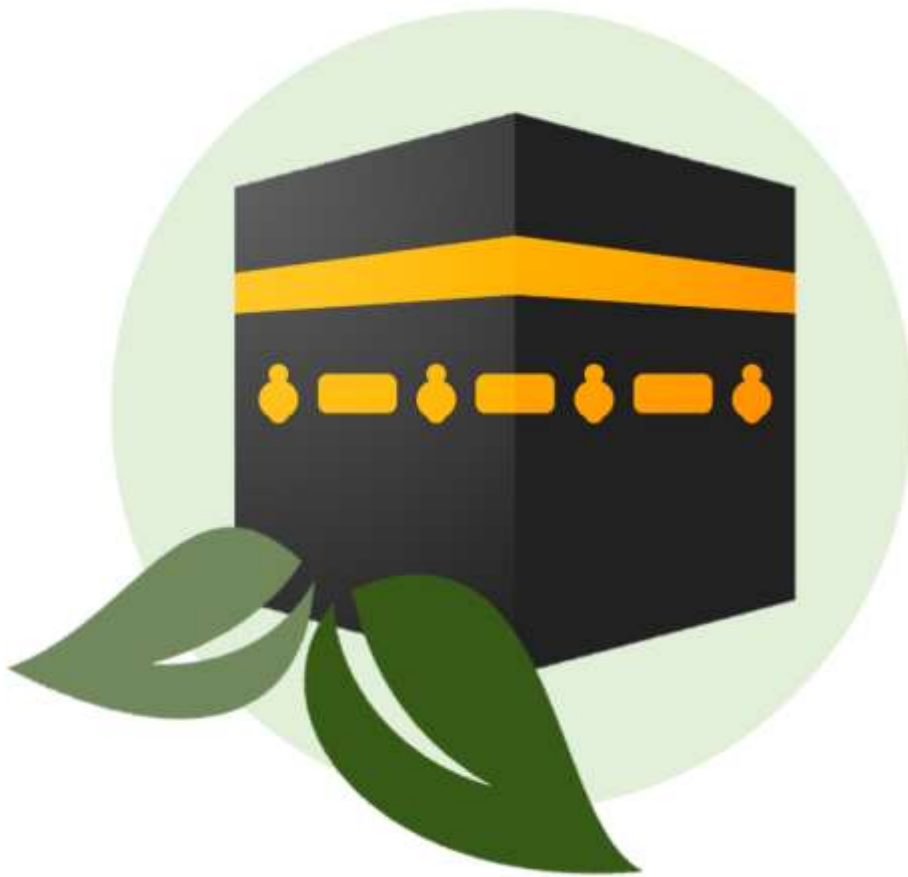


# EcoHajj Guide for Tour Operators



EcoHajj | A Greener Pilgrimage

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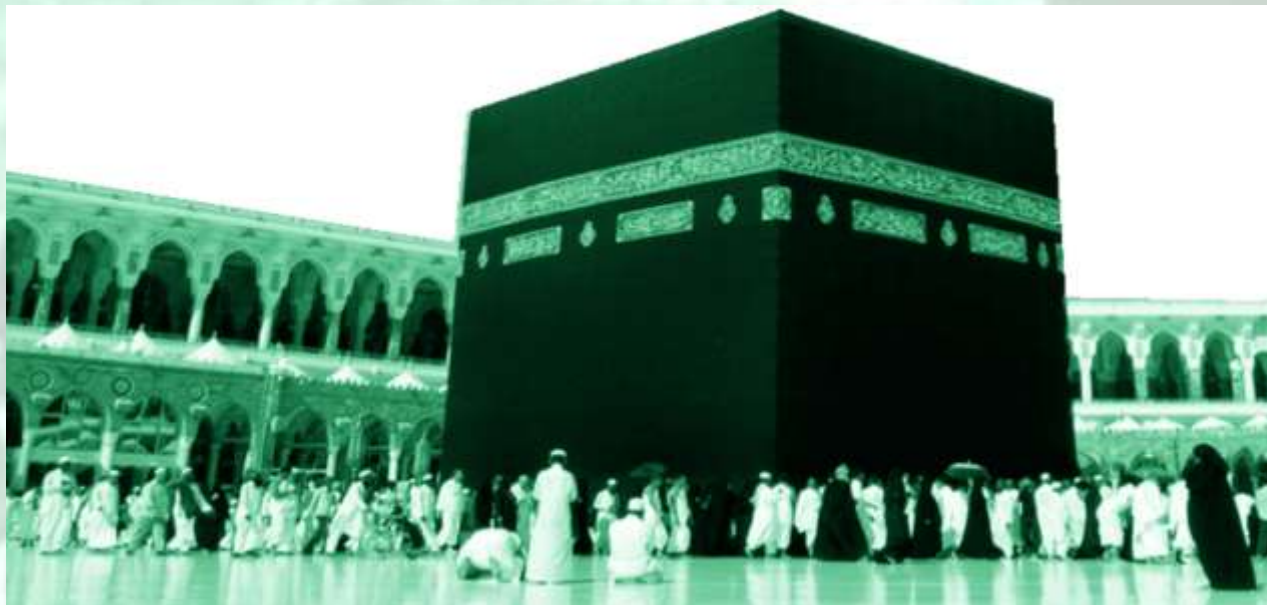
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# Introduction

