

Vacation Ideas

Can You Green Your Vacation?

(NAPSA)—At home, most of us are taking steps to live greener: reusing Ziploc bags, recycling milk cartons and trying to eat more local produce. But did you know that your well-earned vacation could counteract all that good green work you are doing? With nearly 900 million tourists traveling each year, vacationing is an enormous strain on the environment—travel devours fossil fuels, hotels guzzle enough energy to light a small city, and tourist-related pollution wreaks havoc. Instead of leaving your green lifestyle at home this year, Recyclebank, the company that rewards people for taking everyday green actions with discounts and deals, has easy, eco-friendly solutions to green your getaway.

Cover Your Pool—Without a cover, an average pool loses about 7,000 gallons of water annually. Not only is this costly and a drain on the water supply, it also releases harmful chemicals into the environment. Covering your pool reduces evaporation by up to 95 percent. For a quick fix, buy a large sheet of plastic from a lumber store, cut to fit your pool.

Give Your Appliances a Vacation—By turning off your hardworking, energy-sucking devices while you are gone, you will be helping your energy bill and the environment. Electronics with digital displays, instant-on features or remote controls consume energy even while not in use, so give them a rest! Unplug TVs, cable boxes, DVD players, computers, printers, digital clocks, etc.

Rent a Fuel-Efficient Car—Take a break from your gas-guzzling SUV and opt for something more eco-friendly. Car rental agencies such as Avis, Enterprise and Hertz are adding hybrids and flex-



Your next vacation can be even more fun for your family when you know you're helping the environment—and yourselves—at the same time.

fuel cars to their fleets. If hybrids are unavailable, opt for a smaller car with better gas mileage.

Practice "Leave No Trace" Camping—The National Outdoor Leadership School's Leave No Trace program educates campers about the eco-effects of their outdoor pursuits. One vital tip is choosing durable surfaces like rocks, sand, gravel or hardy, dry vegetation for all your activities. Staying on these less-vulnerable surfaces prevents erosion and long-term damage to sensitive wilderness areas. Other tips include bringing your trash home with you and keeping a good distance from wildlife.

Take an Eco-Volunteer Vacation—If you crave a hands-on experience (tracking lemurs in Madagascar? Maintaining walking trails in New Zealand?), an eco-volunteer vacation may be the right fit for you. You can explore the globe and leave things a little greener. For more on volunteer opportunities, visit Voluntourism.org and TransitionsAbroad.com.

Kermit was wrong; it IS easy being green! For more insider tips and ways to get rewarded for your everyday green actions, visit www.recyclebank.com.