

Welcome to Hamburg



A Sustainability Guide for International Students

Arriving in Hamburg is exciting, but it also comes with new challenges.

From navigating daily life to understanding local customs, sustainability might not be the first thing on your mind, and that's totally understandable.

This guide is here to help.

Designed by students, for students, it offers clear, practical tips to help you live more sustainably in Hamburg from day one. From waste sorting and eco-friendly transport to conserving energy and water, and even making mindful food choices, you'll find simple ways to reduce your footprint without added stress.

Welcome to Hamburg. Welcome to a more sustainable way of living.

Sustainable Mobility: Getting Around



1 **hvv** is Hamburg's public transport network. It includes

- U-Bahn (metro)
- S-Bahn (train which connects the metropolitan areas of one or more cities)
- Busses and ferries - yes, the ferry is part of public transport!



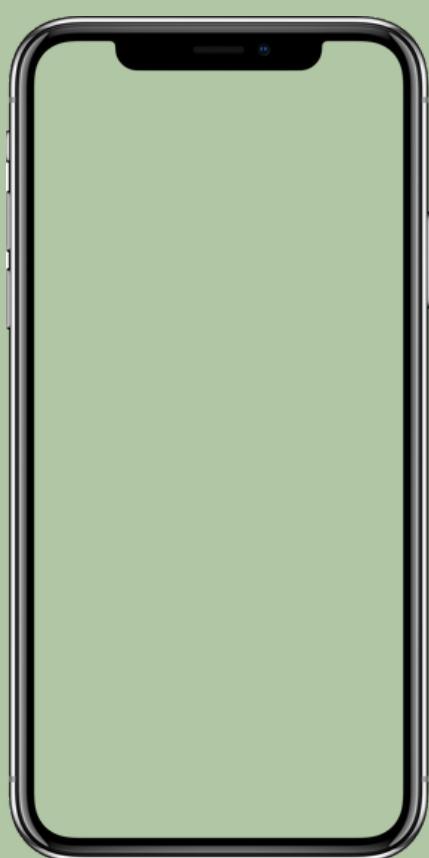
- RB (Regional Bahn – regional train)
- RE (Regional Express – regional train with less stops than RB)



2 **Deutschlandticket: One pass - travel all over Germany.**

The Deutschlandticket is a public transport pass in Germany that allows unlimited travel on local and regional trains, buses, trams, and subways across the entire country.

If you are enrolled as a student at one of the public universities in Hamburg, your semester fee already includes the Deutschlandticket for six months (known as the 'Semesterticket'). You will receive it from your university (for HAW Hamburg students: [HAW-Hamburg: Ticket](#)).



If you are not enrolled at a university during your stay in Hamburg (for example, if you came for an internship, or if you plan to arrive earlier or stay longer than your enrollment period) you can purchase the Deutschlandticket as a monthly subscription. Anyone can buy the Deutschlandticket!

Valid for: S-Bahn, U-Bahn, buses, trams, regional trains RB and RE

Not valid for: Long-distance trains (ICE, IC, EC), FlixTrain, FlixBus, any touristic trains and buses

You can access the hvv network with it!

- Price: 58€/month (2025)
- Monthly subscription, cancel by the 10th of any month
- More info [here](#)

Costs Normal Plan:

- 5 € per year
- Includes 30 minutes free per ride for regular bikes
- After 30 minutes: 0.10 € per minute
- More info [here](#)

3 **StadtRAD Hamburg- Bike sharing**

Perfect for short trips across the city! It's not only environmentally friendly, it's also cheap!

How it works:

- Download the StadtRAD app and register
- Locate & unlock a bike via QR code or map
- Pause your ride at any time (pause counts toward rental time)
- Return the bike to any StadtRAD station and lock it – done!



4 Swapfiets

Want your own bike but no stress with maintenance?

Swapfiets gives you a personal bike for a monthly fee—including repairs and theft replacement.



