



How to Be a Conscious Traveler

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45+ Ways to Travel Or Live Abroad Without Harming the Place You Love

A mindful expat is a welcome guest, not a disruptive force.

HOUSING & GENTRIFICATION

- ✓ Rent long-term (not short-term/Airbnb) in areas with less housing strain
- ✓ Avoid Airbnbs for personal stays—opt for local hotels, pensions, or family-owned guesthouses
- ✓ Don't use your USD advantage to outbid locals on property in tight markets
- ✓ Choose neighborhoods already popular with expats to avoid driving up prices in untouched areas
- ✓ Rent from local landlords, not international investors
- ✓ Avoid turning second homes into short-term vacation rentals
- ✓ Consider house-sitting or co-living for a lower-impact lifestyle

FOOD & ECONOMY

- ✓ Shop at local markets and family-owned tiendas instead of big-box chains
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- ✓ Eat at small, local-owned restaurants (not international chains or tourist traps)
- ✓ Learn seasonal produce and eat what locals eat
- ✓ Don't hoard specialty "foreign" items from local shops meant for immigrants
- ✓ Pay in cash when possible to support small businesses directly
- ✓ Tip generously (but not disruptively—follow local customs)
- ✓ Support local farmers and artisans when gifting or decorating your space





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CONSUMPTION & STYLE

- ✓ Thrift or shop second-hand for furniture and clothing
- ✓ Support local makers on Etsy, at artisan markets, or via regional cooperatives
- ✓ Resist shipping everything from Amazon (especially from abroad)
- ✓ Invest in fewer, higher-quality pieces sourced within Spain or the EU
- ✓ Avoid fast fashion hauls, especially if you're posting content about your "new expat wardrobe"
- ✓ If buying tech or appliances, buy used, rent, or repair before replacing
- ✓ Reduce packaging waste by bringing your own bags, jars, and containers

CULTURAL INTEGRATION

- ✓ Learn the language (even if slowly)
- ✓ Don't expect locals to speak English—appreciate when they do
- ✓ Celebrate Spanish holidays and traditions respectfully [LazyGirlTravel.com](https://www.lazygirltravel.com)
- ✓ Don't complain publicly about "how different things are" or romanticize "the simpler life"
- ✓ Get involved in community activities or events—be a participant, not a spectator
- ✓ Ask before photographing people, homes, or private spaces
- ✓ Don't over-explain Spanish culture online as if you're the expert
- ✓ Promote Spanish creators, guides, and businesses on your platform

DAILY LIFESTYLE & INFRASTRUCTURE

- ✓ Use public transport, walk, or bike when possible
- ✓ Avoid importing a car unless necessary—use local services instead
- ✓ Recycle correctly (and learn Spain's color-coded bins!)
- ✓ Choose energy-efficient housing or reduce AC/heating use
- ✓ Support clean-up efforts or local environmental orgs
- ✓ Conserve water—don't assume it's abundant in your area
- ✓ Use refill stores, bulk sections, and natural cleaning products



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EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL IMPACT

- ✓ Acknowledge your privilege without guilt or saviorism
- ✓ Be honest about the hard parts of expat life—don't oversell a fantasy
- ✓ Don't treat locals as "background color" for your life LazyGirlTravel.com
- ✓ Tip your cleaners, servers, and helpers well
- ✓ Don't post about how "cheap" everything is—especially wages
- ✓ Americans - Check your tone: are you celebrating Spain, or your own escape from the U.S.?
- ✓ Make friends with locals, not just other expats
- ✓ Uplift stories of locals on your platform instead of centering only yourself

DIGITAL RESPONSIBILITY

- ✓ Don't geotag fragile places or secret local spots
- ✓ Don't post romanticized poverty or "aesthetic" photos of struggling neighborhoods
- ✓ Ask permission before featuring people in your content
- ✓ Use your platform to educate gently, not preach
- ✓ Create content that invites respect, not extraction

OPTIONAL ADD-ONS FOR EXTRA INTEGRITY

1. Donate a % of any income made from Spain content to a local organization. (housing, culture, environment).
2. Offer free digital downloads to locals in Spanish (guides, photos, etc.).
3. Volunteer your English or business skills 1-2x/month.
4. Use your platform to amplify local voices or causes when appropriate.
5. Write/publish a Code of Ethics for your travel or expat brand (want help drafting it?).