

Travel responsibly without stress: Find a sustainable tour operator

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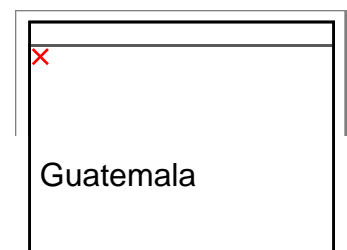
Being a sustainable traveler doesn't mean that you need to worry about making reservations, finding transportation, and planning activities. As more and more travelers are concerned with reducing their impact on the environment and supporting the welfare of the local communities they visit, the number of tour operators that offer sustainable travel packages have also grown.

A responsible tour operator is one that seeks to establish a sustainable supply chain. What does that mean? It means that they work with accommodations, car rental and transportation companies, food services, and even destinations and activities that have been certified or verified by recognized sustainable tourism programs.

To prove that their supply chains are sustainable, tour operators themselves can also become certified or verified. For example, to earn a two-year **Rainforest Alliance verification**, in the first year, at least 30% of a tour operator's supply chain must be sustainable; in year two, at least 50% must be sustainable. Other certification programs have similar criteria.

When you are researching and getting quotes from responsible tour operators, be sure to ask if they only include sustainable companies in their itineraries, assuming that they are available in your chosen destination.

Another key feature of responsible tour operators is that they demonstrate their commitment with their own corporate sustainability practices. Like any company, they can improve




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their environmental and social footprints by reducing their consumption of water, energy and other resources, recycling, using clean technologies, hiring local staff, conserving biodiversity, respecting cultures while traveling, and promoting these practices and values among their employees and customers.

Ask tour operators about their sustainable practices and visit their websites to inquire about their sustainability policies. And, you can go even further to ensure that their commitments are real. We make it easy for you! Choose one of the fantastic tour operators that are listed in SustainableTrip.org. Every tour operator in our directory is certified or Rainforest Alliance verified, which means that they have undergone strict assessments confirming their compliance with the [Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria](#), which are the minimum requirements that a company should meet to be sustainable.

The sustainable tourism boom has also prompted tour operators to demonstrate their collective responsibility by creating professional associations with the common goal of mitigating their impact and helping to conserve the ecosystems upon which the tourism industry depends, and to help provide sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

Tour Operators Promoting Sustainability (TOPS) is a specialized global platform for tour operators that are working with the [Rainforest Alliance](#) to promote sustainable tourism in their respective markets. [These entrepreneurs](#) are helping to transform tourism business practices to make the industry environmentally and socially responsible, as well as profitable.

The **Tour Operators' Initiative for Sustainable Tourism Development (TOI)** is another example. This community was developed with support from the [World Tourism Organization](#) (UNWTO), the [United Nations Environment Programme](#) (UNEP), and the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#) (UNESCO), and it is committed to implementing joint activities and disseminating methods and practices that will make sustainable development a foundation of the tourism industry.

So, if on your next vacation, you'd like a tour operator to do the planning for you, be sure to visit the list of tour operators on SustainableTrip.org and rest assured that they are all doing the right thing to conserve the environment and support local communities!