

Inter rail is an opportunity of travelling through Europe at a cheap railroad price and it lasts one month for young people under 26. To own this ticket means for someone to be disorganized in a society which is more and more aseptic and ordinary. For those who play their cards well, the Inter rail means freedom in a society which organizes and curbs even people's spirit of adventure, astonishment, happiness, dreams.

We've tried to disorganize ourselves, to catch our freedom again. Here we explain how to use it and we give you advise which can be useful both for inter rail men and for everyone who travel by train. We explain it in an english edition, made for Stop Over in Bari, on the occasion of the first European Meeting of Inter rail men. All this when a polemic arises: it seems that some European Railways wants to abolish Inter rail Tickets. The intellectual, political and young world is on ferment for this attack to our freedom of travelling.

MILLELIRE
STAMPA ALTERNATIVA



Luca Conti (Rome, 1965) is writer and musician

Introduction

La nuova moda in montagna? Farsi portare in vetta con l'elicottero e scendere a valle con gli sci (...) Escogitata da chi non ama la montagna e vuole fare affari a tutti i costi. Utilizzata da chi vuole avere sensazioni forti senza dare nulla che non siano soldi. Tanti soldi.

Reinhold Messner, "Il Messaggero",
23/11/90

Special Edition for
I INTERNATIONAL INTER-RAIL-MEN
MEETING
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OTE
Organizzazione
Turistica
Europea



 CITTÀ DI
BARI

Travelling freely and economically is becoming rare, but still exists. One can still travel over a fragment of the planet without falling into touristic oppression with a fixed schedule and perhaps with an impatient guide. One of these methods is travelling by train at a convenient price, purchasing an Inter rail ticket. Someone travelling with an Inter rail ticket should be completely different from a typical tourist. A typical tourist laughs and smells of perfume. He sits in a restaurant, buys expensive and useless souvenirs and takes hundreds of photos. Those who have understood the value of the Inter rail ticket does the complete opposite. He spends as little as possible. He spends the night on the train using it to move from one place to another thus saving money and time. One just jumps on the train and leaves, carrying very little baggage, wearing creased clothing and buys food in a supermarket. You get off the train when you like, before or after getting to your destination. You move from one city to the next waiting for dawn. You sleep in a railway station together with

The journey

Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muß man schweigen.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung

many others with whom it is easy to socialize. Those who use this ticket a lot are called Inter rail-men or women.

The purchase of an Inter rail ticket may be convenient to those who are about to undertake a very long journey. The cost of a return ticket to London from Rome costs more than an Inter rail ticket and a train ticket costs more than an air ticket. But one thing is to buy an Inter rail ticket to save money, another is to travel as an Inter rail-man.

We are not interested in leaving for Palma de Majorca with three suitcases to then move to Greece three weeks later. We are not interested in mambo-clubs and phosphorescent cocktails either. A holiday like that do not really interest us. An empty holiday will soon disappear with your sun tan. An Inter rail-man will: leave with a few possessions, sleep in a railway station, eat a tin of tuna with a knife, have very little money, feet that ache, sleep in a dark and uninhabited area trying to protect oneself from someone who has bad intentions. You can easily recognise the Inter rail-men. They meet a lot of new people and they do not forget each other easily. A trip like this offers more solidarity than a city can give.

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The logic of the journey

Personal involvement and communication are essential if you are to learn something from your journeys. If you are tied to your own little world it will be difficult for you to spot something new when you are travelling. Today a lot of importance is given to where you go. But no importance is given to how and why we travel.

We only read about package tours. What we do is try to recuperate a certain amount of liberty that has been lost in travelling. Even adventurous package tours are offered in brightly coloured brochures. This commercial aspect of tourism is characteristic of our times. It is also true that many people do not want to have any worries on holiday so this kind of alternative is not for them. When you leave with an Inter rail ticket you do not know where you are going and when you are going to return.

Even travelling around Europe on a train, on a small scale, can mean being adventurous.

You will have to get used to living with germs, put up with hunger, go without, put up with the filth of certain trains and waiting rooms. All this will strengthen your character and make you stronger. You will find travelling with an Inter rail quite an education! With an experience like

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this you will learn to stick up for yourself, put up with fatigue, speak different languages, socialise carefully with strangers and learn to live in new situations. You meet true friends by travelling. By seeing things in the flesh you will eliminate all prejudices.

Preliminary information

When you set out on a trip you may organise various itineraries even if you are visiting the same spots. We all travel for many reasons which may be:

- to learn about new cultural realities
- to see old ruins and museums
- to have passionate love stories
- to see new places
- to run away from reality (a broken romance or from emotional stress)
- to write about their adventures
- to look for new ideas and scenery for the theatre or for the cinema
- to look for new settings for a novel
- somewhere to write strange poetry

Some people do not even know why they enjoy travelling. Trying to give a definition to why we travel is useless.

You may prepare a trip in a lot of different ways and here are a few practical hints. When travelling anywhere in the world find out about the place you are about to visit. You do not need to know everything about the country the basic facts will do. Make sure you find out about its climate, health and hygienic, and political situation. On the other hand you may find out about certain dangers

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when you arrive on the spot or even when you have returned home safe and sound. For example, when we visited the cathedral in Armiens (in France) we found out, on returning to Paris, that that same evening and the following day there were terrible riots (with the destruction of shops and cars) between the police and the algerian "harkis". That cold and foggy city had appeared so peaceful to us.

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Baggage

*Tudo quee vemos é otra cousa.
A maré vasta, a maré ansiosa,
É o eco de outra maré que está
Onde é real o mundo que há.*

Fernando Pessoa, Fausto

One of the most common mistakes made, when preparing to leave, is that of wanting to take too many accessories and clothes. The baggage in excess causes no end of logistic and economical problems, becoming a fastidious dead weight. In 1989 Claudio had the courage to tell us that he was going to leave with: ten T-shirts, three pairs of jeans, quite a few shirts, and a "decent" pair of trousers that he was going to use for going to the disco! This would have been dead weight for all of us if we hadn't made him change his mind.

The main concept to bear in mind when preparing your baggage for any destination is that the necessary things are really very few. Once you have set aside your personal belongings the only thing to decide is whether to take food along. You can even share toothbrushes, accessories and clothes, like Ricky and I did when we went to the Umbria Jazz Festival in 1987.

An ideal baggage, which we have to carry, should allow us to visit places on foot comfortably especially when we consider that quick sight-seeing, in the smaller cities, will keep us walking from two to four hours a day. We must enter into symbiosis with our baggage. We must know where everything is (this is why it is so important

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can be either given away, at a certain point, to someone in need or thrown away.

It is also necessary to avoid expensive accessories. These immediately qualify a person as a tourist and thus become an interesting prey. The more you carry the weaker you become.

Military clothing is unadvisable even because we feel that such institutions should not be publicised. It is true that such items of clothing cost very little and are very resistant, but it is also true that being mistaken for a soldier or a guerrilla in various parts of the world means seriously risking your life! Even if you visit an apparently peaceful part of the world, or at least, unless you are more than sure that it is politically peaceful, avoid wearing military clothes. Many things could be unknown to you.

Above all the clothing you wear must be above all comfortable so in case you have to wear the same things for up to five days at a time. This often happens if you are travelling a lot and trying to save money by sleeping on trains. Choose loose clothing. It does not matter if it is old or patched up. As a matter of fact the less you resemble a typical tourist the better.

During our Inter rail trip in November 1991 (whilst travelling through Turkey and Greece) various people mistook me for being Albanian, Turk, and Rumanian. This made me very happy. I only needed to change clothes and I was no longer recognised by other populations. This underlines the fact that racial discrimination originates in the tailor's workshop and that differences between peoples is measured largely in the way they dress. No one stopped me in the market places and no one asked questions in the stations. I slept happily and undisturbed to-

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that everything should be put back in the same place) be able to handle it when we are walking and forget about its weight on our shoulders. Not having something and forgetting to have it are synonymous, therefore, it is worthwhile to take and remember a few essential items.