Good to know:

- You can choose between different models: regular and e-bike.
- Our tip: Deluxe 7 city bike is the perfect option for a city bike! Monthly fee for this model: 17,90€
- More info [here](#)

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MOIA: Ridesharing, Electric and smart

MOIA is a ride-sharing shuttle using 100% electric vehicles.

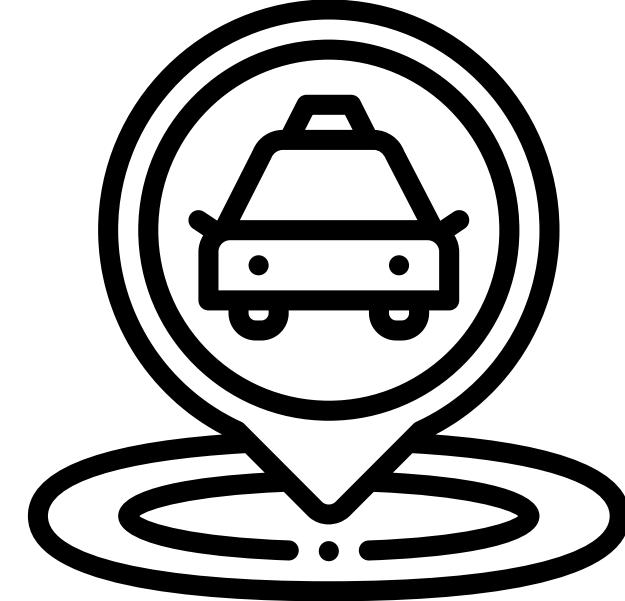
An intelligent algorithm sorts the users' pick-up points and destinations and then bundles them together to create fast and efficient drop-off routes.

How to use it:

1. Download the MOIA app for free
2. Enter your start and end location. You will be informed when a vehicle is available.
3. Pay via app with a credit card (Visa or Matercard), Apple Pay or PayPal. Arrival time and travel costs will be displayed in the app.

Good to know:

- Available to/from Hamburg Airport (small luggage only!) with a surcharge
- Group bookings lower the price per person
- Price stays fixed—even with detours to pick up or drop off other passengers.



'The Shuttle-on-Demand from MOIA combines the flexibility of a private car with the environmental friendliness of local public transport,' - Robert Henrich, MOIA COO



6 Useful apps for mobility:

- **HVV App** – your public transport travel planner in Hamburg
- **DB Navigator** – regional and national trains (for when you want to plan trips in Germany!)
- **HVV Switch** – All-in-one app for public transport, car sharing, scooters & more in Hamburg
- **MOIA**

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E-Scooter

Perfect for quick trips: providers include Tier, Lime, and Voi

Good to know:

- App-based
- Charged by time and distance
- Wear a helmet, drive safely & park responsibly (don't block sidewalks!)



Waste Management

Click to watch:

[Video: How to sort waste correctly](#)

Waste management in Hamburg is handled by Stadtreinigung Hamburg, the city's public cleaning and recycling service. Recycling and waste reduction support Hamburg's climate and resource protection goals.

Tip: Check the Stadtreinigung [website](#) or [app](#) to see which bin goes out on which day at your address.



- Use biodegradable paper bags or newspaper to collect bio-waste-no plastic bags!
- Do not put meat, dairy products, or cooked food in the green bin

