

Sustainable Travel

A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR MAKING A POSITIVE
DIFFERENCE TO THE PLANET



6
Questions
TO ASK YOUR
TRAVEL COMPANY

Did you know not all travel companies are created equal when it comes to their impact on the environment?

Travel providers have choices. They can choose to protect wildlife, support local communities, serve sustainable food, eliminate single-use plastics wherever possible, and take decisive climate action...but not all of them do.

That's where you can make a difference. As a traveler, you have the power to change the world for the better simply by asking the right questions and choosing to travel with sustainable companies—companies that prioritize the health of the planet, actively leaving the places they explore better than when they found them.

But how can you tell sustainable travel providers apart from the rest?

Exploring this guide will help! Lindblad Expeditions cares so deeply about the future of the planet that they want to help you make the most informed decisions possible when planning your next travel adventure. That's why they've curated a list of **six questions you can ask travel companies** to determine the depth of their commitment to sustainability.

*Cover: King Penguins at St. Andrews Bay, South Georgia © Ralph Lee Hopkins.
This spread: Polar bear in evening light with sea birds, Norway, Svalbard*

Table of Contents

Which topics are most important to you when you travel? Learn more about the **six core concepts of sustainable travel**, and what questions you can ask providers to ensure your next travel adventure is good for you—and good for the planet.

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Single-Use Plastics | 4 |
| Sustainable Food | 6 |
| Climate Action | 8 |
| Protecting Nature | 10 |
| Culture & Community | 12 |
| Green Operations | 14 |

“As we travel the world, we experience beauty, wonder, and often the seldom seen. This inevitably creates an awareness that may make us think differently about our relationship to the planet and its myriad biodiversity. And therein lies a multitude of positive possibilities.”



– SVEN LINDBLAD

Founder and Co-Chair of the Board
Lindblad Expeditions



Q1

“What is Your Company Doing to Combat Our Planet’s Plastic Problem?”

Plastic pollution is one of the biggest environmental challenges of our time, which is why travel companies must do their part to reduce or eliminate single-use plastics. From banishing plastic utensils, bottles, and straws to choosing eco-friendly suppliers, travel companies serious about sustainability have kicked single-use plastic to the curb at every level of their operations wherever possible.



Which of the following does your travel company provide:

Single-use options that are harmful to the planet or eco-friendly alternatives wherever feasible?

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✗ Single-use cups & mugs | ✓ Reusable cups & mugs |
| ✗ Disposable utensils, stirrers, plates | ✓ Reusable/washable utensils, stirrers, plates |
| ✗ Disposable napkins for meals | ✓ Cloth napkins for meals |
| ✗ Single-use toiletry containers | ✓ Bulk product dispensers in showers |
| ✗ Single-use plastic water bottles | ✓ Refillable, reusable water bottles |

From left to right: A close-up view of paper straws, which are biodegradable and better for the environment than plastic; Lindblad Expeditions has provided reusable water bottles in all cabins aboard their ships since 2007 (image taken on Sand Dollar Beach, Baja California, Mexico).



SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS & TIPS

Did You Know?

More than 8 million tons of plastic end up in the ocean every year, and scientists estimate that by 2050, virtually every seabird species on earth will ingest plastic if current trends continue. ¹

Take Action

Learn how to reduce single-use plastics in your own home by taking National Geographic's 'Planet or Plastic?' Pledge here:

nationalgeographic.com/plastic

Our Tip

When inquiring about a travel provider's single-use plastic policy, don't forget to ask about their offices and suppliers as well! Green companies are green all the way through, not merely on the surface, and constantly look for ways to improve. For example, **Lindblad Expeditions is 100% free of single-use plastic bottles, cups, straws, stirrers, and utensils aboard their ships and in their offices**, and has worked with their suppliers to have plastic packaging removed from pens, parkas, toilet paper, and more.

Q2

“Are the Meals you Serve Responsibly Planned & Sustainably Sourced?”

