordInn)) in California, which uses diesel-powered trucks fueled with locally produced biodiesel made with reclaimed vegetable oils on its certified organic farm, and fertilizes the garden with food and organic waste compost. The inn also developed an energy conservation program and provides educational programs in gardening, cooking and composting.

Cavallo Point Lodge in [Sausalito, California](#) is a good example of an eco-friendly hotel that has earned environmental accolades for its sustainable practices, including 2013 Travel + Leisure Global-Vision Award and the 2015 National Geographic World Legacy Awards for its sustainable practices.



Cavallo Point Lodge in Sausalito, California, features a cooking school among other eco-friendly amenities. (Photo: Kodiak Greenwood/Courtesy photo)

If you want to forgo the four-star hotel vacation experience altogether, Szostak recommends staying at a working farm.

“You can stay at local farms, too, like Sprout Creek,” she said. “It’s what’s new and what everyone wants. Traveling is not just about being green, it’s about sustainability. I’ll pack light, but I’m also going to support the local businesses while I travel.”

When it’s time to start packing for your much-awaited vacation, O’Buckley reminds everyone to pack light.

“Think about it, the less weight carried in cars, trains, buses, airplanes, the less fuel used and the less pollution and greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere,” she said.

While you are traveling, O'Buckley recommends engaging in some energy-saving practices.

"Keep your energy usage to a minimum at your hotel by taking shorter showers, reusing your hotel sheets and towels, and keeping the lights, TV, a/c and heat off when you leave the room," she said. "Consider using public transportation, walking or biking to reduce CO2 emissions and, before leaving home, unplug lights and electronics and turn down the thermostat in your home. Turning off electronics, unplugging lights and the thermostat will cut down on energy usage and save you some green, too."