



Windstar Cruises: Sustainability & Responsible Travel

Windstar Cruises, part of the Xanterra Travel Collection, blends upscale, small-ship exploration with a meaningful commitment to environmental responsibility. The company's 'Softer Footprint' philosophy touches every aspect of the guest experience—from efficient ship design and clean energy use to sustainable cuisine and coral reef restoration in Tahiti.

Fleet Innovations & Technical Details

Wind Class Ships: Sails + Motor for Fuel Conservation

Windstar's iconic Wind Class ships are designed to harness the power of nature itself. By combining traditional sails with modern motor technology, these vessels can glide across the ocean for hours at a time, dramatically reducing their reliance on fossil fuels. The flagship, Wind Surf, exemplifies this approach—saving up to 7 tons of fuel per day when conditions allow for full sail operation. This innovative blend of wind and engine power not only conserves fuel but also minimizes emissions, setting a new standard for responsible travel at sea.

Itinerary Planning for Fuel Efficiency

Windstar's itinerary planning plays a crucial role in fuel conservation. Routes are strategically designed to minimize distances between ports, reducing overall fuel consumption and emissions. This thoughtful approach ensures that guests enjoy immersive travel experiences while the company maintains its commitment to environmental stewardship.

Star Plus Initiative & Engine Upgrades

As part of the Star Plus Initiative completed in 2022, Windstar 'stretched' three all-suite Star Class yachts—Star Breeze, Star Legend, and Star Pride—by adding new midsections and re-engineering for greater fuel and emissions efficiency. This \$250 million project included replacing seven older engines with four new NOx Tier III engines equipped with selective catalytic reactors to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions. The hulls were also treated with advanced coatings to reduce drag. Even with increased passenger capacity, greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by approximately 20% per gross ton nautical mile.

Shore Power Capability

All Windstar yachts except for Star Breeze and Wind Star are being outfitted with shore power capability, allowing them to plug in at port (where available) to reduce emissions. Star Breeze sails exclusively in Tahiti where shore power is not yet available, and Wind Star joins Star Breeze in Tahiti in 2027.

Fuels Used in the Fleet

Windstar's fleet uses a combination of marine gas oil and wind-assisted propulsion. The company is actively exploring sustainable marine fuels, including biofuel blends as a lower-emission alternative to traditional fossil fuels. These advanced fuel options represent Windstar's forward-thinking approach to reducing its carbon footprint and embracing cleaner energy sources.

Energy Efficiency Upgrades

AC chiller upgrades and automated upgrades for HVAC and ventilation systems, including time controls and

targeted power monitoring, deliver key benefits: lower energy use, reduced operating costs, and a smaller carbon footprint. These improvements conserve fuel and cut emissions, while ongoing LED lighting surveys promise even further energy savings and operational efficiency. Additionally, propeller upgrades are supporting improved propulsion power efficiency of the vessels aligned with their operating speeds and continuing to drive down fuel consumption.

Waste Management & Emissions Reduction

Micro Auto Gasification System (MAGS)

Windstar has introduced the Micro Auto Gasification System (MAGS), a cutting-edge technology that reduces onboard waste volume and results in lower incineration emissions. MAGS is a modern, environmentally friendly alternative to burning waste. It converts solid waste into energy and a small amount of ash, with minimal emissions. This supports Windstar's sustainability goals by reducing onboard waste volume and lowering the environmental impact of waste disposal.

Advanced Wastewater & Bilge Water Treatment

Star Class ships feature EVAC advanced wastewater treatment systems that meet the highest global standards. Fleet-wide upgrades include dual oily water separators and 'white box' discharge sampling for enhanced safety and compliance with international regulations.

Plastic Reduction & Recycling

Windstar has eliminated single-use plastics such as straws, cups, stirrers, and water bottles, replacing them with reusable alternatives. Nordaq premium filtered water is provided in reusable glass bottles fleet-wide, reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable practices onboard. Guests may take these bottles ashore. Guests will find L'Occitane body wash, shampoo and conditioner in large, refillable containers affixed in showers to reduce use of mini plastic containers.

Windstar Cruises complies with MARPOL (IMO regulations on pollution prevention) and all national regulations in each sailing region. As part of reduction of waste efforts, Windstar Cruises focuses on ordering appropriate quantities of food and supplies and asks suppliers to consider suitable and reduced packaging. The yachts collaborate with local communities on garbage segregation to meet local requirements.

Sustainable Operations & Policies

Environmental Officers & Crew Training

Each Windstar vessel's Captain serves as Environmental Officer, supported by trained Hotel General Managers and crew. Annual training ensures robust standards for marine protection and compliance with international regulations such as MARPOL.

Fuel Conservation Practices

Fleet-wide initiatives include energy efficient hull coating applications for reduced drag and maximizing sail systems when wind conditions permit. These practices contribute to significant fuel savings and reduce environmental impact.

Local Partnerships & Guest Engagement

Windstar Cruises makes in-kind and financial donations to organizations supporting environmental and community causes each year. In 2022, Windstar began supporting coral reef restoration in French Polynesia.

Guests across the fleet can adopt corals and contribute to marine ecosystem preservation. A presentation by a Coral Gardeners staff member occurs on every Tahiti cruise.

Sustainable Cuisine

Windstar's collaborations with the James Beard Foundation and the National Health Association brings sustainable, locally sourced, and plant-based menus to the fleet. Chefs source ingredients from local markets, supporting regional economies and reducing food miles. Dining venues offer regionally inspired menus featuring local produce, seafood, and artisanal products. Windstar reduces food waste by strategically managing buffet foods and supplementing with an extensive à la carte menu.

Economic Support for Communities

Windstar supports local economies by buying fresh seafood, produce, and regional specialties for onboard meals and gifts. These purchases benefit local fishermen, farmers, and artisans. The company also hires local guides for shore excursions, keeping tourism dollars within communities and providing meaningful employment.

Destinations That Deliver

With fewer than 350 guests on board, Windstar's yachts access intimate harbors and lesser-traveled ports—places larger ships can't go. Year-round sailing in destinations like Tahiti and the Mediterranean emphasizes sustainable seasonality. Activities such as swimming and kayaking directly from the yacht's Marina platform keep guests close to nature and immersed in the destination without traveling far from the yacht.