



ETHICAL TRAVELER

The World's Ten Best Ethical Destinations 2025

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“One of the most constructive things we can do in our flickering moment of life is to embrace the chance to leave our comfort zones—those dangerous lairs where we learn to languish—and seek out the unfamiliar.”

— Paige McClanahan, *The New Tourist*

Note: As we prepare to release this report, the President of the United States and the world's richest man have shut down USAID, a US government agency created in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy. USAID serves the world's most at-risk populations through sustainable development in areas of health, environment, and humanitarian assistance - all in the name of the American people. With no warning, no consultation, and no planning, the work of USAID was suddenly halted. This action will increase both human suffering and environmental crises, thus creating instability, particularly in developing countries.

We at Ethical Traveler believe that engaged travel can be a powerful antidote to discrimination, prejudice, and hate—and that there is great value for both the traveler and those visited when the traveler is mindful of prevailing political forces. In this sense, travel is also a form of political action. We urge all Americans to protest the shuttering of USAID, and to travel mindfully in [the nearly 180 countries](#) that will be impacted by this reckless action.

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Since the launch of the first smartphone in the summer of 2007, the world has become ever more interconnected. Essential information is now available to everyone from Wall Street traders to fishermen in the Ganges River Delta. Destinations once remote and isolated now have access to world-class medical help and weather prediction, and the voice of our loved ones is only a WhatsApp call away.

These technologies, on the other hand, have also made travel's sense of discovery more elusive. Places that once challenged the most determined nomads can today be visited without guesswork; Trip Advisor offers pre-arrival reservations for five hotels in Timbuktu. More than a tool for sharing, posting on social media has become the point of many people's travel

experiences, directing them to precise spots for the best Instagram-able self-portraits at places like Angkor Watt and Machu Picchu.

Yet, as all enterprising travelers know, there is still plenty of “out there” out there—and our 2025 Ethical Destinations report points in that direction. For people with an adventurous spirit, this year’s winning countries are great alternatives to the over-loved canals of Europe and beaches of Southeast Asia. Not only are they gorgeous and uncrowded, their national leadership has demonstrated a sincere commitment to practices that protect the environment and benefit Indigenous populations.

It's true that the two years since our last report have seen sobering changes in our planet’s health. Large storms, wildfires, and extreme drought are more common; tragic conflicts, advanced by an ageing and desperate patriarchy, have caused untold suffering in places such as Ukraine and Russia, Gaza and Israel, Congo, Burma, Sudan, and Syria. And no one can predict what direction the current U.S. administration will take us.

One might reasonably ask: “Is it safe, or even a good idea, to travel in such a world?” We at Ethical Traveler believe it is. While one should of course avoid places in the midst of crisis, we passionately believe that travel—as Mark Twain succinctly put it—is “fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness.” Travel is more than a personal voyage of discovery; it is a necessary part of the path to mutual understanding, inter-cultural respect, and world peace.

Yet as we do so, let’s remember what the Covid pandemic taught us. As international and domestic travel ground to a halt, millions of people around the world—especially those who relied on the travel economy—had no safety net. Their livelihoods were diminished or destroyed.

This realization inspired a rethinking of how we might better interact with the places we visit. Trends in this direction have included “sustainable” and “regenerative” and, most recently, “experiential” travel. Though some of this is little more than branding, it’s true that we must cultivate new models of travel models that give local people a secure footing and ensure they can be self-supporting during global emergencies. As Paige McClanahan points out in her excellent book *The New Tourist*, we discover the world by engaging with people and places outside of our comfort zones. The challenge is to do this in a way that honors the common bond and basic needs that all people share.

Supporting these values has been Ethical Traveler’s mission since our founding in 2003. We hope our 2025 “Best Ethical Destinations” report, along with our role in global forums on travel, will help drive this process. In the pages that follow, we recommend the 10 most beautiful, welcoming, environmentally aware, and socially progressive ports of call in the developing world. A place on our respected list is both a gift to the winning countries and an incentive for them—and their neighbors—to continue, and improve upon, their good work.

