

europa ON \$12.58 (U.S.)

A DAY

If you've ever wanted to travel to Europe, but have been putting it off now is the time to re-think your position. Why not travel to Europe this summer?

By LINDA JANASZ

One of the first steps in planning your vacation should be choosing a travel agent. There is no additional cost when an agent is involved in the planning process and they can often offer some valuable advice. Many students find that Travel CUTS (Canadian University Travel Services) is very helpful in planning a student-oriented vacation, but they offer much the same information that other travel agencies do. As, they are too busy to spend the necessary amount of time to plan your vacation, and it is necessary for you to investigate the information yourself. As well, it is important to realize that although the travel agent can tell you what is available, they should never *push* you into choosing a vacation. Often it is helpful for you to have some idea of what you want before approaching your agent. Some find it more practical to find their flights and transportation in advance, and then have their agents book them. You may find that it is you who finds the best, and the cheapest, way to go.

It is extremely helpful to talk with others who have taken this trip before. They may be able to shed some light on areas to visit, and give you some good travel advice. Karen, a university student who travelled to Europe last summer, believed she had planned *everything* in advance, but when she arrived in Europe, she found that she had not booked her transportation within the continent. To her dismay, she was unable to buy a EurailPass in Europe, and she spent far more money on transportation than she had budgeted. If you do not buy the EurailPass in advance, you cannot purchase it in Europe, and single train tickets are extremely expensive. As a result, Karen cut her trip short by several weeks.

The next step is to consider your finances. Always take into account

costs for food, entertainment, and other miscellaneous items. Although there are books available claiming, "you can make it on 10 cents a day," be realistic when budgeting.

There are many good books available that can aid you in making some of your decisions while in Europe. A book that many recommend, often referred to as the "student traveller's bible," is *Let's Go Europe*.

Since money is an extremely important issue, it might be advisable to go where the Canadian dollar is strongest: Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. These countries offer far more for your money than you could possibly have expected, as both food

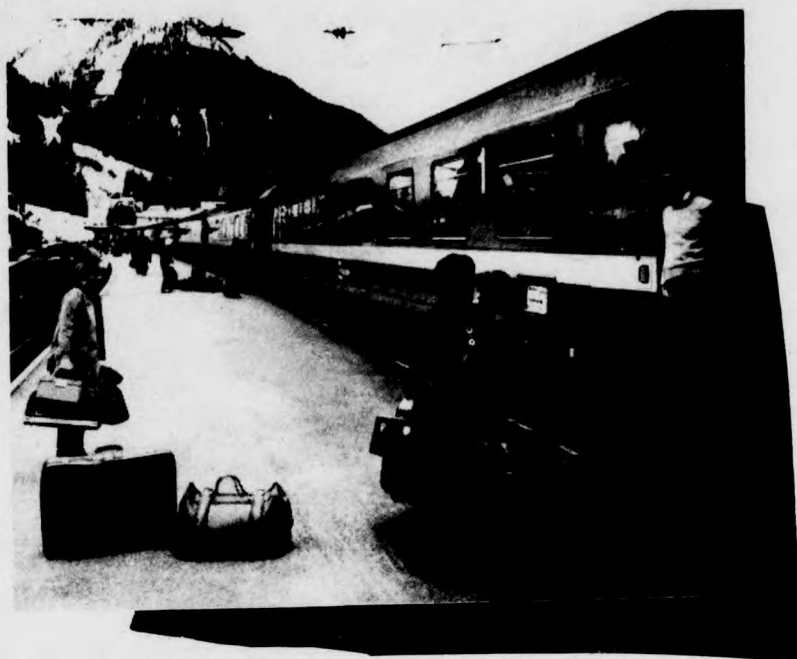
In Italy, you can get a large bowl of pasta for \$1.50 and stay in a pension (small hotel) for \$10 and up. But, if you are worried that you will be scrimping and saving the entire time, talk with others that have made it on a shoe-string budget, and had a fantastic time.

The next points to decide upon are: flight, transportation, and accommodation.

At first glance, your flight seems like a simple decision: it is a matter of finding the cheapest flight there and back. But it is not as simple as it seems. Since you will be travelling during the "high season," flights go quickly and it is necessary to book them far in advance. A youth fare is usually available to those 22 years and under. This pass entitles you to an open-end, one year ticket, and there are Youthfares available from different airlines. If you are interested in this type of flight, you should look around for the best prices. These flights give you great flexibility, but are usually more expensive than a charter. If you know the day that you are leaving or returning, you will be able to book a charter flight. Charters are usually far cheaper than a one-year open ticket, but do not give you flexibility. Destination also plays a role in the cost of the flight. Probably the cheapest destination at present is Amsterdam. You can usually find this flight connection with most of the major airlines, and it should cost between \$495 and \$650.

