



GOODTravel

BEYOND THE BUCKET LIST

8 TIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE AND
RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

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WELCOME

To a world of GOOD

In a recent article for [Sustainable Brands](#), GOOD Travel supporter JoAnna Haugen asks travellers to kick the bucket list and instead seek out slower and more meaningful experiences. Ms Haugen explains:

"[Bucket lists] indicate that dropping into a capital city for a couple days, taking that "must-have" photo, and acquiring a passport stamp is the same as "doing" a country. However, this kind of mindset has a real and disproportionate impact on the natural environment, urban destinations, and the people living in the places that travelers visit."

This guide is our attempt to support GOOD travellers with moving beyond the bucket list mentality. The destinations and experiences we share in this guide are not a checklist, but rather a source of inspiration for the types of experiences that are possible once we as travellers rethink the way in which we travel. It is our hope that this guide will bring attention to practical examples for how the tourism industry can be a force for GOOD both for travellers and destinations.

Thank you.

~ The GOOD Travel Team



CONTRIBUTORS

This guide is based on the experiences of the following sustainable travel experts from across the globe. We thank them for making this guide possible.



JoAnna Haugen is a writer, speaker and solutions advocate. As the founder of Rooted, she works at the intersection of sustainable travel, environmental conservation, and community-based advocacy efforts.



Vallori Thomas is the founder of WOW Coaching & Consulting and the author of *Possibilitology*. She has been leading Possibilitarian Retreats in partnership with GOOD Travel for the past six years, transforming the lives of travellers globally.



Beth Santos is the founder of leading women's travel community Wanderful and the creator of WITS Travel Creator and Brand Summit and Wanderfest. With a background in international development, thoughtful community building and social enterprise, Santos is out to change the landscape of travel for women worldwide.



Dr Vincie Ho is the founder of RISE Travel Institute and Paths Crossing. A humane educator and social justice advocate, Vincie works to engage young people in important conversations around human rights, animal protection and environmental sustainability in the context of travel.

CONTRIBUTORS



Shelley Bragg, from South Africa, is GOOD Travel's Director of Development. Shelley has extensive experience planning and organising group travel experiences and has her Honours in Development Studies. She brings her fundraising, marketing and international education experience to the team.



Karin is a former third-generation airline industry director who has lived on 5 continents and traveled to over 100 countries. As GOOD Travel's Director of Family Trips, Karin's passion is planning experiential travel for families and helping children find their place in the world through exploration.



Eliza Raymond is GOOD Travel's Director of Operations and a PhD candidate at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. She also teaches entrepreneurship, innovation and social change at the University for Peace established by the General Assembly of the United Nations.



Caitie Goddard is based in Washington DC, USA and is our Director of Communications. She has lived and worked on 4 continents and uses her background in social entrepreneurship, operations and leadership development to identify new opportunities to share GOOD Travel globally.

SLOW DOWN

Contributor: JoAnna Haugen

In the summer of 2018, JoAnna Haugen hiked the first 22 stages of the [Alpe-Adria Trail](#) from Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe, Austria (at the base of Grossglockner, Austria's highest peak), to Kranjska Gora, Slovenia. Here's what she shared with us.

How did your experience make you more mindful about your impact as a traveller?

This was not our first long-distance hike. One of the reasons we seek out and enjoy multi-day hikes like this is because trail tourism is a slower, low-impact way to travel. A long-distance trail is also an opportunity for a destination to tell a story: a story about people, history, and culture. For us, the Alpe-Adria Trail is a story about spending a night in Alexanderhütte, a dairy farm where the sweet-sour smell of unpasteurized milk snuck in through the floorboards. It's the story of watching the final World Cup game huddled around the only television in a mountain hut while eating a plate of Kärntner Nudeln. It's the story of standing at Gerlizen Alpe (1,909 meters) at the end of day 19, with skies so clear we could almost see Grossglockner and the Julian Alps we would cross into Slovenia three days later simply by turning our heads. These stories take shape when people slow down, tread lightly, and observe their surroundings instead of rushing from one site to another, ticking off a long list of "must-see" attractions.

What takeaway from this experience can you share with other GOOD travellers?