By visiting these nations we can play an active role in redefining travel, and harness our economic power to enhance the lives of people around the world.

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We at Ethical Traveler believe that travel can be thrilling, inspiring, and transformational. But travel/tourism is also one of the world’s most powerful economic engines, and can drive the way countries treat their citizens, Indigenous people, oceans, wildlife, waterways, and forests. Travel is in fact the world’s largest industry—about 10% of the world’s people now depend on travel-related jobs for their livelihoods. This figure is expected to grow in the coming years, as the developing world’s middle class grows and begins to travel internationally.

What this means is that travelers, as a community, have a potentially enormous influence. Where we put our footprints, and our dollars, has ripples that reach far beyond our personal experience. By “voting with our wings”—i.e., choosing our destinations well and cultivating our roles as citizen diplomats—we can change the world for the better.

Every year, Ethical Traveler reviews the policies and practices of the nearly 150 nations in the developing world. After months of team research, we select the 10 that have the best records in terms of promoting human rights, preserving the environment, and supporting social welfare—all while creating a robust, community-based tourism economy. By visiting the countries on this list, we can use our economic leverage to reward good works and support best practices.

We urge you to explore these destinations and enjoy the wonderful sights, scenic and cultural, they have to offer.

Though we are diligent in creating this list, we must continually remind ourselves: Everything is relative. No country is “perfect.” All have genuine and often serious shortcomings. Each of our winners, however, is making a genuine effort to “do the right thing” in the areas we take into consideration. If they appear on the list *more* than one year in a row, it means they are actively improving on their already excellent work. We sincerely hope that inclusion on this list will motivate the people and leaders of these nations to keep up their admirable work.

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The Winners

Ethical Traveler congratulates the countries on our 2025 list of **The World’s Ten Best Ethical Destinations**. The winners, in alphabetical order (**not** in order of merit), are:

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|---------------------|-----------------|
| Barbados * | Dominica |
| Botswana * | Fiji |
| Cabo Verde * | Palau * |
| Chile * | Panama |
| Costa Rica * | Uruguay |

Runner-Up: Tuvalu

** Appeared on our 2023 list*

How the List Is Created

In the summer of each year, Ethical Traveler surveys the world’s developing nations—from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. We begin our research by focusing on four general categories: environmental protection, social welfare, human rights, and animal welfare.

For each category, we look at information past and present to understand not only the current state of a country, but how it has changed over time. This process helps us select nations that are actively improving the state of their people, government, and environment. Our goal is to encourage behaviors that help create a safer and more sustainable world. The winners are those that have shown greatest improvement over the past year. While some of these countries still have a long way to go, we believe they are going in the right direction.

In this first phase of our process, we consider country scores from a variety of databases related to our three categories. Our information is supplied by sources like Freedom House, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Reporters Without Borders, UNICEF, the World Bank, and LGBTQIA+ resources. After identifying about 25 “short list” performers, we turn to detailed case study research. This focuses on actions these governments have taken over the past year to improve (or, in some cases, weaken) progressive policies and practices in their countries. We use many strategies to finalize our list—including engagement with civic leaders, discussions with travelers, and reviews of local media.

But for a country to make our list, it must excel in more than metrics. Each Ethical Destination also offers natural beauty, great outdoor activities, and the opportunity to interact with local people and cultures in a meaningful, mutually enriching way.

Please note that this report is not a full explanation of our methodology, but an overview of how we conduct our research. An appendix listing our sources is available upon request.

Following are brief reports on each winning country.

Barbados

Famed for its white sand beaches, brilliant turquoise bays, and lush landscapes, Barbados is a Caribbean dream for snorkeling, surfing, spelunking, and hiking. The island also features serene botanic gardens, a wildlife reserve, and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Bridgetown.