Black bin



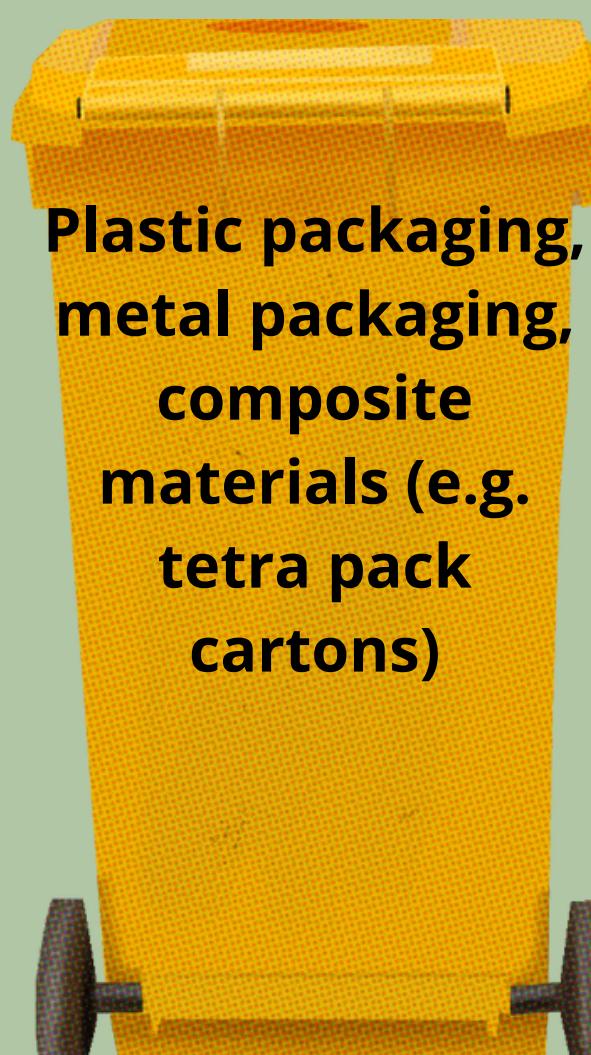
- Only use this bin for things that do not fit in another category
- Reducing residual waste helps keep Hamburg sustainable

Blue bin



- Remove plastic windows from envelopes if possible
- Flatten cardboard to save space
- Remove staples or metal clips from paper

Yellow bin/bag



- Yellow bags are free at district offices
- Only put in empty and spoon-clean containers
- Remove paper sleeves from packaging
- Do not put loose plastic like toys or general plastic items in there-only packaging

Glass containers



- Remove lids and caps (they go in the yellow bin)
- No window glass, mirrors, or ceramics

Deposit system



- Return empty bottles and cans to supermarket reverse vending machines to get your deposit back.
- You can use your voucher as a discount on your next purchase at the supermarket!
- Look for the word "Pfand" on the label or receipt

Bulky waste



Large items that don't fit in regular bins, broken household items, carpet, large toys, wood panels

- Book a free collection from Stadtreinigung Hamburg
- Alternatively, bring items to a recycling center
- Do not put bulky waste on the street without a scheduled pickup

Hazardous waste



Batteries, light bulbs, electronics and small appliances, paint, chemicals, medicines



- Bring these to a recycling center. Find locations and opening times at stadtreinigung.hamburg
- Never put batteries or electronics in the regular bins!

Tips for reducing waste

- **Use reusable bags and containers** → Bring your own shopping bags, lunch boxes, cups.
- **Choose reusable over disposable** → Buy drinks in Mehrweg (reusable) bottles, use refillable items like soap dispensers and razors.
- **Avoid unnecessary packaging** → Shop at markets or bakeries where you can buy food without plastic, or visit "Unverpacktläden" (package-free stores).
- **Save paper** → Print on both sides and use digital notes. "No ads" stickers help reduce flyer waste in your mailbox.
- **Buy second-hand and donate** → Use flea markets or apps like vinted or eBay and donation centers like Stilbruch.
- **Reduce food waste** → Plan meals and only buy what you need. Share leftovers or use food sharing apps.
- **Sort waste correctly** → If you're unsure, check the Abfall-ABC on the Stadtreinigung Hamburg website. It is in German, but translation tools like DeepL can help.

