



Eural pass review

Transcript 022

July 2007

Craig: Hi I'm Craig.

Linda: And I'm Linda.

Craig: And this is the Indie Travel Podcast, episode 22. This week's show was recorded in Klaipeda, Lithuania.

Linda: So, it's time for a review. This week we thought we'd review the Eurail Global pass, since we heard some fellow-travellers grumbling about it a week or so ago.

Craig: The Eurail pass is a ticket which allows you unlimited train travel in various European countries. There are different types of ticket: the Global pass, regional pass, select pass and national pass. Prices vary depending on if you're under or over 26, how long you're travelling for, and if you choose to travel first or second class.

Linda: We'll be talking about a Global pass, which will allow you to travel in 18 European countries. If you're under 26 a fifteen-day pass will set you back 439 US dollars and if you're over that golden age it'll be 675 US dollars. You may have heard of the Interrail pass, which is similar to the Eurail pass, but it's only available to European residents, and you have to have lived in a European country for six months to get it, so that rules out a lot of us.

Craig: If you live in any other country, you're able to get a Eurail pass and we decided to buy a 15-day one last summer, when we were travelling from Malta to England. We stopped in Italy for a couple of weeks, then met up with Linda's sister who drove us to Switzerland, and we started using it when we left Geneva.

Linda: We found that the pass mostly worked for us. We had to get it verified by a railway employee before we started using it, but after that it was really easy. We could just get on a train and go for it.

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Craig: With some exceptions...

Linda: Ah yes. If there was a little "r" on the timetable, we had to get a seat reservation, and that cost extra. The price varies but it's almost always less than four euros. These semi-hidden costs (they are listed in the small print) they surprise some people -- it's the main reason we've heard grumbles about Eurail passes.

Craig: And once we decided we wanted to go a roundabout way through Switzerland, we showed our ticket to someone in the information centre and asked for a timetable. She gave us a nice detailed timetable, and we headed off. Halfway through, though, we thought something was up, and we realised we were on one of private trains the Eurail pass doesn't cover. We couldn't go back, and so we bought onwards tickets - for eighty euros each.

Linda: Yeah, it was heaps. We also found that because we had a ticket for unlimited travel, we wanted to travel every day, and for a long time. And that is really exhausting. We met a father and daughter who also had the Eurail pass, and they were planning on travelling overnight every two or three days. They'd be getting really good value for money, but I think they'd end up being completely knackered.

Craig: Yeah, I think that happens a lot, if you have an unlimited pass, you try and use it as much as you can. But you rush through things, and I'm becoming more adapted to the slow travel method.

Linda: Yeah. You can also get a pass for a certain number of days, say for example five days within two months; these don't have to be used consecutively. It's a great idea because you can stop for a while in one place. You might arrive on Monday using the pass, stay for three days and then leave on the Thursday. The problem with this pass though, is that on the day you're leaving, you have to fill in the dates you're using it. If you make a mistake, you lose that day entirely. Or so it seems according to the information we've read.

Craig: So, in conclusion, I think we would recommend the Eurail pass for people who are planning on doing a whistlestop tour of as much of Western Europe as you can. It's especially good for the expensive countries like Switzerland and Austria,

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but we wouldn't recommend it for extensive travel in Italy, for example, the cheaper rail countries. Do check the normal costs of travel before committing to a pass.

Linda: Prices and details for this show were taken from <http://www.eurail.com/> in July 2007. Please check there for more up-to-date information about all the passes. There'll be a link in our show notes. There are a lot of things you need to know to use the Eurail pass well, and you should do a little bit of research before you buy one, including checking out <http://www.eurail.com/> and prices of local tickets. So, in the next Indie Travel Podcast, we'll give you some tips for using the Eurail pass.

Craig: If you've used the Eurail pass before and want to share your experience flick us an email or audio comment and we'll include it: mail@indietravelpodcast.com

Linda: So until next week, travel well.

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