Freedom House classifies Barbados as “Free,” noting it as “a democracy that regularly holds competitive elections and upholds civil liberties.” Since 2018, Mia Mottley has served as Prime Minister, Barbados’ first female leader since its 1966 independence.

As a country profoundly vulnerable to climate change, Barbados launched the Roof to Reefs program, an ambitious effort ranging from reinforcing homes and critical infrastructure to protecting coastal and marine ecosystems. The debt crisis for meeting these goals prompted the Bridgetown Initiative, a groundbreaking financing policy proposal calling for debt relief, new lending, and private investments. As noted by the United Nations, this initiative put Barbados and Prime Minister Mottley at the forefront of the push for climate justice for small island developing states.

The Barbados government launched a National Action Plan to end plastic pollution—a landmark step in the country’s journey towards sustainable environmental management—while also boosting onshore wind generation capacity with the support of the IFC. The Blue Bonds for Ocean Conservation project supports the nation’s commitment to ocean protection.

In December 2022, Barbados took a strong step towards LGBTIQ+ rights when its High Court decriminalized same-sex relations. Gay marriage is still not recognized, but progress is evident with this landmark ruling.

However, Barbados faces a serious issue re: animal rights, with abuse escalating to “alarming levels.” According to the Animal Rescue Site animal neglect is rampant, and enforcement of existing laws “is notably weak.” Homelessness and mental health challenges also call for Barbados to develop fresh strategies to tackle these issues, which are exacerbated by the continuing breakdown of family and community structures.

Botswana

Botswana is among the best safari destinations in Africa. The Okavango Delta is one of the world’s last great wildernesses, teeming with astoundingly prolific wildlife—including lions, hippos, elephants, and leopards. The mysterious beauty and immensity of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in the Kalahari desert—the largest unbroken stretch of sand on the planet—is awe-inspiring.

Botswana has for some time been one of the most stable democracies in Africa and has consistently received the “Free” status in Freedom House’s annual report. Yet until 2024, the country was ruled by a single party. In November 2024, peaceful and fair elections were held, and an opposition alliance won. The transfer of power is going smoothly, and the peaceful change of government is seen as an example for the entire region. The union-friendly and socialist-oriented Union for Democratic Change (UDC) has promised to focus on social justice and economic diversification and to relaunch a constitutional reform process to establish a modern and inclusive constitution. In addition, President Boko belongs to the Xhosa minority, and thus may improve the integration of ethnic minorities in Botswana.

There is also progress to report on the environmental front. Botswana has started to implement several solar, wind, and battery IPP projects, a shift away from a fossil fuel-dominated electricity

grid. It has also been on the forefront of sustainable tourism in the region, focusing on ecotourism and empowering locals to make a living on their native lands by easing the process of granting tourism licenses to the country's citizens.

Botswana has continued to improve its anti-poaching structure, using new technology—including drones and artificial intelligence—to help monitor wildlife, and soldiers are conducting round-the-clock foot patrols around sensitive wildlife areas. One controversial issue, however, is the continued trophy hunting of elephants. Botswana's government claims that elephant numbers have exploded and that hunting helps keep the population in check. In addition, the income from hunting licenses helps fund its conservation efforts. Botswana has previously tried transferring elephants to neighboring countries, but the problem persists.

Cabo Verde

A stunning ten-island archipelago, Cabo Verde features a remarkably diverse topography that includes craggy volcanic peaks, arid salt flats, green valleys, seaside villages, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Cabo Verde is one of Africa's strongest democracies, with a tradition of civilian rule and promotion of good governance, as well as relatively low corruption and high transparency. International IDEA notes that its "sustained high level of democratic performance has defied global trends among countries with similar economic and social situations for decades." In 2023, the Millennium Challenge Corporation selected Cabo Verde "in recognition of the country's clear commitment to democratic governance."

Press freedom is guaranteed by the constitution, and Reporters Without Borders notes that the country stands out as "a favorable working environment for journalists."