What to wear

Before talking about what is necessary for a journey on a train in detail, we must briefly discuss what to wear. We must say that an Inter rail-man must be dressed so badly that he will not attract the attention of potential thieves, but also so well (well is not exactly the right definition) that he will not attract the attention of, and consequently be stopped by, the police or the like. This happened to us in the company of Claudio in 1989 on the Parisian underground. Above all if our clothes should appear too messy we could risk being thrown out of, or be set upon by the inhabitants of the place we are visiting. If you are too messy the local population, especially in the small towns, is able to interrupt a quiet nap calling you a "vagabond", "tramp", "ragamuffin", "hitch-hiker" or some other noun that will place you in a distant ethnic group. This happened to us one summer in Grado where we felt particularly observed whilst waiting for a train. We must, thus, guess the right clothing for the right situation. You should certainly not wear the same clothes worn in Asiatic Turkey or the areas near the port of Marseille to visit the industrial and banking cities in Switzerland or some village in northern Europe. Generally, however, one should not dress too elegantly. One should try and avoid clothes that suggest that you are tourists and use old clothes that

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gether with Yugoslavian and Albanese refugees. I drank Vodka with a few Georgians and a Nigerian while I was in Salonicco waiting for the train for Istanbul together with two Australian girls, Helen and Meghan.

As far as clothing and baggage goes a distinction must be made. An Inter rail-man can be compared to nomads, to old travellers, to pilgrims, and to hitch-hikers. He does not buy touristic merchandise and he learns from his explorations by travelling very long hours.

Preparing your baggage

The items necessary are really very few, especially when travelling through and to civilised and uncivilised countries by train. If you really need something you can always buy it or even borrow it.

Once you have put your personal belongings together, essential items of clothing, a pen knife and a few accessories the only things left are: documents, maps and money. If you really want to keep the weight of your luggage down you can even leave your sleeping bag at home. But think very carefully about it because you really ought to know the areas you are about to visit well, how frequent the night trains are and the temperatures you are likely to encounter. Perhaps it is a good idea if you take your sleeping bag with you in view of the fact that you will have to wait for a train during the night in the cold and you will probably have to sleep out in the open. When I travelled on my own in Greece, Turkey and France I did not take my sleeping bag with me and I regretted it on several occasions. I managed to overcome such a hardship by covering myself in the clothes I had brought with

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me and when that was not necessary I lit a fire (the Turkish and Greek rural areas allow this).

In 1991, during their trip to Sweden and Denmark, Gianluca nicknamed "Mastiff", Claudio and Ricky slept in one sleeping bag together. This is a good idea when travelling in a group as it allows you to reduce the weight of your luggage considerably.

Here is a complete list of the equipment that we suggest you take on your journeys. The list has been drawn up according to my own personal experience and that of others.

Clothing

Periods that go from June to September, from Spain to Norway, we suggest the following:

- two pairs of knickers
- a pair of swimming trunks
- a pair of shorts with pockets (preferably on the inside)
- a pair of socks
- a heavy jumper (preferably with pockets)
- a T-shirt
- a shirt
- a second T-shirt
- a pair of flip-flops (to be used as a second pair of shoes)
- a sturdy pair of shoes. These must be comfortable and dry quickly. But above all they must be comfortable. We really do not believe in waterproof shoes. It is best to have a pair of shoes that dry out quickly. Do not use modern gym shoes as they are likely to be sto-

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len as soon as you take them off when you go to sleep. We also feel it is completely useless to walk into a big city wearing hiking boots.

- a K-Way

- a pair of jeans. The problem with jeans is finding the right opportunity to wash them. If you have money to spare you can take them to the launderette. If the climate is favourable you can wash them in a wash basin and then put them out to dry. You might not even want to wash them, therefore, the problem does not exist! In this case only take one pair of trousers (the pair you are wearing), a shirt, a T-shirt and a pair of shorts. All your clothes will soon become grey-green in colour. You will not need anything else. Do not carry dirty washing around with you. This is only a useless smelly burden. The only inconvenience of having a few clothes is that you can not change your clothes so frequently. But this is obviously not very important. Our friend Valerio, nick-named "Coupè", even eliminated his knickers, much to the disapproval of a few bigots. Even in the youth hostels he is forced to sleep in his clothes. But if you do not want to copy him you can do without knickers when you have washed them. There may be a few differences for an Inter rail-girl, although her baggage does not differ much.

You may find it funny that you need so little. But if you wash the clothes regularly you will find you need nothing more. A pair of swimming trunks may be used as knickers and a pair of shorts may be used when you have washed your trousers. If you find that you still feel cold even if you are wearing all your clothes it may be a good idea to use

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the old cyclists remedy, that is wrap yourself in newspaper. You might even want to take into consideration what Ricky did on a Norwegian boat in 1990. He covered himself in toilet paper! Try not to carry too much weight even if you are travelling during the cold season and you are wearing a heavy jacket, a hat and gloves.

"Gradual elimination"

As far as personal belongings and clothes go you may try out what we call "gradual elimination". We have used this method many times. "Gradual elimination" means carrying enough old clothes that can eventually be disposed of when they are dirty. This makes room for food or just lightens the burden on your shoulders. In some countries you can either sell, barter or throw away accessories. If you decide to throw anything away leave it where it can be easily found. It is better to leave it to someone in need rather than just throw it in the rubbish bin! The same goes for maps and books. Someone may need them. We have found that these things are found or given to us when we need them most.

Personal belongings

Even personal belongings such as soap and shampoo must be used up gradually and sparingly.

Toothpaste is not necessary. One day a friend of ours, Pierone, confessed he had not used toothpaste for ten years and had never had problems with his teeth. We never used toothpaste again. The only thing toothpaste does is freshen up your breath! The only really indispen-

sable items are a toothbrush, a bar of soap, shampoo and a towel. But you can even do without a towel using other methods just as efficacious. If you decide to take a towel it must not be very big, say 50x70cm. Remember to choose an old towel as this will be cut up and thrown away gradually during the journey. We did not take towels with us on our last Inter rail trip. We used the paper towels found on the train, in public toilets and in hotels the very few times we used them. In order to dry yourself you may choose to try out the method we used successfully on a November trip to Athens. We used paper towels too start off with and finished drying ourselves off with our jumpers. Then hang the jumper out in the sun or near a radiator to dry. Another alternative to a towel is a buckskin. Mauro suggested this. He travelled from Rome to Kabul by coach a few years ago.

- a toothbrush
 - a new razor every ten days (this is optional as you may choose not to shave as a beard is a good camouflage)
 - half a tube of shaving cream (optional, see above)
 - half a bar of soap. You can even find a bar of soap on trains and in other public places. Take only the necessary amount of soap with you though
 - half a bottle of shampoo (if you have very short hair you will be able to save shampoo)
- Things will be different for girls in the same way as the quantities will obviously be different. We can only suggest that they do not take entire suitcases of make-up with them. Long hair needs special care. But bottles of the conditioner, brushes, etc... can be found in re-

duced sizes

- paper handkerchiefs and perfumed paper towels for children are very useful for personal hygiene. There are also a number of other items necessary for various emergencies such as: sanitary towels for women, and body lotion for delicate skins

Guide books, books, and documents

A passport is necessary when travelling. Make sure that the guide book you choose covers all historical and cultural aspects of the country you are visiting rather than giving a long list of fashionable boutiques. Browse through various guide books and eliminate those that are heavy, expensive and say nothing. If you have time you may like to take a few notes from various books you have consulted in a local library. This will allow you to save money being that some guide books are quite expensive. A friend might even be generous enough to lend you his guide book knowing that it will be returned in a sorry state. You may even choose to photocopy a guide book omitting all the irrelevant material such as: first class hotels and restaurants, Casino' etc... Take the book if you really need it. Before leaving learn a little about the place you are about to visit, although there are some who travel just for the kick of it. A map of Europe is necessary even if you just want to point out random to the next destination.

