

Sustainable lifestyle hacks



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Published in 2022 by the Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP) in the framework of the EU-funded SWITCH-Asia PERETO Kyrgyzstan project

Project website: pereto.kg

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Adopting sustainable lifestyles made easy

More and more people are getting active and want to live more sustainably to protect the environment. Do you also want to live sustainably?

Here we have lots of 'green' tips and practical examples on how you can lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

You don't have to be perfect — just start it today!

Climate change, air pollution, world hunger, and water scarcity are among the most pressing problems facing our world today. The root of the problems is that most of us, unfortunately, do not live sustainably. By consuming more resources than are available in the long term, we live at the expense of the environment and future generations. The way we buy, what we buy, how we travel, work or spend our free time – all determines the amount of our environmental footprint.

While policy makers and industry play a key role to enable sustainable choices of the individual, each person can also do his or her share to reduce lifestyle related emissions.

Sustainable lifestyles encourages people to minimise their use of the Earth's resources as to preserve the planet. Our lifestyle hacks (green tips) will help you reduce your environmental footprint. Have fun!

Do you know?

Through their consumption behaviour, households are responsible for 72 % of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, contributing to climate change (Dubois et al, 2019).

A change in our lifestyles and behaviour is key to reduce GHG emissions to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Our daily consumption patterns and lifestyles can make a big difference!

These icons categorise the tips based on their impact on:



Lifestyle



Travel



Energy



Mobility

TIP #1



Replace disposables

Wherever possible, replace disposable products with reusable ones (i.e., razors, batteries, ink cartridges, coffee filters, etc.)

What you can do!

Let's save money, reduce resource use and wastage!

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TIP #2



Go local, go organic

Eating local means buying ingredients that are grown close to where you live. It supports the local economy and is a great way to reduce your ‘food miles’, which means the food you eat requires less fuel to get to your plate. Opting for locally produced and organic food can help reduce GHG emissions. Let’s go local and organic!

Did you know? Organic farming excludes the use of agrochemicals and relies on natural methods. It reduces environmental pollution, helps to maintain soil fertility, and preserves biodiversity. No wonder, organic food tends to be high-quality!

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TIP #3



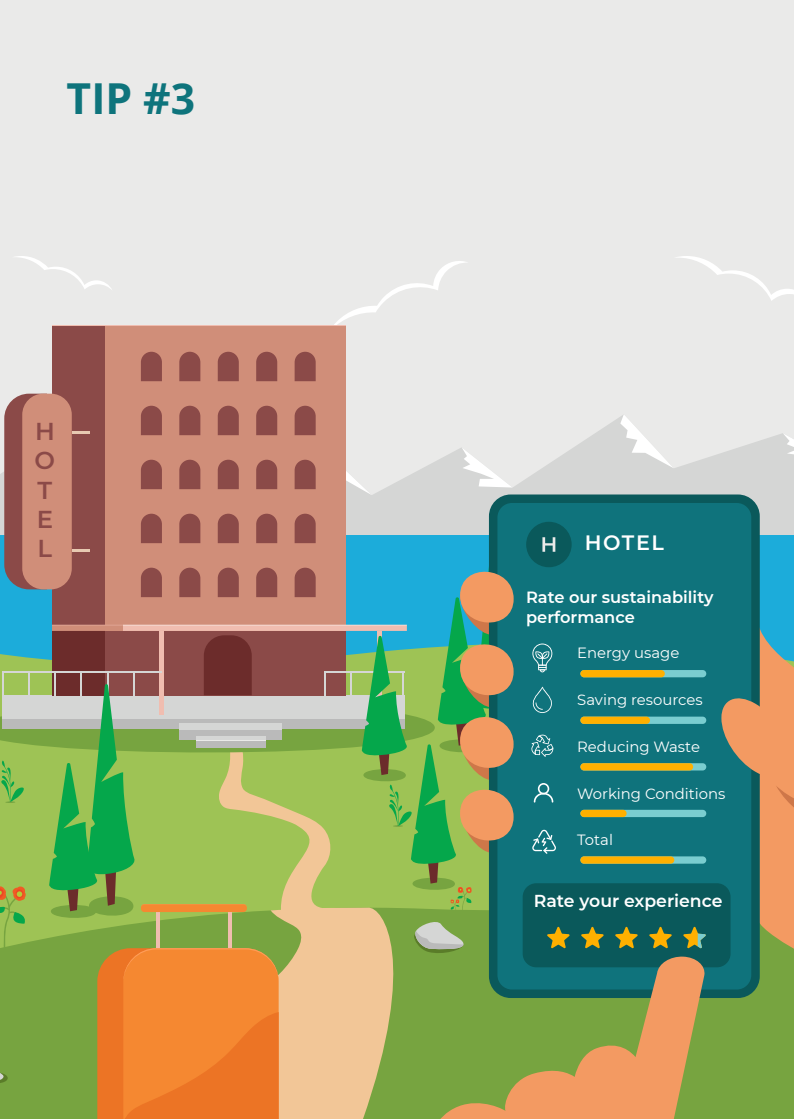
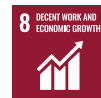
Encourage hotels to reduce waste

