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Best Ways to Take a City Tour

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Forget traditional city tours that leave you trapped behind the window of a bus. Here are four ways to actually get out and see the city, up close and personal.



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Driving around on your own while attempting to tour a strange city is a good way to ruin a great travel experience. Dealing with traffic, finding places to park, juggling maps or trying to listen to your GPS—while arguing with your travel mates about which museum to visit first—can all contribute to frazzled nerves.

This is why I generally book some sort of tour before I even try to see a city on my own. Once I have a good introduction, I know where I want to spend more time and feel much more comfortable exploring on my own.

Here are some of the best ways to see a city—without feeling like you're trapped behind the window of a bus.

Hop-On/Hop-Off Tours

A great way to be introduced to a city is with a hop-on/hop-off touring option. One of the most beautiful cities in the world is Vancouver, and one of the best ways to see it is with the [Vancouver Trolley Company](#). Just check their website for the nearest stop, purchase a ticket onboard, then ride around to whatever destination piques your interest, or stay on for the whole two-hour, narrated tour. Lovely Stanley Park, fascinating Gastown and the intriguing Granville Market—all are available on the trolley.

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For another unique hop-on/hop-off option, try the canal boats in Amsterdam, Netherlands. The boats stop at a variety of locations; if you are lucky enough to stay at the sleek and modern [Mövenpick Hotel](#) on the IJ River, the canal boat will pull up right in front! You can ride the different-coloured routes all over the city and just step out to see Anne Frank's home or the famous Red Light District. Be sure to visit Dam Square and have some of the wonderful local pancakes or freshly made cheese.



Segway Tours

If you want to be a little more adventurous, a Segway tour of a city is a marvelous way to see things up close in a specific part of the city or neighbourhood. Many places are offering a tour of these fun gizmos, which require some practice in balancing but are great fun. [Segway of Savannah](#) in Georgia was a perfect introduction to this lovely, historic city, since it allowed me to see the beautiful homes and gorgeous squares with our own transportation.



Cycling Tours

If you want to be more active and get some exercise, try a city bicycle tour. [Bicycle Tours of Atlanta](#) in Georgia was my first introduction to this touring style and it was wonderful to just tool along the city streets with skyscrapers looming up to the sky beside us. I saw incredible street murals, historic homes such as the boyhood home of Martin Luther King Jr., and the beautiful, park-like Oakland Cemetery.

Foodie Tours

Another way to see a city in a unique way is to take one of the many foodie tours. I spent a day in Old Town Scottsdale, Arizona, with [Arizona Food Tours](#). I tasted everything from Thai Tom Ka Gai soup to liqueur-infused ice cream, all while listening to our very knowledgeable guide tell us the history of Scottsdale.

Drive, walk, take a boat or wheel your way around on a bike or Segway; you are going to have many different touring choices wherever you go. Now park that car and see the city!

JAN ROSS



After a lifetime of travel, Jan Ross can pack a bag and hit the road with very little notice, although she will always have a little black dress and some snazzy shoes in there. She loves to travel with her husband of more than 35 years as he is a great photographer and she is often way too busy having fun to think about taking pictures. Active travel or relaxing, she is up for it all!

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