Remember to write out a list of telephone numbers, document numbers, and traveller's cheque numbers just in case they are stolen. Remember to do this with a ball point pen. Do not write anything out with a felt tip as it

tends to fade. If you lose your Inter rail ticket you have to buy it again.

Food for the journey

Taking food for the journey is still a debatable issue. Some, like our friend Ricky, feel that it is better to carry more food than clothes because this allows you to save money. At the same time it allows you to savour home made food! This is not always true because most of the time it is tinned food. We feel, on the other hand, that one does not really save too much money. The food found in supermarkets (that can be found all over Europe) is normally fresh and reasonably cheap. So why increase the weight of your luggage with tinned food if fresh food is available and far more nutritious. A good idea though, is that of taking a stock emergency food. This consists of bars of chocolate, energetic bars, vitamins, mineral salts, muesli, dried fruit and nuts.

The sleeping bag

We have already mentioned this indispensable accessory. Apart from having become the symbol of a way of travelling, it also saves you a lot of money and you can sleep practically anywhere with it. It is better to have a light weight sleeping bag as once it is rolled up takes up very little space. Various kinds of sleeping bags are available on the market. The prices range from a very cheap sleeping bag to an expensive one made with goose feathers. When choosing your sleeping bag you must bear in mind the temperatures you are likely to encoun-

ter in the various countries you are about to visit, what the sleeping conditions are likely to be, personal taste and economical possibilities. Inflatable mattresses are relatively useful as they take up space. If the ground is wet all you have to do is place a sheet of plastic under the sleeping bag. This sheet of nylon can then be rolled around the sleeping bag when you have packed it away.

The ruck sack

You are going to need a ruck sack for packing your belongings in. You only need a small ruck sack (like the ones you use for school). A ruck sack must be comfortable. It must not tire your shoulders, and it must not break. It must also be big enough to pack anything else that might be bought during the journey. Forget about camping ruck sacks. Luggage to be taken on a train is far less. We are not going camping. Travelling with an Inter rail ticket is a very subtle and strategic art.

Medicines

Medicine supplies depend a lot on where you are going. There are some universal medicines such as: natural disinfectants and antiseptic creams like propolis (bee glue) and chlorine compounds. These may be used for disinfecting wounds and insect bites or for disinfecting drinking water.

Do not forget aspirins, vitamins and mineral salts. These will come in handy in hot climates especially in view of the fact that you will be walking around a lot. All these should be interegrated with a very nutritious diet. In cer-

tain countries it would be a good idea to have something against mosquito bites and antibiotics for serious intestine disorders. A small sachet of a purgative will be useful for the opposite problem. Claudio can vouch for this. During our trip to Holland in 1989 he suffered from constipation for eight days. Flavio solved his problem by giving him his precious supply of a purgative. Claudio soon felt better!

If you should get blisters you can dress them with special ring-shaped plasters. These cover the painful area of the foot. New shoes can give nasty surprises. So make sure you use an old pair of shoes.

If you do not have anything against mosquito bites the smell of burnt fire wood should do the trick. It acts as an insect repellent.

Accessories

Make sure you have both a pen knife and a spoon on you. The spoon does not necessarily have to be big and it can substitute a fork. During our 1990-'91 Inter rail trip, for example, we had no fork and spoon. We only used our knife.

Another useful piece of equipment is a sheet of plastic (1x2 or 2x2 metres). This can also be a bin liner. You will need this sheet of plastic to protect yourself against heavy rain and cold, or under your sleeping bag.

A metal mug is useful but you might find it superfluous. It can be used as a mug, as a dish, as a saucepan (especially if you take a camping fire with you). But honestly speaking we have never taken one on our trips.

Ear plugs and a pair of sunglasses will come in handy

when trying to get some rest. A torch is also necessary. This will illuminate dark carriages on the train and areas you wish to inspect before settling down for the night.

Remember to take two plastic bags with you. A plastic bag will protect your feet from unpleasant consequences like verrucas and fungi when having a shower. You will find a plastic bag useful for the following:

- as a carrier bag
- as a rain hat
- to protect your stomach from rainy weather or intense cold
- as a cushion when you have to sit on something wet somewhere to put dirty clothes
- somewhere to store food or anything else that is not water-proof
- to cover your ruck sack during wet weather
- as a portable toilet (to defecate in when necessary)

Even a simple handkerchief may be used:

- to blow your nose
- as a wrist band
- as a head band
- as a scarf
- as a mask against dust
- as a bandage for your eyes
- as a piece of string
- to tie a plastic bag to your ruck sack
- as a hat
- as a container
- as a towel
- as a serviette

- as a table cloth
- as toilet paper (when you realise you have not got any)
- as a plug in a sink
- if you are incurably romantic to say good-bye with

A plastic water bottle is also very useful, especially in summer. This will take the place of a flask and can be thrown away when it is no longer needed. A proper flask is expensive, heavy and contains very little liquid! Matches and lighters are also essential pieces of equipment.

We have also found that a stick of wood is also very important. This may be used to block a door when it does not close properly or to block the communicating door on a train. This will stop the door closest to you from swinging back on your head if you are sleeping peacefully in the corridor.

You can not do without a watch. It is indispensable for those who travel by train, even if the punctuality of some trains leave much to be desired! One must decide whether a watch with an alarm is needed or not. If you decide an alarm clock is not necessary, you will have to rely on your own "biological alarm clock", which is not always very accurate! Be prepared to miss quite a few trains! A few pens will be necessary (no felt tips) and a pencil.

Taking photographs

Deciding whether to take a camera along is a problem even if many people decide to take it with them. You may risk not appreciating the natural beauties of the scenery because you are concentrating on taking the photo. A

photograph does not really portray the beauty of the scenery. It just reproduces its features.

Think well about taking a camera with you. If you really want to take a few photos use a small automatic camera which is normally quite light (how irritated we feel when we see tourists bent in two under the weight of the bag that contains all their photographic equipment, which is also an open invitation for thieves). A camera is not really useful (according to us) for a fundamental reason: all that is worth seeing has already been photographed and is available quite cheaply in the form of postcards. At this point it might be a good idea to have stickers of yourself made. These may be stuck on the postcard of the most suggestive sights. You will still have the same effect and you will spend less. On the other hand some of the most charming places in the world have been filmed in the 007 films like the Meteors in Greece and Yerebatan Sarayi in Istanbul. So the same goes for filming places you have visited. But it goes without saying that certain moments and group photos can have sentimental value, therefore they are worthwhile remembering. In our experience we have found that many people carry cameras with them so they can send you a copy or even the negative of the photos taken.

"Super compact" luggage

At the end of our Inter rail trip in 1990 to Yugoslavia (and before arriving to Trieste) we realised that our luggage could be reduced even further. Therefore here is the list for a "super compact" luggage (always including the clothes you are wearing):

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- a) clothes:
 - a pair of knickers
 - a pair of shorts (these can be used as a pair of swimming trunks, a second pair of knickers or a pair of shorts)
 - a K-Way
 - a pair of shoes
 - a jumper
 - a pair of socks
 - a shirt
 - a T-shirt
 - a pair of trousers (can be jeans)
 - a pair of flip flops

- b) personal belongings:
 - a toothbrush
 - half a bar of soap
 - a bottle of shampoo
 - toilet paper (when leaving it is not really necessary to carry a lot of toilet paper on you. You will be able to find it on trains, in public toilets, or in cafés, or in hotels)
- As far as guide books, documents, food, sleeping bags are concerned nothing changes. As far as accessories go you only need a pen knife.