When you slow down, you notice and appreciate more. On our 22-day hike, we kept a list of all the animals and bugs we encountered. I practiced my German with a fantastic innkeeper over bread and jam one morning. We ate lunch at a crumbling castle that's just sitting in the woods. Every day we were treated to spectacular views simply by walking where other people weren't. You don't have to go far or fast to build memories you'll never forget -- and when you exert some effort to do it, you're rewarded physically too!



CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

Contributor: Vallori Thomas

Visiting the continent of Africa had been a lifelong dream for Vallori Thomas and in 2013 her dream became reality when she joined a cycle challenge in **South Africa**, riding approximately 400 miles along the coast from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town. The purpose of this journey was to raise awareness and funding for the Kliptown Youth Program, a non-profit organisation in Soweto, Johannesburg providing opportunities that enable young people to rise out of poverty.

How did your experience make you more mindful about your impact as a traveller?

At the end of the cycle challenge, we visited Kliptown Youth Program (KYP), the organisation we had raised funds for. We were greeted with a parade and celebration in appreciation of our efforts; something I will never forget. I was so inspired to learn about their commitment to educating youth as a way to effect generational change and economic advancement of the community that I have continued to support KYP since I returned home. This was my first experience of travel designed to have a positive impact and it transformed the way I view the tourism industry and my role as a traveller. I gained a new perspective about how travel should always be first and foremost about the places we visit and what their needs are. Travel is a privilege - and travellers should use this privilege for GOOD.

What takeaway from this experience can you share with other GOOD travellers?

During this trip to South Africa, I got to meet and travel with like-minded people from across the planet including South Africa, USA, Germany, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. The experiences we created together were unforgettable. Through sharing and celebrating our diversity as well as overcoming the challenges of cycling across South Africa together, we formed lifelong friendships and uncovered the possibilities we each hold within ourselves. I recommend to all GOOD travellers that they seek out opportunities to learn from and celebrate the diversity that they encounter when they travel.



EMBRACE TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

Contributor: Beth Santos

In 2009, Beth Santos travelled to **São Tomé and Príncipe** by herself. She had recently graduated from college, was looking for her next path forward and found an opportunity to teach at a middle school abroad for a few months. This experience was her first time in Africa and her first time traveling to a developing economy.

How did your experience make you more mindful about your impact as a traveller?

I became hyper-aware of myself in many contexts: as a traveler from a wealthy country who was used to so many efficiencies and luxuries (potable water coming out of our sinks and showers, 24/7 electricity, supermarkets), but also as a woman in the world. I would research tips online on how to travel solo for women and most of them were about what cute bikinis to wear or shopping advice. I realized how little information there was out there -- real, helpful information -- and how lonely it felt to be a solo female traveler -- even though women are actually the majority in travel! That was the first travel experience that I had that taught me about representation, and much of my work running Wanderful has been based on that. Not just representation of women, but creating equitable representation for other under-represented communities in the travel space, and making sure they have the adequate resources to support their journeys.

What takeaway from this experience can you share with other GOOD travellers?

My takeaway for other GOOD travelers is that travel is intensely personal, and no one feels or experiences it the same way. Our experiences are a convergence of our identity, our worldview, our history, how others see us. But these personal experiences don't have to happen thousands of miles away. Travel really only consists of three things: (1) trying something new, (2) challenging your preconceptions, and (3) getting uncomfortable. If you can do those things traveling 10 minutes from you home, that is as much of a transformative travel experience as anything else. Travel is not just about where we go, but how it changes us and the way we think about the world.



BE INTENTIONAL

Contributor: Dr Vincie Ho

In 2017, Vincie Ho and her husband traveled in **Morocco** during Ramadan. They did a lot of research before the trip to make their trip as mindful and sustainable as possible.

How did your experience make you more mindful about your impact as a traveller?

We hired local guides, stayed in family-run raids, visited an animal sanctuary rather than going to see those poor goats forced to dwell on Argan trees for show in Essaouira; we tried to be as respectful as possible knowing that everyone was enduring heat and hunger while fasting; we did a cooking class at a female-founded nonprofit that empowers victims of domestic violence by providing long-term professional culinary training and stipends, and there's even a cute organic garden at that training center. We also insisted on using land transport only to avoid taking multiple domestic flights. And after the trip, I made sure to share positive reviews on social media to support small businesses and nonprofits.