Travel providers deeply rooted in sustainability thoughtfully curate their menus—from farm, or ocean, to plate. They source food from local producers wherever possible, offer plant-based options, and understand the most responsible seafood choices, creating a top-notch culinary experience while making the best possible choices for the planet.



They also have robust strategies for mitigating food waste. **Did you know up to 50% of food served in large cruise ship buffets is never eaten, and therefore wasted?** So it's worth asking your travel provider whether they serve their meals buffet-style—and how they are otherwise taking a bite out of food waste.

Meal Service: A Real-Life Example

By serving plated dinners and asking guests to indicate their dinner order preference earlier in the day, Lindblad Expeditions has established creative ways to reduce waste. Simple yet effective food policies like these, from sourcing to serving, set sustainable travel companies apart.

From left to right: A large school of bigeye trevally in deep water near Cabo Pulmo, Baja California Sur, Mexico; hydroponic farm in Guachipelin National Park, Costa Rica.





SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS & TIPS

Did You Know?

An estimated one-third of the food produced worldwide—1.3 billion tons—is lost, spoiled, thrown away, or otherwise uneaten, and if we eliminated food waste, we could reduce human-caused greenhouse gas emissions by 6-8%.² To learn how you can limit food waste at home, visit:

<https://stopfoodwaste.org/resources>

A World First

Lindblad Expeditions launched the first-ever farm-to-table food program in Galápagos.

“Part of our continuous commitment to sustainability is to serve the cuisine of each region using local ingredients. This is what sustainable travel is all about.”



— ANA ESTEVES

Director, Hotel Operations

Learn More Here:



SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS & TIPS

Did You Know?

You can offset the carbon emissions for any flight you take by donating to a carbon-reducing project. Use Lindblad's quick, easy carbon calculator to offset your flights here:

www.expeditioncarboncalculator.com

Take Action

Don't be afraid to ask climate-aware companies how they audit their processes or what standards they adhere to in calculating their carbon footprint. For example, Lindblad Expeditions partners with South Pole, the world's leading developer of international emission reduction projects, to offset the emissions for every ship in the fleet, their offices, all staff travel, and more.

What is "Carbon Offsetting"?

Companies "offset" their carbon footprint by calculating the amount of greenhouse gas emissions they produce, and investing in projects (reforestation, clean energy, etc.) that reduce or capture an equivalent amount of carbon, counterbalancing the effect their emissions have on the planet. Learn more here:

www.southpole.com

Q3

“What Decisive Climate Actions Have you Taken?”

Travel is a balm for the soul and opens our eyes to the wonders of the world, but it also means getting from “A” to “B.” Whether by plane, train, car, or boat, the act of traveling releases carbon into the atmosphere. But that shouldn’t be the end of the story!

The good news is that travel providers can achieve a net-zero carbon impact on the earth—if they choose. Some providers are climate-conscious and do everything they can to eliminate, reduce, and offset their carbon emissions. Others? Not so much. If you care about clear air and the future health of the planet, that’s where you, a traveler with choices, come into play.



When considering your travel options, look for companies that have taken clear, decisive climate actions. For example, you can ask:

- “Are you aware of all the sources in your business that produce carbon emissions?”
- “Have you reduced your emissions wherever possible and offset those that can’t be eliminated?” (see *What Is ‘Carbon Offsetting?’* at left, for more information)
- “What energy-efficient practices and policies have you adopted?”

From left to right: Antarctica; Glacier Bay National Park, Southeast Alaska.

Q4

“Do You Actively Protect Nature?”

One of the most important tenets of sustainable travel is the protection of wildlife and the preservation of the natural world. Any travel company can claim to show you wonders, but companies with an ethos rooted in sustainability take action to ensure the places they explore—and the ecosystems and wildlife they experience with their guests—not only survive, but thrive, for generations to come.



Before choosing a travel experience, ask your provider:

- “How do you contribute to direct conservation action?”
- “Do you offer guests opportunities to witness conservation in action during their travels?”
- “Do you follow or exceed all rules and regulations for wildlife viewing?”
(see ‘Wildlife Watching 101’ at right, for more information)

Calling All Wildlife Lovers!

