

# Go your own way

#SLOW TRAVEL #SUSTAINABILITY

Low-impact travel doesn't just do the planet a favour, it's an exciting way to explore some of the world's most enticing places at your own pace. *By Joanna Tovia*

**G**ETTING AROUND UNDER YOUR own steam is a down-to-earth mode of transport that reveals a destination slowly, deeply and memorably – and has the feelgood bonus of shrinking your travel footprint. If you live in Australia, it's all but impossible to travel overseas without air travel, or via a cruise, but what you do once you get there is another story. Consider ditching cars, buses, trains and more flights for a bicycle, kayak or simply relying on your own two feet to get around for at least some of your journey – it might just be the best part of your trip.

## WALK THIS WAY

It may not be the quickest way to get from A to B, but walking is one of the best ways to mingle with locals, become familiar with their everyday life, and truly experience a destination – instead of views whizzing past you through the window of a train, car or bus.

If you like the idea of walking, but stop short of joining a tour, consider a self-guided walking trip. And don't let the thought of lugging around your suitcase put you off. In Croatia, The Natural Adventure company takes care of getting

your bags from guesthouse to guesthouse and provides a choice of itineraries, but it's up to you to get yourself from point to point and find places to eat (isn't that part of the fun of travel?). As well as the more popular itineraries along the Dalmatian Coast, other self-guided walks take you through vineyards and villages and along mountain trails. On an eight-day walk, expect to cover 11-26 kilometres per day – at your own pace, of course.

Walk Japan also offers self-guided tours, but a guided small-group tour offers the additional benefits of insights into the culture and history of the towns, temples, forests and countryside you discover along the way – not to mention reservations at eateries frequented by locals for their sensational food. The Basho Tohoku Tour follows in the footsteps of Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō, from Sendai to Yamagata.

## TRAVEL FACTS

### WALK

[thenaturaladventure.com](http://thenaturaladventure.com)  
[walkjapan.com](http://walkjapan.com)

### CYCLE

[intrepidtravel.com](http://intrepidtravel.com)  
[trektravel.com](http://trektravel.com)

### KAYAK

[responsibletravel.com](http://responsibletravel.com)  
[saltydog.com.au](http://saltydog.com.au)

### ADVENTURE

[gadventures.com](http://gadventures.com)

The seven-day walk is all the sweeter with end-of-day soaks in steamy onsens at the inns you stay in along the way.

## ON TWO WHEELS

Regardless of whether you're a hard-core cyclist or like your bike rides leisurely (preferably with a basket holding a baguette), there's a bike tour out there for you.

Those on the fit side with adventure on their minds will love Intrepid Travel's Cycle Jordan: Petra & Wadi Rum small-group tour. The seven-day ride will take you from the shores of the Dead Sea through the rugged desert landscape to ancient Petra, and you'll sleep everywhere from Bedouin (nomadic Arab tribe) camps to hotels. It's a unique way to experience an incredible part of the world.

Europe is a dream for cycling enthusiasts, especially foodies keen to indulge in regional food and wine. A six-day, self-guided e-bike tour through Tuscany with Trek Travel will have you taking in the sights of vineyards and villages along quiet, cypress-lined roads. E-bikes are ideal in this hilly countryside, giving you a hand up steep terrain when your legs need a breather. Pizza making, wine tasting, country picnics and piazza dinners punctuate your trip – all that bike riding makes for guilt-free devouring!

## OUT ON THE WATER

Like cycling holidays, adventures on the water can be as active, or as relaxing as you like. Drifting down the Dordogne in a canoe on a self-guided tour from hotel to hotel is a dreamy way to take in the chateaus, villages and valley vistas of southern France – and fabulous for families. Tour operator Responsible Travel runs a nine-day trip from Rocamadour to Carsac-Aillac. You'll paddle around 20 kilometres per day down the tranquil Dordogne River, with plenty of time to explore your surrounds.

A six-day kayak expedition in Australia's pristine Whitsundays with Salty Dog Sea Kayaking allows you to experience this idyllic part of the world both in and on the water.

As well as kayaking around the islands and bays (from Airlie Beach), you'll don snorkel and fins to immerse yourself in the natural beauty and marine life of the Whitsundays with a small group of like-minded travellers.

Thrill-seekers can dial up the adventure in Costa Rica. A tour to the eco-capital of the Americas with G Adventures will have you rafting along the picturesque Pacuare River. The action-packed 13-day trip begins and ends in San José, and includes trekking, biking, horse riding, surfing, kayaking and ziplining. 🌿

ABOVE: Paddling in the Whitsundays with Salty Dog Sea Kayaking  
RIGHT: Cycling through Jordan with Intrepid Travel