This EcoHajj booklet highlights ways in which Tour Operators can organise and facilitate a greener and eco-friendlier Hajj and Umrah for their pilgrims.

Increasingly, Hajj or Umrah companies have a responsibility to provide all their pilgrims with a service that takes into consideration the environmental impact of their journeys.

Tour Operators organise pilgrimages for thousands of people, which makes their responsibility even greater than the individual pilgrim.

This guide will discuss Islam and the Environment, give advice and suggestions for Tour Operators and tips on What to Provide.





# The Environment

**"Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of that which men's hands have done." (30:41)**

Caring for the environment is an important teaching of Islam. As guardians of the earth, the responsibility to care for the earth lies with every person.

The reality of harming the environment requires us to rethink our lifestyles and actions and we must reflect on the impact of our actions.

The Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam and is an annual pilgrimage to Makkah. It is a mandatory religious duty for Muslims which must be carried out at least once in a lifetime by every adult Muslim who is physically and financially capable of undertaking the journey.

Nearly three million Muslims from many Muslim countries perform Hajj each year, which means that the Hajj has an enormous environmental footprint.

During Hajj, huge quantities of waste are generated, including plastic bottles, packaging and food.

Other impacts are of water use and water wastage, and transporting vehicles causing air pollution.

The direct result of all this pollution damages the health of the pilgrims and causes litter which chokes public infrastructures and are an eyesore.

The Hajj can be sustainable if the government and the pilgrims behave in an environmental friendly manner and avoid different types of pollution.





# The Qur'an

The Qur'an is the ultimate green-guide. Environment protection is such an important aspect of Islam, that there are many verses in the Qur'an that deal with the environment and green issues.

Being stewards of the Earth, it is the responsibility of every individual, not just Muslims, to care for the environment. "And it is He (God) who has made you successors (*khala'ifa*) upon the earth" (6:165). The word *Khalifa* can mean deputy, guardian and 'friend of the Earth.'

In terms of wasting resources, the Qur'an states, "O children of Adam! ... waste not by excess, for Allah loves not those who waste." (7:31)



# The Green Prophet (pbuh)

Today, with the increasing awareness of the dangers facing our planet and the interest in going green, a reflection on the guidance of the Prophet (pbuh) in this area proves helpful and relevant.

In many *hadith*, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) dealt with environmental issues, such as reducing waste, conservation, sustainability and recycling.

The Prophet of Islam (pbuh) used to repair his own shoes, sew his clothes and carry out all such household chores done without complaint or want for more. Reusing, repairing and recycling things instead of always buying new is a sign of prophetic character.



# Water

Water is the most valuable resource in the the world. God creates and sustains life through water.

In the Qur'an, God uses the analogy of life and death for Muslims to recognise the value of water. *"Allah has sent down rain from the sky and given life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness. Indeed, in that is a sign for a people who listen."* 16:65

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) advised a companion against wasting water for *wudhu*, "...even if you were on the banks of a flowing river."

When performing Hajj or Umrah, wasting water becomes even more unacceptable.





# Plastic

To save our world for future generations, try to avoid all plastic use.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Cleanliness is half of faith." He also said, "Removing harmful things from the road is an act of charity."

By staying far away from disposable commodities (like plastic bottles, food wrapping, cups and straws), keeping the environment clean and avoiding litter, we are fulfilling a religious obligation.

Allah swt has placed human beings on the earth as His representatives to look after the earth, not to destroy it.



# Conservation

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) encouraged the planting of trees and the cultivation of agriculture, saying, “There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as charity for him.”

Islam is against the cutting or destruction of plants and trees unnecessarily, the Prophet (pbuh) said: “He who cuts a lote-tree [without justification], Allah will send him to Hellfire.”

This hadith can be linked to the devastation caused by deforestation in many countries which causes soil erosion and kills the biodiversity of the earth.





# Food

The Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) prohibit wasting food. The Qur'an states, *"....He (Allah) likes not those who waste."* 6:141

For Muslims, it is not permissible to throw the food in the bin. Doing so is considered as disregard for the blessings of Allah and a failure to comply with His orders. The Prophet Mohammad's (pbuh) said, "No man fills a container worse than his stomach. A few morsels that keep his back upright are sufficient for him...." In other words, over-eating is simply not allowed.

