Public Transport

Saxon Switzerland has an excellent public transport network.
It is an environmentally friendly ànd relaxed way to travel.
Enjoy a ride on the old-fashioned tram through the Kirnitzchtal, the steam and panoramic trains or the paddle-steamers on the Elbe.
Travelling by public transport usually involves some planning.
Here is an overview of a variety of public transport options, including tourist stops on the way.

By Bus



Pirna bus station is the hub of all regional bus lines. It lies next to the railway station and is easily accessible from Rathen. In the weekends a coach, that takes you and your bike to various destinations in the region, leaves from here.

A useful overview of departure times and routes is available at most stations and Tourist Informations.

Another option is to use the VVO navigator.

There are a few shuttle services as well:
connecting Rathen - Bastei (leaving from the parking place near the supermarket in Rathen) railway station - Königstein.

By Tram

Kirnitzschtalbahn



The old-fashioned narrow-gauge Kirnitzschtalbahn (Kirnitzsch Valley Tramway) runs through the lovely valley of the Kirnitzsch river. The tramway was built to draw tourists and it still attracts many. The line runs between Bad Schandau and the Lichtenhainer Wasserfall (Lichtenhain Waterfall).

Stopping places on the way are a great starting point for a walk in the magnificent and vast Schrammsteine area.

For the Häntzschelstiege and Zwillingsstiege (via ferrata [literally this means iron road. It is a protected climbing path]) you should leave the tram at Beuthenfall.

Tickets can be purchased from the tram driver.

Bikes are not allowed on the tram.

Dresden



Dresden has an extensive tram network where you can use VVO one-day tickets and reduced tickets.

By Train

Rathen's train station lies on the other side of the Elbe. On average, a panoramic train (S-bahn) leaves from here in the direction of the Czech Republic (Schöna) or Dresden every 30 minutes.



Travelling in the direction of the Czech Republick you pass through Köningstein (0:05) and Bad Schandau (0:10).

Change trains in Bad Schandau for:

- The Sebnitztalbahn, this is the mountain train to Neustadt (0:56).
  To do the full tour of the "Sächsische Schweiz Ring" you should take the train to Neustadt from Pirna.
  Stolpen (1:15) is one of the places you will pass through.
- The train to Sebnitz (0:40).
- Kirnitzschtalbahn (narrow-gauge tram to the Lichtenhainer Wasserfall (0:55).
- The Eurocity to Prague (1:47).

In the direction of Dresden (0:40) you pass through Stadt Wehlen, Pirna (0:11) Heidenau-Grosssedlitz (o.a.).
From Dresden you can continue your journey to:

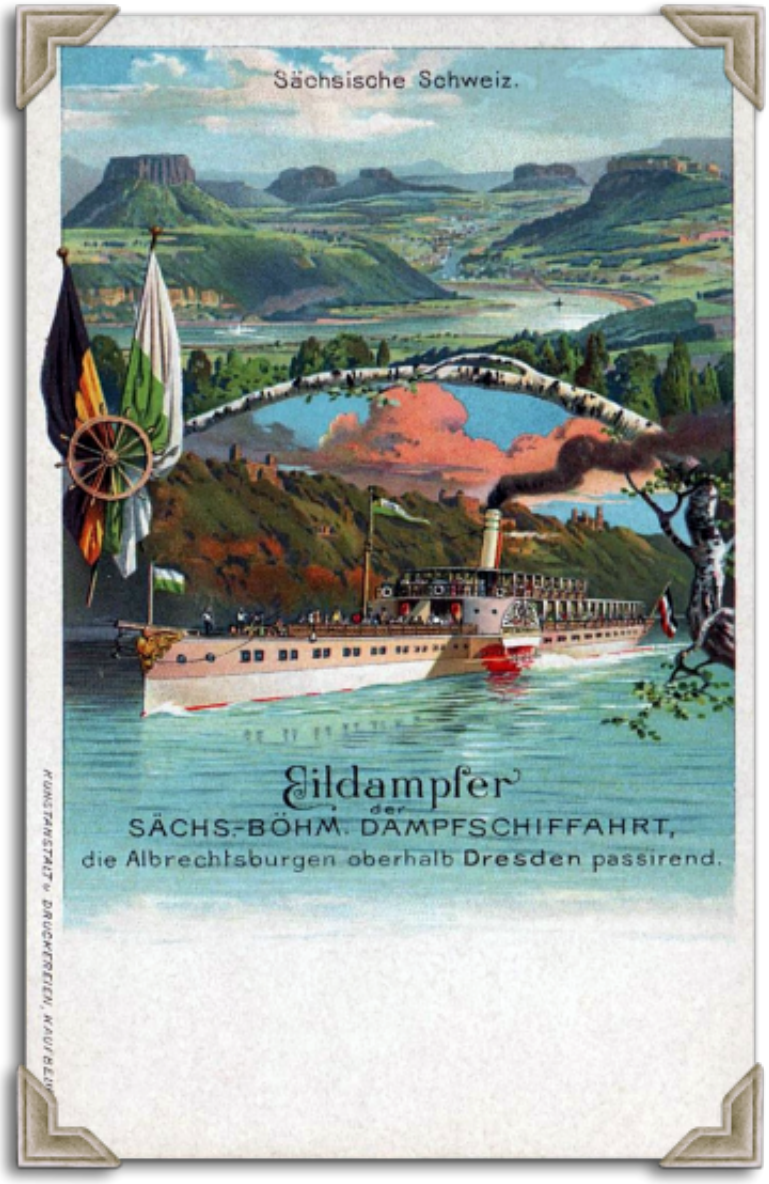
- Radebeul Ost (0:55) for a visit to the Carl May or DDR museum.