The journey to Morocco was very different from other trips that I had done before, because it was a lot more intentional. I also made sure to take a holistic approach to sustainability - sustainable travel doesn't only mean staying in an eco-lodge or bringing our own reusable water bottle. It's about whether our presence would benefit or cause harm to the local community, economy, animals and the environment of our travel destinations. It's never just about one act or one activity. Sustainable travel decisions should be in every step that we take throughout our journeys.

What takeaways from this experience can you share with other GOOD travellers?

- *Do your research to find out what's happening behind picture-perfect images with animals*
- *Seek out activities that would benefit the local community*
- *Be respectful during religious ceremonies and be mindful and considerate when taking pictures of such ceremonies*



DO YOUR RESEARCH

Contributor: Shelley Bragg

In 2009, Shelley Bragg took her first trip to [Thailand](#) – a country that she would then end up living in for 4.5 years, a decade later. She went to Bangkok and then took a small van and a beautiful ferry ride to Koh Samet, an island four hours away. It's a gorgeous island, but on arrival, she realised just how much Koh Samet was influenced by tourists rather than the communities that lived there.

How did your experience make you more mindful about your impact as a traveller?

What I noticed was a tourism industry that was already established and that had been largely shaped based on the demands of tourists, and largely to a negative degree. Thailand is a beautiful place, but the tourism industry is complex. There are many popular and sought-after activities that negatively impact people and the environment. It is saddening to see. It made me realize how, as travellers, we shape places. What we expect, what we ask for and what we pay for creates a demand which then leads to change in that community, as the market shifts to meet our demands. I realized that we need to be so incredibly aware of our role as we step into other communities, with our own ideas and agenda. We need to think critically about what we choose to spend our money on and what we choose to support and how this might be an impactful choice not just for that moment but also for the longer term.

What takeaways from this experience can you share with other GOOD travellers?

When I took this trip, I didn't have the information I do now about how to make more responsible choices when traveling, what questions to ask and what to look for in tourism providers. Had I been more aware, I could have created a trip that I felt was impactful in a more positive way. My takeaway would be to do research before traveling, to be conscious and aware of where you are spending your money and what organization and activities you are supporting. We influence places, and we need to constantly consider that.



STEP OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Contributor: Karin Nunan

One of Karin Nunan's most impactful travel experiences was a sustainability-focused safari across the Okavango Delta in [Botswana](#). The trip was led by local guides who challenged her to spend the entire two weeks with the smallest environmental footprint possible.

How did your experience make you more mindful about your impact as a traveller?

Each and every day, we learned a new life lesson from our passionate and highly-skilled native guides. How to listen for lions. Spot hyenas. Use the sun as a guide and the moon as a map. Their unparalleled knowledge of the landscape and wildlife literally kept us not just alive, but thriving. On the final day, when we reached the Chobe River after walking through a grassy flooded plain, our guides cautioned us to stop. They cued to the right and a pride of lions went by. To the left, the buffalo. Over the distance, the elephants. Hyenas. Giraffes. Wildebeest. Warthogs. Literally hundreds upon hundreds of animals - predators and prey - circled around us on their way to the riverbanks for their sunset libation. Some looked at us, but most lumbered by. I stood there in tears. Not from fright, but from honor. I knew that experience and the feeling of unbridled helplessness without fear would never be repeated in my life. At that moment, I was just another animal walking on our earth's surface. I wept because it was a lifelong reminder that we all share this planet and while my footprint may be small, it can impact so many other creatures.

What takeaways from this experience can you share with other GOOD travellers?

My takeaway was a vow to always remember my individual impact not just when I travel, but how I live. Because each individual's impact multiplied by 8 billion can either preserve or destroy our planet. As GOOD Travellers, we all should limit our footprint wherever we go. Research before we book – how to get there, who we choose to guide and transport us, and where we stay. Even if it means stepping outside our comfort zones. But oftentimes, it's in that space where lasting memories are truly made.