Muslims should show gratefulness and appreciation to Allah swt by not wasting food and sharing.





# Tour Operators

This section highlights ways in which Tour Operators can organise and facilitate a greener and eco-friendlier Hajj and Umrah trips for their pilgrims.

Increasingly, Hajj and Umrah companies have a responsibility to provide all their pilgrims with a service that takes into consideration the environmental impact of their journeys.

Tour Operators organise pilgrimages for thousands of people, which makes their responsibility even greater than the individual pilgrim.

The following sections give advice on how to reduce waste in a number of areas.



# Water Conservation

Water is the most valuable resource in the world. Wasting water is not allowed in Islam. Below are ways in which Tour Operators can encourage pilgrims to conserve water.

## 1. Finish your Water



Encourage your pilgrims to finish all the water when drinking from plastic bottles.

Many people drink only some of the water and throw the rest in the bin. This should be avoided, if possible.

The role of the Tour Operator should be to remind pilgrims throughout the trip, especially during the days of Hajj in Mina.

## 2. Re-usable Bottles



Tour Operators should consider providing their pilgrims with re-usable water bottles.

Re-filling a re-usable bottle, made from metal or glass, can substantially reduce the need for plastic bottles. Re-usable bottles could be provided as part of the Tour Operator's Goody Bag.

## 3. *Wudhu*



Tour Operators should encourage their pilgrims to practice performing *wudhu* from a bottle, as this can help to conserve water. Tutorials on how to perform *wudhu* from a bottle can be given before Hajj.

This skill will be particularly useful in Mina, Arafat and Muzdalifah to avoid queues.

## 4. Zam Zam



Zam-Zam is available in Makkah and Madinah. Pilgrims should be encouraged to refill their bottle every time they go to the *masjid*.

This will also reduce the use of disposable plastic bottles and the plastic disposable cups used in the *masjid*.

## 5. Water Coolers



Zam-Zam is available throughout the *Haramain*, in Makkah and Madinah. A good habit to get into is to refill your bottle every time you visit either *masjid* to pray.

This will also reduce the use of disposable plastic bottles and the plastic disposable cups used in the *masjid*.





# Food

The Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) prohibit wasting food. There are a number of ways in which food waste can be avoided and reduced by pilgrims during Hajj.



## 6. Finishing Food

At meal times, pilgrims should be encouraged to finish their portion of food. Especially in Mina, where the portion sizes can be very big. Leaving food which is half-eaten and unlikely to be consumed by anyone else, should be avoided.



## 7. Sharing is Caring

Many times, especially during the days of Hajj in Mina, one portion of food can be large enough to share between 2-3 people.

Pilgrims should be encouraged to divide up their meals and share with the people around them to prevent waste. Tour Operators should provide extra plates and spoons for this.



## 8. Buffet

At times, hotels provide buffet meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Tour Operators should remind their groups that over-filling their plates with food and then not finishing, causes a lot of waste. Pilgrims should also be warned not to overeat due to gluttony being strictly prohibited in Islam.

# Hotels

Whilst staying in the hotels during Hajj, there are ways in which pilgrims can reduce their environmental impact, in addition to not wasting water and food.

Tour Operators should consider providing a small printed card, to be given to every pilgrim or to be placed in their hotel rooms, listing the points of advice below. An example card is shown below.

## 9. Save Electricity



Tour operators should encourage their pilgrims to conserve energy by putting off their hotel room lights, and any other electrical devices, when they leave the room.

Saving electricity goes towards saving energy.

## 10. Re-use your Towels



By hanging your towels and re-using them, pilgrims can help to reduce the amount of energy hotels use to wash and dry the towels and linen.

Tour Operators can suggest this to their pilgrims regardless of whether the hotel has a sustainability drive.

## 11. Water Waste



Tour operators can remind pilgrims that showering less frequently and for shorter periods of time can help drastically reduce water wastage in hotels.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to perform *ghusl*, or have a bath, with less than 2ltrs of water!

# General Advice

There are many other aspects to being eco-friendly, sustainable and environmentally greener. Below are some general tips for Tour Operators

## 12. Walking Groups

Tour Operators could organise walking groups for those pilgrims who are fit and able, on certain parts of the Hajj.



By walking between the Hajj sites, your group will be reducing their carbon footprint in terms of vehicle pollution.

Tour Operators should choose routes that are easier to walk, and avoid any extreme hardship for their pilgrims.

## 13. Avoid Littering

As a responsible Tour Operator, advice should be given to your group to avoid adding to the problem of litter and make sure that they discard their rubbish properly.



