

Travel

Malta will make you and your bank manager happy

Your bank manager will cheer because you didn't have to overdraw your account or pay a king's ransom for a week or two in one of the sunniest holiday spots on the Mediterranean.

The 100-square-mile island state, less than 60 miles south of Sicily, boasts 11 hours of sunshine daily during the summer, compared with 9-1/2 hours in blue-skyed Greece or eight on the Costa Brava, both sunny by Canadian standards. And prices in Malta bear no relation to inflated Canadian prices.

This island playground, a republic within the British Commonwealth, is a group of islands and rocky islets, of which Malta is the largest — nine by 17 miles at the widest points.

Gozo, next in size (26 sq. mi.) and just a half-hour ferry trip away, is greener and more hilly than Malta. The baby of the trio is Comino, a square mile island sitting in the middle of the channel between Malta and Gozo. Its population comprises a handful of farmers and their families, and the staffs and patrons of two luxury hotels.

The Swiss and their magnificent travel machine

SYNDICATED TRAVEL NEWS — Have you always wanted to see Switzerland — but somehow you've got the idea that it's expensive, and not easy to travel around there?

Well, how wrong can you be!

Not only is Switzerland one of the most beautiful, hospitable and easy-to-travel-in countries of the world — it's also one of the most reasonably priced.

You know, hotel prices in Switzerland haven't gone up for almost six years now — and you can pay only \$24 a night for a room that would cost at least twice as much in a hotel in New York, Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal.



Probably because the Swiss do want you to come and see their country, they have invented a marvellous idea called the Swiss Travel Voucher.

No — it's not a travelling alarm clock! It's a terribly simple system of travel, hotel and tourist attraction vouchers that give you complete freedom to go just about anywhere you want to — at any time.

Basically, all hotels are graded by cost — and only the best in each category are used. In fact, these categories (which are color-coded as well in the brochure that you can get from your travel agent), range from a high of \$40 a night to a low of \$10 a night. All of these rooms, except the lowest category, come with a private bath or shower. Now, a word about this. As you probably know, the Swiss are famous for their hotels. Their hotel management training courses are the best in the world; and a \$10 a night hotel in Switzerland is not the same as a \$10 a night hotel in Canada. All the hotels, however, they cost, are clean, comfortable and very good value for money. In fact, the \$10 hotels are more likely to be one of the old, medieval guesthouses, built of wood and with overhanging roofs. So, before you go you simply buy — at your travel agent's — as many vouchers as nights that you want to spend in Switzerland. You don't have to buy all of one kind, either — nor do you have to book ahead. You are recommended to call the hotel that you want to stay at on the morning of the day you intend to arrive. But the thing is, your accommodation is always guaranteed.

This means that your holiday can be totally flexible, because you're always sure of a place to stay, no matter where you go to. Now, travel: You can buy a Swiss Holiday card at the same time that you buy your accommodation vouchers. This gives you unlimited travel on the rail, steamer and bus systems for varying periods. Prices start at \$77 (1st class) and \$55 (2nd class) for an eight day period, and go up to \$149 and \$107 for a month. Alternatively, you may want to lease a car — which you can also do over here, from the

same travel agent where you buy the accommodation vouchers and travel card. Prices vary, depending on the model leased and whether you opt for the unlimited mileage, or time plus mileage, packages. But to give some idea, it would cost you \$216 a week to lease a Ford Fiesta 1100, unlimited mileage. As you can imagine, many people rent a car for part of their holiday, and travel on a Swiss Holiday Card for the rest. The point is that there are over 30 locations where you can pick up whichever car you've already rented; which again makes for a very flexible holiday indeed.

Tourist vouchers: these entitle you to all sorts of different advantages in dif-

ferent places. It might be a sightseeing tour of Zurich, or Geneva. Perhaps a wine-tasting in the Italian Canton. It could be a cable-car trip into the Alps, or admission to any one of the hundreds of museums and art galleries there.

What all this means is that you can plan and budget exactly how much your basic holiday is going to cost. Thereafter, all you have to worry about are meals (don't forget that breakfast is included in the accommodation voucher), as if you're leaving a car, and spending money. And you're not tied down to any specific itinerary, either: you can go wherever the fancy takes you. One day you can be climbing the Matterhorn (the easy way,

of course!) and the next, you can be boating on Lake Geneva. You can explore Bern in the morning, and arrive in Lausanne at night — without having to worry about where you're going to stay, and how to get there.

But, just to make it easy for you, the Swiss National Tourist Office in conjunction with Swissair and Air Canada have prepared some sample trips for you to take. They range in length from three days to fourteen days, and each place is worth seeing, each major tourist attraction is carefully spelled out.