Autumn "Super compact" luggage

In 1991 once again I realised that our luggage could be reduced. This choice obviously depends on the individual. I can only give advice based on our own personal experience. You may even do better. I was travelling in November and some temperatures even dropped to 0°C. This is a list of my "super compact" luggage for the au-

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turn traveller:

- a woolly hat
- two pairs of socks. A pair of tennis socks and a pair of woollen socks. Both pairs of socks can be worn together when the weather is very cold.
- an old jumper that can be thrown away (we threw ours away on a bench in the railway station of Argos in Greece. We had been waiting for a train for fifteen hours because we had missed one because we were sleeping)
- a flannelette shirt
- a dark coloured anorak (blue it does not catch the eye and it camouflages). It must have big pockets and it must be waterproof. Your anorak must become a second ruck sack as many items will be placed in its pockets so as to lighten the weight of your ruck sack
- a pair of jeans with quite a few pockets. These will contain money
- a pair of shoes
- two plastic bags
- two pairs of knickers
- a pair of swimming trunks just in case you decide to go to the sea or to the swimming pool
- the bottoms of a track suit. These can be used as a second pair of trousers. These can be worn on top of or under a pair of trousers when it is very cold.
- a T-shirt and a shirt. Choose them with care. Remember that these clothes may be worn up to five days at a time and so man made fibres may be uncomfortable. Try to use cotton. But I might add that man made fibres are dreadful so you will not mind throwing them away.

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Even here you will need guide books and reading books. Try to choose light reading as the train tends to tire you intellectually

- a small tape recorder with micro-cassettes. This will record quick notes and various sounds
- a handkerchief. We have already talked about its utility

Money and prices

It is necessary to learn to use money sparingly when you are travelling. But you must take enough money to last throughout the journey (always remembering that there may be an emergency). Have a look round at prices before you decide to buy something. Travelling around with Daddy's credit card or a lot of money means that you have not understood the spirit of an Inter rail trip. The same goes for those who waste their money on stupidities that can also be harmful to the body.

You ought to keep your money in various pockets. Leave a small sum of money in your wallet so that you will please any aggressor (you may even choose to make use of two wallets). Never keep your documents and your Inter rail ticket in your wallet. Always put them in a different pocket.

You will find that internal pockets are extremely useful. This must be firmly fastened to the inside of your clothes. Money belts are now known all over the world so we advise you not to use them.

Change your money into dollars, traveller's cheques and the currency of the country you think you will spend more time in. If your traveller's cheques should be stolen

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or lost, there is always the possibility that the money be reimbursed to you immediately providing you give the cheque numbers to the necessary authorities.

Always remember that the cost of living varies from country to country. A recent survey has revealed that the most expensive cities in Europe are the following: Oslo, Stockholm, and Helsinki. These are followed by: Swiss cities, Copenhagen, London, Rome and Milan. You tend to spend more in these cities than in France, Spain and the other European countries. Think very carefully what you need to buy in each country always bearing in mind the cost of living.

Buy your food in a supermarket daily, stocking up for Sundays or holidays when shops are closed. This will allow you to save money. Do not eat in restaurants unless it is really necessary. If you choose to eat in a restaurant choose a cheap one!

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Travelling in a Group or by Yourself

Quelques instant plus tard, les trois compagnons de route étaient installés dans le projectile, dont ils avaient vissé intérieurement la plaque d'ouverture, et la buche de la Columbiad, entièrement dégagée, s'ouvrait librement vers le ciel.

Jules Verne, "De la terre à la lune"

When travelling by train you may choose to travel in the company of a group of friends or on your own. Travelling with a group of friends has its advantages and its disadvantages. The bigger the group is the slower you will move. Generally speaking the ideal number is to travel in groups of two to three or better still on your own. Too many trips have failed due to a badly assorted group. Make sure that the group is well assorted before you leave otherwise you risk the journey becoming a long parliamentary sitting!

A big group may have problems in finding accommodation in youth hostels or small hotels. This will mean that the group will have to split up. So try to travel in groups of three. Problems are solved easily when the group is small. It is easier to find accommodation, to find seats on a train, to help if someone is ill, and is a guarantee against any potential aggression. It is not just a coincidence that three is considered a perfect number. Even the first astronauts were either in three, in two or by themselves (think of the "Apollo" or the "Soyuz"). Tasks can be easily divided when you are in three (like asking for information,

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reading the guide books, doing the shopping, checking train timetables, and keeping the accounts).

You may find travelling in two just as interesting, but at the same time it requires a very close friendship. Both must possess a similar psychological and physical make-up. Massimo prefers travelling in two. In 1985 Domenico and Andrea carried out a memorable Inter rail trip from Scandinavia to Morocco. They both revealed great courage and a tremendous physical resistance.

A positive aspect of travelling alone is that you can choose how fast you wish to travel and what to visit. This would not be possible if you were travelling with a group. Travelling by yourself does not really mean being alone. You are never alone as you are likely to meet a lot of new people. If you travel with a group socialise with other people.

These groups can be combined in various ways. In 1989 we started off in a group of six (Ricky, Valerio, Flavio, Claudio, and "Mastiff"). We soon divided into small groups and decided to meet up in different places. In 1990 Ricky, Patrick and "Mastiff" started off together and we left on our own. We then decided to meet in Marseilles. The best solution is to vary your journey and the company you are travelling with. But this obviously depends on personal taste. Fate also plays an important part in meeting people. We met the same girls three times in Greece. We met Roland, an engineer from Nürnberg, once again on one of our trips. Ricky met a boy from Turin he had met a year previously whilst travelling from Barcelona to Cerbère.

We have experienced travelling in a group and on our own and both have their own particular characteristics. The ideal solution would be to try them both!

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Sleeping, Eating and Using Public Toilets

Y así, fatigado deste pensamiento, abrevió su venteril y limitada cena
M. Cervantes, Don Quijote

Tiredness and Hunger

Both eating and sleeping, as in everyday life are essential moments of any journey. Neither one or the other must be neglected due to lack of time or any other reasons. Although it is easy to postpone eating times or to reduce sleeping hours when travelling, one must try and make the most of the time spent on the train.

In 1989, after having left Alicante where Ricky had moved together with two girl-mates from Turin, I left for Madrid at lunchtime and arrived the same evening at nine o'clock. After having found a place to sit down I tried to sleep although the seat was quite uncomfortable. At midnight I was woken up by a policeman who told me that the station was closed (in Lyon once the dogs were set against me and other people and a man was being beaten up). I found shelter on an open-air roof that could be reached with the moving stairs. I tried to sleep fully clothed and with my ruck-sack on my shoulders back to front and I advise you to do the same in order to reduce any possibilities of theft or simply to use it as a cushion. I tried to get some sleep always keeping a watchful eye.

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It wasn't a very quiet night and at one stage it was enlivened by two wretched individuals who were walking along looking at a pornographic magazine.

The next morning I faced the trip to Madrid in a dreadful state. It was still dark when I got the underground at five o'clock: my legs wouldn't even stand straight and I had to have a rest every ten metres for I felt exhausted. I tried to find a room for the next night but I gave up looking in disgust after having visited a squalid one-star pension where tattered beds were closely fitted in rooms without windows, all at prohibitive prices. After wandering for a while I set out for Rome hungry and exhausted where I arrived thirty-six hours later.

I experienced another case of exhaustion in London in 1989 together with my friends Flavio, Ricky, "Coupè", "Mastiff" and Claudio. We had only just come back from a tiring marathon around Scotland. Coming out of the British Museum after a quick and lazy visit, we fell asleep on the nearby lawn without even having any energy to eat. Some other Inter rail travellers that we met later on in Holland, also from Scotland, did the same thing in exactly the same place. We came to the conclusion that on these occasions, it is wise to concentrate on a limited number of destinations to avoid tiring oneself out for no reason.

