

It's a Bike, It's a Stroller, It's a Taga!!!

07/09/2012 by [Elisabeth Meyer](#) 10 Comments



If you want to get technical the [Taga](#) is a bakfiets (Dutch for cargo or carrier bike). The Taga was developed in the Netherlands where they use three wheeled bikes with large boxes or seats to carry cargo and children from place to place. Here in America we typically use bike trailers that may or may not change into a stroller at your destination. What sets the Taga apart is the entire thing morphs from bike to stroller without leaving a bike frame and wheels behind. There is nothing to lock up once you get to where you are biking.



The Taga is very expensive (\$1495) when compared to popular trailer bikes, but if you take into consideration the added cost of a bike it seems more reasonable. Taga is in fact the least expensive carrier bike in the world, and specifically in the USA, it is also the smallest, lightest and most versatile. A decent bicycle + trailer costs about the same. Also, the Taga has several [accessories](#) that will extend the usefulness of the bike far beyond your stroller years. It has a shopping cart basket (\$229) you can attach instead of the child seats. This allows you to morph the Taga into a shopping cart when you ride to the store. I use it for this purpose regularly, and the basket holds several days of groceries. It is probably about the size of those small Dollar Store shopping baskets. When I am done I turn it back into a bike and ride home. The shopping basket has handles so once home I can take the whole thing to my kitchen for emptying. The only bummer is the child seat does not fit with the basket so you get to, I mean have to, shop by yourself. The basket zips together so you can unzip it to store it flat. However, it is a little difficult to line up all the zippers so I never break mine down.

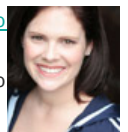
One seat with a canopy comes with the standard package. You can add a second seat (no canopy) for a younger child (\$218). You have to screw the two seats together on the same frame so you cannot quickly switch between singles and doubles mode. You can buy a car seat adapter (\$95) to use with several Maxi Cosi, Cybex, and Be Safe models. But, the manufacturer strongly recommends not biking with a child younger than one. I am not sure I see the usefulness of this accessory. Taga says the age limit on the car seat is because in a few states in the USA there is a state law about it and their recommendation is based on these states, to be on the safe side. In most of the states there isn't any age limitation, though. They recommend parents to check the law in their state. In Europe, many people use the Maxi Cosi adapter with Taga from 3 months and simply ride slower.

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The seats are roomy and comfortable even for big kids, but a covered wagon style seat for larger kids is also available. This Double Wooden Seat comes with a sun & rain cover, and accommodates two children up to 52 lbs and 30 lbs in bike mode. However, you cannot use it in stroller mode, and at \$625 it is probably not worth it. There is a small storage basket underneath the bike, but unless it is something heavy I'm always afraid things will fall out. Instead I purchased a pair of side bags (\$59) that are just big enough for cups, snacks, a couple of diapers/wipes, keys, wallet, and maybe one change of clothes. I often just have my kids hold their backpacks.



As a bike I LOVE my Taga. The seats can slightly recline for naps, and with three wheels it is very sturdy. It only has three gears so you cannot go fast, and hills take considerable effort. It takes me approximately 30 minutes to ride the 3.5 miles to my work with a five year old and three year old. I live in a very hilly area, and admittedly there is one extremely steep hill that I sometimes have to get off and push the bike up. Remember this was designed in the Netherlands where it is pretty flat, so if you live in the foot hills or mountains this is not the bike for you. Likewise, if you want to ride in races or long distance on the road this is not the bike for you. I ride on the sidewalk or bike lane only. I don't mind that it is only a three speed as I would not want to go fast while carrying my kids anyway. The fairly high weight limit of 55lbs and 44lbs in each seat means that my children ages nearly 7 and 4 still fit. My son's head is taller than the back seat now, but he doesn't seem to mind. My oldest is at the top of the weight limit, but she is nearly old enough to ride her own bike along side of me.



As a stroller I am less impressed. It is very wide and bulky so it won't fit in small boutiques, but large stores like Wal-Mart and the local grocery are fine. The bike wheels do great on grass at fairs or festivals. The biggest problems I have with it are the front wheel is fixed which makes me lean the stroller on its two back wheels to turn, or back the stroller up. Also the weight limit in stroller mode is much less at 33 lbs per seat. I am not sure why there is such a weight discrepancy, but I know the seat sits more forward on the frame in stroller mode. (UPDATE: Taga says the weight limit in stroller mode is because of the ASTM safety standard which defines a child weight limit for strollers.) Now that my kids are older I end up pushing an empty stroller around Wal-Mart. However, if you have

small kids and want to do some trial walking or bike to grassy festivals the large fixed wheel is good. Just realize it is too heavy for real running or steep hiking.



My kids love it. They love being in the front so they can see and talk to me. I feel much more secure riding this than using my old bike trailer. I never felt really comfortable with that because my kids were so far behind my bike I wasn't sure how they were doing. Not a big deal with older children, but my younger one was just over a year old. Plus, once a truck almost hit them in the trailer. The car was behind me, and I had the flag on the back. The driver wasn't paying attention, and almost hit them while turning into a drive way. It was such a close call that I never used that bike trailer again. With the Taga my kids are up at nearly the same level as I am, and are close to me in front.

Overall, if you are going to use it for many trips instead of your car it is worth the money. I ride mine to work twice a week, take the kids to school nearly daily, go to the park, grocery store, and ride to Wal-Mart. I put nearly 30 miles a week on that bike because most things I need to do are within 5 miles of my house. You can get it into a large SUV to say drive to a board walk or green belt park for an afternoon of family riding fun, but you have to break it down quite a bit. Even then it will take up the whole trunk. Also, if you are using the double seat you cannot separate the two seats. You must have a very large trunk space with the third row seats out. In the end, it is just one of those luxury items that if you have the extra money to spend on a cool looking toy, or you don't own a car (ME!) than it is worth the high price point.

At this point you can only purchase Taga directly from the manufacturer at www.tagabikes.com. They tried using distributors like Magic Beans and other high end retailers, but for operational reasons they only sell them directly now. As for customer service, I once had a problem with my bike. I contacted the company in the Netherlands. They shipped me a new part at no cost. As for routine maintenance I take it to a regular bike shop.

Oh, and one last thing worth mentioning... If you are an introvert this is not the bike for you. Everywhere I go people comment on it. The bright colors and unique design is very attention getting. Several people have pulled their car over to ask me about it. Be prepared for all the questions from curios onlookers as this bike is a conversation starter.



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