Energy Conservation: Reducing Costs & Usage



1 Use energy-efficient lighting

- Replace traditional lightbulbs with **LED** ones: they use up to 80% less energy, will cost you less over time and last longer
- Always **switch off the lights** before leaving the house/a room

2 Unplug and switch off devices

- Even when on stand-by, devices consume energy, so **turn them off completely** to conserve energy and save money
- Use **power strips that have on/off switches** to make the process easier



3 Reduce heating costs

- Always **keep track** of the current room temperature
- Keep radiators **free of dust and decoration**, so that they can heat more efficiently
- If possible, **lower the temperature** – even 1-2°C less can save up to 6% in heating costs
- Always have the **windows and doors closed tightly** when heating is on
- Instead of keeping the windows tilted for prolonged periods of time, air out rooms shortly but effectively with "**shock ventilation**", where you open all doors and windows completely for a brief 5 minutes

4 Cooking tips

- **Use a lid** when boiling, it will bring down time drastically
- **Turn off the stove/oven a few minutes early** so that you can put the residual heat to use
- Cook food in **bigger batches** and reheat over the next few mealtimes to save heat and also water from cleaning the utensils fewer times

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Get to know your consumption

- It is a good first step to **get to know your personal energy consumption** and getting a feeling for how much energy you use on a daily basis
- Use the following link to calculate your approximate **energy consumption**
- You can also use this link, where you can approximate your **CO₂ footprint**

Please understand that this is not to judge you, but rather to help you with better understanding your current habits.

6 Optional: Choose green electricity

- If you choose your energy supplier yourself, use a provider that offers **renewable energy tariffs**
- Check out the following link to **compare providers**
- If your energy supplier is chosen by your landlord/dorm, ask them what tariff they use and maybe **suggest switching to a renewable supplier** if not already using one

7 Choose seasonal & regional food

- Transport and refrigeration of imported food require a lot of energy, so buying **seasonal and local fruits & vegetables** reduces energy use and emissions
- Their **labels** often show the country of origin; this can help you avoid long-distance imports
- You're not sure what's in season? Look on **local guides, seasonality schedules** or buy on weekly **farmers' markets**

Water: Save Resources

without Sacrificing Comfort



1 Keep showers short & smart

- Reducing showers to a maximum of **5 minutes** will save water and heating energy
- Consider installing a **low-flow shower head**, which can reduce water usage by up to 50% by using a unique nozzle shape or mini-turbines

2 Turn off the tap

- When washing your hands or brushing your teeth, consider **turning off the tap** while brushing/soaping to save 6L per minute or more
- The same goes for the shower; here too, consider **turning off the water** while using the soap/shampoo



3 Use your appliances efficiently

- Always run them only with **full loads** and regularly (though not always) use their eco-modes if available
- Choose **lower temperatures** for your washing machine if applicable (usually 30°C is enough)
- **Don't rinse off your dishes before putting them in the dishwasher**, since most modern dishwashers can make them clean even without; only scrape off bigger or hardened leftovers

4 Get To Know Your Setup

- In student dorms or shared apartments, the **utilities might be included** in your rent or billed separately. Ask your dorm/landlord if unsure
- Clear up whether there might be an **energy or water usage cap**, and track your consumption if you do pay utilities separately

5 Report leaks

- If you notice a **leaky tap**, toilet etc, let your landlord/dorm know, since a single leak can waste tens to hundreds of litres a day



6 Cultural Tips: German Efficiency At Home

- Especially in older buildings, heating is often centrally controlled, so be sure you **understand your radiator system**
- Instead of using a drying machine, **air-dry your clothes** to save electricity. This might also be mandatory, since a **drying machine might not be allowed**, especially in older buildings. Once again, check with your landlord/dorm when you have questions
- **German tap water, especially in Hamburg, is of excellent drinking quality and gets regularly tested (find more information [here](#))**, so be sure to hydrate in a cost-efficient and healthy way
- **Water dispensers are available at the HAW**: on all campuses and free to use



Greens on the Go

Plant-Based Places to Eat in Hamburg

Tasty veggie-friendly spots across the city!

