



Getting Around Charleston: An Overview for International Residents

Navigating a new city can be tricky for anyone. It can be even trickier when the majority of people in your new city drive their own car more than they take public transit. Charleston is a vast region and is therefore, not easily walkable. When moving to Charleston, it is advisable to become familiar with modes of transportation if you decide not to purchase or rent a vehicle. Be sure to check out this [link](#) for other information.

This guide is not designed to answer all the questions you may have about how to navigate Charleston, but we hope it provides you with some first steps when thinking about getting around Charleston.

Buying or Renting a Car

Important Steps –

- **Buying:** There are an abundance of new and used car dealerships in the Charleston region for car buying. If buying a used car, make sure you have the entire history of the car life.
- **Renting:** If you plan on renting a car for long-term use, make sure you do some research on what car will be most accommodating for your family.

Tips to Consider –

- If buying a car, consider making the trip with a strong negotiator who can help you get the best price.
- When renting a car, don't wait until you pick up the car to decide if you should buy car rental insurance. Most likely, it will be more expensive at the car pickup location than over the phone or online.
- Try to avoid renting a car at the airport. You can avoid waiting in lines and paying extra fees by doing so.
- Check to see if your credit card has any partnerships with car rental companies. You may be eligible to receive rewards and discounts.

Transportation by Bus

Important Steps –

- **CARTA:** CARTA is the Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority and runs the bus system with over 25 routes available. Feel free to check out their [website](#) which offers tracking, planning a trip, route maps, schedules, and much more.
- **Fares and Passes:** Fares can be found at the website above. A variety of passes (such as one-day, ten-trip, thirty-one day, etc) are also offered by CARTA.
- **Low Country Go:** Low Country Go is a sustainable mode of transportation in the Charleston area that aims to reduce traffic congestion by supporting carpools, vanpools, public transit, schoolpool, etc. through their ride-matching services. Feel free to explore their [website](#) and download their smartphone app to find the best mode of transportation for you and your family.
- **TriCounty Link:** TriCounty Link is a commuter system that provide nine fixed routes and four commuter routes to rural residents of Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties. Check out their routes online [here](#)

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Tips to Consider –

- If you will be frequently taking the bus or don't carry exact change, buying a pass might be the best option for you. Consult the website for the six locations of where to buy a bus pass.
- The bus system is cash only so if you know you will be taking the bus, make sure to have exact change.
- Download the "Transit App" to your smartphone to get updates and alerts about your transportation.
- Note that the CARTA bus system does not have two routes to the airport.
- Keep in mind that public transportation in Charleston may not be as ubiquitous as it is in other, larger cities.

Taxis and Ride Sharing Apps

Important Steps –

- **Taxis:** There are over 20 taxi companies in the tri-county region of Charleston. Try a quick Google search using key words such as "Charleston taxis services."
- **Ride Sharing Apps:** Ride sharing smart phone applications such as Uber and Lyft are a very common, safe, and affordable way of getting around Charleston. Consider downloading a ride sharing application if you have a smart phone.

Tips to Consider –

- Tipping the driver is expected when taking a taxi. It's most common to tip between 15 and 20 percent depending on the rate of service.
- During busy hours of the day and night, ride sharing apps will have a surge fee so if you are traveling during rush hour or another busy time of day, make sure you are aware that the price may go up.

Alternative Methods of Transportation

Important Steps –

- **Holy Spokes:** Bike sharing as a mode of transportation has become very popular in large cities around the U.S. Charleston has so many beautiful sights and routes to explore by bike, just download the smartphone app or look at their [website](#), link a debit or credit card, and starting riding.
- **Charleston Moves:** Charleston Moves is a nonprofit dedicated to mobility around Charleston by bike or foot. Explore their [website](#) for SC bike laws, a new rider toolkit, and bike-friendly infrastructure.

Tips to Consider –

- Holy Spokes offers a variety of passes for your bike riding needs including pay as you go, day pass, monthly, and annual.

Airports

Important Steps –

- **Charleston International Airport:** Charleston’s more widely used [airport](#) is home to eight commercial airlines and offers domestic flights.
- **Executive Airports:**
 - **Charleston Executive Airport:** This [airport](#) primarily serves corporate and business jets.
 - **Summerville Airport:** Summerville Airport is open to public use as a general aviation facility.
 - **Berkeley County Airport:** Berkeley County Airport is open to public use as a general aviation facility.
 - **St. George Airport:** St. George Airport is open to public use as a general aviation facility.
- **Mount Pleasant Regional Airport:** Three flight schools are located at this [airport](#) and it serves recreational fliers and aviation enthusiasts. No passenger services are offered at this airport.

Tips to Consider –

- Note that the CARTA does have routes to the Charleston International Airport if you prefer not to drive yourself or take a taxi/Uber/Lyft.
- When taking a flight, make sure you check the airline’s regulations regarding seating, baggage, and other important matters.

GET INVOLVED

The Global Fluency Initiative is an activation of the Charleston Metro FDI Plan and the One Region Global Competitiveness Strategy. It is led and implemented by a volunteer Action Team committed to continuing to grow the metro’s global fluency. **For more information, contact:**

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