Have you ever wanted to travel to a place so you can observe a certain species, like polar bears, emperor penguins, or blue whales “before they’re gone?” If so, you’re not alone! Lots of people seek travel experiences where they can view iconic wildlife firsthand, but wouldn’t it be even better to travel with a company that’s actively trying to preserve the wildlife we all love? That’s what choosing sustainable travel does: it helps ensure the species you encounter have champions who will help them survive.

From left to right: A Galápagos giant tortoise at Rancho el Manzanillo on Santa Cruz Island, Galápagos, Ecuador; Corals, Laughing Bird Caye, Belize.





SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS & TIPS

Did You Know?

Less than 8% of the ocean is fully protected from fishing and other extraction activities.³ By committing at least half a million dollars each year since 2014 to National Geographic's Pristine Seas project, Lindblad Expeditions furthers meaningful efforts to protect the last wild places in the ocean.

LEX-NG Fund

Lindblad Expeditions has raised more than \$18.9 million from travelers since 1997 for marine, coastal, and wildlife conservation in the regions they explore and beyond, including \$13 million through the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic (LEX-NG) Fund.

**To learn more,
read the Impact
Report here:**



Wildlife Watching 101

Did you know that feeding wildlife or getting too close can harm animals in the long run? Traveling with companies that follow or exceed all wildlife viewing regulations ensures that the wildlife you love isn't harmed or exploited.

Q5

“How Do You Support Cultural Preservation & Local Communities?”

Sustainable travel is rooted in respect: for nature, people, cultures, and communities. Has your travel company formed real, tangible relationships with the local communities they visit that are built on a foundation of trust? Do they support local people in becoming stewards of their environment? Do they further education, cultural preservation, and economic opportunities in the places they explore?



Responsible exploration means listening to local people and supporting communities as they tackle local challenges. For example, in Southeast Alaska and British Columbia, Lindblad Expeditions has supported efforts by First Nations communities to preserve endangered indigenous languages, disappearing art forms like Raven Tail and Spruce-Root weaving, and more—thanks to the meaningful relationships they’ve forged through years of respectful exploration.

From left to right: Close-up of a beaded necklace made with recycled paper, crafted by artisan Sara Fiallos in the Galápagos Islands, Ecuador; Traditional dancers in full regalia in Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka, Russia.





SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS & TIPS

Did You Know?

Artisan handcraft production is the second highest source of income in the developing world behind agriculture⁴, so supporting artisans can mean lifting entire families out of poverty. Since 2007, Lindblad's in-house artisan development program has empowered hundreds of artisans through workshops and local collaborations, and dedicates 5% of sales from their fleetwide, shipboard Global Galleries to programs that benefit artisans, creating a renewable cycle of support. To learn more, visit:

www.expeditions.com/artisans

Celebrate Culture Through Music

Another way responsible travel providers can support cultural preservation and appreciation is through music. Lindblad Expeditions' one-of-a-kind music program, led by ethnomusicologist Jacob Edgar, celebrates cultural expression through a curated, free-to-download playlist series, *Wavelengths*. Listen on:

Apple Music



Spotify



SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS & TIPS

But, Wait! Shouldn't We Stop Traveling Altogether?

Some may argue 'yes' with only a narrow understanding of the benefits of travel. But what would be lost? Travel educates. Travel inspires. Travel allows us to see the world from a different perspective, and to care. And once people care about something, they're more likely to take action to protect it.

What is "Greenwashing"?

Greenwashing happens when companies publicly tout actions that make them appear more environmentally-conscious than they really are. They use a few seemingly eco-friendly examples to paint a "green facade" over their operations, obscuring an otherwise minimal commitment to sustainability. The only way to know for sure whether a company is truly "green" is by asking meaningful questions—like the ones contained in this guide.



Q6

“How Are Your Operations ‘Green’ Across the Board?”

