

# If you're travelling in Europe this summer here's a message for you

**Berel Wetstein & Ian Bailey**  
They were just two crazy kids, two buddies who came from the same flashy town near Orlando. They had a great deal of energy but they were naive and they decided to join the thousands of North American kids who took their chances on a trip to "the continent"; to Europe. As well as their wits and courage they would only have each other as they plunged into alien cultures of far off lands.

Their names were Mickey and Donald.

You've immersed yourself in Fodors and steered your luxurized sensibilities to 84¢ a day. You believe that you are prepared to join the thousands of students who make the trip to Europe at about this time every year. However, above and beyond the alien cultures there are pitfalls and traps that have befallen a woeful legion of others who have made the journey. Despite the careful plans of established travel agencies students fall into the same traps over and over again...

Mickey and Donald were somewhere between Paris and Nice prying open the secrets of Europe with the inexpensive and flexible Interrail passes. Suddenly a femme fatale, the woman of Donald's dreams entered their compartment and sat beside Donald. Swept off his feet by undying love Donald realized that there was no one else in the world for him. He abandoned Mickey on a train platform in Nice leaving him to his own devices for the duration of the six week holiday. "Gosh Donald, what did you want to do that for?" sobbed Mickey as he wondered what he would do.

There is nothing wrong with falling in love but there is a piece of advice that is only good sense. If it seems likely that you and your travelling companion are going to be separated then plan a meeting with your friend at a prearranged time and place. It is a good idea to meet at the Embassy of your nation of citizenship. They will hold messages for you. When his undying love finally



left Donald found himself in Italy. Stumbling through the streets of Milan under a dark pall of depression he was seen by two policemen who suspected him of being linked with an extremist terrorist organization. When they stopped him and asked him for some identification he was unable to show them his passport which he realized he had left in Vienna. The policemen spoke among themselves in Italian and asked him to follow them to the station to answer a few questions about his political persuasion. Two weeks later when he was released from detention he was far smarter and wiser about the value of carrying ID at all times.

Long before you leave home it is worth your time to take a close look at your passport. Make sure that it has at least a year remaining on its validity.

European authorities can be very picky about this. It is also worth noting that in Europe the scars of the anarchy of World War II have never really healed and proper ID is very important. The value of a piece of paper saying that you are who you say you are has only been reinforced by the recent antics of groups such as the Bader Meinhoff Gang. Travelling in Europe without ID can be a serious offense for which ignorance of the rules is a leaky excuse.

*Lost, alone and depressed Mickey buys some granular white powder from a friendly fellow tourist who says that it will make him... happy. When he is asked about the powder by a friendly agent of the law he swiftly finds himself before an equally friendly judge who slams Mickey with an unfriendly one-month sentence in jail. Mickey's one phone call to the Embassy gets him a busy signal.*

Have you seen *Midnight Express*? It says more than a thousand books on the use of drugs in foreign nations can tell you. Eastern nations are generally more strict than Western nations but in either region the chance is not worth taking.

One night in Rome Donald realizes that he has one month of vacation time left and a few places left that he wants to see. A few sights without which a trip to Europe would just not be worthwhile. Places like Hungary, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Spain, etc...

Plan! Don't operate under the overly optimistic belief that you can see all of Europe in six weeks. Try dividing the area you want to cover into quarters and peg them with priorities. At this point buy yourself a Michelin Green Guide. The guide is published for tourists and is based on train routes.

Berel Wetstein was a travel agent with Valantine Travel in Toronto for 7 years. He has fallen into many of the traps in Europe during his six trips there. Ian Bailey was just along for the ride.

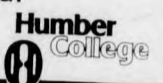
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