## Tourism -Cares

Beyond Green:
The Travel Industry and Meaningful Travel

## What We'll Cover Today:

- Tourism Cares in a nutshell
- Defining Meaningful Travel
- The Business Case Trends, Myths, Opportunities
- Tourism Cares Tools and a Call to Action

# Uniting Travel for Good.

Tourism Cares unites the travel industry and is a **catalyst** for positive social, environmental, and economic impact for the people and places of travel.



#### WHAT WE DO



Immersive Events + Volunteering



Professional Development + Training



Meaningful Buyer + Supplier Connections



**Cross-sector Networking** 



Grants to Non-profits + Social Enterprises



**Sustainability Education** 

### **MEANINGFUL TRAVEL**

Ensures direct benefits for host communities, protects cultural and environmental assets, and connects guests with destinations in a deeper, more responsible way.

#### Infuse through:

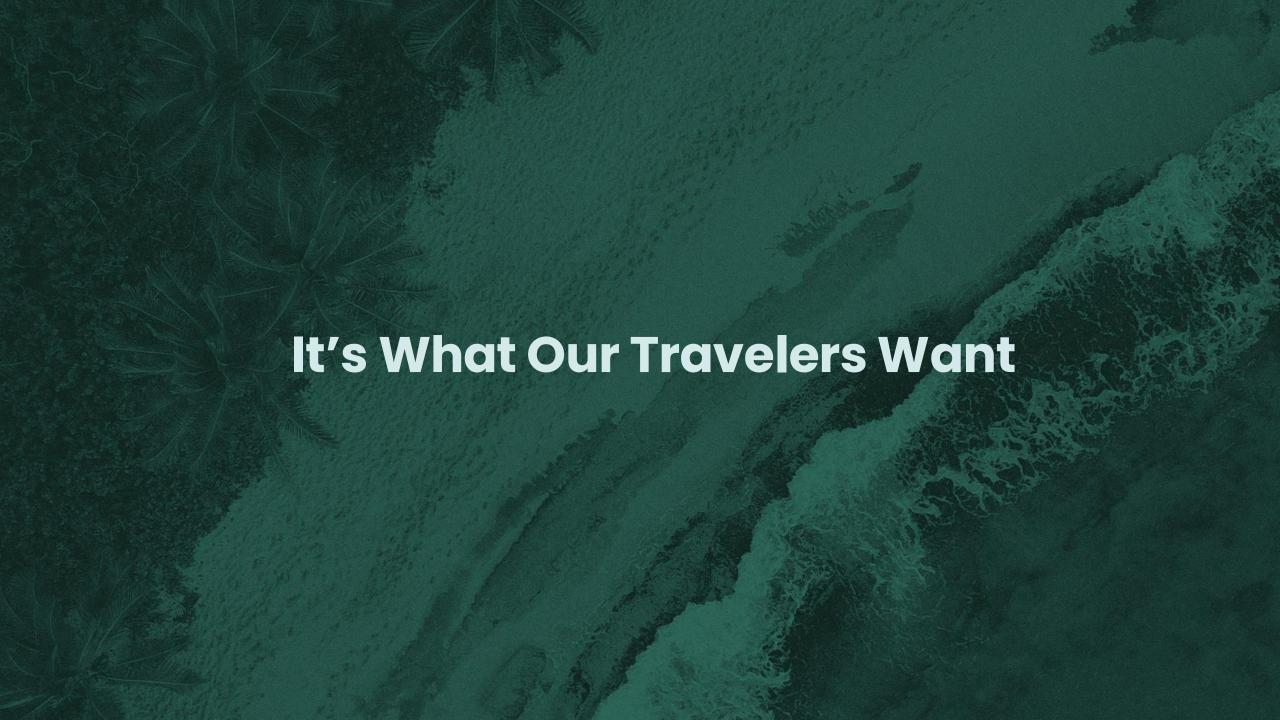
- Food
- Adventure
- Culture

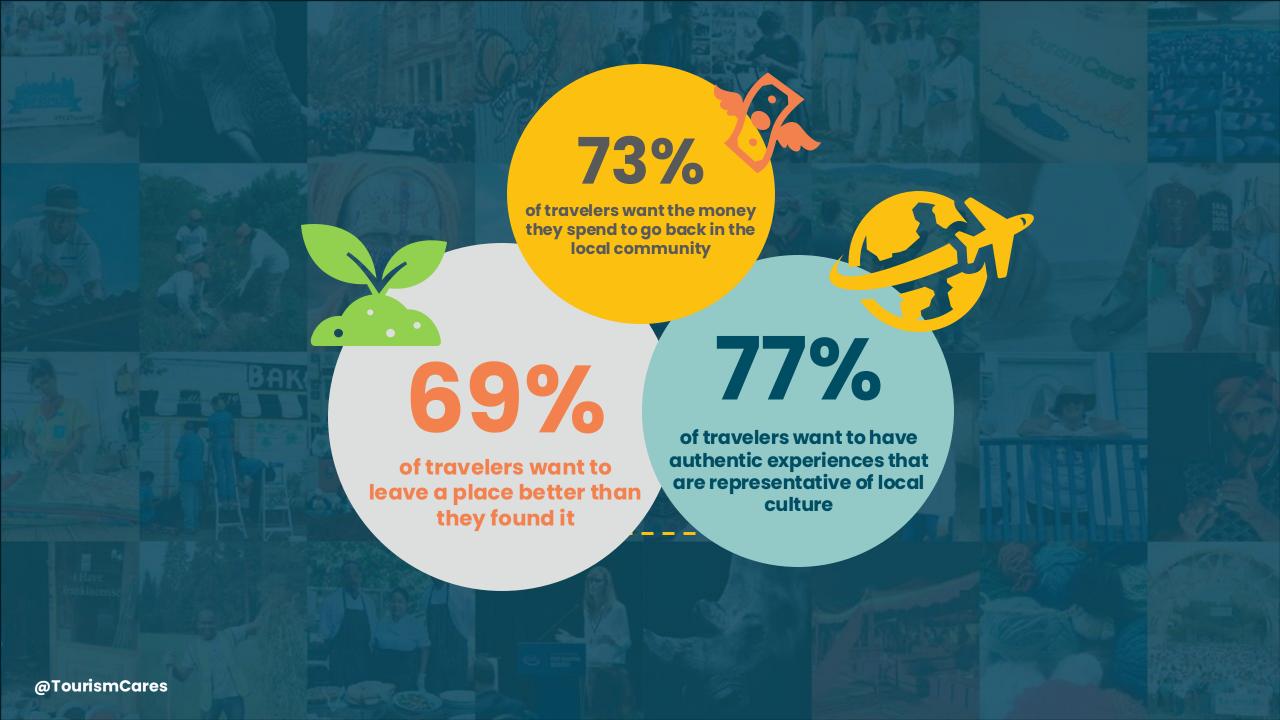
- Shopping
- Transportation
- Accommodations















## Community-Led Travel:

- Demand for authentic, culturally rich travel is rising
- Supports social enterprises, Indigenous communities, and local guides
- Builds stronger, more equitable destination economies



## **Climate Conscious Travel:**

- Carbon footprint tracking & offsets
- Slow travel, electric transport, low-emissions choices
- Tour operators creating Climate Action Plans



- Travelers want proof of positive impact
- Rise of certifications, third-party reporting, transparency