In 2023, Cabo Verde launched its first blue bond at the Ocean Summit, which will raise investment in its rising ocean economy. Additionally, President José Neves accepted an invitation from UNESCO to join the Ocean Decade Alliance. The government also approved the Strategy for a Sustainable Future Seas and joined the WTO's Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, which aims to further ocean sustainability. Despite conservation efforts, overfishing and illegal fishing remain problematic, as do pollution and plastic waste.

Cabo Verde is one of the friendliest LGBTIQ+ African countries, with no obstacles to political representation. Additionally, women have full and equal political rights and are increasingly involved in politics, although social constraints have somewhat impaired their participation.

The country has embarked on an ambitious goal to eradicate poverty by 2026 through a program designed to address root causes and empower communities. Healthwise, the WHO and other organizations have praised Cabo Verde for becoming a malaria-free country.

On a somber note, Cabo Verde is a country of origin for children subjected to sex trafficking and domestic labor, and a destination for women forced into prostitution—although the government has implemented measures to identify and protect victims. The country is also viewed as an easy trans-shipment point for heroin destined for North Africa and the European markets.

Chile

From the driest desert in the world to the eternal ice and inverted waterfalls of its glacial fields, Chile is a land of dramatic contrasts. It offers some of the most pristine and diverse natural landscapes on our planet.

Chile has emerged as a global standard in key environmental areas such as energy transition, green investment, and sustainable tourism. Climate Action Tracker even rated Chile’s climate targets and actions as “almost sufficient” (just one step away from the highest rating of meeting the Paris Agreement goals). Chile is one of the few countries to achieve this rating, thanks to its faster-than-anticipated expansion of energy renewables and a plan to phase out coal.

Environmental challenges remain, however. Chile is facing a severe and deepening water crisis, which is being addressed by moving towards more sustainable and equitable water resource management. Treated wastewater, for example, is becoming a growing source of irrigation in Chile’s arid North.

Animal rights in Chile also saw an important positive development, with Chile officially banning cosmetics testing on animals, as well as the manufacturing, importing, and marketing of cosmetics tested on animals.

Chile is the third least corrupt country of Latin America, and it continues to work towards more transparency and integrity, launching a new program in the public sector to strengthen the legal framework and establish more robust institutional mechanisms. In September 2024, the Economic and Environmental Crimes Law came into force. It promises to impose stricter penalties on corporate wrongdoing and broadens the obligations of companies to prevent and respond to unlawful activities.

Societal discrimination against the Indigenous Mapuche and unrest linked to land disputes continued, but there were some positive developments. In 2023, President Boric created an expert commission to work on land rights solutions and reparations for Mapuche communities. The commission is expected to issue a report very soon and lay the foundations for a medium- and long-term solution to the land claims. Police brutality during mass protests has also been a long-term concern, but the indictment of three senior police commanders for their role in the repressive response to a 2019 mass protest is a milestone on the road to truth and justice.

Costa Rica

With its white sand beaches, misty volcanic peaks, tropical rainforests, and rich pre-Colombian and colonial history, Costa Rica offers travelers a range of attractions.

Costa Rica has a long history of democratic stability and has been a global leader in environmental progress and sustainability. As the first tropical country to reverse deforestation, the country boasts nearly 60% of forest cover and a quarter of its territory legally protected. The National Decarbonization Plan aims for carbon neutrality by 2050.

Fishing for hammerhead sharks is now illegal, and dedicated sanctuaries serve as vital habitats. Protection for sea turtles has led to a prohibition on selling eggs, meat, and related by-products, while efforts to track the illegal trade of eggs have been successful through satellite tags, and an egg decoy creation known as “The InvestEggator.” Additionally, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights upheld a ban on cockfighting, which the Humane Society called a great victory for animal protection. Following the closing of two zoos, the Ministry of Environment transferred nearly 300 animals to a refuge, underscoring Costa Rica’s goal of preserving wildlife in their natural habitats.

