

## Buy a Eurailpass

# Leave the driving alone in Europe

The hassle of European driving can be avoided if you take the train

You're making your first trip to Europe and you've got everything pretty well arranged. The only thing you have to do now is call somebody about renting a car once you get there.

Well, if you'll take a little advice, don't bother about the car. Instead, buy a Eurailpass from your travel agent, allowing you unlimited first-class travel on most of the trains of Europe for a specified period of time — three weeks, two months or three months.

And the cost of any of the three types of Eurailpass will be far less than you would pay to rent a car and buy gasoline, which is well over \$1 a gallon in all European countries.

Many Canadians shy away from train travel in Europe because their only experience with trains has been either a sterile ride on the GO system or the 19th-Century inefficiency of our national rail networks.

Take our word for it, comparing European trains with Canadian trains is like choosing between filet mignon and a frozen pizza. The European rail system is set up on a business-like basis, not as a necessary evil as it is in Canada.

And there are countless reasons why travel by train in Europe is far more practical than renting a car. Once you have purchased your Eurailpass — and you must do so before you leave Canada because they aren't sold in Europe — that's all you have to worry about, except for checking the easily-read train schedules in European train stations.

You simply board a first-class coach of any train you wish to take and when the conductor comes by to collect your ticket, all you do is show him your pass and he continues on his way. No bother about trying to make a ticket agent understand your phrase-book German or Italian so he'll give you the right ticket. No worry about trying to figure out how much the fare is in "real money".

Compare this with the many agonies of driving a car in Europe. Aside from the high cost of car

rentals and gasoline, you pay the added expense of third party insurance. The first thing a traffic policeman will ask you for is your "green card" (in whatever language he's speaking) which is your proof of insurance. All countries insist on it.

Then too, your Ontario driver's licence might be all you require to drive in the country you're visiting, but it may not be either. This means that to be on the safe side, you should purchase an International Driver's Licence before you go — another detail to take care of.

And European drivers are everything you've heard they are. Anyone who tells you he drove through Paris or Rome without incident is either a very good driver or a liar. One of the things that will trip you up while driving in France is the "priorite a droit" which means the vehicle on your right has the right of way.

And they take this right literally. Cars will come whizzing out of laneways on your right and you are required to stop for them. Even mothers with young children on occasion will consider their baby carriages as vehicles (after all, they have four wheels) and will launch them off the curb, hurling insults at you about your driving ability when you don't give them "priorite a droit".

Should you happen to be driving through a little village and run over one of the ubiquitous chickens found on the roadways in all such communities, the fowl owner will insist that you pay not only for the unfortunate creature you have just sent to that big Colonel Sanders kitchen in the sky, but for all the eggs she would have laid and all the eggs her offspring would have laid as well.

If that isn't enough to convince you that driving in Europe is strictly for the foolhardy, then you should know too that rental cars are fair game for the petty thieves that abound in Europe.

We know of one incident where a Canadian schoolteacher set up his small pup tent in a campground just outside Naples and left for a couple of hours of sightseeing. When he returned, someone had packed up his tent and belongings and had

simply walked away with them.

Realizing that his vacation was ruined, he decided to drive his car back to the rental agency but made the mistake of parking it on a downtown street in Naples first while he spent an hour browsing through a museum.

Although he had parked the car on a busy thoroughfare in broad daylight, with a traffic policeman on the corner, he came back an hour later to find that someone had removed the door unceremoniously with a crowbar and had stripped the vehicle of all its contents. And, of course,

the traffic cop on the corner hadn't seen a thing.