- Honest storytelling builds trust



## Inclusion and Equity:

- Uplifting diverse voices, operators, and access
- DEI in tourism products and marketing
- Accessible and socially conscious design





## Sustainable options are ALWAYS more expensive.

Reality: Sustainable choices can be low-cost or cost-saving

#### **Examples:**

- Eating local
- Walking or using public transport
- Staying longer in fewer places



Responsible practices can be low-cost, high-impact

#### **Examples:**

- Cultural training for staff
- Removing single-use plastics
- Partnering with local communities

## Only Adventure Travelers Care About Sustainability.

Travelers across all segments—luxury, cultural, culinary, wellness—value sustainability

Today's traveler wants:

- Transparency
- Local connection
- Purpose-driven experiences

## Sustainability Doesn't Fit My Business Model.

Every business can find a sustainability entry point

Examples by sector:

- Urban hotel → reduce energy, source local
- Tour operator → support community-led experiences
- Transportation → offset emissions, improve logistics

Small steps = big impact over time

## The Say-Do Gap

#### Why Travelers Struggle to Follow Through



## Travelers Want Sustainability, But Cost and Convenience Still Dominate

Even though sustainability is important to travelers, when it comes time to book:

- Cost remains the #1 factor in travel decision-making.
- Convenience is critical—people book what's easy and familiar.
- Perceived extra effort (e.g., researching sustainable choices) can push travelers toward traditional options.