Quick Bites

Schanzen Döner

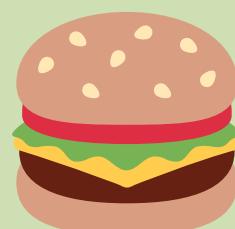
(Sternschanze)



Vegan soy döner - fast, filling & open late

Vincent Vegan

(Central station)



Loaded fries, juicy burgers - all vegan

Chill Spots

Cafe Koppel (St. Georg)



Leafy courtyard café - great for lunch or studying

Mamalicious (Sternschanze)



Vegan pancakes, bagels & chill brunch vibes

Groceries & Markets

BioMarkt



Organic groceries with plenty of veggie snacks and staples

Denn's Biomarkt



Large vegan range, ideal for cooking

Tip:

- Some Asian markets in central Hamburg offer student discounts.
- Supermarkets offer plant-based options.

Unique Eats

Kkokki Loves Vegan

(Sternschanze)



Korean vegan bowls - hot & fresh

TA Vegan House

(St. Pauli & Altona)



Asian fusion tapas, fully plant-based

...and many more!

Conclusion: Every Small Step Counts!



Sustainable living doesn't have to be perfect, it just has to start somewhere.

The tips in this guide are here to inspire, not to judge. We understand that everyone's situation is different, and not all suggestions will fit every lifestyle. What matters is doing what you can, when you can. Even small actions, like sorting your waste, choosing second-hand, or riding a bike, can make a real difference.

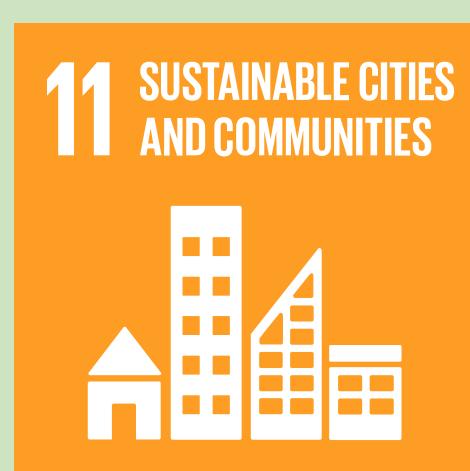
Why care?

Because the way we live affects not only our environment, but also the communities around us. By making mindful choices, you're contributing to a better, more sustainable future, for Hamburg and beyond.

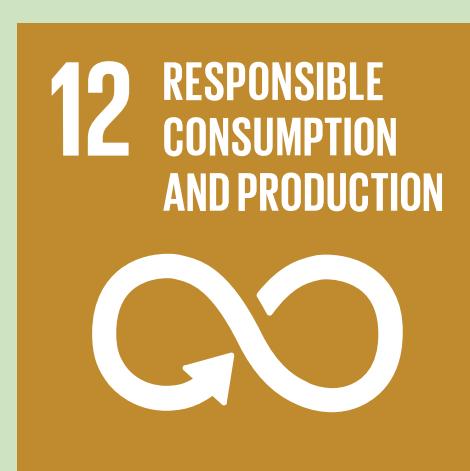
This guide is based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially:



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* <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

- SDG 4 – Quality Education: sharing useful, everyday sustainability knowledge
- SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities & Communities: helping you live in harmony with Hamburg
- SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption & Production: reducing waste, reusing more
- SDG 13 – Climate Action: empowering small steps that lower your impact

We hope this guide helped you feel more at home, and more confident in making sustainable choices in your new city.

Thanks for reading, and once again, welcome to Hamburg!

This guide was created in July 2025 by **Nic Gionfriddo, Giulia Mayerhoff, Brenda Rivera, Kathia Schlenker del Cid, Frederik Wendt** as part of the Bachelor's course **Intercultural Project Work at HAW Hamburg**.

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