

Recreation and Travel

Broader choice of Eurailpasses available

By VINCENT EGAN
Travel Columnist

Canadian travellers in Europe this year have a broader choice of Eurailpasses than ever before.

Introduced by the European railways in 1959, these "passess" - actually, flat-price tickets with unlimited mileage - are valid throughout the rail system in 17 countries on the Continent.

They can also be used for transportation on some ferry lines (in certain circumstances, a supplement must be paid) and specified bus routes. Eurailpasses must be bought in North America; all travel agents can issue them.

The basic, "consecutive-day" 1991 Eurailpass comes in five lengths - 15 days costs \$458; 21 days, \$584; one month, \$722; two months, \$984; three months, \$1,220. Increases over 1990 prices are between 9.3 and 10.9 per cent.

Then there's the Eurail Flexipass. Purchasers can choose a \$269 pass that's good for five days' travel within a 15-day span; \$469 for nine days of travel in a 21-day period; and a third, at \$585, that allows 14 days of travel within a month.

For both the basic Eurailpass and the Eurail Flexipass, children from age four to 11 pay half-fare; younger children travel free. All of these passes entitle the holder to first-class

travel.

YOUTH PASS

For young people under 26 years of age, the less expensive Eurail Youthpass is the ticket for second-class train accommodation. A one-month pass costs \$498, and a two-month pass \$635 - savings of 31 per cent and 35.5 per cent, respectively, over the equivalent first-class passes.

New for 1991 are two Eurail Youth Flexipasses, each valid for a period of three consecutive months. Price is \$398 for 15 days of travel within that period, and \$635 for 30 days.

Another innovation this year is the EurailDrive Pass. Good for a 21-day period, it combines four days of rail travel with three days' use of a Hertz rental car.

On the customary basis of one car shared by two pass-holders, prices start at \$269 U.S. for an economy-size model (in combination with first-class rail service). Holders are entitled to purchase up to five additional days of rail travel (at \$40 U.S. per day) and as many as five days of car rental (\$50 U.S.).

Yet another variation on the theme is the 15-day first-class Eurail Saverpass at \$349. It is basically similar to the 15-day, \$458 Eurailpass, but it requires that at least two Saverpass holders travel together in the low season, and a minimum of three

during the April 1 to Sept. 30 season.

EASTERN EUROPE

Note that the various forms of Eurailpasses are valid throughout re-unified Germany this year.

FrenchRail Inc. this year has joined forces with the national railways of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland to market the European East Pass. Price is \$160 U.S. for five individual days of travel during a 15-day period, and \$259 U.S. for 10 days of travel in a one-month span.

In addition, those whose travel will encompass a more limited geographical area can choose among a wide variety of national and regional "passes" such as the BritFrance Railpass, Scandinavian Rail Pass, and Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg) Tourrail Pass.

Before buying any railway pass, try to estimate the amount of rail travel you expect to undertake. It could be cheaper and more convenient simply to buy ordinary tickets.

Switzerland, long a leader and pioneer in unlimited-travel schemes (example: Swiss Holiday Card), will break new ground in 1992 with a McDonald's franchise, serving Big Macs and the like, in dining cars on certain trains between Geneva and Basel.

Of interest to west-coast railway buffs in particular is an exhibition of historic railway equipment in Sacramento, Calif., from May 3 to 12, 1991. It is sponsored by the famous California State Railroad Museum in that city, and will include some 40 locomotives and cars, a large display of toy trains, a railway musical revue and other attractions.

TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Here are notes on news of current interest to travellers:

- Early birds get the bargains on flights to the U.K. this year. Both Air Canada and British Airways are offering discounts on departures from Canadian gateway cities from March 18 to Oct. 31. Passengers must book at least 21 days before departure, and not later than March 2 at British Airways and March 31 at Air Canada. Minimum stay is seven days and maximum one month.

- The 500th anniversary of the birth of Henry VIII on June 28, 1491, is being observed this year in England with a variety of functions. These include a major exhibition from May 1 to Aug. 31 at the National Maritime Museum in the London suburb of Greenwich, birthplace of Henry and of his daughters, Mary and Elizabeth.

- Hyatt Hotels has announced a 25 per cent reduction in rates for seniors (62 years and over) at its

91 hotels and 17 resorts in Canada, the U.S. and the Caribbean.

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Active living for expectant Moms

(NC)—There was a time when pregnant women were encouraged to "take it easy" and "keep their feet up." Attitudes have changed over the years, however, and regular physical activity during pregnancy is now considered natural and normal.

Dr. Larry Wolfe, a Queen's University professor and specialist in the area, suggests that healthy women with no prior problems during pregnancy stand to benefit from regular physical activity while they are pregnant.

In a summary prepared for the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (a national agency supported by Fitness Canada), Dr. Wolfe listed the benefits. They include increased levels of energy, improvements in mood and body image, promotion of appropriate weight gain, prevention of diabetes and back pain, easier labour and delivery, and faster recovery. Not a bad list!

To experience these benefits, women wishing to be active while they are pregnant would be wise to:

- Discuss their program with their doctor.
- Avoid increasing their activity level during the first three months.
- Consider activities where the body is supported. Swimming and cycling



LIFESTYLE TIPS

are good examples. These are especially good if activities like jogging and aerobics are uncomfortable.

• Avoid activities which involve physical contact or danger of falling.

• Participate at a comfortable level, and take rest breaks.

• Drink liquids before and after each session. Avoid activity in hot or humid weather.

• Be sensible. Take a day or two off when feeling more tired than normal.

Active living—finding pleasure in everyday things—is important during pregnancy and after. Listen to what one mother of two has to say when she compares her second pregnancy and delivery when she was active and fit to her first one when she wasn't: "I was up and around the same day and home sooner than the first time. This sold me on the benefits of regular physical activity. Being fit has improved the quality of my life. I feel happy and motivated, and I have a positive attitude which reflects on my whole family."

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