In order to save time and to avoid feeling too full up, it could be worthwhile to jump a meal or to eat every twenty-four hours as I did for three days in Turkey and Greece. After having eaten a yogurt for lunch at the Konya market, I ate twenty-eight hours later at Istanbul, after another twenty-four hours at Tesseloniki and the same again in Athens.

partment carriages are squeezed with eight seats in every compartment. As far as sleeping is concerned, the Italian six-seated ones are the best for they may be lowered. The modern ones have been considered to be in the European media, that is to say that they are uncomfortable although someone has said they are "functional". According to the style, the Spanish ones may and may not be comfortable. The French and the British ones are generally comfortable. The Yugoslavian ones are not bad and have a toilet very similar to your home toilet with ceramic tiles and a wooden toilet seat. The Turkish and Moroccan trains may be modern and comfortable or old and uncomfortable. The Scandinavian ones are like big houses.

Providing it is empty and not too uncomfortable, you may even sleep on the luggage rack, as we saw an Austrian do in France. The compartments of the old Turkish carriages have an extra wooden floor above the entrance door. We found it very comfortable on our journey from Istanbul to Konya.

An empty train is more comfortable than a cheap hotel. It is much better having a compartment all to yourselves rather than a sleeping berth. Using a sleeping bag on a train is also very useful. If there is nowhere to sit down you may skillfully lay down in the corridor or on three closely fitted gangway seats, or as I have already mentioned on the luggage rack or even in front of the toilet. If you sleep in front of the toilet door you must calculate a security distance and be out of the way of the carriage slide-doors. If you want to sleep well, it is necessary to lay on at least two seats facing one another. Remember to take your shoes off to avoid the fine. If you have been sit-

Sleeping on the Train

Travelling with Inter rail necessarily implies sleeping on the train if one intends saving time and money. One should automatically be able to fall asleep, which is not difficult travelling with Inter rail for most of the time you feel tired. To make good use of hours that would otherwise be boring, you may even sleep in the station while waiting for a train. Having an alarm clock makes things easier. If the journey is long enough to allow an adequate rest, you may choose out of two possibilities: the first and possibly the best is that of arriving in a town you intend visiting. Before leaving the station and starting the visit, to avoid going backwards and forth and consequently wasting a lot of time, it is wise to write down departure times for one or more destinations. The second may be that the arrival place is not very appealing, therefore, it would be wise to make a research of nearby interesting places that may be easily reached.

Choose a main station as your destination point which will certainly be busier than a secondary station giving a greater possibility of connections and choice of trains. If there is nothing in particular you would like to see and having a good train timetable, you may work out an approximate day-schedule trying to fit in as many places you may possibly see. If you travel by train during the day, you may eat, sleep or consult a guide.

Some trains are quite comfortable for sleeping in, others less. The Belgian trains that we got in 1989 to Holland were dreadful; the seats were in an upright position with fixed arms which made it impossible for us to sleep comfortably. Some of the French and Spanish com-

ting for more than one night, it would be a good idea if you could do some physical exercise to help the blood circulate better. It is also advisable to have frequent foot baths to soothe tired feet. There are different ways to keep seats empty when you are extremely tired and find yourselves in a compartment by yourselves or with two or three other people. One way to discourage possible disturbers is by pretending you are asleep and pulling your naked feet up on the seat in front of you. This is why it is important you dress badly and have a grown beard. Patrick, Ricky and "Mastiff" did exactly this. It doesn't always work out but there is another very efficient way and that is of making the compartment smell of cheese. Once "Mastiff" pretended he had pneumonia.

There may be crowds of people during holiday times and soldiers on leave. The best thing to do when waiting on a crowded platform is to jump on the train as it comes. You must then rush to get a decent seat, close the door and try and sleep in as comfortable a position as possible. Try not to waste too much time looking for a seat for it is first come first served and others may not be too keen on giving up room to you. Some people prefer the warm but smelly and crowded compartments and others prefer laying down on the floor. We belong to the second category.

Sleeping in another place

The train doesn't always arrive at destination in the morning and at times it may arrive during the night. In this case you may sleep in the waiting room, on a seat, on a bench or on the floor. Or you may even look for another

place perhaps in the open. Most stations shut at night, especially the small ones, therefore, it is advisable to find a sheltered and calm place where to spend the night. We advise you to use ear-plugs and to cover your eyes with a handkerchief to keep out the noise and light. Using sunglasses and a hat are also a good remedy not only for the above-mentioned reason but also not to allow people with bad intentions to understand whether you are asleep or not. We have used this method in many European stations and have slept quite comfortably. Among the many that have given us shelter, I can quote the bench on platform ten at Darmstadt station, the Besançon ticket-office where we woke up the next morning at six o'clock alongside a queue of people, the entrance to Dijon station, the two stations in Lyon, the one in Athens (where our neighbour slept the whole night with a turned-on radio that he also used as a cushion) and Argos. Ricky, Claudio and "Mastiff" asked to sleep on the mail trolleys when we were in Vastervik and Boden, in Norway.

If you intend sleeping in the station, or on a bench, or in a park, it is advisable to do so in the small centres rather than in the big cities although most trains leave from the latter. You can choose whether to sleep in such a way as to be easily noticed or camouflaged. The second solution may be as dangerous as the first unless we are not in a secure position.

Amongst the various sleeping positions, I can recall when Ricky and "Mastiff" slept in Bruxelles in 1990 in a slanted position on the station steps. I also recall when we slept together in Ostenda leaning over our ruck-sacks in a seated position. Another great proof of ability has been given by some youngsters the same year in Bergen,

Norway. They found out it was free to get in the disco and they entered and slept in comfortable arm-chairs with ear plugs in their ears. Sometimes we have slept on the side of the road as we did in Micene, under the Greek sky and in the open and on beach deck-chairs and under bushes etc.

Sleeping in a Bed

Now and again it is worthwhile to sleep in a hostel or cheap hotel for obvious reasons of tiredness, climate and hygiene. During my last Inter rail journey I slept for six nights in a month in a bed and the rest of the time on the train and in other pleasant places. It may be that the pension you choose to sleep in is not all that reliable. This is what happened to me and other friends in 1989 in London when we found ourselves in a hostel full of punks. In that period our friend "Coupè" gave signs of delirium. He even mistook the cuts caused by shaving of a German girl from Koblenz for a number of drug injections. He slept fully clothed with his shoes on as well. From then on it became a habit to acknowledge one another with "God save Coupè". Also, the next morning Ricky and Flavio came across a hostel customer while fiddling "manu propria" with his private parts. That same morning we woke up feeling itchy and so we thoroughly washed ourselves with Lysoform disinfectant. We advise you to take this along with you perhaps in a smaller container in order to disinfect the toilets. You may even happen to sleep in a hotel with people never seen before, perhaps renting the same room in order to save money. We shared a room in Greece with a Canadian boy who woke up every morning

exclaiming: "I hate mornings". Realising what kind of people you're mixing with, it is always wise to keep your money, documents and knife on you. Although there is great solidarity among travellers it is always best to hide your money well in a hostel. Apart from those hostels belonging to the Youth Hostel Federation, that publishes a yearly detailed guide and to which you must be a member, there are also other cheaper and cleaner independent ones. Furthermore, during holiday times it is possible to board in student hostels.

At the "Citè Universitaire" in Paris, the most important nations have their own "Maison". In 1989 at the "Maison du Brésil", Ricky and I stubbornly paid for a single room and shared it with Claudio and "Mastiff" that we secretly let in at night. We must underline the outstanding and cheerful style. Le Corbusier, the famous architect planned the "Maison du Brésil" and is considered a high representative of XXth century functionalism. We made use of the space in our daily activities and at night, in full harmony with the French planners' rational architecture, as well as the well-known crowding of the Rio de Janeiro houses to which the "Maison" has in some way been inspired. The reason for which we were able to let our friends in at night was simply because we had the keys. We spent very little money. The following year instead I boarded at the "Maison de l'Inde". When you arrive in the big cities you may be approached by someone at the station offering the possibility of boarding cheaply in a hotel or hostel. Find out exactly where it is situated and the cost.

