

Long Distance Travel

Why we care

Today's savvy travelers are curious about their carbon footprint. Generally, the faster the vehicle the more impact on the environment. Flying, for example, allows us to conveniently travel far more miles than we otherwise would. Two people flying 5,000 miles have the impact of their driving about 15,000 miles in a hybrid car—more than 75% of average household annual car mileage. The chart below compares the impact of different modes of travel. *(The airplane mode includes the impact of nitrogen oxides and water vapor at high altitudes but does not include emissions related to takeoff, landing, and ground operations.)*

| Mode | Lbs. CO ₂ or equivalents per passenger mile |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Bus | .17 |
| Hybrid (2 occupants) | .28 |
| Amtrak | .45 |
| Typical car (2 occupants) | .56 |
| Typical SUV (2 occupants) | .71 |
| Boeing 747 (coach) | .84 |
| Typical car (1 occupant) | 1.09 |

Simple, positive steps

- Avoiding air travel forces us to travel less, to be more selective, and to get more out of the trips we take.
- Consider renting a high mileage car for a family trip. Avoid peak travel periods that keep you stuck in traffic.
- If you do travel by plane, choose coach. First class takes twice as much space and has twice the carbon impact. Choose nonstop rather than connecting flights because takeoff and landing produce a lot of carbon.
- Vacation close to home. You'll save money and avoid stress.
- Use modern technology, such as Skype, FaceTime, or webcams to stay in touch with friends and family.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.