In some regards, however, Costa Rica has slipped from its former high status. Fishing of some other threatened shark species continues, and in December 2023, the Costa Rican congress voted against extending the Sharks Are Wildlife bill. Environmental groups have charged the government with promoting harmful projects including trawling, hydrocarbon exploitation, open-pit mining, and marina construction along the coasts. Over-tourism and the increase in cruise ship arrivals also threaten the country’s place in the green industry.

Another serious issue facing Costa Rica is the increased challenge to freedom of the press. The country fell three ranks in Reporters Without Borders, and President Rodrigo Chaves has verbally attacked journalists, particularly those who have spoken out against him.

Indigenous people continue to face discrimination, particularly regarding land rights and access to basic services including health care and education. The UN has called on Costa Rica to take immediate action for the as-yet unpunished 2020 murder of Indigenous rights leader Jerhy Rivera. A surge in violent crime is also a problem, as is corruption: The country reached its lowest ever score in Transparency International.

Real progress in many areas, including strong environmental policies and eco-tourism advances, qualify Costa Rica for this list. Our recommendation, however, is tinged with caution. If they wish to remain an Ethical Destination, Costa Rica’s leadership must address the challenges to freedom of the press, Indigenous rights, and wider shark protection.

Dominica

Compared with other islands in the region Dominica remains unspoiled, featuring clear blue waters and lush mountain ranges. With a deep sense of value for its unique identity, the country is striving to protect local communities and habitats by instilling an ethos of responsible tourism.

Dominica made it to our 2020 Ethical Destinations list because of this focus on sustainability, but with the caveat that it should urgently cancel its arcane “anti-buggery” laws. Dominica finally decriminalized same-sex conduct in 2024, ruling their longstanding “anti-buggery” laws unconstitutional. The Caribbean island nation also scores well in Freedom House’s annual Freedom in the World report, obtaining an impressive 93/100 for political and civil rights in 2024. Since 2023, Dominica has been governed by its first woman and first Indigenous president, Sylvanie Burton.

Dominica has also continued its pro-environmental efforts, rolling out a number of programs to further its goal to become the world’s first “climate resilient nation.” It strongly encourages investment in sustainable tourism—in particular eco-lodges, guesthouses, and sustainable resorts—that cater to green-minded visitors. Concerning animal rights, Dominica recently made conservation history with the world’s first sperm whale reserve, a “Vulnerable” species according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The sperm whale’s diet promotes plankton blooms, which capture carbon dioxide and drag it to the ocean floor when the plankton die. Dominica’s sperm whales can sequester as much carbon as 18,000 acres of forests, contributing significantly to climate resilience.

Fiji

From lush rainforests to rugged mountains, secluded beaches and colorful coral reefs, Fiji’s natural beauty has something for both the adventure-seekers and those wanting to simply relax in nature. But Fiji is not only a nature destination: Its vibrant, welcoming culture and rich history are also strong assets of the largest country of the Pacific Islands Region.

With its groundbreaking Climate Change Act—a binding piece of legislation with clear and long-term climate change measures and policies—Fiji aims to safeguard the future of its people, ecosystems, and biodiversity. Forward-looking Fiji was only the seventh country in the world to pass climate legislation inclusive of a net-zero emissions goal.

With the launch of a new National Sustainable Framework for its tourism industry, Fiji continues to focus on sustainable, resilient, and inclusive tourism. The Framework aims to guide the sector towards a prosperous visitor economy while ensuring the protection of Fiji’s diverse environment and cultures. One of these measures is an accreditation program for Fiji’s tourism industry focusing on the performance of local tourism businesses in ten key areas, including water, waste, and energy usage.

While there is much work to be done regarding civil and political rights, Fiji continues to move in the right direction. There was a peaceful transfer of power following the 2022 elections, ending 16 years of military-led governments. Important progress was made with the abolishment of the Media Industry Development Act, which had allowed press censorship, and of the requirement for married women to change the name on their birth certificates before voting, which had been suppressing their votes.