When traveling, let the hotel management know that you like to support businesses that have adopted environmentally and socially responsible practices.

What's the benefit?

Apart from reducing waste, it conveys you're a responsible consumer and there is demand for sustainability.

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TIP #4



Opt for sustainable accommodation

You can be sustainable when traveling by actively searching for green places to stay on various holiday platforms. Today there are many accommodations offering you options to preserve the environment or engage with local communities.

What's the benefit? Sustainable accommodation more often than not offer a more creative and personalised experience. While caring for Mother Nature you also save on money and resources.

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TIP #5



Smart washing

Air your not-so-dirty clothes on hanger with the window open to get rid of smells. Or, wash stains instead of washing the whole garment.

What's the benefit?

Reducing your washing frequency or opting for cold-water washing can save electricity, water and chemicals. This also will prolong the life of your favourite clothes!

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TIP #6



Fly less

Consider whether or how often you can do without air travel in order to live more sustainably. How about taking the train, biking or trekking in the mountains? If you have to fly, consider offsetting your carbon footprint.

Did you know?

More and more people are travelling by planes. In 2019 alone, 4.5 billion people were flying. This contributes to global GHG emissions greatly. When we fly, around 250 kg CO₂ equivalent per passenger per hour is generated (Carbon Independent).

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TIP #7



Educate yourself

Educate yourself about sustainability and sustainable living by reading books and blogs. Listen to Ted Talks, podcasts on topics such as sustainable consumption. In the process you can also connect with like-minded people around you through social media.

What you can do!

Slowly you can become an influencer and inspire others through your actions, creating a ripple effect.

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TIP #8



Calculate your carbon footprint

With an online carbon footprint calculator, you can determine your individual carbon footprint. The result shows you your biggest negative impact on the climate and gives you tips on how you can live sustainably and improve your carbon footprint.

What's the benefit?

A carbon footprint calculator helps to identify areas for improvement in your lifestyle or business in terms of energy and resource consumption such as food, energy and water.

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TIP #9



Offset your carbon emissions

When you have to travel by plane, you can consider offsetting your greenhouse gas emissions. Today there are a handful of websites offering this service. By paying the carbon offset fees, you support tree planting or other environmental protection projects in other parts of the world.

What's the benefit? Carbon offset projects help counteract the release of GHG emissions, whilst simultaneously improving the livelihood of people around the world.

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TIP #10



Go organic and fair

Sustainability includes social responsibility as well as environmental protection. Organic food is produced without or with minimal use of man-made chemicals and, thus, protects human health and biodiversity. Fairly produced foods such as coffee, juice, or chocolate help to ensure that more money ends up with the small producers.

What's the benefit? If you buy organic, you support the increase and protection of biodiversity and support environmentally friendly food production.

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TIP #11



Switch from red meat

A great way to make your meat consumption a little more sustainable without giving up your hearty dinners is to switch red meats for chicken, turkey or fish.

Did you know?

Eating meat adds 0.8 tonnes CO₂ to your annual carbon footprint. Beef requires a lot more feed, water and land than chicken, and therefore accounts for an additional 400 kg of carbon emission per year. Replacing your beef consumption could reduce your carbon footprint!

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TIP #12



Go vegetarian... once a week

Reducing meat once a week can be a good place to start. See how it feels, then see if you start to naturally gravitate towards more vegetable-rich options. You might eventually discover that you enjoy eating more veggies!