One of the most apparent sights during Hajj and Umrah is the vast amount of litter. From food waste to plastic bottles, from used nappies to cut hair, litter is everywhere!

Especially during the Hajj days in Mina, Tour Operators should provide bins for rubbish and remind their group members to use them. Encouraging them to keep their area in the tent clean.



# What to Provide

Tour Operators are responsible for their pilgrims and part of the responsibility of making Hajj easier, is providing them with eco-friendly, sustainable products and helping them to reduce their carbon footprint. It begins with making sure that all Tour Operators have sustainable products and principles in mind.

The following are top tips on What to Provide.

## 1. Go Paperless!

Many Tour Operators provide their pilgrims with guidebooks, that gives them information and an itinerary for their trip.



Tour Operators can choose to print their guidebooks using recycled paper, or make sure that all their material is recyclable. They should avoid the use of laminated, glossy paper, receipts, letters, and any metal binding. Another way to be eco-friendly is to be completely paperless. Pilgrims can be emailed a PDF of the guidebook, which can then be accessed on smartphones, and any other documents.

## 2. A Day-Bag

Pilgrims will be buying groceries, souvenirs, and various other items during their Hajj and Umrah trips.



They will also need a small bag to carry their essential items and their shoes when they go to the masjid.

Tour Operators can provide light day-bags or backpacks for their pilgrims. This will reduce the use of plastic bags, one of the biggest culprits of ocean pollution.

Once again, the day-bags can be branded with the Tour Operator's logo.

### 3. Eco-friendly Toiletries



In addition to reusable utensils, Tour Operators might also want to consider providing eco-friendly toiletries, such as, a biodegradable toothbrush, shampoo bars, soaps, lotions and sunscreens that are organic and are 100% vegetarian.

Also, reusable bottles for shower gels and shampoo and bamboo cotton buds, the list goes on.

There are a huge number of eco-conscious companies providing ethical and sustainable products.

### 4. Ethical Clothing (*Ihram*)



Clothes manufacturing is notorious for poor labour conditions and waste, especially in developing nations. Hajj and Umrah Tour Operators may want to provide Ihrams for their Hajjis, or suggest that they buy, ones that are made from sustainable materials and with ethical working conditions.

Also, reusing is even better than recycling. Tour Operators may want to offer a recycling scheme, where used Ihrams are collected after Hajj and re-distributed to future pilgrims. In this way, others can have a share in the reward!

### 5. Re-usable Bottles



The factory production of clothes is one of the biggest causes of pollution in the world. Clothes manufacturing is also notorious for poor labour conditions, especially in developing nations.

Consider purchasing your *Ihram* and clothing for your Hajj and Umrah trip that is made from sustainable materials and with ethical working conditions.



## 6. Solar Chargers

Solar power can give phones and gadgets an energy boost, and reduce the amount of electricity being used.



During the days of Hajj, whilst in Mina and Arafat, solar powered chargers can be really useful especially when there's relatively little access to sockets. Tour operators may want to consider providing solar chargers, or encourage Hajjis to bring their own.

## 7. Reusable Utensils

Instead of distributing countless plastic spoons and forks. Tour Operators might consider providing pilgrims with reusable utensils, especially during the days of Mina. This will seriously reduce the use of one-time plastics.



Pilgrims can be given either metal cutlery or bamboo utensils, which are 100% biodegradable.

Hajjis can also be reminded that eating with their right hand is a sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), which would easily reduce the amount of plastic cutlery used.





# What to Provide Checklist

- 1. Go Paperless
- 2. A Day-Bag
- 3. Eco-friendly Toiletries
- 4. Ethical Clothing and the *Ihram*
- 5. Re-usable Bottles
- 6. Solar Chargers
- 7. Reusable Utensils
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
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- 10. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. \_\_\_\_\_

# Hotel Information Card

Tour Operators should consider providing a small printed card, to be given to every pilgrim or to be placed in their hotel rooms, as a gentle reminder of being eco-friendlier during their stay.



**EcoHajj** | Help save the planet...

**“O children of Adam! ... waste not by excess, for Allah loves not those who waste.” (7:31)**

**Towels** If you wish to reuse your towels, please put them back on the towel rail. By hanging your towels and re-using them, you can help to reduce the amount of energy hotels use to wash and dry the towels and linen.

**Electricity** Conserve energy by putting off your hotel room lights, and any other electrical devices, when you leave the room.

**Food** If you are provided with buffet meals in this hotel, please refrain from over-filling your plates with food and then not finishing. Wasting food is prohibited in Islam.

**Water** In order to reduce water waste, not showering excessively and for shorter periods of time, can help drastically reduce water wastage.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to perform ghusl, or have a bath, with less than 2ltrs of water!