Notably, Fiji has developed a robust system to respond to the arrival of asylum seekers, and the community has seen the value of welcoming refugees into the tight-knit fabric of its society. The UNHCR, in fact, is using Fiji's system as a good example of what can be achieved through effective collaboration with national authorities and community stakeholders.

Palau

Palau has long been a gem for its gleaming beaches, spectacular diving and snorkeling, and spectrum of rare sea creatures, birds, flora and fauna. It has been a leading advocate for sustainable tourism as well as marine life and ocean preservation. Helen Reef, one of Earth's most remote and biologically diverse reefs, is one of 39 sites in Palau's Protected Areas Network, and the Palau National Marine Sanctuary is one of the world's largest protected seascapes.

Freedom House ranks Palau as "free," with the U.S. State Department describing the government as "stable, and not prone to political violence." The constitution provides for freedom of expression and the press, and Palau claimed the top spot in the 2023 Media Freedom Index, placing it first among 14 Pacific Island countries surveyed.

In 2024, Palau's House of Delegates passed an amendment ensuring the continuation of energy subsidy programs, ensuring financial relief to residents facing rising utility costs. Additionally, a new law designed to enhance support and services for persons with disabilities was enacted.

Homosexuality is legal in Palau, and while same-sex marriage is banned, no laws restrict the discussion or promotion of LGBTIQ+ topics. Additionally, an increase in female candidates for the 2024 elections signaled a shift towards greater gender representation.

Palau faces a growing threat from the misuse of social and digital technology, and in 2024 its national legislature passed a law aimed at curbing the unauthorized distribution of sensitive or intimate images, addressing both criminal and civil penalties.

Corruption continues to be a problem, although several high-ranking officials have been convicted in recent years. Lawmakers continue to deliberate on strategies to deal with this problem more effectively.

Palau faces aggressive military activities by China, along with what Palau’s president describes as Beijing’s attempt to “weaponize” tourism against Palau. The island’s strategic geopolitical location and value make it vulnerable to competition for control.

Panama

Panama’s lush rainforests and palm-fringed islands, along with a rich history of Indigenous cultures, African heritage, and Spanish influences, translates to a wide variety of experiences for both the adventure-seekers and those who want to slow down.

Panama is classified as “Free” by Freedom House thanks to its democratic political institutions, competitive elections, and orderly rotations of power. In addition, freedoms of expression and association are generally respected. Unfortunately, corruption and impunity are still serious challenges—even though in 2023, former President Ricardo Martinelli was convicted of money laundering. Similarly, while discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people is still an issue, the country’s ombudsman did create the National Observatory of Human Rights of the LGBTIQ+ Population to monitor issues facing LGBTIQ+ people.

Panama made it to this year’s Top 10 thanks to its impressive environmental achievements and its focus on sustainable tourism. This includes a new law granting nature “the right to exist, persist and regenerate its life cycles,” meaning that the impact of laws and policies on the natural world must be considered. This law also specifically protects sea turtles, prohibiting all commerce in sea turtles, parts, and eggs, as well as irresponsible tourism that may disrupt their habitats.

Ocean Conservancy considers Panama “a global leader in ocean conservation” as one of the first countries to not only meet the United Nations 30x30 goal to protect 30% of land and oceans by 2030, but exceeding it by expanding the Banco Volcán marine protected area.

Panama’s new Sustainable Tourism Development Master Plan prioritizes people and nature—for instance, supporting rural and Indigenous communities through projects focused on environmental conservation and community empowerment. Through responsible tourism, communities can showcase their culture and way of life while generating an income.

Uruguay

Tucked between Brazil and Argentina, Uruguay is known for its verdant interior, windswept dunes, and thriving artistic culture. Wildlife excursions, quiet fishing villages, colonial architecture and thermal springs are among the array of experiences awaiting visitors.