Sustainable choices need to be affordable, easy, and seamlessly integrated into the experience. NOT an add-on.

## Closing the Say-Do Gap



- Make meaningful travel the easiest or default choice
- Highlight the travel experience
- Use real time impact metrics
- Educate without overloading
- Don't make sustainability an opt-in

### How We Can Integrate Meaningful Travel

### Start simple



- Partner with a local business or nonprofit
- Make one small sustainability shift
- Add an interactive experience

## Reposition Your Marketing & Messaging

#### Emphasize the experience, weave in impact



- How will the experience enrich the tour, enhance the stay, deepen understanding of place, be memorable?
- Don't market sustainability as the selling point if you don't have the right audience
- When you talk about impact, use digestible insights

### Make it the Default

#### Part of standard itineraries and/or offerings



- Make meaningful travel the easiest or default choice
- Include in all programs
- Make part of brand story
- There's something for everyone and always something to find
- Use your resources





## THE MAP IN ACTION

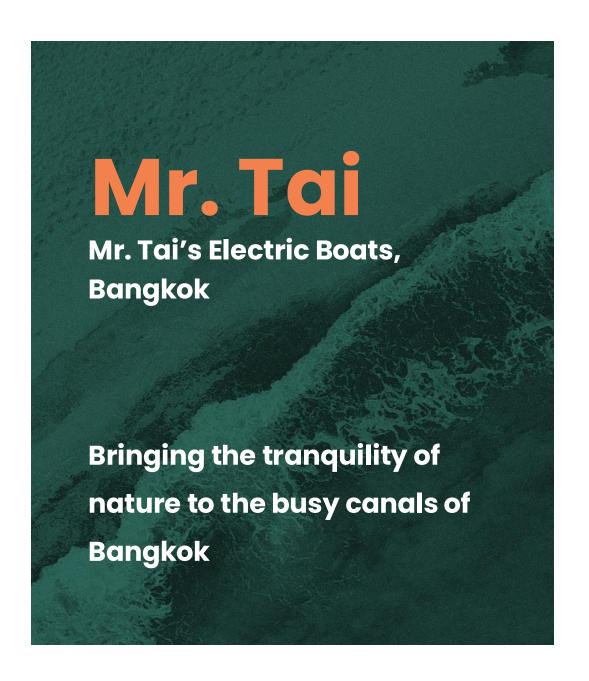
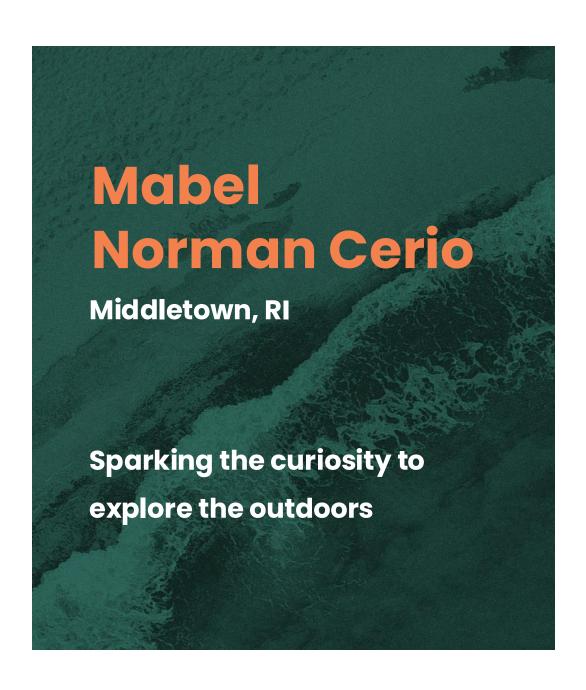