Truly sustainable travel companies are green throughout every aspect of their operations: in the field, at their offices, and everywhere in between. “Greenwashing” happens, but companies like Lindblad Expeditions walk the walk—even behind the scenes. Recycling. Replacing single-use plastics with reusable, eco-friendly alternatives. Educating guests through mindful exploration. Engaging with staff to cultivate a culture of sustainability. Leveraging their position in the industry to help suppliers green their operations... and more. Choosing to travel with companies that have baked sustainability into their very DNA means you are making the greatest positive impact possible for the planet.



To determine whether your travel provider’s operations are truly “green,” here are some questions you can ask:

- “Is sustainability a priority in every aspect of your operation?”
- “Do you recycle (paper, batteries, electronics, lightbulbs, etc.)?”
- “Have you eliminated single-use plastics everywhere you possibly can?”
- “Have you “greened” your offices (purchased energy efficient products, instituted energy-saving policies, etc.)?”
- “Do you actively engage your staff and employees with sustainability through training, a forum for staff to make green improvement suggestions, etc.?”
- “Are you 100% carbon neutral?”
- “Have you leveraged your position in the industry to catalyze positive environmental changes beyond your own operations? If so, how?”

From left to right: Paddleboarding at Fatu Hiva, Marquesas Archipelago, Pacific Ocean, French Polynesia; Lindblad Expeditions’ Leave No Trace policy ensures the wild places they visit with guests, like Niko Harbor, Antarctica (pictured)—remain pristine.

Thank You For Considering Sustainable Travel

By asking travel companies the right questions and choosing sustainable travel, you are making a real difference. You're showing the travel industry that the status quo is no longer acceptable when the health of the planet is at stake, proving there's consumer demand for travel that makes a lasting, positive impact on the world. And you can feel good knowing you're preserving the places you love—ensuring future generations can experience and enjoy them for years to come.

Sustainability: A Constant Evolution

Never content with the status quo, responsible travel companies like Lindblad Expeditions constantly seek to grow and improve their sustainability efforts. They will be the first to tell you that this is an ever-evolving field, and by continually striving to do better for the planet, they raise the standard for the entire travel industry, influencing widespread change.

We hope you'll join in!

"It's easy to only think about our insular world—the community and environment we have direct contact with—but sustainable travel allows us to understand the intricate network that we're all a part of. It helps us understand that our actions affect places and environments across the globe."

— KATHY H.
Lindblad Guest



PARTNERS & FRIENDS WHO SHARE LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS' COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY:



LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

- 2020** / Ensemble Travel's Purpose Award
- 2018** / Virtuoso Sustainable Tourism Leadership Award
- 2016** / Virtuoso Best VAST (Virtuoso Active & Specialty Supplier) Award
- 2013** / Virtuoso Sustainable Tourism Leadership - Supplier Award
- 2010** / Virtuoso Best VAST (Virtuoso Active & Specialty Supplier) Award

LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS

- ✓ 100% carbon neutral
- ✓ Free of guest-facing single-use plastics fleetwide
- ✓ Sustainable, responsibly-sourced food program
- ✓ Protects nature
- ✓ Supports cultural preservation & local communities
- ✓ Green business operations across the board
- ✓ Leverages position as industry leader to educate and inspire positive action



From left to right: Emperor penguins sit atop an ice crevasse, Antarctica; A Lindblad Expeditions field staff member illuminates the natural wonders of Alaska for a guest.

Endnote Citations:

1. "Marine Plastics." IUCN, 5 Dec. 2018, www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/marine-plastics.
2. "Fight Climate Change by Preventing Food Waste." WWF, World Wildlife Fund, www.worldwildlife.org/stories/fight-climate-change-by-preventing-food-waste.
3. "How Much Do You Know about Our Ocean?" The Pew Charitable Trusts, www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2021/04/20/how-much-do-you-know-about-our-ocean.
4. "Artisan Sector." Artisan Alliance, www.artisanalliance.org/sector.

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about the planet and travel as a powerful force [for good](#).

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dates, rates, and to make a reservation.**

To learn more about how Lindblad Expeditions harnesses the power of travel for good, visit www.expeditions.com/sustainability