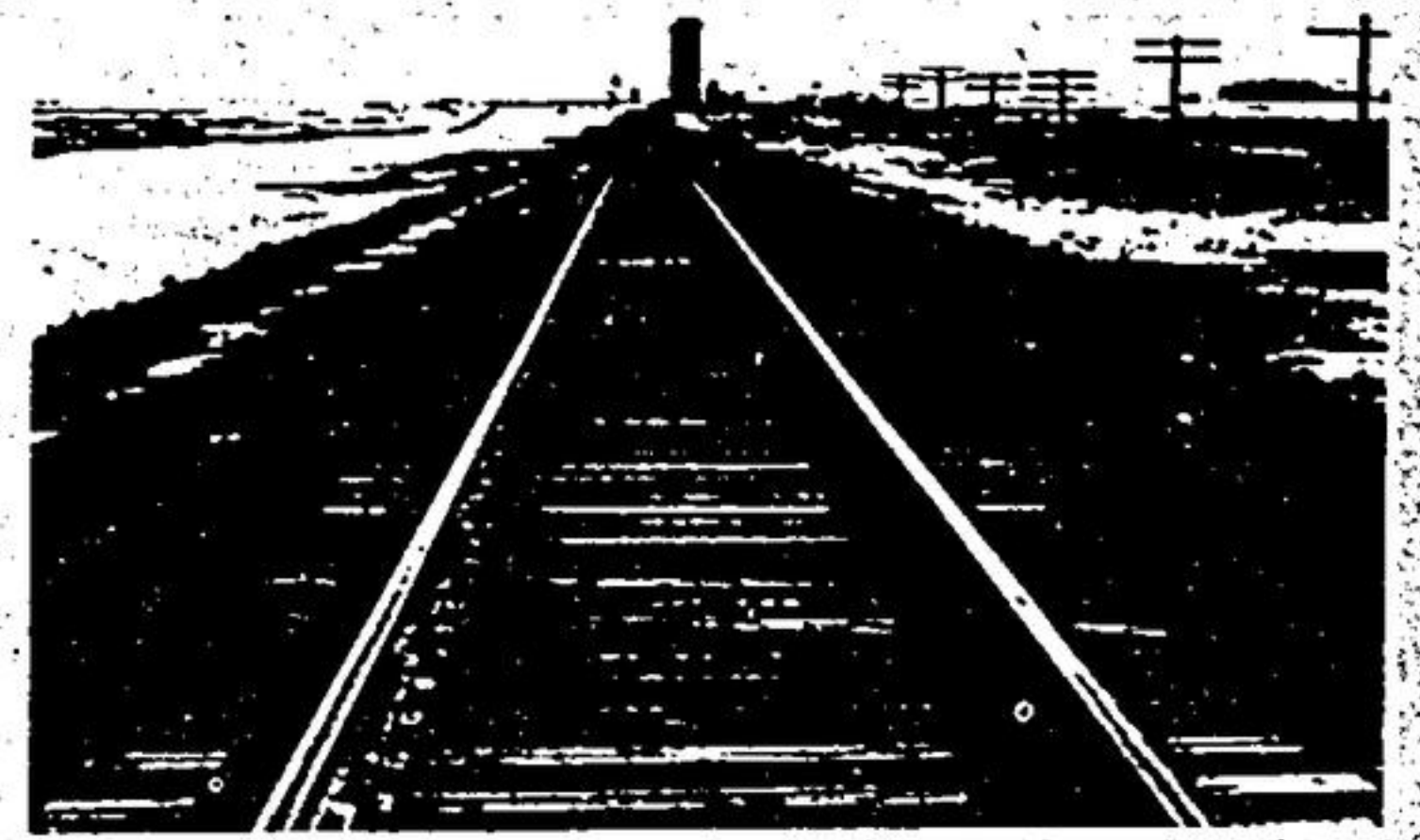
Very few Canadians who have driven in Europe have come away without at least one experience with car pilferers. It wouldn't surprise us to learn that these people even have their own union.

Travelling by train, you avoid all these problems. European trains are clean, comfortable and efficient. If the schedule says your train leaves at 7:03, then don't arrive at 7:04 because it will be gone. None of the casualness of the Canadian system where a holiday weekend can

throw schedules off by an hour or more.

Another bonus is that most European stations are in the heart of the city, handy to hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions. And people will tell you that some of the best and the least expensive meals can be bought in the restaurants of European railway stations. European visitors to Canada can hardly believe that we tolerate the rubbery cheese sandwiches and muddy coffee of the vending machines in our railway stations.

EURAIL CONVERTS Before this starts sounding like a paid



advertisement for Eurailpass — which it isn't — allow us to give you one more example of what made us become converts to European train travel.

On one occasion, we arrived in a European city on a holiday and there were no hotel rooms to be found. It looked for awhile as though the night would have to be spent on a park bench.

Instead, we boarded a train for an overnight trip

to Marseille and, since the Eurailpass gives you the plush surroundings of a first-class compartment, we were able to stretch out across the empty seats and sleep quite comfortably with an overcoat as a makeshift blanket.

You see, first-class travel on European trains is fairly expensive for the average European traveller — it's an unbelievable bargain under the Eurailpass system.

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### Answer to Trivia Quiz

- (c), 2. (a), 3. (d), 4. (b), 5. (a), 6. (c), 7. (b), 8. (a), 9. (d), 10. (b), 11. (c), 12. (d), 13. (b), 14. (a), 15. (b), 16. (c), 17. (a), 18. (c), 19. (b), 20. (d).

#### SCORE

If you got 17 to 20 answers right, Henry Kissinger has nothing on you. 14 to 17 means you've obviously been around; 10 to 14 means you could probably find your way home from the Enchanted Forest without the aid of breadcrumbs; and under 10 means you'd better call your travel agent and get cracking.