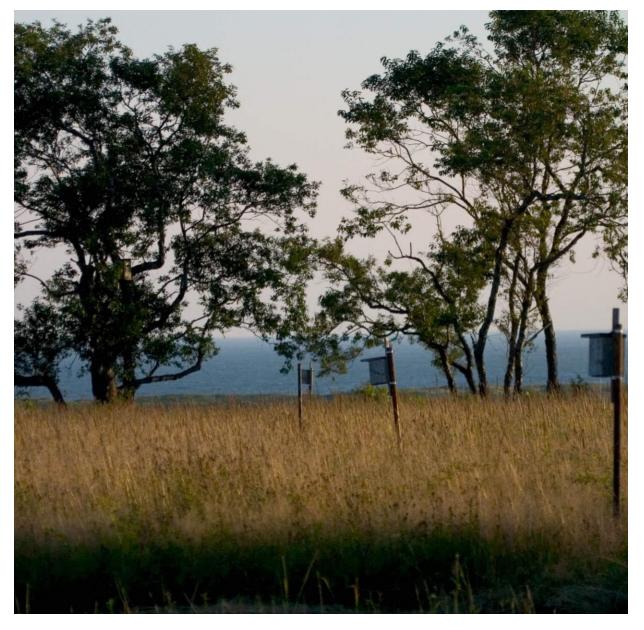


Image courtesy of EF









### **MEANINGFUL TRAVEL MAP**



#### **Tour Operators + Travel Advisors:**

Incorporate into your new/existing itineraries



#### DMOs:

Build a Map to promote your sustainable tourism options



#### MICE:

Incorporate a community day with partners into your event



#### **Hoteliers:**

Encourage your guests to visit featured Impact Partners



Informed

**Travelers** 

Become

**Better** 

Stewards



## MEANINGFUL TRAVEL CHECKLIST

Tourism Cares

#### 1. Supporting Local Communities

Choose locally-owned hotels, restaurants, shops, and experiences, especially those mindful of their own positive impact.

Dine at neighborhood restaurants, attend local festivals, and take tours led by community-based organizations.

Buy handmade products directly from local artisans and co-ops, and share their work with friends and family back home.

Support non-profits or social enterprises through donations, purchases, or visiting their spaces to learn more.

#### 2. Protecting the Planet

- Bring your own reusable water bottle, shopping bag, and containers to reduce plastic waste.
- Choose accommodations with visible environmental commitments, and conserve water and electricity.
- Use public transportation, walk, or bike when possible to lower your carbon footprint and live like a local.
- Visit nature conservation efforts, marine sanctuaries, or reforestation projects that welcome visitors to support their mission.

#### 3 Respecting Cultures and People

#### Learn with Tourism Cares

At Tourism Cares, it is our mission to unite, inspire, and activate the tourism industry to benefit the people and places on which our industry depends. Whether an individual or company is just beginning their sustainability journey or ready to take the next step, our educational resources are designed to meet them where they are, offering the knowledge, ideas, and support they need to make a meaningful impact.



Explore Tourism Cares' online educational courses at your own pace. Covering topics from sustainability marketing to destination stewardship, this digital training will enhance your sustainability knowledge and practices in travel.



Led by industry experts, Tourism Guided by seasoned travel Cares' webinars offer engaging and interactive sessions that provide valuable insights, best practices, and practical tips to help attendees navigate their sustainability journey and make a positive change in the travel industry.

> Explore our Webinars



executives, Tourism Cares' Sustainability Workshop Series offers structured learning sessions to expand participants' knowledge and empower them to develop a tailored sustainability plan.

Learn More

Educated **Travel Pros Sell Better** Experiences

#### **MAKE A COMMITMENT**



#### Actionable Steps

- Partner Locally for Impact
- Enhance the Experience
- Tell the Story

#### **Final Thought:**

You don't have to do everything at once, but taking small steps today will help your business stand out in a changing industry.

## Beyond Green: The Travel Industry and Meaningful Travel

Presented by:

Jessica Flores
Chief Experience Officer
jessica.flores@tourismcares.org