LISTEN

Contributor: Eliza Raymond

At 8,848 metres above sea level (29,035 feet), Mt Everest has inspired adventurers from all corners of the world for nearly a century. Approximately 1,000 mountaineers attempt to summit Everest each year. A further 40,000 are estimated to attempt the hike from Lukla to [Everest Base Camp](#) annually. Eliza Raymond was one of them (the 40 not the 1).

How did your experience make you more mindful about your impact as a traveller?

Hiking to Everest Base Camp is a bucket list goal for adventurers globally, and I was no exception. So I was somewhat surprised when the first piece of advice given to us by our local guide was that "hiking to Everest Base Camp is all about the journey, not the destination." Of course, he was absolutely right, and the experiences we had on our journey made me completely rethink my bucket list mentality. What I most remember from this hike was not arriving at base camp, but rather arriving at the Tea Houses every night where we'd roll out our sleeping bags and drink tea by the fire. The majority of our Tea House hosts had grown up in the Himalayas and many of them had stayed in part because of tourism. The stories they shared with us taught us how Everest affects lives everywhere: those of the adventurers and those who wait for their safe return, but most of all the lives of their leaders and the communities that hikers pass through on a daily basis. So if you're considering a hike to Everest Base Camp or even dreaming of the summit itself, take a step back and remember that you'll be hiking through people's homes and through an extremely fragile mountain environment.

What takeaways from this experience can you share with other GOOD travellers?

My number one takeaway from this experience is to take the time to stop and listen to the people you meet on your travels. It is the people you meet, the stories you hear, the moments of connection you experience and the friendships you form that truly make travel memorable. Allow yourself the time and mindset to truly listen and have your opinions challenged - and reflect on how you can integrate the different ways of thinking and living you encounter on your travels once you return home.



BE FLEXIBLE

Contributor: Caitie Goddard

Last December, Caitie Goddard spent time travelling with her brother after they both had long work trips abroad. They decided to visit **Vietnam** because it's one of Caitie's favourite countries in the world to visit and her brother had never been. They chose to stay in Ho Chi Minh City for five days and practice "slow travel", getting familiar with one area rather than trying to hit as many hotspots as possible.

How did your experience make you more mindful about your impact as a traveller?

We were keen to support local businesses as much as possible and work with tourism providers that were investing in the community. We chose Urban Adventures for a few day trips where we had a chance to see the Ku Chi Tunnels and take a canoe down the Mekong River. We recognized how tourism can be a HUGE boom to local communities and how the expectations of tourists really shape opportunities for cultural and environmental preservation. It was important we understand that we were there as guests and stay open-minded to new experiences.

What takeaways from this experience can you share with other GOOD travellers?

Before you go, research! It goes a long way and makes you feel better as a traveller to greet and thank people in their own language. Additionally, having a rough idea of what you might want to do can be really helpful, especially in a big city. For example, had we not booked our AO Show at the Saigon Opera House (incredible!) prior to arriving, we would have missed a wonderful night. However, keep an open mind and be open to change! A few of my favorite things about this trip and others was jumping at opportunities we saw (great food stalls, interesting museums), that we hadn't planned on. Being flexible goes a long way. And finally, the opportunity to travel with others who share your values and interests cannot be understated. Travelling with my brother is one of my favourite ways to see the world: I love his sense of adventure and appreciation of new cultures and experiences.



TRAVELLING GOOD

8 tips for travelling GOOD

We hope the stories we have shared from around the world have inspired you to think beyond your bucket list. We hope that they have demonstrated that your experience as a traveller will be shaped as much by *how* you travel as *where* you travel - and, most importantly, *how* you travel will shape the impact you leave on a destination. So as we start to dream about travelling again, let us do so mindfully.

Here are 8 tips from the stories we have shared for us all to reflect on. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of what it means to be a GOOD traveller, but rather a starting place for discussion. Please join us in adding to these tips through our blog.

1. Slow down
2. Celebrate diversity
3. Embrace transformative experiences
4. Be intentional
5. Do your research
6. Step outside your comfort zone
7. Listen
8. Be flexible

Thank you.

~ The GOOD Travel Team



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