Did you know? Meats contribute more than 56 % of all greenhouse gas produced by food production. Animal industry requires a large amount of water, pollutes groundwater and requires land clearing for fodder cultivation.

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TIP #13



Cab sharing

The requirement of number of cabs or private vehicles will go down if commuters share cabs. When you go backpacking, you can consider sharing your Uber with other fellow backpackers who stay in the same accommodation.

What's the benefit? Not only this will reduce congestion, help save the environment by reducing CO₂ emission, you can also meet new people while going the distance! Caution: during a global pandemic like the COVID-19, hygiene and safety measures need to be considered carefully.

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TIP #14



Avoid microplastics

Microplastics are pieces of plastic that are smaller than 5 mm. They enter wastewater from a variety of sources. Use natural or homemade detergents, shampoos. When possible, choose clothing made from organic materials, such as cotton, silk, wool, hemp and other natural fibers.

Did you know? Dryers generate about 40 times more microfibers than washing machines, with a single household dryer releasing up to 120 million microfibers into the air every year. Microplastics pollute our environment and threaten the entire food chain, especially in the oceans.

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TIP #15



Smart gardening

Some plants such as Aloe vera, snake plants, spider plants act as nature's own air purifiers. They help you in keeping your house clear of air pollution.

What's the benefit? Carpets, paints and many cleaning supplies contain volatile organic compound (VOC). This can have negative health effects including allergies and other respiratory ailments. Opening windows and adding houseplants to your house is an effective and low cost way to improve indoor air quality.

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TIP #16



Switch to green power

You can improve your carbon footprint enormously by switching to renewable energy sources. You could, for example, install solar panels on your roof or backyard for your electricity.

Did you know? In 2019, 80 % of domestic energy production came from fossil fuels. Using renewable energy can help reduce the need for energy imports or fossil fuel use, thus reducing the greenhouse gas emissions.

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TIP #17



Smart ventilation

Cross ventilation of rooms, putting blinds on a hot day, and setting the thermostats at a consistent temperature are some sustainable techniques of heating and ventilating that can reduce the need to turn on air conditioners. This can reduce fossil fuel consumption.

What's the benefit? Clever heating and ventilation reduces your ecological footprint by reducing CO₂ emissions as well as decreasing your utility bill considerably.

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TIP #18



Reduce water wastage

Long showers, bath routines, faucet leaks are major contributors to high water consumption. Turning off the tap while brushing your teeth is an excellent place to start. Taking shorter shower is another easy and impactful sustainability hack.

Did you know? On average, leaving the water on while you brush wastes around 19 liters of water, and to put this into perspective, energy Star-rated dishwashers use only 15 liters of water per load.

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TIP #19



Reduce or eliminate food waste

Food waste is a big problem facing us today. Use a shopping list to buy what you really need. Check what you have in stock. Plan and cook for events to have minimal waste as possible.

Did you know? Roughly one-third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year – approximately 1.3 billion tonnes – gets lost or wasted. That contributes to 6 % of total global emissions!

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TIP #20



Compost your food scraps

Consider starting your own composting system at home to turn your food waste and garden scraps into nutrient-rich food for your plants, your local community garden, nearby farms, etc.

Did you know?

Composting can reduce the need to landfill waste or to use chemical fertilisers. Waste accounts for 3 % of the European Union's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2019.

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TIP #21



Upgrade to LED bulbs

Replacing your incandescent or CFL bulbs to LED makes a huge difference!

What's the benefit?

LEDs use 75 % less energy and last up to 25 times longer than their incandescent counterparts, a factor that won't just help you to be more environmentally friendly, but will also save you some money!

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #22



Grow your own herb garden

A spare sunny windowsill is enough space for an indoor herb garden! Apart from fresh herbs and saving money, you cut down on purchasing plastic wrapped herbs.

Did you know?

Growing your own herbs will help you avoid purchasing single-use plastics like packaging, and will save you some money. Easy and useful herbs to grow indoors include thyme, chives, catnip, mint, basil, chamomile, and many more.

