

VIETNAM: GREEN TRANSPORT GUIDE FOR TRAVELERS

Welcome to Vietnam! From the narrow alleys of Hanoi's Old Quarter to the vast waterways of the Mekong Delta, how you choose to move shapes the environment.

This guide ranks Vietnam's transportation options from most sustainable (lowest carbon footprint) to least sustainable, helping you make eco-conscious travel choices.

GREEN OPTIONS: LOW-IMPACT & CARBON-FREE

These options produce zero or near-zero carbon emissions per passenger. They are the best choices for the environment and often offer the most immersive local experiences.

1. Walking & Cycling

Sustainability Rating: Excellent (Zero Emission)

Where to Use: Perfect for the flat, historic quarters of Hoi An Ancient Town, Hanoi's Old Quarter, and Hue's Imperial Citadel.

Why It Matters: Zero carbon emissions, zero air pollution, and zero noise pollution. Hiring a bicycle also supports local rental shops and independent guides.

 **Traveler Tip:** Hoi An and Ninh Binh are highly bike-friendly, with many hotels offering free bicycles. In Hanoi, watch out for dense scooter traffic and walk at a steady, predictable pace when crossing streets.

2. Electric Taxis & Buggies (Xanh SM / Electric Cars)

Sustainability Rating: Good (Low Emission)

Where to Use: Widely available in major cities (Hanoi, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City, Phu Quoc).

Why It Matters: Vietnam is home to VinFast, a major electric vehicle manufacturer. The all-electric taxi brand Xanh SM operates clean, quiet fleets with zero tailpipe emissions, helping reduce the severe urban air pollution.

 **Traveler Tip:** Download the Xanh SM app on your phone (similar to Uber/Grab) to easily book electric cars and electric scooters at transparent rates.

YELLOW OPTIONS: MEDIUM-IMPACT & SHARED TRANSFERS

These options consolidate multiple passengers into a single vehicle or use public networks, significantly reducing the carbon footprint per person compared to private cars.

1. Sleeper Trains (Vietnam Railways)

Sustainability Rating: Moderate (Eco-Friendly Long Distance)

Where to Use: Traveling from Hanoi to Sapa (Lao Cai station) or from Hanoi down the coast to Central Vietnam (Quang Binh, Hue, Da Nang) or further to Southern Vietnam (Nha Trang, Ho Chi Minh City).

Why It Matters: Rail travel is one of the most sustainable long-distance choices, emitting up to 80% less carbon dioxide per passenger than a short-haul flight. It also saves you a night's hotel cost while letting you witness spectacular rural landscapes.

 **Traveler Tip:** Book soft-berth cabins (4 sleepers) for comfortable overnight journeys. Travel Sense Asia can arrange tickets on tourist cabins (such as Chapa Express or Lotus Express) attached to the national train.

2. Seat-in-Coach (SIC) Shared Limousines & Tourist Buses

Sustainability Rating: Moderate (Shared Footprint)

Where to Use: Popular routes like Hanoi to Halong Bay, Hanoi to Sapa, or Da Nang to Hoi An.

Why It Matters: Shared D-Car Limousines (9-seater vans) and tourist coaches group multiple travelers together, reducing the number of individual cars on the road and cutting fuel consumption per capita.

 **Traveler Tip:** Prioritize large private groups or shared shuttle transfers when your schedule aligns.

3. Traditional Cyclos & Local Rowboats

Sustainability Rating: Moderate (Socially Sustainable)

Where to Use: Cyclos in Hanoi/Hoi An; hand-rowed sampan boats in Tam Coc (Ninh Binh) and the Mekong Delta.

Why It Matters: While slow, they are human-powered (zero fuel) and directly support local workers. The rowers in Trang An/Tam Coc and cyclo drivers are independent operators whose livelihoods depend directly on these traditional services.

 **Traveler Tip:** Always negotiate and agree on the price before boarding a cyclo.

RED OPTIONS: HIGH-IMPACT & INDIVIDUAL TRANSFERS

These options produce high carbon emissions per passenger. Use them only when necessary (due to tight schedules or remote destinations) and consider offset options.

1. Private Gasoline/Diesel Cars & SUVs

Sustainability Rating: High Impact (High Carbon Footprint)

Where to Use: Customized itineraries, door-to-door transfers, or remote mountain regions.

Why It Matters: Individual private transfers are the most carbon-intensive road options because the vehicle's emissions are split among only a few passengers.

 **Traveler Tip:** When private transfers are necessary, ensure your driver adheres to our No Idling Policy (switching off the engine while waiting at hotel lobbies or sights).

2. Domestic Flights

Sustainability Rating: Very High Impact (Extreme Carbon Footprint)

Where to Use: Traveling between North, Central, and South Vietnam (e.g., Hanoi to HCMC, Phu Quoc or Da Nang).

Why It Matters: Short-haul flights emit a massive amount of greenhouse gases during take-off and landing.

 **Traveler Tip:** Avoid taking multiple domestic flights. Plan your itinerary linearly (e.g., land in Hanoi, travel south by train/road, and depart from HCMC). If you must fly, fly economy class and travel light to reduce weight.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL TO VIETNAM (INTERNATIONAL ARRIVAL)

Long-Haul Flights: When flying to Vietnam internationally:

1. **Fly Direct (if available):** Choose direct routes rather than multi-stop layovers, as takeoff and landing produce the highest share of flight emissions.
2. **Pack Light:** Every kilogram saved reduces fuel burn.
3. **Choose Modern Fleets:** We recommend flying with airlines that operate modern, fuel-efficient aircraft (like the Airbus A350 or Boeing 787 Dreamliner used by Vietnam Airlines) and have active carbon reduction commitments.