The Promise and Imperative of Sustainable Travel

Samantha Bray
Center for Responsible Travel (CREST)
ETC 2019
Montgomery, Alabama
January 30, 2019
Why Tourism?

- 10% of world GDP
- One in every 11 jobs globally
- Largest export category in many developing countries
- Almost twice as many women employers as other sectors
- Provides incentive to protect natural and cultural assets
- Avenue for peace and understanding
INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS 1950 - 2030

- 2018: 1.4 Billion
- 2012: 1 Billion
- 2010: 1.8 Billion

1950: 25 Million
1960: 69 Million
1970: 166 Million
1980: 435 Million
1990: 669 Million
2000: 1 Billion
2012: 1.235 Billion
2020: 1.4 Billion
2030: 1.8 Billion

(Mn Million / Bn Billion)

Source: © Highlights 2017 - World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), July 2017
This growth is a good thing, right?
Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Québec, Canada
What is Sustainable Tourism?
What is Sustainable Tourism?

Tourism that leads to the management of resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life-supporting systems.

“Sustainability principles should apply to all types of tourism activities, operations, establishments and projects, including conventional and alternative forms.” – United Nations
The Imperative for Sustainable Tourism

Climate Change
Hurricane Maria hits Puerto Rico

Overtourism
Overcrowding in Banff National Park
What Sustainable Tourism is Not: Boring

Nature-based Tourism

Ecotourism

Sustainable Tourism

Urban Tourism

Sun & Beach Resort & Cruise
The Quadruple Bottom Line

People

Planet

Profit

Purpose

Food adventures offered by Intrepid Travel (Source: Trekbible)
The Virtuous Cycle.

Better Places to Live

Better Places to Visit

Better Places to Visit
The Ecotourism Revolution in Terminology & Ideas

1970s:
New global environmental movement
• Dissatisfaction with mass tourism
• World Bank/IDB closed tourism departments

1990s:
Fastest growing sector of tourism industry
• 20% – 34%/year

2002:
UN’s International Year of Ecotourism

2017:
UN’s International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development

Nearly every country involved in tourism, also promoting ecotourism/sustainable tourism
Why does it matter to travel providers?
Shift Toward Experiences
Consumer Demand

Ecotourism, nature, heritage, cultural and “soft adventure” tourism predicted to grow rapidly

93% of Conde Nast Traveler readers believe travel companies should be responsible for protecting the environment, and 58% said their hotel choice is influenced by the support the hotel gives to the local community.

A Booking.com survey, “more than two-thirds (68%) of travelers intend to stay in an eco-accommodation in 2018, reassuringly up from 65% in 2017 and 62% in 2016.” -- Booking.com

Preparing traditional meals at Hotel Rovies, Greece (Source: Greek Reporter)
Destination Case

If the product – our destinations – aren’t protected in environmental and social terms then people won’t want to visit them, it is as simple as that.

—John De Vial, Association of British Travel Agents
Business Case

Sustainably-minded travelers:

- Highly educated
- Well-traveled
- Environmentally and socially aware
- Stay longer and spend more for local or differentiated experiences
“The question is no longer can sustainable tourism work; independent case studies from around the world have documented that it does.

Rather, the question today is how far the travel industry can take sustainable tourism principles to help protect the world’s natural and cultural treasures – the very ‘products’ upon which tourism businesses also depend.”

– Virtuoso
What’s the deal with certification?
It can be overwhelming!
Standardizing & Benchmarking
Certifications & Criteria

GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM COUNCIL
Is patronizing a certified company the only way to make responsible choices?
Responsible Travel Tips

- Stay in locally owned hotels & eat at locally owned restaurants to minimize leakage
- Research hotel environmental policies & community-based initiatives
- Utilize public transportation, walk, or ride a bike!
- Buy locally made handicrafts
- Employ a local guide
- Be culturally sensitive
- Bring reusable bags and utensils
- Eat locally sourced foods and minimize food waste when possible
Opportunities & Resources

- ETC Sustainable Tourism Practices: Questions for Tour Operators
- ASTA Green Guide
- Pack for a Purpose
- Carbon Offsets
- CREST’s “Dos and Don’t of Travel Giving”
- CREST’s Responsible Travel Tips
- CREST’s “Case for Responsible Travel”

Offset Now

Whether it is a flight, an event, business travel or just a certain amount of CO₂: calculate and offset your CO₂ online in just a few steps. It’s safe, and you will receive a certificate.

Offset here
What Footprint Will You Leave?

The big question...
Thank you!

Samantha Bray, MTA
Center for Responsible Travel (CREST)

1225 Eye Street, NW
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
Tel: (202) 347-9203 ex 414

www.responsibletravel.org