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TIP #23



Avoid using air conditioners

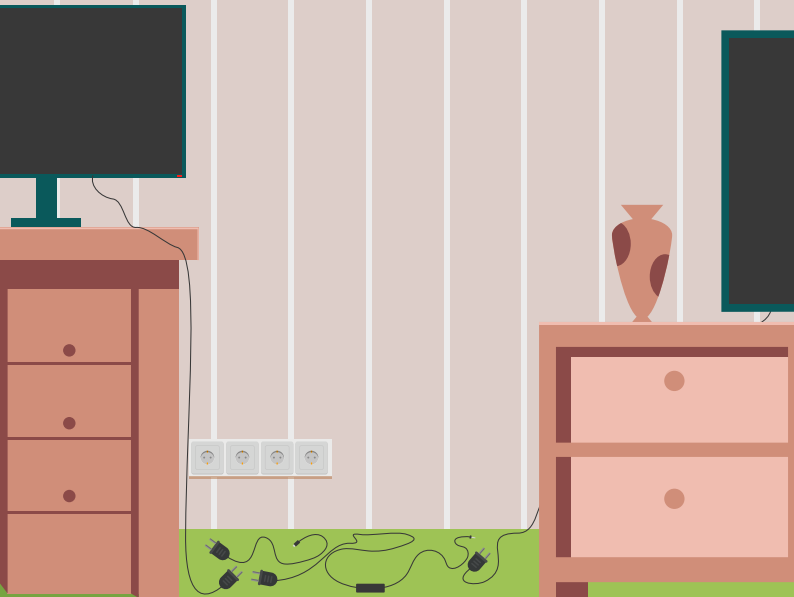
Before you switch on your AC this summer, try putting up thick curtains over every window in your home. They help to keep the sun's warm rays from heating your home, and help to prevent cool air from escaping.

Did you know? It shouldn't come as a surprise to learn that air conditioning uses a considerable amount of energy. Air conditioning uses about 13 % of all electricity worldwide, and produce 2 billion tonnes of CO₂ a year.

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TIP #24



Unplug small appliances

Even if you are not actively using items like printer, radio, TV or coffee machine, they are likely still draining electricity from your home.

Did you know?

This passive use of energy not only drives up your carbon footprint, but also impacts your electric bill! Roughly, you could save 10 % every month when you unplug appliances when not in use. So make it as much a habit as when you turn off the lights to conserve energy.

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TIP #25



Reuse your towel

Your towel can easily last for a week by hanging them to fully dry, before bacteria begin to cling to or grow on the soft surface. Keep this fact in mind next time you visit a hotel, too. Hang them neat in the bathrooms to avoid unnecessary replacements.

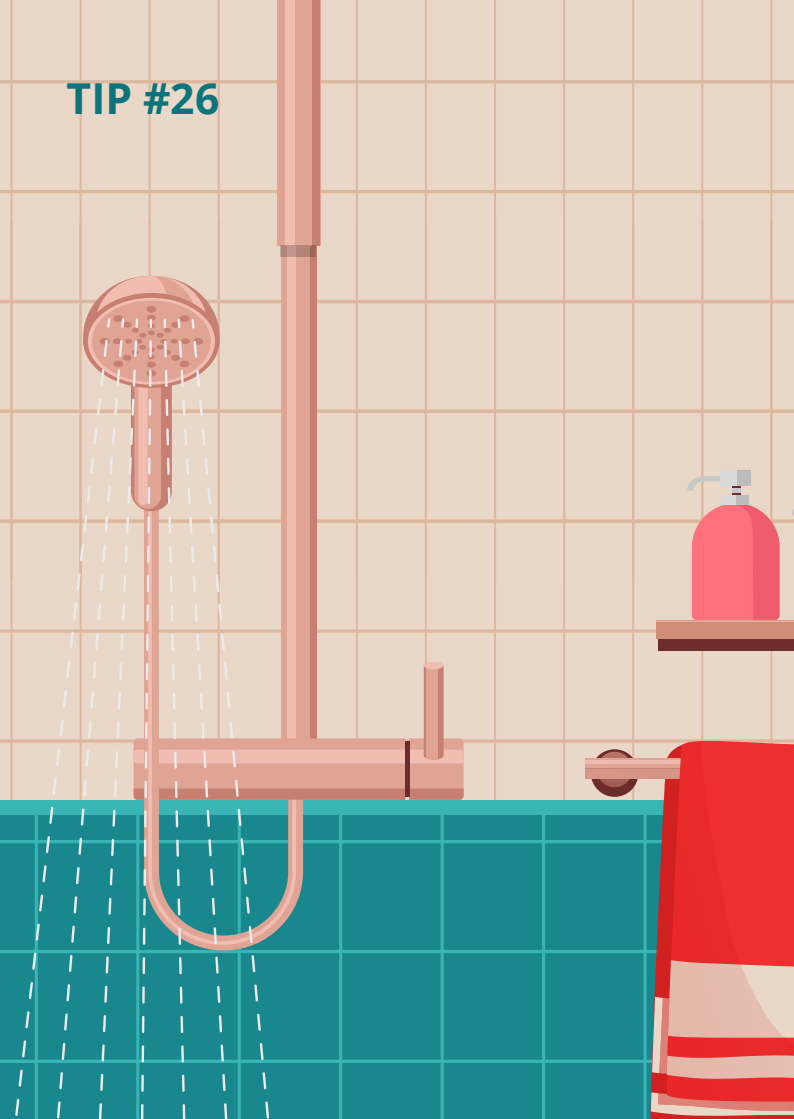
What's the benefit?

