

COSMOPOLITAN

11 **Actually** Sustainable (and Chic!) Hotels to Book for Your Next Trip

By Annie Daly | Aug 15, 2023



If you are a person who a) lives on this Earth, b) likes to travel, and c) is not a monster, you probably care about sustainable travel a lot. But, unfortunately, like many things in the eco-friendly space, green travel is not immune to greenwashing (when a company is misleading about how environmentally sound they are). Tons of hotels these days sell themselves as sustainable hotspots, and it can be hard to tell which ones are genuinely following through on their promises and which ones are just, ya know, hopping on the eco bandwagon for the profit of it all (ugh).

But don't worry—I've got you! To help you understand what actually makes a hotel sustainable, and thus be a ~smart booker~ of green spots, I checked in with two sustainable travel pros: Alix Collins, the director of communications at the Center for Responsible Travel (CREST), a non-profit dedicated to sustainable hospitality, and Jonathon Day, PhD, a professor of sustainable tourism at Purdue University. Their TL;DR summary? Truly sustainable hotels do way more than just swap out single-use plastics (though, yeah, that's important, too). On an even bigger scale, legit eco-friendly hotels also do their best to care for the entire environment around their properties—an area experts refer to as the “tourism ecosystem.”

“In addition to reducing their carbon footprint, actually sustainable hotels protect and promote the surrounding community’s local culture and economic well-being,” explains Collins. In fact, many tourism experts have begun to refer to this more expansive approach to sustainable travel as regenerative travel, because its whole mission is not just to do no harm, but to help do good, too— aka leave a destination better than it was when you arrived.

Of course, it’s one thing to know what makes a hotel green, but it’s a whole other skill to actually find the ones that make the cut. Start by scoping a hotel’s website, blog, or social platforms, Collins suggests—and be sure to look for initiatives that go beyond carbon footprint reduction. “While sustainable hospitality is definitely a journey for many hotel companies, you’ll ideally find a hotel’s commitment to the well-being of the community around them, which may include but isn’t limited to: localizing their supply chain, hiring local staff and paying them fair wages, honoring the sense of place, and creating meaningful partnerships with individuals, organizations, and businesses in the area,” she continues.

If you're not in the mood to sleuth around a million hotel websites, you can also check out some other platforms that do the curating and info-gathering for

you. Booking.com, for example, recently launched a sustainability badge. Or, you can scroll through KindTraveler, Responsible Travel, and Tablet Hotels for more vetted options, suggests Collins. CREST also has a list of green hotels and impact tourism programs that put sustainability front and center. But the best option? You can just scroll down and check out this Cosmo-approved list of sustainable hotels, below. Good news: they're all super chic—so you can go green and still live that luxe travel life, too.

Le Barthélemy Hotel & Spa

 **Grand Cul de Sac, St. Barts**

As one of the most popular and chic spots in the Caribbean, [Le Barthélemy Hotel and Spa](#)—a gorgeous 44-suite beachfront boutique hotel on the French Caribbean island of St. Barts—is also doing it right when it comes to sustainability. The property's breezy, open-air layout was designed to reduce energy consumption by using natural light and solar energy, and the architects used all-organic and low-impact materials (think local stone and wood) to build it.

The biggest eco highlight, though, is Le Barthélemy's reef restoration program, where they work year-round with the ETA (Environmental Territorial Agency) to support conservation. This year, they expanded on their partnership with Coral Restoration St. Barth to offer guided scuba and snorkeling dives, so guests can help improve the surrounding coral reef while enjoying its beauty. Related: The brand only uses organic fertilizers to protect the surrounding land, and all staff members are trained on environmental protection. It's a oui from me!