  Here you can change to the steam train (Lößnitzgrundbahn) to Radeburg with an optional stop in Moritzburg (1:22) to see the Schloss (castle).

- or in Meißen (1:16), the city of the famous porcelain.

By Paddle boot

Sit back and relax on a deck of a historic steam paddler and enjoy the romantic view.



The traditional fleet passes not only through one of the most enchanting river landscapes in Europe but also through Dresden Elbe Valley. Along the way you will see:

- Königstein
- The Bastei
- Stadt Wehlen
- Pirna
- Pillnitz palace
- "das Blaues Wunder" or the Loschwitz Bridge. Connecting the city districts Balsewitz and Loschwitz
- the three "Elbschlösser" (Villa Stockhausen, castle Eckberg, castle Albrechtsberg)
- Canaletto view on Dresden (with among other the Semperoper, Hofkirche, Zwinger, Frauenkirche, Grünes Gewölbe)
- Wine fields on the steep banks of the Elbe
- Meißen skyline with the Albrechtsburg castle

The fleet consists of various ships. Along the river you can visit one of the sights and transfer to the next paddle steamer to continue your journey. An interesting option is to cycle back to Rathen along the well beloved Elbe cycle route. You can also travel back by train.

By Ferry

In Rathen

According to the timetable the ferry sails every 15 minutes.
In practice, however, the ferry leaves as soon as the last person is on the ferry, boat traffic on the river allowing.



Sailing times are:

In the summer season

15. May - 31. October	From	To
Monday to Friday:	04:30	00:45
Saturday, Sun- and holidays:	05:30	00:45

In the winter season

1. November - 14. Mai	From	To
Monday to Friday:	04:30	23:45
Saturday, Sun- and holidays:	05:30	23:45

As a guest, you pay a reduced fare on presenting your spa pass.
VVO all-day and reduced fare tickets are not valid on the ferry of Rathen.

Outside Rathen

Every village on the Elbe has at least one ferry. Most are maintained by the VVO which means their all-day and reduced fare tickets can be used on the ferries. On average, ferries sail according to timetable. For sailing times check the VVO website.



Special means of transport

A somewhat unusual, but interesting means of transport is:

Standseilbahn (Funicular Railway) in Dresden



Built in 1895 this funicular railway is in the direct proximity of "das Blaues Wunder" and takes you to the villa district "Weisser Hirsch" which lies high above the city. Once you are at the top, you have a beautiful view over the city from "The Balcony of Dresden". We recommend restaurant 'Luisenhof", which you cannot miss, but a walk through both city districts is also very much worth your while. The 547 meter long ride can be combined with a visit to the historic engine room.

Schwebebahn (Suspension Railway) in Dresden



Suspension railway may sound modern, but being built in 1901, it is the oldest monorail in the world. It connects the district of Loschwitz with the 84 meter higher district of Oberloschwitz and it is not far from the Standseilbahn (Funicular Railway). During the journey you have a beautiful view over the city and here is another opportunity to visit a historic engine room. From the robust tower at the top you can see as far as the Erzgebirge (the Ore Mountains) on a clear day.

Personenaufzug (Passenger truss-tower lift) Bad Schandau



This freestanding, 50 m high steel tower was built in Art Nouveau style. A bridge connects the tower with the plateau that is a natural habitat for lynx.

The lift was built in 1904 to connect the 50 meter higher Ostrauer Scheibe (Ostrauer Plateau) with Bad Schandau. Here you can admire several beautifully designed wooden houses which once were holiday homes for affluent Russians.