

washingtonpost.com

Advertisement

LUXURY TRAVEL
AUCTIONS
AND DEALS

Win a Trip!

SEARCH FOR TRIPS

Choose Destination

June, 2007

GO



Browse All Beach Offers



[Browse All City Offers](#)



[Browse All Country Offers](#)

[Click Here To
VIEW ALL OFFERS!](#)



LUXURY LINK

How to Find a Hotel That's Truly Fit for The

Eco-Friendly

Sunday, June 10, 2007; P06

Travelers seeking a hotel that leaves a minimal carbon imprint often end up in a place that falls short of their expectations. Sometimes the green credentials turn out to be little more than a ficus plant in the lobby. Or worse, "green" means that the showers are cold, the toilets are a long walk away and the place is lit by flashlights.

The problem is that in the United States, "we don't have one single source that clearly defines what is or is not a green hotel," said Glenn Hasek, editor and publisher of Green Lodging News, an independent e-mail newsletter that covers the eco-hotel industry. Unlike in Canada, Costa Rica and some other countries, no single U.S. agency or organization verifies the credentials of eco-lodging. Nor are there many guidebooks or comprehensive directories devoted to the subject.

Still, Hasek and other green hotel specialists have identified several

criteria that eco-minded hotel shoppers should look for:

- A towel and linens reuse program.
- A 100 percent nonsmoking policy.
- A recycling program for guests.
- The use of compact fluorescent lights instead of incandescent bulbs.
- The use of nontoxic cleaning products by housekeepers.

Additionally, some hotels compost their food waste and use the results as fertilizer. Some are equipped with sophisticated technology, including devices that power down heating and cooling when guests are not in the room.

Beyond the environmental features inside the property, green accommodations should sponsor outreach efforts to educate guests and the surrounding community in sound sustainable living, according to

Karen Lewis, co-owner of Lapa Rios, an award-winning mountain resort in Costa Rica. The hotel also manages the 1,000-acre nature preserve that surrounds it.

Ronald Sanabria, director of sustainable tourism for the nonprofit Rainforest Alliance, suggests that travelers ask hotel managers what they are doing to contribute to conservation and to help the surrounding community practice sustainability.

Sanabria also suggests that travelers find out whether the property's green credentials have been certified by a third party. A number of independent, national and state organizations certify eco-hotels, including the Washington-based Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), an architectural and building organization.

Costa Rica, Sweden, Australia and Canada are among the countries with active, high-profile certification programs. In the United States, California, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Florida, Michigan, Maine and

Vermont all certify green hotels at the state level. The Green Seal and Energy Star programs administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency allow U.S. hotels to self-certify their eco-practices.

Internet Resources

All the sites listed below provide links for booking properties.

- *Green Globe 21* (<http://www.greenglobe21.com>), an Australia-based organization, vets hotels and eco-lodges in more than 70 countries and provides benchmarking and certification at different levels. It gives detailed background about the properties.
- *Ecoclub* (<http://www.ecoclub.com>), based in Greece, links to the Web sites of eco-lodges, hotels and resorts in more than 80 countries. It also offers useful eco-travel news and advice.
- *Eco-Tropicalresorts* (<http://www.eco-tropicalresorts.com>) lists hotels in the United States and throughout the tropics. Properties represent a range of environmental commitments.

- *Responsibletravel* (<http://www.responsibletravel.com>), started with funding from Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop, recommends resorts and hotels -- including some funky start-ups not listed elsewhere -- in several dozen countries.
- *Eco Tourism Society* (<http://www.ecotourism.com>) provides links to well-established eco-resorts as well as lesser-known green lodging options in more than 50 countries. Travelers seeking a basic grounding in eco-principles should check out the Web site of this Washington-based organization.
- *Best Green Hotels* (<http://www.bestgreenhotels.com>), which includes links to properties in more than 80 countries, is a good place to start a search. But many of the hotels listed are described so broadly that further research is sometimes needed to help define their eco-practices.
- *Sustainable Travel International* (<http://www.sustainabletravelinternational.org>), based in Colorado, is one of the most reliable sources to search. Includes several hundred

accommodations worldwide.

- *Rainforest Alliance* (<http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/tourism>) lists a few exemplary properties in Central America and the Caribbean.

- *Green Hotels Association* (<http://www.greenhotels.com>) lists 350 properties, including hotels, lodges and B&Bs throughout the United States and in a dozen foreign countries. Some of the hotels listed have only modest environmental programs.

- *Environmentally Friendly Hotels* (<http://www.environmentallyfriendlyhotels.com>) contains links to more than 2,300 hotels worldwide, mostly in the United States and the tropics. The mix of environmental practices among properties ranges widely.

-- *G.L.*

[View all comments](#) that have been posted about this article.

Post a Comment

Ad

Join the discussion. Sponsored by Cisco. 
welcome to the human network. **CISCO.**

[View all comments](#) that have been posted about this article.

Your washingtonpost.com User ID, WashingtonPost, will be displayed with your comment.

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Log in](#) | [Register](#)

Comments that include profanity or personal attacks or other inappropriate comments or material will be removed from the site. Additionally, entries that are unsigned or contain "signatures" by someone other than the actual author will be removed. Finally, we will take steps to block users who violate any of our posting standards, terms of use or privacy

policies or any other policies governing this site. Please review the [full rules](#) governing commentaries and discussions. You are fully responsible for the content that you post.

© 2007 The Washington Post Company

Ads by Google

[Ecotravel Brazil](#)

Brazil wildlife, the waterlands, Amazon rainforest Deals!
www.fredson.com

[Eco Friendly Servers](#)

Intel® Xeon® Based Rackable Systems Servers. Download Free Whitepaper!
www.Rackable.com/Green

[Sustainable Building](#)

Home Performance with Energy Star Improve Health, Comfort, Efficiency
www.sustainablespaces.com