Washing your towels once a week or once every two weeks is perfectly safe and hygienic, and it will help you save on water and energy.

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TIP #26



Install a low-flow showerhead

While these savings may not seem super significant at first glance, they can be quite significant overtime especially for large households. Low-flow showerheads promote the use of less heat, thereby reducing the overall CO₂ emissions that your home produces.

Did you know? Standard showerheads dispense more than nine liters of water per minute while low-flow showerheads produce less than eight liters of water per minute.

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TIP #27



Be a change agent for sustainability

Support a local cause by taking an active role that promotes environmental protection and sustainability such as the SAKTA movement involving young people in Kyrgyzstan.

What's the benefit? By being part of such movements you can meet and collaborate with like-minded young people in your area. As a change agent you can make an enormous ripple effect that will transform your community!

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TIP #28



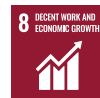
Respect local communities

When traveling, you can contribute to local communities by respecting their customs and values. You can take the opportunity to learn about their culture by, for example, taking a cooking class or finding an 'eat with locals' programme.

What you can do!

Get off the beaten paths of tourists sights and engage with local communities on eye level.

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TIP #29



Buy less

If you buy less, you help to reduce the mountains of waste in the form of clothes, electronic waste, food, plastic, or textiles. Buy sustainably only after assessing your stock based on your needs.

Did you know?

Did you know that fast fashion is responsible for around 10 % of total global carbon emissions? What's more, 57 % of all discarded clothing ends up in landfills!

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #30



Air dry your hair

Using a hairdryer requires electricity and utilises a significant amount of energy. Air drying requires zero electricity, and though it may take a little longer, it can create better results.

What's the benefit?

Apart from using no electricity, air drying allows your hair to dry in its natural shape and texture, and can help you improve overall shine and moisture.

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TIP #31



Invest in quality

You can really make a difference by saying no to fast-fashion. While it can be tempting to pick up dozens of pieces of clothing for little money, a far better use of your funds is to save up and purchase one or two high-quality items.

What's the benefit? High-quality items will last longer than fast-fashion options, eventually saving you money over time and reducing your carbon footprint. Do you know, it takes 10,000 litres of water to produce one kilogram of cotton or about 3,000 litres of water for one cotton shirt?

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TIP #32



Save and reuse glass jars

Although glass jars are recyclable, they also happen to be a super useful item to keep around your home. That is why you should make a habit of saving and reusing them! Glass jars that used to contain pickles, jams, etc., make excellent drinking cups, beautiful light fixtures, functional pen holders, and so on.

Did you know? Glass is 100 % recyclable. Glass recycling and the logistics around that takes up considerable amount of energy though, so to reuse glass is the best option.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #33



Waste sorting

Sorting waste can reduce the need for landfilling. Wherever possible sort your waste into plastic, paper, cans and food.

Did you know?