Let us make a list of things that can be done to make sure that we do not regret spending a night in a hotel

rather than on station benches. First of all you must ask the price and if it doesn't convince you be doubtful. If you are asked in low season how much you expect to spend, don't be afraid to make a low offer. After having found a hotel at a reasonable price, ask to see the room and make sure you don't hand over any money without having seen it and made sure the bed and toilet are clean. If you are unable to find an appropriate pension and you don't feel too tired out, start looking for a place where you might open up your sleeping bag. Washing can always come later! Otherwise, it is always best to spend a little bit more rather than spend a restless night.

Food

When buying food be careful of the so-called "tourist traps" as a Canadian boy nick-named them. They are generally to be found in places of easy reach such as archaeological sites and beaches and are terribly expensive. Go to the bar only in case of need and that is to say when you are dying of thirst and feel literally exhausted having slept for two nights running on the train. We advise you to shop in supermarkets where prices are modest. In Belgium, Ricky found beans at three hundred lira a tin but he was the only one who ate them. Having tasted them ourselves and not at all appreciating them we thought he had been blessed by God.

Correct eating is essential. Don't think you can economise by eating bread and jam for breakfast, lunch and supper as someone did a few years ago obtaining not too good a result. It is wise to buy cheese, fruit, bread and fresh milk. By eating fresh local products you may get a

better picture of the place you are visiting. In 1990, Ricky, "Mastiff" and Patrick (nick-named "Petriccone") went on an Inter rail journey to Oslo and picked sixty-one apples from a tree that lasted them all the way to Paris where we met up with them. They all looked terribly healthy. In an eight kilometre walk on the Argos main road in Argolid and on the way to the Tirintos ruins, we ate two kilos of succulent oranges that we had picked from trees that were overlapping the netting. If breakfast is included in the boarding price, try and make the most of it by eating until you are full up but also skillfully filling up your bags and cardboard boxes with food.

res at you, you stare back too. If you are attacked run away but by all means avoid fighting; quick-thinking is important.

Your Inter rail clothing would frighten anyone especially after some use; you will either be mistaken for a thief or a tramp.

There is plenty to say with regard to bad behaviour. In 1989, in the Alicante waters together with Ricky and two girl-mates, we were able to rid ourselves of some Moroccans wanting to know where we were from. We told them we were Neapolitan. In a carpet shop in Istanbul we were once threatened with a gun and were then told it was all a joke. I didn't move, making out I was not afraid but I couldn't run away anyway. The Turkish guy told me he belonged to the mafia and his friend told me he had the guns to defend himself from thieves. The latter invited me out to eat, as is the French custom. I declined the gay invitation. It is important not to make a mountain out of a mole-hill! Another similar episode happened at the station in Athens when I was deciding whether to cross Yugoslavia, that was at the time in war. We heard the noise of an automatic gun fall from the jacket of a Yugoslav waiting for the Sophia Express (that crosses over Belgrade). He calmly picked it up and continued to sleep.

If you are careful enough you may avoid meeting up with some problems. If somebody sits next to you when there are plenty of free seats, it is clear they are wanting to bother. If someone approaches you and starts talking while staring at your luggage, he is obviously more interested in knowing the contents of your luggage rather than in the Italian football gossip. Exactly this happened to me with an Albanese boy in Athens.

Tactics to be used when Travelling with an Inter Rail ticket

Tu igitur, qui nunc contum gladiumque sollicitus pertimescis, si vitae huius callem vaccus viator intrasses, coram latrone cantares.

Boetius, Consolatio Philosophiae

Behaviour

It may seem a paradox to some but the best way not to get into trouble is by not being afraid, especially if there is no reason to be so. Proving yourself open-minded and not too available is the best way to act with people you don't know. The behaviour of a serious traveller is not that of enjoying himself for he must respect his environment. Rubbish should be reduced and thrown away in the appropriate bins.

It is important when travelling with Inter rail to be alert in order to avoid any danger. If someone with bad intentions notices you have an unsure behaviour, watch out because you could even be his easy prey. Therefore, show that you are indifferent and sure of yourselves but keep a watchful eye.

If you happen to be walking in a dark road at night, it is always better to keep in the centre rather than on the side-walk alongside the walls. In this way you may be quicker in noticing someone wanting to bother you. Listen out for any noise and always look back. If someone sta-

If you run out of money, you can beg in the streets or in the hostel. In extreme cases you may try asking your own Embassy for help. The money must be returned as soon as you set foot in your own Country.

Information on how to use an Inter Rail ticket

According to rules and regulations, once the season railway ticket has been filled in, it should be stamped at the ticket-office of the station itself. It is only a useless, bureaucratic formality. One of its great advantages is that of avoiding to stamp the ticket before getting on the train and just jumping on and filling in your own destination. The ticket-inspector will later check the ticket and stamp it. Some ticket-inspectors have complained about the lack of bureaucracy. If you happen to bump into a stubborn one, say you are sorry, smile and in future be sure you have your ticket stamped before you get on the train, at least up until you are in that Country.

In some stations, you might even have difficulty in getting a new booklet that is made up of six pages, each divided into six squares. When I was in Istanbul I had to put up with a Mr. Know-all who told me that once the booklet was used up, I couldn't travel anymore. I never went there but I was told that in Ankara I could have got a new one. In Tessaloniki I had only two squares to go and I was told that I could replace the booklet only when the old one was used up. If you only have one full page left and one square, hide the page and show your seasonal railway ticket; at least this way you'll feel safer. If instead you have lost or cannot find your seasonal railway ticket, explain it to the ticket-inspector on the train. It would be a good

idea to make up your own emergency booklet by making a photocopy of the original one.

Your journey on the train

In Mauro's opinion, considerable experience is needed to travel on Indian trains. It is easy to catch a train in Europe but it is important to check the destination of every single carriage that is written on the outside. The train is often made up of many wagons all going to different places and if you are not careful and although a journey is always full of unexpected events, you might even end up in some totally uninteresting place.

There are a few "strategic" observations to be made about travelling by train. The first has to do with where we sit. Before sitting down, always make sure the seat has not been booked and if it has, check from which station. There are two different kinds of bookings: a compulsory one that you pay together with your ticket and the optional one whereby the express fare is not always requested. If the seats don't appear to be booked, sit down in the hope that nobody will make you get up. At times, the ticket-inspector has a list of the bookings. You may even be told that a seat is booked and nobody turns up. If you are sure a seat has been booked and nobody has yet turned up, hold onto it and at the same time, go and look for another one that has not been booked. If you are unlucky, stay where you are and don't make a fuss if the owner turns up; just ask to see his ticket.

The old railway warning "do not lean out of the window" also goes for the most fearless of Inter rail travellers. It can be dangerous to lean out of the window, for in

countries such as Greece, bushes are so close they actually touch the train. Just be careful to avoid a dangerous effect of branches and leaves catapulting back at you.

Also, do not spit out of the window for whoever is sitting further ahead than you and happens to be leaning out the window too, won't be none too pleased!

The world is made up of all sorts of people: mad, nervous and wild drunkards that can be dangerous. Those we meet on the train may harm us with inconsiderate actions, you must learn how to deal with them. Once, in 1991 on the Paris-Toulouse, a French man introduced himself to me as a guitarist by shaking hands. He told me he had lived in Italy for two years and then began to sing one of Pino Daniele's songs (an Italian pop star) in a French fashion. He then moved towards the door to the train that was travelling at a high speed and opened it. He asked me to lean out with him. I was half a metre away from him. I began to think that the man could have grabbed me by an arm or that a sudden jolt could have caused an accident. I refused acknowledging him (it is fundamental in these cases), and told him I was tired and cold. Once in Spain, an English girl decided to travel with the door to the train open, thus becoming dangerous for whoever needed to go to the toilet. It is normal to travel with the door to the train open in Turkey, in particular on local trains that connect Istanbul to the suburbs. Youngsters lean out, jump down, jump on as it is in movement; all this undoubtedly keeps you well alert. It is not unusual to be woken up by drunkards. For instance, in Germany I was breathed over by someone who mumbled nonsense words and then began to sing.

