



GREEN GLOBETROTTING

HILTON'S TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE STRATEGIES
ENCOURAGE ALL OF ITS PROPERTIES, INCLUDING
LA QUINTA RESORT & CLUB, TO UP THEIR ECO-GAME.

BY JUNE ALLAN CORRIGAN



La Quinta Resort & Club has embraced Hilton's Travel With Purpose campaign by incorporating eco-friendly touches throughout the property, from water-conservation lawn and gardening techniques to sourcing local, pesticide-free produce for on-site restaurants.

IF THE IDEA of traveling with “purpose” conjures up images of grueling business trips or obligatory journeys to family gatherings, it’s time to view it in a different light. At Hilton properties, including La Quinta Resort & Club, traveling with purpose represents commitment to a far greater cause. Travel, of course, satisfies our endless curiosity about the world and connects global communities, but it also takes a toll on the environment. Travel With Purpose is Hilton’s lauded corporate responsibility campaign to lead the way in sustainable travel and tourism practices. At La Quinta Resort & Club, efforts to reduce the property’s ecological footprint take the form of several green initiatives.

As the resort inhabits a unique desert environment, it comes as no surprise that several of its eco-friendly enterprises incorporate water-conservation techniques. For instance, a composting machine converts all leftover food into mulch, and filtered water runoff from the machine is then carefully repurposed for irrigation and golf cart battery replenishment.

Smart landscaping is the norm throughout the property; some grass regions have been converted to artificial turf, while water-conserving drip irrigation now services flower beds and other plantings once watered by pop-up sprinklers. Meanwhile, an on-site water feature has been re-tiled and waterproofed to prevent water loss. “All these things might sound small,” says Daniella Foster, senior director of Global Corporate Responsibility at Hilton, “but in terms of water stewardship best practices, these are the kinds of things that really move the dial.”

Energy reduction is another area of focus. La Quinta Resort & Club has strategically replaced stand-alone thermostats in guest rooms with network thermostats, a smart-room feature that enables management to control room temperatures remotely, which positively impacts energy reduction efforts. Studies show that when guests stay at hotel properties, they are not in their rooms 70 percent of the time. During those periods, as well as in between guests, the ability to raise and lower room temperature within a four-degree range offers tremendous potential for energy efficiency.



A truly smart thermostat includes a thermal sensor component that can sense whether someone is in a room or not.

Carbon- and waste-reducing policies reach into every corner of the resort, from the spa (where many treatments incorporate the Zents skincare and body care line made from all natural ingredients) to the golf courses and even in the rooms themselves. Naturally, recycling is standard practice, whether it is a compactor dedicated to preparing cardboard for reuse or the recycling of old fluorescent lightbulbs, batteries, motors, AC units, and anything containing copper or metal. Even soap gets recycled. Hilton has implemented the hospitality industry’s largest soap recycling program with global health organization Clean the World. The partnership essentially results in the upcycling of discarded soap bars that are sterilized and repressed into new bars for communities in need. As part of that effort, Hilton is proud to have distributed more than 6 million bars of recycled soap to 38 countries, significantly impacting communities troubled by hygiene-related illnesses.

Though Hilton launched Travel With Purpose in 2012, the desire to have a positive impact on the communities surrounding its hotel properties has long driven the hospitality giant. Since 2008, the company has reduced carbon emissions and waste by 30 percent and energy and water consumption by 20 percent. Hilton has been able to track its environmentally conscious efforts through LightStay, an award-winning performance measurement system it put in place to calculate, analyze, and report such data. “LightStay is an online platform and a

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brand standard for every single Hilton property no matter where it is in the world to track and monitor their energy usage, their water, and their waste,” Foster says. “I always say what gets tracked and measured gets prioritized and managed.”

In May 2018, Hilton pledged to reduce its ecological footprint by half and to double its social impact investment by 2030. In taking measures to do so via its Travel with Purpose campaign, the hotelier aligns itself with the United Nations’ 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and vision for the world. Research shows that corporate responsibility strategies like Travel With Purpose matter to consumers. “Issue areas like energy, water, and waste matter,” Foster says. “Things like promoting inclusive growth and unlocking opportunities for local entrepreneurs through local sourcing matter. Plugging in young people to careers and hospitality and providing them with pathways into the industry — these are all things that Hilton is focused on as part of our 2030 global goals.”

Hilton celebrates its centennial anniversary this year, and the future is on its mind. “We’ve pioneered the industry for 100 years,” she adds. “We want to pioneer it for the next hundred, and a key factor of that is sustainability. Focusing on sustainability is essential for travel and tourism to really flourish.” ❖

HOW TO BE A MORE ECO-FRIENDLY TRAVELER



When we book a vacation, one of the last things on our mind is how our trip will affect the environment — we’re preoccupied with all the little pre-trip necessities, like what to pack, who will water the houseplants, and what time to arrive at the airport to bother with going green while exploring the globe. According to the UN’s World Travel Organization, the travel and tourism sectors account for approximately 5 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions, yet they contribute billions of dollars to the global economy and are essential for cultural preservation and appreciation. So how can we, as individuals, do our part to keep the planet happy while fulfilling our wanderlust?



PACK LIGHTLY. Less weight in the airplane cargo can reduce carbon dioxide emission.



WALK OR BIKE. La Quinta Resort & Club is located within walking distance of the charming Old Town village, brimming with restaurants and specialty shops, as well as spectacular mountain trails and walking paths.



RENT a hybrid car.



TURN OFF all lights when leaving your guest room or casita.



DINE at restaurants that source ingredients from local, organic purveyors, resulting in less packaging and processing and pesticide-free food.



CARRY your own water bottle. (We love La Quinta Resort’s special-edition Swell.)