Landfilling causes leachate pollution that oozes out harmful substances that may then enter the environment. Further, through waste sorting and collection materials such as plastic bottles can be easily collected and recycled.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #34



Plan and pace your travel

Try to combine multiple errands in one trip instead of multiple trips throughout the week. Not only this will save time, but also energy. When on vacation, planning your travel will save money and stress as you can get a better offer on local transports.

Did you know? When at home, plan your week to map your travel routes and save on fuel, time and money. Pacing yourself and giving yourself time to live like a local in the country you're visiting is vital if you want a truly immersive, deeply moving travel experience.

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TIP #35



Opt for local modes of transportation

Walk or cycle wherever possible. Minibuses and salon cars providing a shared taxi service are found in bus stations in Kyrgyzstan's major cities and towns, as well as in village squares.

Did you know? Currently, cities are dominated by cars which cause air pollution, congestion, noise and traffic injuries. Space freed off cars can then be used for parks, affordable housing, wider bike lanes and footpaths and so on.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #36



Bring your own shopping bags

While shopping, if you only buy a few products skip the shopping bag. For larger purchases, bring your own eco-friendly basket, or reusable bags.

Did you know? It takes 1,000 years for a plastic bag to degrade in a landfill. Approximately only 1–3 % of plastic bags are recycled every year.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #37



Bring your own cutlery

In addition to carrying your own straw, or skipping the straw, you can choose to quit the cutlery, too – by bringing your own when planning to eat on the go.

Did you know?

Plastic forks, knives and spoons are ranked among the most harmful types of marine debris to marine wildlife. The year 2018 was the first time that plastic cutlery made the Top 10. Nearly 2 million plastic cutlery were collected in 2018 worldwide.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #38



Reduce plastic waste

Buy unpackaged items whenever possible. If you can't avoid it, dispose of plastic directly in the plastic sorting bins. Simple things like using a bamboo toothbrush, picking up litter when you can, requesting mugs in coffee shops go a long way.

Did you know? 79 % of plastic waste is sent to landfills or the ocean. Currently, 51 trillion microplastics litter our oceans which is 500 times the number of stars in our galaxy.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #39



Smart lighting

Simple things like turning off the lights when you leave a room or using natural light during the day can help reduce CO₂ emission. Also, home lighting automation can ensure that your lights are only switched on when necessary.

What's the benefit? Installing smart home devices can give you options, for instance, automatically limiting excessive energy use or energy monitoring. It can allow you to identify the appliances that consume the highest amounts of power, but also automatically switch off any unused devices.

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TIP #40



Agents of change

Youth are agents of change that can bring about transformation in their immediate community as well as in the society at large. They do so by influencing their families and relatives to adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

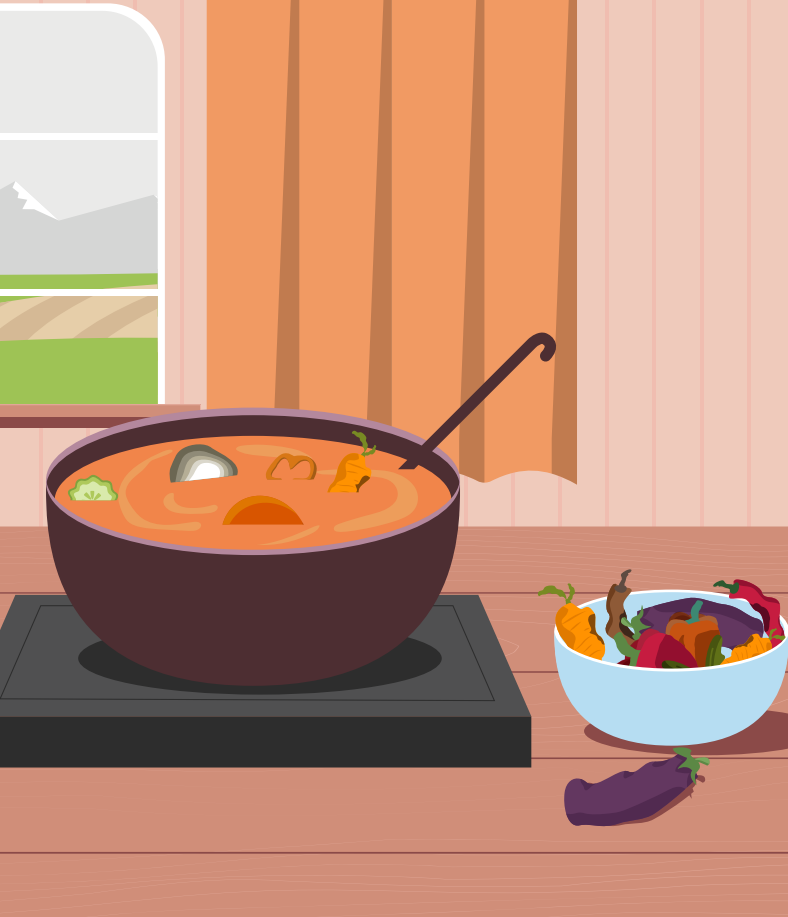
Did you know?