With a Freedom House ranking of 96/100, Uruguay has a historically strong democratic structure and a positive record of upholding political rights and civil liberties. Its government integrity score is above the world average, and the country is considered Latin America’s least corrupt.

Uruguay continues its leadership in environmental progress. Generating 98% of its electricity from renewable sources, its rapid expansion of sustainable energy sources has been lauded as a model for transitioning from fossil fuels, and its embrace of wind turbines as a source of cheap, reliable power, provides 40% of the country's capacity.

In LGBTQIA+ rights, IGLTA considers Uruguay one of the most progressive countries in the world. It is lauded as one of the safest places for such travelers to visit and live. Additionally, the government cooperated with the UN and humanitarian organizations in aiding refugees or asylum seekers and established a special residency program for migrants.

For these and other reasons, Uruguay returns again to our list, but this time with two caveats:

First, violence against women remains a serious concern. According to the U.S. Department of State as well as EEAS and the Ministry of the Interior, the last two years recorded a significantly higher rate in femicide than in preceding years. While Uruguay does have laws against gender-based violence, the government failed to fully implement them or allocate funds to adjudicate cases.

Also of serious concern is the increase of threats to media freedom and access to public information. Uruguay saw a dramatic drop in ranking of Reporters Without Borders from 44th in 2022 to 52nd in 2023, and the number of attacks against journalists doubled in the past year. In October, however, Uruguay's Supreme Court announced it would support the formation of a Roundtable for the Safety of Journalists in the country.

Runner-Up: Tuvalu

Tuvalu is a collection of exquisite islands and atolls formed of coral reefs and volcanic rock. As one of the world's least visited destinations, it is nearing a "now or never" point due to rising sea levels. The island and its people, as Reuters reported, "are running out of time." Recognizing this reality, Tuvalu is putting its history online so that it will exist virtually.

As part of its advocacy for climate change, Tuvalu's government in 2024 completed a large solar farm, marking a critical step towards the goal of 100% renewable energy by 2030. Tuvalu is also exploring wind energy opportunities, and has installed a cutting-edge system of 184 floating solar panels. Long-term development policies emphasize the role of tourism in jobs and income. Unfortunately, illegal fishing remains a problem for both the economy and ocean biodiversity.

Same-sex relations between men are illegal and gay marriage is banned, although these laws, evidently, have not been recently enforced. Tuvalu does remain behind in women's rights and in antidiscrimination laws for both women and LGBTIQ+ people. But in September 2023, the Parliament approved a Bill of Rights that guarantees freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex. Additionally, Tuvalu has no legislation on human trafficking, nor is any of the national budget allocated towards protection of victims.

Nonetheless Tuvalu has much to recommend it, and we include it as a “runner up” in hopes that an increase in visitors will help give this threatened nation the capacity to better safeguard itself from the ravages of climate change.

Afterword: Flying and Climate Change

We understand that travel, particularly by air, has an environmental cost. As with so many industrial endeavors on our increasingly harried planet, flying has become a cost/benefit equation. And though air travel (according to a 2019 article in *The New York Times*) “accounts for about 2.5 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions ... a far smaller share than emissions from passenger cars or power plants,” its carbon footprint may soar by 2050, as demand outstrips advances in efficiency.

The *Times* also reported that “a small group of frequent fliers, 12% of Americans who make more than six round trips by air a year, are responsible for two-thirds of ... aviation emissions.” As the US accounts for one-quarter of all flight emissions, this figure is substantial.

It is certainly true that much business travel can and should be conducted remotely. But occasional air travel to increase one’s understanding of the world, and connect directly with other cultures, remains vital—if not essential. So while we do encourage travelers to take trains, ferries, and buses whenever possible, we reject the idea of “flight shame” for those who wish to experience first-hand the beauty and variety of our shared world.

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We hope you will support our work, and we invite you to listen to the archived Ethical Traveler Podcast: <https://ethicaltraveler.org/ethical-traveler-podcast>

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