

Maryville College Sustainable Travel

Defining Sustainable Travel

Travel comes with costs and benefits – both to the traveler and to the local communities (people, environment, economy). Being a sustainable, responsible traveler comes with a responsibility to be both conscious and conscientious about the impact we are making in the world. In an ideal world, our travels and actions while traveling will make the world a BETTER place. Maryville College Scots Abroad are committed to contributing positively to the world around us.

Sustainable Tourism is defined by the [UNWTO](#) (UN World Tourism Organization) 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”

Sustainable Travel has three pillars:

Sociocultural Sustainability: is minimizing the negative impacts of travel and focusing on the positive ones, like promoting cultural exchange, encouraging interaction, and preserving local cultures and traditions.

Economic Sustainability: We see economic sustainability as building linkages with local partners and reducing leakages of funds from the local community - in other words, keeping the money local.

Environmental Sustainability: is a focus on conserving the natural and built environment and minimizing the impact on and preserving the world for future generations.

When we talk about sustainable travel on an individual level, sustainable travel is often labeled Responsible Travel. As education abroad students, we want to pay attention to the way in which we, as short-term or long-term visitors, interact with our host destinations.

There are many ways to take intentional actions to make a difference in the world. Here are some of our top priorities.

([Core Values](#) & [Commitments](#))

Sociocultural Commitments

Education Abroad makes it easier than most forms of travel to minimize negative impact and increase positive impact on local communities. We are committed to:

- **LEARN** about local cultures, language and issues before we travel.
- **IMMERSE** ourselves in the local culture by building real relationships, living like a local, and participating in local life.
- Be bold and engage with locals.
- Speak the language. Learn and use phrases from the local language as much as possible.

- Make an effort to learn from the people we encounter. Ask questions. Seek understanding.
- Be aware of behavior norms, body language and local customs. Adapt behaviors and attitudes to be more successful culture learners.
- Learn to listen and speak with respect and represent different points of view
- Check your reactions. Learn to recognize your emotions and react appropriately for the situation.
- Recognize diversity in populations. Try not to generalize about norms and mores when it is not appropriate.
- **AUTHENTIC** experiences are our priority. We will strive to leave the beaten path while we travel.
- **RESPECT** the local culture.
- Leave your preconceived notions at home.
- Have an attitude that embodies openness to learning and difference.
- Be open to our common humanity.
- **FIRST DO NO HARM. THEN CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING.** Make an effort to give back to the places we travel. (volunteering, donating, sharing our culture)

Environmental Commitments

If we don't love the planet, we will not have one to travel in the future. Some of our environmental commitments include:

- **REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE**
- We will use our @MCScotsAbroad waterbottles while we travel and pledge to reduce or reuse single-use plastics. Bring a water filter to use in places where the water is not safe to drink, or boil your water before drinking.
- We will be conscious of our energy usage.
- be educated about biodegradable products to use while traveling
- Bring what you have, or buy used products rather than purchasing new goods (reuse)
- **LOWER OUR FOOTPRINT.** Use **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION** options whenever possible. Evaluate and take advantage of Carbon Offset programs where feasible. In some cities, a bike will be a fantastic way to get around, while trains and buses will help you get further afield. Avoiding cars and planes will be the best way to keep your personal emissions lower.
- **MINIMIZING WASTE**
- **EVALUATE & CHOOSE** sustainable providers and accommodation
- **FOLLOW LOCAL PRACTICES.** Sometimes your footprint is lowered by living like a local. For example, take some time to learn about the local food systems of your host country and what it means to keep a more sustainable diet there. In some countries that might mean reducing your meat intake and replacing it with locally grown vegetables, while in other countries that might mean taking advantage of sustainably raised meat from nearby ranches.

Economic Commitments

Choosing where we spend our money matters.

- **BUY LOCAL**
- Support local and sustainable businesses. When you buy locally, you not only help support the local economy – you also are purchasing products that have a smaller carbon footprint due to transportation, or lack thereof. You can bring your own canvas bag to stores in order to reduce your own waste. The best part about this is you end up with items that are more meaningful to you and representative of your host city.
- Our spending will be done intentionally with thought about how it impacts local communities.
- We will make an effort to stay in small, locally owned hotels
- We will eat in locally-owned restaurants.
- We will use local, independent guides
- **LEAVE TOURIST ZONES** our local impact is greater when we expand the areas we travel to beyond the post popular sites.
- **FAIR TRADE** When traveling, we want to be intentional about considering issues such as fair wages and working conditions, fair purchasing (considering the impact of haggling for a bargain on the locals), respect for human rights, culture and the environment.