

## How to be a more sustainable tourist in Sharjah and beyond

*Looking to travel more consciously? Are you interested in minimising the negative impact of travel and maximising the positive? In this guide, we help you on your conscious journey.*

[Environmentally responsible behaviour often tends to dilute when it's time for a holiday.](#) Normally environmentally conscious people excuse themselves when travelling and frequently make different choices to those they would in their own home countries. On a basic level, we may find ourselves taking long hot showers or using new towels every day.

Many of us yearn to travel and learn more about the world around us, however, the tourism industry is globally among the most polluting industries; [generating 8% of all global greenhouse emissions](#) while producing vast quantities of noise and light pollution. Moreover, tourism depletes valuable natural resources such as water and is responsible [for over 35 million tons of waste per year](#), causing irreversible physical degradation of sensitive ecosystems and loss of biodiversity due to construction and tourism infrastructure. It's not all bad news though; tourism and tourists can contribute positively to the world too, benefiting the local community, supporting local businesses and creating more work opportunities through an infusion of wealth. Furthermore, tourism often offers educational aspects which can lead to raised awareness and support for important issues such as nature conservation and the preservation of local cultures.

Tourism also offers opportunities for positive contributions too, benefiting the local community, supporting local businesses and creating more work opportunities through an infusion of wealth. Furthermore, tourism often offers educational aspects which can lead to raised awareness and support for important issues such as nature conservation and the preservation of local cultures.

Given the dual nature of tourism's impact, it is crucial for travellers to be mindful of their influence and strive to minimise negative consequences while maximising positive outcomes. Keep reading below to learn how to become a sustainable tourist in Sharjah and beyond, ensuring that your travels leave a positive mark on the environment and local communities.

### **Be mindful**

When planning and embarking on your trip, it is important to stay conscious of your impact and make thoughtful decisions at every step. Here are some key considerations:

- **Be mindful of your CO2 emissions.** Your choice of transportation significantly affects your carbon footprint when traveling. Opt for land travel when possible, avoid flying or pack lighter when you fly to reduce CO2 emissions. Opt for [public transport](#), walking, or bike rentals instead of cars at your destination. A great way to travel around Sharjah without a car is by going on [Sharjah's City Sightseeing Bus](#), which itself is an experience, or renting bikes along the Al Majaz waterfront. When on vacation, embrace slow travel, focusing on one destination to reduce travel between places and deepen your experience. Consider carbon offsetting to compensate for your carbon footprint.
- **Opt for sustainable accommodations** and know what to look out for, for example, does the hotel recycle, do they use solar heating or try and conserve their water? How do they handle plastic and food waste? Many accommodations have adopted sustainability measures, and they often proudly highlight them. Booking.com now displays sustainability of hotels when you search, and you can also directly ask your hotel for their sustainability policy. For inspiration

on sustainable lodging options in Sharjah, check out Sustain Sharjah's recommendations for your upcoming trip.

- **Be mindful of your behaviour**, just as you would be at home. Try to minimise energy and water usage as much as possible. You can achieve this by taking short showers, not running the taps for too long, opting for reusable water bottles over single-use ones, and reusing your towels. Additionally, consider minimising air conditioning, turn appliances off when you are not present in the room, avoid unnecessary laundry, turn off lights when not in use, and unplug electronics. Being mindful of energy and water waste becomes especially important in destinations where resources may be limited, such as Sharjah, which has an arid ecosystem.
- **Respect the local context**. Take the time to honour and acquaint yourself with [local laws and regulations](#) designed to uphold environmental and cultural preservation. This could encompass laws aimed at safeguarding delicate ecosystems and preventing disruption to local wildlife. Sharjah is committed to preserving natural and endemic wildlife which you can visit in the numerous [conservation sites and wildlife centres](#).

### **Support the cause**

There are great initiatives that have a positive impact which you can support. For instance, you can support conservation areas like [national parks and reserves](#), natural monuments and protected landscapes by paying an entrance fee. At the same time, it is important to avoid supporting initiatives harmful to the destination's environment and community. These could involve visiting sanctuaries that keep animals in captivity, or engaging in tourism associated with child labour.

How to support a positive cause:

- Explore local markets and shops for unique and ethical purchases, or arrange experiences with local guides. Sharjah boasts incredible souqs and markets for you to explore!
- Support local initiatives led by community members, and ensure your contributions have a positive impact on local development by doing your own research.
- Boost the local economy by visiting local businesses, directing your spending towards the community, and demonstrating respect for cultural heritage.

Sharjah is committed to natural preservation through different projects and conservation reserves such as Kalba, which preserves an ancient mangrove forest at the Khor Kalba mangrove centre. Another example is Buhais geological park, where you can learn about the geological history of Sharjah and the geological importance of Buhais and archaeological areas surrounding it.

### **Change your mindset**

Being a sustainable traveller is a complete perspective shift. It is about being aware of how your actions impact the environment you are visiting. Here are some things to consider on your next trip:

- **Leave no trace**: A lot of damage has been done to the environment by tourism activities. It is important to follow the "leave no trace" mindset, leaving no litter behind and avoiding contaminating the environment through your actions.
- **Seek expertise**: Tourists often don't intend to harm, but their lack of awareness can negatively affect destinations. Using ecotourism travel agencies or sustainable tourism platforms give advice on spots to visit. These platforms ensure responsible touring and offer insights into nature and local culture. You can discover authentic experiences on the Sustain Sharjah website.
- **Get educated and practice mindfulness by connecting with nature**. Find new ways to appreciate nature and be inspired to protect it. There are many conservation efforts that are made possible with tourism. You can join nature excursions led by knowledgeable guides who can teach you the ways to interact with nature responsibly. Your investment in these experiences contributes to conservation efforts and raises awareness.

Interested in delving deep into how to travel sustainably? Explore **Sustain Sharjah's extensive resource library** on sustainable tourism for in-depth insights and valuable information.

### **Know your impact**

Beyond being mindful and supporting initiatives, you can take your sustainable travel to the next stage by measuring the impact of your trip. A carbon calculator serves as a useful tool to gain insight into your environmental footprint while travelling, enabling you to make more sustainable travel decisions.

Begin your path to becoming a sustainable traveller by connecting with the Sustain Sharjah community. Join us below:

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