

Map your route to an eco-friendly vacation

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Planning a vacation is not the time to forget how to lessen your impact on our planet. Deciding where to go, where to stay, how to get there, and what to take all provide opportunities to make smarter choices.

PICK THE PERFECT PLACE: Whether you decide to visit an environmentally sustainable winery in Napa Valley or check into a green certified ski lodge in Utah - the choices for eco-friendly destinations are endless.

You can seek out spots that appeal to you and your family on Web sites like [EcoTrotters.com](#). Tour companies like Intrepid Travel specifically coordinate eco-friendly excursions across the country. Don't forget the ultimate eco-destinations in America - our national parks.

There is one in nearly every state, and they are home to awe-inspiring views, free-roaming wildlife, and endless things for the nature lover to do. Plus, they won't bust your budget.

STAY SMART: It's all the rage these days to go green and many hotels are either being built with the earth in mind or are making retrofits that will conserve energy and water. Some hotel restaurants even feature all-organic menus.

To find what you're looking for, check out [IStayGreen.org](#) and [EnvironmentallyFriendlyHotels.com](#). AAA also features green, eco-icons in their guidebooks that highlight hotels which are making eco-friendly strides.

GETTING THERE IS HALF THE FUN: It isn't just where you go and where you stay; it's also important how you get there. But who really has the time to sift through mounds of research to figure out whether flying, driving, or traveling by train is better for the planet?

[TripFootprint.com](#) does the hard part for you. Enter where you're headed, with how many people, and it'll scientifically determine which way will generate the least pollution.

Another option for those who may not have the most fuel-efficient ride is to park it and rent a hybrid. It cuts down on the wear and tear of your own car and you'll be creating fewer emissions on your trip.

A BETTER BAG: The best choice for luggage is to use the bags and suitcases you already have. But if you need some new pieces, there are plenty of eco-friendly options that are just a click away.

Web sites such as [Luggage.com](#) have wide selections of eco-friendly luggage made by Patagonia, Eco-Traveler, Mountainsmith and more. Many are made with recycled materials or renewable resources and they are available in every price range.

Do Your Part to make your getaways good for you and our planet.

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TERRI BENNETT



Terri Bennett has been providing weather forecasts in the Charlotte area for more than 16 years. In September 2007, she launched Terribennett.com to serve as the single source of Terri's knowledge and expertise.

She is also promoting green technology in her Do Your Part campaign.

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