



## **MAY CHALLENGE: OUT & ABOUT**

We've spent a few challenges figuring out what we can do differently within our own homes in order to help out the planet and those with whom we share it. This challenge is about what we do when we're outside of the comfort of our homes. As we go about our daily lives, are we making things worse or better?

The Out & About challenge will look at how we get about, what businesses we're supporting while we're going about our daily business, and what impact our choices are having when we travel.

### **PART 1: GETTING AROUND**

#### *THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY*

This part of the challenge is really straightforward - this month, try and make your transport options a bit greener. Do you drive a car? Maybe try car-pooling as often as possible. It really is basically impossible in some parts of the world to get around without a car (Hi, USA!), so sometimes driving those gas-guzzling beasts is a necessity. However, when it comes time to buy a new car, maybe look at electric or hybrid cars instead? You can also make sure you're voting for people who care about making public transport and bike lanes a viable option.

If you usually take public transport, can you try biking or walking? When I worked in London, I used to walk an hour and a half to work and back every day. I was lucky in that my route took me through several parks - that commute was sometimes my favourite part of the day. London's Royal Parks are lush.



## *TRAVEL*

I'm not going to shame anyone for taking pleasure in travel, especially after COVID squashed that delight for so many of us. However, when you're going on holiday (FINALLY!), look to see that your way of getting there is as green as possible. If you have to fly, try to fly direct (multiple flights = bigger carbon footprint) and tick the box to spend a few bucks more to offset your flights.

The same goes for your accommodation choices when you're on holiday - how green can you go? Look for hotels or rentals that take sustainability seriously. Don't chuck your towels on the floor each day - reuse them to save the water and energy required to wash them. Avoid using those mini shampoo bottles - can you imagine how many minis a hotel goes through?!

## **PART 2: CHECK YOUR HABITS**

### *FOOD ON THE GO*

We still need to eat and drink when we're out and about, but we can do so in as green a way as possible. When you can, try and eat in rather than getting your food or drinks to go - you'll avoid those disposable containers. If you really must grab and go, bring your own reusable containers. You don't need to buy 'travel cutlery' or some such nonsense - your own cutlery is already perfectly suited to travel. A stainless steel or glass reusable cup and water bottle really come in handy, though.

### *WHO YOU SUPPORT*

When you're out and about, you tend to frequent certain establishments. How green are these businesses you're supporting? Do their values match yours? Are you spending your money with small businesses that do right by their employees and the planet?



## *WHAT YOU DO*

Under normal circumstances, most of us are doing school runs and going to the office. However, what do we do with our free time? Are we going to places that we value and care about? Sure, that theme park might look fun, but what ecological damage is being done by all those throwaway food and drink containers? What about the plastic tat they hand out or try to tempt you to 'win'? How big is their carbon footprint with all those rides they're running day in and day out? Maybe a picnic or a camping trip in the forest or by the lake with a group of friends might wind up being far more fun and save both your wallet and the planet.

## **PART 3: LOOK AROUND**

### *TREASURE IT*

What places of natural beauty do you have close by? Take the time to plan out when you're going to visit them. Look for organisations that are working to preserve parts of the earth that are gorgeous but threatened. How can we help them? What local developments are eating away at nature without bringing us much in return? Do we really need another strip mall? Get to know your own backyard, so to speak, and make sure political leaders are taking care of it.

### *LEAVE IT BETTER*

How can you improve the places you visit? Sure, there are the simple things like not littering, picking up after your dog, not picking the flowers that are there for everyone's enjoyment... but what can you do to go the extra mile? A friend forwarded me a 'feel-good' story about a guy who did up a local playground that had fallen into disrepair. Is there something in your neighbourhood that could do with a little TLC?



It doesn't have to be anything major - the other morning I saw an elderly gentleman out walking his dog. As they passed the local park, he stopped to clean up the trash some lazy people had left on the picnic tables the night before. That simple act probably made a big difference in so many people's mornings. Instead of passersby being infuriated by a picnic area strewn with rubbish, anyone walking by now would just notice the pretty park rather than the trash. While it's gross that people would leave their trash scattered about, the very least we can do is pick it up so that it doesn't harm our wildlife, our planet, or just our mood.

What can you do this month to make the world better when you're out and about?