

Travel

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'We took our pick from a stable of 40 glossy Lusitano horses and rode out across the fields'

Mary Lussiana explores a starry corner of Portugal

The 30 best eco escapes

Book ahead

Chris Haslam looks at the rise of green travel — and offers plenty of inspiration for that first escape

T TIMES Earth

When and where we take our summer holidays this year is still uncertain. But one thing's for sure: as the world emerges from the pandemic, travel is going to be significantly greener. In the past two decades cheap flights, ever-larger cruise ships and the siren call of Instagram accelerated the locust-like march of mass tourism, with little concern for the social and environmental costs. Covid-19 has applied the brakes to that, with the World Tourism Organisation calling for "recovery plans which contribute to sustainable development goals and the Paris Agreement".

In the very short term we'll indulge in sun, sand and sangria, but when the post-prohibition party is over the planet will still be getting warmer. To stop travelling isn't the answer. Tourism accounts for up to 10 per cent of global GDP. In many countries it contributes more than 50 per cent, and not only are millions of people dependent on the industry for their survival, but as the pandemic-driven hiatus has shown, so are habitats and species; once wildlife stops paying its way, the pastoralists and their cattle move in. Extracting tourism from this interdependent tower could bring societies and ecosystems crashing down.

The solution begins with the acceptance that leisure travel is a responsibility rather than a right. That two-night New York shopping spree or long weekend in Rio have become unconscionable.

The business of responsible travel is about balancing profit and the planet. It's not just about planting trees — although that helps. It involves examining every aspect of every trip to minimise the carbon cost while maximising the benefits to the environment and population in the places we visit. Imagine, then, a future in which every trip came with a sustainability rating, like a nutrition label on foodstuffs.

It's an idea that the holiday and accommodation providers listed here would welcome. It may mean pricier trips, but responsible travel is like buying tomatoes: organic, Fairtrade ones will be less uniform and more expensive, but they're better for the planet in the long run.



3 A cabin at Wild Nurture in the Highlands

1



Green Hill Farm in the New Forest

BRITISH ISLES

1 Getaway in the New Forest

You'll see the term "Certified B Corporation" popping up a lot over the next few years. It's a badge of honour for businesses committed to reconciling the triple-bottom-line principles of people, planet and profit. So far fewer than 4,000 companies worldwide and only 361 in the UK have passed the rigorous certification process — one of those is the holiday park operator Lovat. Its newest park is Green Hill Farm Holiday Village in the New Forest, a mix of lodges, camping pods and safari tents with wood-fired hot tubs. **Details** Seven nights' self-catering in a hot-tub safari tent from £1,909 for six, arriving July 23 (lovatparks.com)

“That two-night New York shopping spree has become unconscionable”

2 Off the beaten track on the Llyn peninsula

Overcrowding isn't exactly great for sustainable tourism so this summer we should spread the love — and spend our cash — in lesser-trodden locales. Wales's Llyn peninsula is one such place. Imagine Cornwall as it was in the 1950s: uncrowded and undeveloped with narrow lanes and wide beaches. Bert's Kitchen Garden — named after a camper van — is an eco-campsite on 13 acres five minutes from Trefor Beach, on the sunset side of the peninsula. There are 15 camping pitches, a converted American school bus called Otto and two fully equipped glamping tents.

Details Seven nights' self-catering in a glamping tent from £840 for four in August (bertskitchengarden.com)

3 Highland retreat

Climate-friendly, carbon-neutral eco-tourism is not incompatible with unashamed, self-indulgent luxury. Yes, you can have cold showers, compost lavatories and recycled sackcloth blankets if that's your thing, but equally you can have a designer log cabin powered by a micro-hydro plant with high-speed wi-fi and offering self-guided yoga, mindfulness and intimacy retreats in a sacred grove above the River Lochy. It's called Wild Nurture and the mountain at the end of the garden is Ben Nevis.

Details Seven days' self-catering for five from £2,980 in June (wildnurture.co.uk)

4 Back-to-basics Devon

If you want to know just how much the Devon Den owners, Jo Henderson ▶