

Mindful travelling

How we choose to travel from our home to the Yatra can have far reaching effects on the environment. As we all know, planes, trains and cars (even electric ones) rely on fossil fuels which contribute to climate change.

Comparing means of travel

But how do we compare the different means of travel, and which is the most polluting?

As an element of comparison, the journey one way from London to the Yatra in the south of France is 1360 km (850 miles). Different methods of transport would produce the following CO2 emissions per person....

Plane	234kg
Large car	117kg (with 3 people in)
Small car	58kg (with 3 people in)
Train	79kg
Coach	41kg
Bike	0kg
Walking	0kg

Multiply by 2 or 3 the CO2 produced by planes as it goes straight into the upper atmosphere where it has a greater harmful effect.

Cars often pollute the air right where we live - the World Health Organisation estimates that in the UK around 30,000 people a year die prematurely due to air pollution¹.

Trains and Coaches

These consume a lot of energy, but divide by the number of passengers on board and they're a far more climate-friendly option than cars or planes. Taking the Eurostar from London to Paris cuts your CO2 emissions by an impressive 90%. Sleeper trains are more efficient as they travel at slower speeds. A study also shows that the reading ability of 12-14 year olds whose schools lie under flight paths is impaired by 23%, while children of all ages are more likely to develop anxiety disorders when routinely exposed to aircraft noise.

For buses:

within the UK

Megabus (seats starting at £1): <http://uk.megabus.com>

National Express: <http://www.nationalexpress.com>

UK to France

Eurolines: <http://www.eurolines.co.uk/coach/>

For trains:

Within the UK and UK to France

Megatrain (seats starting at £1): <http://uk.megabus.com/megatrain.aspx>

The Train Line: <http://www.thetrainline.com>

Train travel fare tips:

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bloom/guides/transportemissions.shtml>

- If you need to change trains within the UK, and that both trains are run by the same train provider, it can still be cheaper to buy each train ticket separately (strange but true and tested!)
- Tickets are cheaper when bought as far in advance as possible. They are usually issued 3 months before the date of travel. On thetrainline.com website, there is a section where you can give your email to be contacted on the day that the tickets you want are issued (for example, you will received an email on 27th May telling you that the tickets for 27th July are now available). At the time of writing, this is in the 'Tools' tab on the top right corner of the main page, then 'ticket alert'. Buying tickets as close to that day of issue as possible will greatly reduce their price.

Within France

SNCF: <http://www.voyages-sncf.com/> Note that by click on the British flag the bottom left of the site, it redirects you to the TGV-Europe website which does not offer as many options as the SNCF one, though it is in English.

The SNCF also offers the 3-months-in-advance booking service as explained above. On the main page ('Accueil'), look at the bottom of the page under 'Services' and click on 'Alerte Résa'. There you can indicate your travel itinerary and dates and will be contacted when the tickets are issued. The cheapest tickets in France are usually the ones called "Prem's".

For a wealth of useful tips on cheap travel by train and coach in the UK and Europe, have a look at these websites:

<http://www.seat61.com>

<http://www.moneysavingexpert.com>

The Guardian cheap train travel tips webpage.

Cars

If you come by car, how you drive can cut fuel consumption by 10%... Here is how:

- Driving at 110 km/hr (70 mph) rather than 130 km/hr (80 mph) reduces fuel use and CO2 emissions by one third. A bit slower is even better.
- Avoid fast acceleration and braking.
- Keep your tyres inflated to the right pressure and have your car regularly serviced.
- Reduce drag by leaving the roof rack at home and closing the windows and sunroof.
- Don't carry unnecessary weight- empty your boot.
- Use air conditioning sparingly as it significantly increases fuel consumption.
- If you're stuck in a jam, switch the engine off if you expect to be there for more than a minute.

For more information, watch the useful 20 minute Eco Driving Film on

<http://www.devon.gov.uk>

Think about putting your itinerary on the Yatra website used for liftsharing. This website will be created a month or 2 before the Yatra, and its address indicated on the main Yatra website. And if you are several people leaving from nearby places, why not consider renting a minibus?

Hitching and offering lifts

If you don't fancy thumbing it, try the liftsharing websites below:

For the whole of Europe (French website)

<http://www.covoiturage.fr/> or <http://www.covoiturage.fr/lang/en> in English
<http://www.covoiturage.com/> (in French)

UK

<http://www.freewheelers.co.uk>
<http://www.liftshare.com>

France

Type 'covoiturage' in Google, there are lots of different websites

Belgium

<http://www.karzoo.be>
<http://www.carpoolplaza.be>

Germany

<http://www.mitfahren.com/>
<http://www.mitfahrgelegenheit.de/>
<http://www.nrw.pendlernetz.de>

If hitching rather than sharing lifts, please always be safety conscious...

Planes

It's almost impossible to keep our carbon footprint at a sustainable level if we fly. Bear in mind that we can cancel all our eco-living and carbon-reducing efforts for a whole year by taking a long haul flight². By 2050 plane travel globally looks set to undo all the carbon savings we make elsewhere.

50% of us say we are more concerned about the effects of flying than 5 years ago, but only 8% of us actually fly less³.

Who flies? Only about 5% of the world's population has ever flown - mostly people from industrialised countries. And who pays? Climate change consequences mainly affect those who have contributed little to it, ie. people in developing countries⁴.

More information on all this on these websites: <http://www.co2balance.co.uk> ,
<http://www.flightpledge.org.uk> , <http://www.planestupid.com> .

And finally...

The Yatra is a journey in mindfulness, and getting there is part of the experience. Go slower, enjoy the view.

² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/starbucks-ethical-living/ethical-holiday-choices>

³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bloom/>

⁴ <https://www.atmosfair.de/en/home/>