Youth are agents of social change contributing to making the world a better place. The youth are the next generation and have characteristics such as enthusiasm and vitality that can contribute to discovering new things and developing a better environment for all.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #41



Upcycling your food

Upcycled food is about reducing food waste, by creating high quality, nutritious food products out of the nutrients that otherwise would go wasted. You can make smoothies or veggie soups out of less-than-perfect fruits and vegetables.

Did you know?

Upcycling food is an ancient tradition based on the philosophy of using all of what you have. It's about doing more with less, and elevating all food to its highest and best use. Globally, we lose around \$1 trillion per year on food that is wasted or lost.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #42



Grow biodiversity at home

If you have a garden, allow a small area to grow 'wild', or leave a patch of fallen leaves. Insects, birds and small mammals will benefit from the cover and native plants.

Did you know? Nature is declining globally at an unprecedented rate in human history. The average abundance of native species in most major land-based habitats has fallen by at least 20 %, mostly since 1900. More than 40 % of amphibian species, almost 33 % of reef-forming corals and more than a third of all marine mammals are threatened.

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TIP #43



KEEN – keep it native

Try and include more native plant species, particularly those that attract bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects to your garden. If you don't have a garden, do you have space for a window box, or hanging basket?

What you can do! An increase in suburban development has led to an extensive clearing of native vegetation, resulting in a loss of habitat for wildlife living in those areas. The good news is that you can help shift this pattern! If you own a property, you have the chance to create a sanctuary for wildlife.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #44

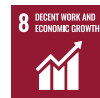


Protect the places you visit

You can make a positive impact on your holiday destination by leaving it in a better condition than how you found it. Get actively involved in cleaning beaches and forests for example. All you need to do is always bring a bag with you and take a few minutes when you are out for a walk to pick up the rubbish you find along the way.

Did you know? With its three main components, regenerative tourism promotes local economic growth, social and cultural development, and environmental sustainability.

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TIP #45



Try regenerative tourism

Get to know the locals. Try to avoid sticking to very touristic areas, you will learn far more about the destination and its culture if you interact with the communities who know it best. Hiring local guides and buying locally-made gifts and souvenirs will also help support the local community and the receiving destination.

Did you know? Regenerative tourism transforms lives, offers restorative and immersive experiences that give back to our planet and empowers people at the same time.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



TIP #46



DIY upcycled products

Upcycling means you turn unwanted items into a valuable material or product. A lot of do-it-yourself ideas are available online which you can try at home. Rather than throwing away old stuff, you can turn it into something beautiful and useful!

Did you know? Upcycling minimises waste that is sent to landfills each year and reduces CO₂ emissions. It also reduces the need for producing new or extracting raw materials, decreasing the amount of air and water pollution.

Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals:



What you can do right now!

If you are keen to include more sustainability into your everyday life, here are three suggestions on how to go about it and how you could even help others to live more sustainably to protect the environment. Remember: You don't have to be perfect — just start it today and have fun!

1. Pick 5 tips you want to try.

You can go step by step. Start with the first tip today and when you feel comfortable with it and have integrated it into your everyday life, try the next one!

2. Share it on Social Media!

Share this guidebook on social media. This way more people can read the tips and join in getting more sustainable. If you like you can let people know what your favourite tip is. Maybe others want to start right away with this one!

3. Engage two friends!

Things are often easier and more fun if you do it together. Tell two friends about the tips and encourage them to try some out. This way you can even exchange on how you go.



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