Steer clear from anything and anyone suspect, bombs (especially in Italy) and from abandoned luggage and strange objects.

We may quickly change our appearance, especially to look worse. The same person may change a lot by messing up or combing his hair, dirtying or cleaning his shoes, tucking in or leaving out his shirt. Tight jackets and large trousers are excellent to give a poor look, as with a grown beard. It is easier for a girl to worsen her appearance being that she takes pride in herself more than what a boy does. It is only for defence purposes that we are suggesting tactics the old rascals used to use. At that time, scoundrels used to disguise themselves explicitly to look for money. Today we do it in order not to be bothered. You may even pretend at times that you are mad, as our friend Anthony did. He used to work in Manhattan at night and act as a wild beast on the underground.

Length of time, Itinerary and Means of Transport

*Il vero viaggio è quello che dai posti
porta a ciò che origina i posti*
Eliemire Zolla (from a conference held in
Rome, 20/11/90)

Itineraries

Although every traveller has his own itinerary, we may give some useful general rules. For a series of reasons it is useless working out a detailed schedule, the first being a philosophical one: living your journey day by day makes it exciting and fascinating. Nevertheless, due to unexpected delays, misunderstandings, changes in schedule or due to a variety of train times, it is always wise to organise alternative programmes. Various addresses may come in handy but it is impossible to programme and book everything, for the journey will be over and done with even before you start it. At the beginning of a journey it is difficult to have a detailed train time-table, therefore, it is advisable to be well organised and to improvise like a jazz musician. The idea is to keep in mind a general itinerary which may be subject to sudden changes.

In order to visit more than one city in a day and to make the journey easier, it is necessary to write down departure times to the various destinations as soon as you get to the station. This will allow us to change itinerary according to whether we like or don't like the place we are vi-

siting or we get to know people. Some countries may easily be visited by train whereas others have many interesting places to see but are badly connected. Consider the large cities or main stations as an arrival point at night. It will give you a larger possibility of choice and greater train connections. You may continue your visit or just stop off in a hostel to freshen up.

According to how much time you have at disposal, the size of the city you are visiting and how many places are worthwhile seeing, your visit may be organised in various ways. When I was in France once I managed to see five cities in one day. You don't get to enjoy the journey though because it is all very tiring. At the end of that everlasting day I left for Marseilles where I had given a mid-day appointment to Ricky and "Mastiff" and arrived the following day. On that occasion, Ricky proved to be exhausted because when I called him he didn't beckon me. By chance I had seen him in the station at six o'clock in the morning as I had already got on a train going to Aix-en-Provence. I looked for him and found him leaving his bag in a luggage deposit. I asked him if he heard me calling him and he said he did but that he was used to me calling him in another way. Fortunately, "Mastiff" was with Ricky and proved to be very efficient and well aware of the goings on.

At times, the changes of the itinerary may be surprising. When I set out for Trieste from München, I would never have expected that the train was to arrive in Ljubljana in Yugoslavia, due to the inexact German time. When my Visa was given back to me during the night, I realised that the writing on it was also in Cyrillic. I took it for granted that it was just a publicity slogan and went

back to sleep again. The next morning at dawn I woke up in Yugoslavia. It wasn't that bad after all: I ate blackcurrants and walked to another city. In the afternoon I then set out for Trieste.

Trains and their times

If you want to check the train times, every station has a twenty-four hour time-table. There are notice-boards and monitors with departure and arrival times and at times you may find pocket time-tables. This is not enough though, it is always wise to confirm times at the ticket-office or at the information desk. Some trains may not even be written down on the time-table, may have been cancelled or changed or there may even be a non-scheduled train. You may even ask information regarding connections to avoid wasting time or on the contrary to allow yourself a breathing time in order to visit some other places. You must also calculate a time limit regarding the connections of trains that are not punctual, such as the Greek ones.

All over Europe there are trains whereby you pay an extra fee or a compulsory booking is needed, this may change according to the period in which you travel. Choose one of these solutions just in case you have no other choice.

At the main stations there is a big notice-board where the most important trains are indicated. It is a good idea to consult it when there are many people waiting in order to choose a less crowded train or a passenger carriage.

Stations

There are different kinds of stations:

a) The usual intermediary station that leads into a little open garden with a fountain, perhaps a square and an abstract sculpture in honour of those who have died during the war. In front of the station in Venice and the two stations in Istanbul there is water instead. Usually, by continuing straight on you get to the town-centre. It isn't the same everywhere but lacking any other indication it is the best thing to do, at least you get moving. There are different kinds of buildings, at times you may find offices under the railway itself, as in Nîmes.

b) The station may be detached from the urban centre. It is generally like this in centres that are slightly uphill such as Assisi and Micene, or in places that are not connected by rail as is Bordeaux. There are also cities whereby the old quarter is far away from the station and instead a new industrial less fascinating area is connected by rail. If you happen to get there at night, you may choose one of two possibilities: either to go on foot towards an interesting place or to sleep in the station.

c) An urban centre may have many stations especially in the big cities such as Rome and Paris. Each station has a different name. Ask the ticket-inspector or a passenger which they think is the best station to get off according to where you have to go.

d) In some small agricultural centres you may be disappointed to find just a station. Ending up there is a clear sign of exhaustion. If you happen to get there during the day, try and continue your journey even with other means of transport, either by bus or by thumbing a lift. If instead

you happen to get there at night and there are no connecting trains, just open up your sleeping bag and jump in it.

Some small stations are closed at night. Others stay open, generally the big ones. The fact that trains travel at night and stop in small stations doesn't always mean that the station is open. You may happen to get off a train at night and find yourselves in a dark and lonely road.

Travelling with Inter Rail and other means of transport

You may go round the city-centre on foot, by bus or underground or you may thumb a lift. You must by all means have light luggage. It is advisable to use other means of transport to get to places trains don't reach or to avoid long waiting times. At times, it may be worthwhile renting a bike to go sight-seeing round the city.

If you have plenty of time and the weather is good, it is a good idea to go round on foot; it is certainly good physical exercise. On my last Inter rail journey I often went round on foot, once I thumbed a lift and I got a bus three times.

If it is absolutely necessary to get a taxi, make sure you are together with other people in order to bring the price down. It is useful to get information on other means of transport such as renting bikes. Be choosy and never accept the first offer that is given to you.

It is always a good idea to take shelter in quiet undisturbed places. The only inconvenience is having to depend on some means of transport and having to carry around your luggage, but it could be worth a try. In 1990, Massimo and Francesco combined a Scandinavian Inter

rail journey with a tent and renting a car and at times even camped nearby the station.

As far as ferries are concerned, you may either travel free, pay a cheap fare or full fare on the deck (consider what the various companies offer). In the Summer period it is advisable to get there early to find a decent place where to sleep because it is crowded. At times you may sleep inside (without paying) on a settee or in an armchair or even by the bar. If you sleep out in the open, try and find a sheltered place.

Making Appointments

Giving each other appointments makes the journey colourful. You may reach the desired places and meet up with friends at the same time. To be able to give and confirm appointments you can call the same person. You may inadvertently give an appointment in a place that doesn't even exist or that is difficult to get to. In Paris (Gare de Lyon), Flavio and "Coupè" gave some friends an appointment on a platform that didn't infact exist.

An appointment that worked out between Ricky and myself was that given in front of the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona. I was coming from Val d'Aosta and after having stopped off in Imperia-Porto Maurizio to freshen up, I continued my journey towards Spain. Ricky was coming from Rome and although he was eleven minutes late we met.

