

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



FIVE ECO-FRIENDLY ROAD TRIP TIPS

By Anna Marden
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I bought a car for the first time in my life earlier this year. This big purchase allowed me to finally make plans to check off a lifelong bucket list item — road tripping across America.

After posting a picture of my cute new car (a fuel-efficient Honda Fit) on my social media accounts, my heart fell when an environmental activist friend commented, telling me to get rid of “that monstrosity.”

I wasn’t about to sell my car or cancel my trip, but I realized that my personal carbon footprint would escalate quickly on a road trip. Viral videos and documentaries about global warming, ocean pollution, and deforestation have always depressed me, yet I never really thought I could do anything about it. On a trip to Asia last fall, the problem became more real to me when I saw piles of burning trash and straw-littered beaches in real life.

After getting publicly shamed about my gas-guzzling, I decided to make an effort to reduce my impact, instead of just swallowing my guilt. If we all make small adjustments, it can add up to create wide-scale change.

1. Green Gas

Right after buying my car, I learned about the Green Gas Movement, a Somerville-based nonprofit founded by a trio of Northeastern alumni. The Green Gas Card is a free, secured debit card that links to your bank account and donates 10 cents per gallon of gas to certified clean air projects, including tree-planting charities and clean energy initiatives. The company calculates the additional charge for your gas based on the national average. Gas prices fluctuate so much anyway that I didn’t notice the difference.

2. Reusable drink containers

In the past, I always mindlessly bought tons of bottled water and drinks in disposable cups with plastic lids while traveling. The waste adds up quickly. For this trip, I purchased a stainless-steel water bottle as well as a vacuum-insulated cup. To help eliminate the need to buy drinks on the road, I also brought a 2.5-gallon water tank, several types of powdered drink mixes, and I made cold-brew iced coffee in a large rubber-sealed glass jar.

3. Stainless steel straws

Plastic straws are not recyclable, so I ordered a pack of stainless steel straws that I kept in my purse and used with my travel cup. The straws came with a handy pipe-cleaning brush. I also tried to use my own straw when buying drinks at restaurants; however, servers often delivered drinks with an already-open plastic straw. I was disappointed that creating unnecessary garbage was outside of my control, but my steel straw also helped me start many conversations with servers about how they could reduce their waste, too.

4. Collecting litter

When walking in a beautiful urban park in Richmond, Va., I was saddened by the piles of trash that had gathered in the nooks between large rocks on a river. Because of my green-travel goals, I decided to do something I’ve always considered but never acted on — I started picking up litter. I was annoyed that I had nowhere to put it or easily carry it out. After that, I decided to keep recycled bags in my purse and daypack so I could pick up any trash I found along the way; it was an excellent way to reuse ice bags and other unavoidable plastic waste that I accumulated. It’s also easy to find a littered plastic bag to use to collect and carry out refuse.

5. Eat green

It’s hard to eliminate waste from packaging when you eat, especially on the go. I avoided Styrofoam at all costs. I also tried to avoid takeout, opting for cooked meals whenever I could with my friends and family who hosted me, at hostel kitchens, or on my camping stove. I chose snacks packaged in cardboard whenever possible. I bought a bunch of nuts and dried fruit in bulk and made trail mix. I stored it in re-sealable bags that I had saved from previously purchased packaged food. I also bought produce that travels well and didn’t come in plastic packaging. Loose carrots, bananas, and apples are my top picks. Summer is the best time of year to eat locally grown while traveling, which also reduces the carbon footprint of shipping food long distances. I took every opportunity I could to stop at farmers’ markets and roadside farm stands.

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Reusable stainless steel straws help reduce plastic waste.

HERE

VISIT THE CAPE’S LARGEST DOG FEST

Watch dogs leap into a 40-foot pool, compete in a “radar run,” and show off during K-9 demonstrations and Frisbee shows. Agway of Cape Cod’s Paw Palooza takes place at Dennis-Yarmouth High School July 14 and 15, with benefits from the event going to two of the region’s largest animal shelters. During the DockDogs competition, your pooch can jump into a pool while competing for the greatest distance, height, and speed. Then let your dog take a dip in the puppy pool pavilion, tackle the lure course, and get a caricature portrait. Don’t miss the stunt dog performances, when nationally renowned rescue dogs display their tricks. The event also features a big vendor fair with dog-related products, food trucks, and a kids’ zone. *Admission: \$7 for 13 and older; free for kids 12 and under, and dogs. Pooches must be rabies vaccinated and leashed.* www.pawpaloozacapecod.com.

