How you can be a responsible traveler this holiday

According to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), responsible travel refers to the behavior of travelers aspiring to make choices aligned with sustainable tourism practices during their trips.

Sustainable tourism is tourism that minimizes the costs and maximizes the benefits of tourism for natural environments and local communities and can be carried out indefinitely without harming the resources on which it depends.

Visiting new environments is thrilling and exciting. Make your travel even better by adopting responsible travel. Below are some tips that you can adopt for your next trip.

1. Choose sustainable accommodation and tour operators:
Do a background check and find sustainable companies and facilities that work actively with local communities, and carry out practices that help protect the environment and wildlife. In addition, these companies accommodate locals from the surrounding community and enhance their skills and capacity through extra training.

2. Respect the local culture:
Many cultures are more conservative with regard to their dress code, mode of greeting, religion, and places of worship among others. Do your research on what the customs are of your preferred destination to ensure you do not inadvertently offend anyone. Consult your guide on what to do or say when and before visiting specific communities. Take time to learn the local language, such as how to say hello. The picture illustrates Maasai Moran showcasing how to make fire.
3. **Minimize your waste:**
Carry a reusable drinking water bottle with you for your entire trip and fill up drinking water from offered water jugs and/or water dispensers.

Eat and drink at restaurants/cafes and avoid takeaways that result in extra packaging that ends up as waste.

Say no to plastic bags/packaging during your visits to the shops. Instead, carry a reusable eco-friendly cloth bag or place your bought items in your backpack.

Your goal is always to leave the place better than you found it. The picture below taken during the ecorating reassessment of Sands at Nomad illustrates a paper straw.
4. **Contribute to the local community:**
Support the local enterprises by purchasing products from the local shops, markets, and gift shops, dining at the local restaurants, spending a night at a family-run guest house, etc. This helps inject money directly into the local community, therefore positively impacting their livelihoods by providing a source of income. The picture below shows a group of Maasai women provided with space to make and display their beadworks at Basecamp Masai Mara.

![Maasai women with beadworks](image)

5. **Reduce your carbon footprint:**
Carbon footprint refers to the number of greenhouse gases, specifically carbon dioxide emitted by our activities during a given period.

You can reduce your carbon footprint by reconsidering how you travel, and identifying and choosing more eco-friendly options for your trip.

While it is possible to be oblivious to the implications that our actions may have when we travel, it is only through education and awareness that we can help spread the word about responsible travel. Are you a conscious, responsible, and sustainable traveler?

Share your thoughts, knowledge, and discussions about responsible travel with those within your reach and move outwards. Do it simply but in a way that those that learn from you can spread it down to others.