The most popular, sensible, and reasonable choice for transportation within Europe is the Eurailpass. The Eurail company offers a Youthpass which is restricted to travellers under 26 years of age. The pass entitles you, for one fee, to unlimited travel through 16 countries for one or two months, but it is not limited to train travel alone. Depending upon the country, the pass will also entitle you to use steamers, ferries and buses, giving you unparalleled flexibility. Rosemary Arand, a representative

and accommodation is extremely cheap. For example, it is possible to stay on a Greek island for as little as \$15 a day, and still live beautifully.

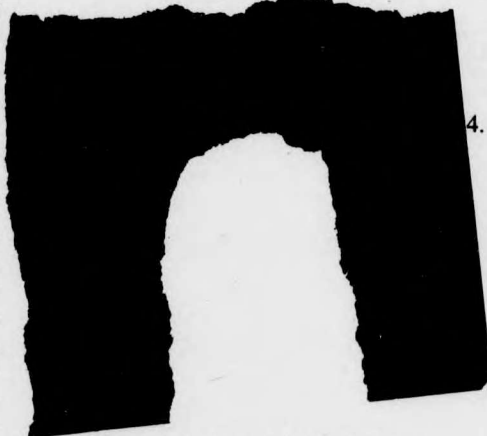


from the Eurail office in Toronto describes the flexibility: "You can go where you want, when you want, to as many places as you want, while your pass is valid."

The convenience of the pass is also important to note. The railways in Europe are far more extensive than in Canada, and run virtually everywhere. You can hit the large bustling cities, or venture into the small towns. And because trains are Europe's most popular form of transportation, they run constantly. You will also find that the pass is by far the best value for your money. Eurail destinations range from Ireland to Portugal, all the way up to the tip of Norway!

Jackie Hobson of Butterfield and Robson Travel warns, however, that "the first time traveller often feels obligated to *constantly* use their pass. They often don't take the time to enjoy their trip, ending up spending more time on the train. We are not accustomed to this type of travel, but it is by far the most enjoyable, flexible, and convenient way to see Europe."

Hobson also said, "If you are taking a long train ride, it is necessary to arrive early in order to get a seat. It is also possible to purchase a couchette (sleeper) on the train for a charge of approximately \$10 a person."



Accommodation is the last major point to consider. Lembit Lellep from the Canadian Youth Hostelling association advises that "for the youth traveller, hostelling is inexpensive, available, accessible, and safe." It only costs \$15 to buy a membership card enabling the bearer to stay at any of the 3,000 hostels in Europe at a cost of between \$8 or \$14 per night. Lellep said, "At one time, there were fairly strict curfews set by the hostels, but now they are allowing for longer hours. Also, the sizes of the dorms are becoming much smaller." Lellep

added, however, "You should be careful of independent hostel operators. It is important to make sure that they are a member of the hostelling association." A guide book can be purchased (\$5) along with your membership, listing all hostels and their prices. Lellep said the Hostelling Association is "trying to help educate those travellers who will be making their way to Europe this summer." They are offering travel films at 40 St. George St. every other Tuesday. For those interested, call the YHAC at 862-0226.

Some things to keep in mind are:

1. It is necessary to have a valid passport. You can get your passport through any passport office. You'll also need your birth certificate and two pieces of I.D. (driver's license, Social Insurance card, credit cards, student card, etc.)
2. Changing your money into traveller's cheques is extremely helpful, and a much safer way to travel. The best way is to exchange your money into foreign currency as soon as you arrive in that country. You should try to estimate as closely as possible how much you will be spending in that country, so as to avoid carrying too much cash with you.
3. Perhaps the most important advice anyone can give you is to *travel lightly*. If you are too busy carrying your luggage, you will not enjoy your vacation. You will surprise yourself at how little you will need.
4. The Eurail YouthPass may be purchased at any travel agent, the Canadian Youth Hostel Association, or through the Eurailpass company located at 1290 Bay Street (968-3272). The Youth Hostel Association of Canada, 223 Church Street (368-0207).