RELAX AT A NEW KENNEBUNKPORT HOTEL

Kennebunkport has welcomed a new luxury hotel, the Yachtsman Hotel and Marina Club, which boasts just 30 rooms, a new Marina Bar, and private garden landscaping. The hotel, part of the Kennebunkport Resort Collection, overlooks the Kennebunk River and sits within walking distance to downtown. You’ll get pampered here: “yacht club” members receive custom, complimentary services and amenities (fresh coffee and croissants, access to the marina bar, and more). Stay in a bright and airy Harborfront Bunga-



low, which has high ceilings, boutique-style furnishings in cheery colors, and bathrooms with Kohler fixtures and marble floors. Guests get complimentary access to kayaks, canoes, and standup paddleboards at nearby Kennebunkport Marina. Then watch the sun set or the nightly bonfires while enjoying small bites and fancy cocktails in the Marina Bar. *Rates start at \$329. 207-967-2511, www.yachtsmanlodge.com.*

THERE

HAWAII HOTEL GETS A COMPLETE MAKEOVER

Stay at the new Westin Hapuna Beach Resort, nestled in the bluffs above award-winning Hapuna Beach, and enjoy some of the largest guestrooms on Hawaii Island’s Kohala Coast, a serene setting with an adults-only pool, and new activities including the island’s only CrossFit studio and run con-

cierge. The hotel, formerly the Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel, debuts this month after a \$46 million complete transformation. The hotel’s focus on wellness and luxury extends from the nature-themed lobby to the 232 guestrooms and 17 suites. The new lobby features interactive check-in pods, and a vertical garden that highlights some of the island’s flora and fauna, and that creates a profoundly peaceful setting. New dining options include Meridia, a Mediterranean-inspired restaurant with a display kitchen and craft cocktails; Naupaka Beach Grill, a casual restaurant with local brews on tap;

’Ikena Landing, an open-air breakfast venue; and Piko Coffee+Bar, a barista bar with Kona Coffee and fresh to-go items. *Rates start at \$299 per night. 808-880-1111, www.hapunabeach-resort.com.*

REI CREATES LOW-KEY ADVENTURE TRIPS

REI has launched new soft adventure trips to locations worldwide, aimed at travelers who are inspired by tales of hardcore feats but seeking toned-down, less-strenuous adventures. Local guides have created these trips, which emphasize local history and culture, and blend off-the-beaten-path adventures with fascinating destinations. New trips include an 11-day trekking excursion through Japan’s UNESCO World Heritage sites and pilgrimage trails (follow pilgrimage and ancient trading routes, soak in onsens, meet a local miso maker, and stay in traditional guesthouses), a winter hiking adventure in the Great Smoky Mountains (explore historic farm sites, homesteads, and ghost towns; hike part of the Appalachian Trail; and stay in a rustic lodge), and a hiking and kayaking adventure in Southern California (see wildflower blooms and fossils in a desert park, paddle around sea caves at sunset, and hike coastal trails). *Prices range from \$1,599 to \$17,945, and include lodging, meals, local transportation, and activities. 800-622-2236, www.rei.com/adventures.*

EVERYWHERE

TRANSPORT ANY BIKE ON YOUR ADVENTURES

Forget swapping out bike racks to accommodate your mountain or road bike, or your kid’s 20-inch bomber. Thule’s versatile new UpRide roof rack does the job of multiple racks in one. It lets you transport bikes with traditional forks or thru-axles, and wheels ranging from 20 to 29 inches, without having to remove a front wheel. Thanks to the clever design, the carrier firmly grips the front wheel using two sturdy and easily adjustable arms. It secures the back wheel in place — in an adjustable tray — using a rubber ratcheting strap. Your bike frame remains completely untouched throughout. The UpRide works with tires up to 3 inches wide (or up to 5 inches with the Thule UpRide Fatbike Adapter, which is sold separately). It’s easy to install and works with aero and square Thule roof bars. *Buy Thule cylinder locks (sold separately) to lock your rack to your vehicle, and your bike to the rack. \$219.95 (rack); \$39.95 (two-pack of locks). 800-238-2388, www.thule.com.*

KARI BODNARCHUK

