



Simple things you can do to begin traveling your own green path

- 1) Recycle!** When you think of recycling, your county's program will come to mind first. Use it! Find out what you can recycle curbside and follow the guidelines for your area. And with all the other waste you have... get creative. Can you donate used kitchenware, clothing or books to a Goodwill or other charity? Not sure how to recycle something? Start at Earth911 (<http://www.earth911.com>) to learn how to recycle almost everything! If you don't have recycling at work, talk to your HR department about starting a company program.
- 2) Complete the circle: buy recycled, repurposed and used/vintage products.** While it's absolutely true that recycling is crucial, consumers need to support goods and wares made from recycled paper, glass, aluminum, etc. to continue the national programs. It may take a moment or two longer to sleuth out recycled printer paper, note-cards or envelopes, but they are available even in large chain stores. You can find handmade recycled glass cups, platters, pitchers and plates easily, too — even at chain stores across the country. And what's not to love about used or vintage? Save dollars — try going after used goods on Freecycle. (<http://www.freecycle.org/>)
- 3) Turn off lights when you aren't in the room.** This is a no-brainer, but folks still forget. Teach the habit to children. Bonus: You also save \$\$\$. While we're talking about lights, switch to CFL bulbs throughout your home. As your regular bulbs burn out, replace each one with CFLs. With the new daylight and tungsten balanced options, there's no reason not to. Bonus: You save money on your energy bill again! Be sure to dispose of CFLs correctly, too.
- 4) Get a less toxic clean.** As your household/kitchen cleaners and bathing products are used up, replace them with more natural, biodegradable alternatives. Most supermarkets carry these now, so there's no reason not to. Some easy to find brands include Seventh Generation, Method, Mrs. Meyer's, Sun & Earth, Simple Green. Bon Ami, biokleen, ECOS or Borax. You may find you prefer the more natural clean over time and try making your own cleansers from vinegar, water and baking soda. Talk about a great and simple way to save money, too!
- 5) Adjust your thermostats.** In the winter, turn down the heat to 68. In the summer, exist at 78 degrees. You really can do it. Again — you save money while saving the planet. If you own your own home, consider insulating your attic to cut down on energy costs. You can buy insulation made from recycled denim or foil — no more scary fiberglass. Have a hot water heater? Get an insulating blanket for it to snuggle in and save energy.
- 6) Shop locally as much as you can.** Keeping funds in the local economy is good for so many reasons. Obviously utilize farmer's markets, but also checkout nearby small businesses. Does someone local make handcrafted natural soaps? Try switching to their product. Can you get bread at a "main street" bakery? Trade up from the grocery store brands. You're keeping your dollars in your area, cutting down on carbon emissions from shipping cross country/cross globe, and supporting the dreams of a small business-owner. Everyone wins.
- 7) Give up the bottle.** The plastic bottle, that is. Our oceans are riddled with plastic. In fact, scientists from the National Aquarium (<http://www.aqua.org/conservation.html>) recently stated that as of 2012, not one cup-measure of ocean water in the world is free of plastic-particulates. Simply recycling plastics may not be enough to save our



oceans. Stop buying bottled water and teas. Get a water filter and a reusable aluminum bottle. Drink water from home; brew tea at home — and carry them in your chic new reusable bottle. While we're on the subject of plastics, get a few cloth bags and use them for all your shopping activities. No one truly needs plastic bags from stores — and ching ching — you'll save \$\$ again. Many stores give credits for bringing your own bags, and many coffee shops give credits for bringing your own reusable cup.

8) Share a ride. Carpool as much as you can. Or even better — walk, ride a bike or use public transportation. These options aren't always viable, but when they are, don't make excuses. Every single one of these modes of transport not only saves you money, it cuts down your carbon footprint. Wanna get really green? When you're looking at your next vehicle, consider a hybrid or electric car/SUV. They save gas, save money, save the planet and are terrific transportation. Bonus: many public parking garages offer first-level, front-row "green vehicle parking." You win again.

9) Ready to dig in? Try going meatless just one day a week. According to experts at the UN, the livestock industry creates a larger portion of damaging greenhouse gas than the transportation sector. But you can help by simply going meatless one day a week. It's easier than you may think and you don't have to be a dirty hippie to eat a plant-based meal. No patchouli is required. A gazillion web resources are available with recipes, menus, restaurants and more. Consider a Meatless Monday and save the world by have veggie tacos for dinner. (<http://www.meatlessmonday.com/>) The other six days a week, look for organic and/or locally grown food options for produce, dairy and meats. In the mood for seafood? Check out Seafood Watch for the most sustainable choices. (<http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx>)

10) Step up. Someone else isn't going to rescue the planet for us. Everyone will need to do their part and every choice, no matter how small, counts. The science is in. It has been in for decades. But action will have to come from individuals, not the government or huge corporations. They will follow us — because we support the government and corporations with our funds. Educate yourself and others, learn all you can. Flick your television to Planet Green or National Geo Channel. Read some eco-blogs, like Treehugger. (<http://www.treehugger.com/>) Start today. This is your moment to be hero.