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**Traveling Through Europe**

**By Jonathon Hardcastle**

The summer of 2005, my friend and I decided to apply for a summer program as part of our

graduate degree and travel from United States to Europe and specifically to Brugges in Belgium, so as to attend an intensive seminar at The College of Europe on Politics, Policies, Lobbying and the European Union. Although I have never visited Belgium before, I was really excited to discover, while browsing the internet, that I was about to visit one gorgeous and historical city of the "Old Continent," while enhancing my academic knowledge and meeting new people.

Before leaving the US we printed any information we could find regarding the city's tourist locations, interesting cafes and historic buildings. Although Brugges is a very small town, it offers a lot of possibilities to those interested in exploring its excitements. But even if it surpassed our expectations, visiting only one European town or country seemed a waste for such a trip. Thus, we decided in advance to research the opportunities a young graduate student has while traveling around in Europe and the most convenient, cheap and interesting way to go from city to city and country to country was via train. The Eurorail trains are the simpler way people have to visit a variety of European destinations, as boarding a train actually offers to the adventure-seekers the possibility of having an extraordinary trip and admiring the countryside in the meantime.

In fact, upon the completion of the summer program, we packed our bags and traveled from Brussels to Amsterdam. The Netherlands' capital was a combination of beauty and adventure. The city streets, the people walking or bicycling around, the nice weather and its countless river docks create a unique combination of images, which are food for hungry eyes-like ours. Since we had less than 48 hours available to see as much as possible, we decided to pay a visit at the Van Gogh Museum, walk the Red District by night, and of course take the tram to travel through the city and gaze its unbelievable beat.

Next stop was Paris, France. Lucky as we were to find an available and affordable room as soon as we got off the train station, the next thing was to find a map of the city and its incredible metro system and travel around to check everything! Notre Dame, bridges, the Eiffel Tower, the Bastille, Champs-Élysées, small cafes and long walks across the Seine River or through the area of Montmartre, made our stay in Paris unforgettable. In fact, one of the best pictures we got from this trip

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was in front of the Arc de Triomphe and we took it by ourselves—both faces appear on the frame. Monte Carlo was our next and most expensive destination, but its beaches and sun gave our trip a legendary feel.

Next, we visited Italy. Florence and Venice, two of the most important trade cities in Europe offered us some life–time opportunities. Historical monuments, paved streets, canals, museums, restaurants and Italian cafes convinced us that Italy is actually much more than an interesting destination. In fact, I fall–in–love with almost every single building we crossed and by the time we had to catch our plain back, I though we have made a huge mistake; our eight day trip should have lasted a lifetime.

Jonathon Hardcastle writes articles for

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### **Tips On How To Get Cheap Air Travel To Europe**

**By Dana Goldberg**

Trip to Europe often connotes high airfare. But with a little effort and dedication, you can go in any cities of this continent at a cheap price.

To know how, here are the following tips:

1. Search the Internet. It is the best place to search for cheap air travel to Europe. Try it yourself: do a research on all major and minor airlines traveling from the United States to Europe. Check all their prices. Now search on the Internet. You will be surprised how much difference the plane tickets are.
2. Take connected flights and do not fly direct. Again, this would take a good time of researching and finding the cities that can connect your flight from the United States to any city in Europe.
3. No first class and business seats please. Your aim is to go to Europe in as little amount as possible. These seats could cost twice as much as coach seats. Do not be ashamed if you seat on the tail of the airplane, after all, you will arrive at the same time and the same place.
4. Target off–season. During this time, airfare is low. Europe's airfare is cheapest during winter. But

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make sure you are prepared for heavy snowfall.

5. Plan to travel longer. One way to get to Europe without spending money is by taking the cheapest flight from the United States and travel by train or bus to your desired city. This might take a while especially if you are planning to go to Moscow and happen to land on the Western cities of Europe. The rewarding part is, you can see other countries and enjoy the sceneries while traveling

6. Identify the slow days. Usually, most people travel less during Tuesdays and Wednesdays. You can capitalize on this and take your flight to Europe at lesser cost. After all there is no difference when you arrive in Europe during Sunday or Tuesday.

7. And in accordance with number 6, schedule your return also during slow days.

8. Book in advance. Aside from getting your desired seat, you can get low air rates 2–3 weeks before the flight.

9. Get round–trip tickets. It is much cheaper to get return flights than one–way tickets.

10. Do not mind asking for lowest rates. Usually, you can get the lowest air travel rates to Europe if you would only ask. It is just there waiting to be asked.

11. Watch out for lowest fare. Stay at the airport and wait 'til they tell you the flight is in its lowest rate. This might not be appealing but who cares? At least you arrive in Europe the same way they did.

12. Volunteer to get bumped. Inform the airline that it's okay for you to transfer to the next flight. Your time loitering around the airport could mean cash discount coupon you can use on your future flight.

If you are brave enough, try the following:

1. Try wandering around the airport and look for people who decided not to go. Buy their tickets at lowest price. But here's the catch: the ticket should match the name of the passport. Do it if you have a match.

2. Ask if there is any physically challenged person on the flight and ask if they want company. They would be willing shoulder part of your airfare.

These mentioned tips could surely make your way to Europe. And though some may be a little bit off your ways, you have more choices and one would be enough.

Dana Goldberg is the owner of Princess Travel Deals. Her website focuses on Travel and tourism information worldwide.

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