Really, the Swiss Holiday Voucher is one of the most marvellous ways of seeing a very beautiful country — and of meeting its very hospitable people.

Europe camping a togetherness deal

BY TONY HARRISS

SYNDICATED TRAVEL NEWS — "But you just don't understand. Dad. Everybody's doing it." She flings her hair back angrily and stamps her foot in frustration.

You find yourself sighing. And not for the first time in this conversation, either. "Not everybody's doing it, dear," you say wearily, "and a lot of the ones who do get into trouble." You try to explain. You say "I just don't want you to have any bad experiences. It should be a good experience."

"But it will be. It's the only way to really get the feel of the country. Besides, hitch-hiking is perfectly safe." Your patience is at an end. You know that hitch-

hiking alone through any country is not perfectly safe... and is maybe a good deal more dangerous for an inexperienced, young foreign tourist. "You won't be reasonable, dear, so I'm just going to say that I won't allow it, and that's all there is to it."

"Oh, Dad, you'll just never understand." And she runs upstairs to her room.

Yes, the current myth among the young is that the bedroll, the jeans and the thumb can miraculously get them through Europe... and maybe even overland to the mysterious Himalayas. And, let's face it, a lot of young people do manage to survive and return to embellish the romantic myth of footloose travel.

But a lot of them don't return. Last year, 19 young North American tourists simply "disappeared" somewhere in Europe and Asia. Hundreds more languish in jails from Turkey to Nepal, mostly because of ignorance of local drug laws and the romantic myth that it is "freer" over there. Then, too, even among those who do return safely from the summer's trekking, the real story of their experience is too often a nightmare of dysentery, hepatitis and the unending discomforts of exposure. It is a reality that is glossed over in the re-telling.

You understand these realities, and, as a parent, you try to communicate them to your son or daughter... but you run up against the very powerful myth of romantic, footloose travel that is current among the young.

Yes, about this time of year when the young start thinking about summer travel, well, a lot of parents feel like a character in a modern nonsense play... maybe entitled *Oh, Dad! Poor Dad, They've Blucked You Into A Corner And You're Feelin' So Sad*.

About this time of year a lot of parents feel backed into corners when the subject of youthful travel comes up; you can allow your inexperienced offspring to travel unsafely, or you can appear as an "unreasonable tyrant" in their immature and rose-shaded eyes.

Well, Dad. And Mom. There is a way out of the corner.

Goway Travel Limited of Toronto in conjunction with Transit Travel in Europe has provided an escape route for both you and your youngsters over 17. Goway/Transit series of bus-camping tours through Europe and Asia seem to offer the best of both worlds: the reality of freedom and informality for youthful travellers... and the reality of peace of mind for their parents. And the prices are very right.

They have no less than eight bus-camping adventures designed for the 18-30 age group, ranging from three weeks to fourteen weeks in length, offering the experiences of all Europe. Some of the trips concentrate on Russia and Scandinavia, others concentrate on Greece and the Greek Islands, still others cover Spain and Morocco. The fourteen-week European itinerary takes in 23 countries.

If your young adult is suffering from the "Marco Polo Syndrome" and insists on nothing less than going overland to the Himalayas, well, Goway has even packaged that so that you can wave goodbye without trauma. "London-Katmandu Overland" is a two-month adventure of mixed camping and hotel-accommodation combined with experienced leadership, luxury coach transportation and safety.

Camping adventures can get you out of that corner, Mom and Dad. Maybe, it would be a smart move to suggest it before your offspring start eyeing backpacks in sporting goods stores.

Goway/Transit prices are probably cheaper than the "hostelling and hitching" route. A six-week European tour costs as little as \$579 plus another \$111 for the food kitty. Even the marathon London-Katmandu two-month adventure costs as little as \$573 plus another \$129 for the food kitty and a further \$390 to cover accommodation in areas where, for various reasons, camping may not be advisable. That's under \$1100 from London to Nepal.

These prices do not include air fare to London, the point of departure... that would hardly be possible at these rates. Getting to London is extra. But they do have a "London Club," a friendly youth hotel which offers two nights free accommodation with membership.

Altogether, this operator has no less than eighteen different tour packages. Some are designed for the youthful 18-30 age group, and some are intended for the "under 35's" who seek hotel accommodation instead of camping... but all are exciting and inexpensive. The range of tours offered is so extensive and varied that a brochure is necessary.

At this time of year, a Goway/Transit brochure is a good investment for worried parents. See your travel agent for a free copy.

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