



## p-TIPS

## Eco-hols (Green and productive tourism)

Experts agree that holidays are necessary for a focused, healthy, productive workforce. Although the greenest holidays are those spent at home, avoiding the use of resources and energy, people who “travel sensitively” often make the best global citizens, according to *The Armchair Environmentalist* (MQ Publications, 2004) author Karen Christensen. Countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region are developing ecotourism destinations, green resorts, and nature-friendly leisure activities. For those considering a holiday, Christensen suggests the following to minimize the environmental negatives of tourism while maximizing the socioeconomic benefits for both travelers and hosts.

- 1) Choose a destination in which you and your family are truly interested. Don't just “do the sights” because everybody else has been there.
- 2) Travel to learn. Engage fully with a place and its people, history, natural surroundings, and culture. Master at least a few polite phrases of the local language and read a good guidebook before arrival.
- 3) Eat local. Sample local specialties, try independent (not franchised) small restaurants off the beaten tourist track, and shop in markets for fruit and snacks.
- 4) Stay in green hotels. Search the Internet for places to stay which have a green policy and features.
- 5) Try to make a connection with local people. This can be done through colleagues, associations, hobby groups, etc. and can make a big difference to your stay.
- 6) Conserve resources. When you leave your room, turn off lights and air-conditioning. Don't touch those little shampoo bottles at the hotel; they use too much packaging. Most hotels offer guests options on laundering linens and towels daily, and it isn't usually necessary to do so.
- 7) Try a home exchange. You'll save money and have a richer experience.
- 8) Explore new options. For a real change of routine, stay on an organic farm and help with planting or harvesting, volunteer with a group building housing for the disadvantaged, or offer expertise to an aid organization or school.
- 9) Buy appropriate souvenirs, dealing directly with craftspersons. Things that find daily use will be appreciated the most by those at home.