

Reducing Waste – Guidelines for Visitors to Antarctica

Be part of the solution

When travelling to Antarctica, there are steps you can take to reduce the amount of plastic and other waste produced. Waste is removed from Antarctica by ship or air and taken to ports outside the region for disposal, but these may have limited facilities depending on their location.

Your operator is working towards reducing single-use plastic in its operations. You can support their efforts and help leave no lasting signs of your visit by reducing the number of disposable items you bring, use and dispose of during your trip. There are also steps you can take to stop litter and harmful plastics from ending up in the environment.



Refuse: Refuse items you don't need such as bags, bottles, cutlery and cups.

Reuse: Extend the life of your belongings. If you don't need it, give it away.

Reduce: By consuming less and using reusable items you can help reduce the total amount of waste world wide.

Recycle: Learn about waste recycling at home and separate accordingly. Look for recycling opportunities when travelling.

Before travelling

- Travel with reusable items such as water bottles, cups, bags, cutlery etc. that you can bring home with you.
- Use reusable, durable waterproof bags to protect your camera and other devices from the elements. We discourage the use of plastic bags for any reason, even resealable ones.
- Do not bring hand or feet warmers. Most are single use and wrapped in plastic. Invest in good quality clothing to keep you cosy. Ask for advice before you go.
- Remove unnecessary packaging from new items before packing them.
- When packing toiletries, choose eco-friendly alternatives such as cosmetics free of microbeads.
- Choose products with non-plastic packaging such as soap and shampoo bars. Your accommodation may also be equipped with refillable dispensers. If you need to use plastic bottles and containers, use reusable ones.
- Synthetic clothing sheds small plastic fibers. We recognize that it may not be possible to entirely stop using synthetic clothing but reducing the amount we use is a great first goal.



When travelling

- Avoid using disposable cups, straws, bottles, food containers and other items.
- Do not throw any non-organic items in the toilet, including wet wipes.
- Make sure all your belongings are well secured when outside, paying particular attention to tissues and camera bags.
- Enquire about local environmental initiatives and how you can reduce your plastic footprint to support the communities you visit. If necessary, bring waste home for proper disposal and recycling to reduce strain on remote areas with limited waste management facilities.
- Talk to other travellers and staff – not everyone has the same experience and knowledge, so it is a good opportunity to learn from and inspire others.

Special note

Products labelled as 'degradable' or 'biodegradable' will degrade faster than regular plastic items but may still contain fossil fuels, thus creating microplastic particles. To effectively reduce waste, avoid using these alternative options and choose reusable items instead.

What the travel industry is doing

The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) and the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) have joined the United Nations Clean Seas campaign. Together with their members, they are working to systematically reduce the use of disposable plastics and other items. Operators are also involving guests in beach cleanups worldwide and remove tons of marine litter every year. Through information to crew, staff and guests, and through sharing of best practices, IAATO and AECO are involved in raising awareness and involvement in safeguarding the environment, at sea and on land.

These items regularly wash up on beaches around the world. By working together to cut these out we can shrink our plastic footprint.

	Plastic bottles & tops Carry reusable bottles and cups.
	Cigarette butts The filters contain plastic. Only smoke in designated areas. Dispose of carefully.
	Plastic bags Refuse plastic. Carry long-lasting bags made of natural materials.
	Drinking straws & plastic cutlery Carry your own reusable items. Refuse plastic straws.
	Wet wipes They contain plastic fibers. Try reusable cloths, cotton-wool or bamboo instead.
	Cotton-bud sticks/swabs Look for 100% cotton or paper products.
	Candy wrappers & food packets Look for non-plastic wrapping. Most chewing gum is synthetic too.

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