I want to tell you about another appointment given in Spain that involved Flavio who in turn convinced, with great difficulty, his brother Valerio to go along too. Flavio had made an appointment with a girl-mate of his but let

us ignore his intentions with regard to the matter. The two brothers arrived late to the appointment and didn't meet up with the girl. When they arrived in Barcelona, Flavio rang the Spanish girls' home and found out she had just left to go on holiday. It turned out to be a clamorous "missed appointment", being that the two boys had travelled all the way from Bremen in Germany especially to meet her. Apparently, Flavio didn't say a word during the whole journey back to Rome.

Examples of some Inter Rail journeys

(We have listed the names of Cities as are in the original seasonal tickets)

Domenico Condello and Andrea Antenucci. From 26/7 to 25/8/1985 to Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Morocco and Switzerland.

(26/7) Roma-München, München-Kopenhagen;
(29/7) Kopenhagen-Stockholm; (4/8) Turku-Helsinki-Turku;
Stockholm-Kopenhagen; (8/8) Kopenhagen-Amsterdam;
(11/8) Amsterdam-Bruxelles; (11/8) Bruxelles-Paris; (13/8) Paris-Bordeaux; (13/8) Bordeaux-Irun-Algeciras; Algeciras-Tanger;
(15/8) Tanger-Rabat; (17/8) Rabat-Casablanca;
(17/8) Casablanca-Marakecht; (19/8) Marakecht-Casablanca;
Casablanca-Rabat; Rabat-Tanger; Tanger-Algeciras;
(20/8) Algeciras-Bobadilla; Bobadilla-Barcelona; Barcelona-Cerbère-Lyon; (23/8) Lyon-Genève-Lausanne-Montreaux-Milano-
Bologna-Firenze-Roma; (25/8) Roma-Bologna.

Leonardo Fenu and Raffaele Elia. Two consecutive journeys from 10/7 to 9/9/1986.

(10/7) Roma-Bonn; Bonn-Amsterdam; Amsterdam-Kopenhagen;
from Kopenhagen and back to Englave, Klampeborg, Helsingor, Hellerup and Hillerød; Kopenhagen-Hasleholm; Hasleholm-Malmö; Malmö-Hasleholm; Oskarshamn (ship to Visby);
Stoccolma-Helsinki (by ship); Helsinki-Kuopio; Kuopio-Turku; Turku-Lahti; Lahti-Oulu; Oulu-Kemi; Kemi-Tornio-Boden; Boden-Stoccolma; Stoccolma-Göteborg; Göteborg-Fredrikshamn;

Fredrikshamn-Langaa; Langaa-Struer; Struer-Hostelbro; Hostelbro-Copenhagen; Copenhagen-Amburgo; Amburgo-Lubecca; Lubecca-Amburgo; Amburgo-Heidelberg-Heidelberg-
Brema; Bremen-Hannover; Hannover-Bremen; Bremen-Munich;
Munich-Chiusi (30/8).

Leonardo Fenu and Raffaele Elia from 20/7 to 19/8/1987.

(20/7) Eastbourne-London; London-Harwick; Harwick-Hook-Holland; Hook-Holland-Amsterdam; Amsterdam-Eindhoven; Eindhoven-München; München-Zagabria; Zagabria-Sarajevo; Sarajevo-Kardeliev; Spalato-münchen; München-Hamburg;; Hamburg-Copenhagen; Copenhagen-Stoccolma; Stoccolma-Üppsala; Üppsala-Osthammar; Osthammar-Üppsala; Üppsala-Stoccolma; Stoccolma-Oslo; Oslo-Myrdal; Mirdal-Flam-Voss-Oslo;
Oslo-Stoccolma; Stoccolma-Turku; Turku-Savonlinna; Savonlinna-
Helsinki; Helsinki-Turku; Turku-Stoccolma; Stoccolma-Copenhagen; Copenhagen-Amsterdam; Amsterdam-Bruxelles; Bruxelles-Strasburgo; Strasburgo-Mulhouse; Mulhouse-Chiusi.

Valerio and Flavio Antonini, Lorenzo "Melensa" Cuneo and Alessio "Zucchina" Carrer. From 5/8 to 4/9/1988 to Germany, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Spain and France.

(5/8) Roma-München; (7/8) München-Dachau; Dachau-München;
(9/8) München-Copenhagen; Copenhagen-Halsingborg; Halsingborg-Copenhagen; (10/8) Copenhagen-Amsterdam; (14/8) Amsterdam-charlem; Harlem-Heemskerk; Heemskerk-Den Haag, Den Haag-Heemskerk; (15/8) Heemskerk-Bruxelles, Bruxelles-Bruges; (16/8) Bruges-Bruxelles, Bruxelles-Bruges;

(17/8) Bruges-Gand, Gand-Barcelona; (19/8) Barcelona-Lyon; (20/8) Lyon-Paris; (23/8) Paris-Versailles, Versailles-Paris; (24/8) Paris-Roma.

The Author together with Ricky Blatti, Gianluca "Mastiff" Morettini, Claudio Pinello, Valerio and Flavio Antonini. There are some changes in the routes. From 26/7 to 25/8/1989 to France, Great Britain, Holland and Spain.

(26/7) Roma-Calais; (28/7) Dover-London; (29/7) London-Salisbury-London; (29/7) London-Edimborough; (31/7) Edimborough-Inverness-Edimborough; (1/8) Edimborough-London; (2/8) London-Amsterdam; (3/8) Amsterdam-Heemskerck; (4/8) Heemskerck-Groningen-Heemskerck; (5/8) Heemskerck-Utrecht-Heemskerck; (6/8) Harlem-Paris; (10/8) Paris-Beauvais-Paris; (this is where our lonely journey starts); (12/8) Paris/Dijon-Tournus; Tournus-Lyon; (13/8) Lyon-Torino; Torino-Aosta; (17/8) Aosta-Torino-Genova-Imperia (quick stop for a swim in the sea); Imperia-Barcelona (I met Ricky in Barcelona); (18/8) Barcelona-Alicante; (from Alicante we continued alone); (20/8) Alicante-Alcazar-Madrid; (21/8) Madrid-Port Bou-Cerbère; (22/8) Ventimiglia-Roma; (25/8) Avezano-Pescara.

Massimo Paone and Francesco Palombi to Germany, Denmark and Norway, also with car and tent. From 25/7 to 17/8/1990.

By train:
(25-28/7) Roma-Milano-Amburgo-Copenhagen-Oslo.

By car:
(29/7) Roldal-Hangesund-Bergen; (30/7) Voss-Vinje-Hella-Sogndal-Skjolden-Sognefjell; (31/7) Lom-Otta-Dombass-Oppdal;

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(1/8) Levanger-Snasa; (2/8) Mo i rana; (3/8) Narvik; (4-6/8) Isole Lofoten: Svolvaer, A; (7-8/8) Fauske-Moirana-Skogn-Oppdal-Lom-Sognefjell; (9-10/8) Lom-Skjolden-Sogndal-Fagermess-Honefoss-Sandefjord-Stokke-Drammen.
By train:(11/8) Oslo-Trondheim; (12/8) Trondheim-Oslo; (13/8) Oslo-Bergen; (14/8) Bergen-Oslo; (15-17/8) Oslo-Copenhagen-Amburgo-Francoforte-Milano-Genova-Rapallo.

Ricky Blatti, Gianluca "Mastiff" Morettini and Patrick "Petriccone" Nebbia. From 6/8 to 5/9/1990 to Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France.

(6/8) Roma-Francoforte; (7/8) Francoforte-Amburgo; (8/8) Amburgo-Lubeca-Amburgo; (8/8) Amburgo-Copenhagen; (9/8) Copenhagen-Stoccolma; (10/8) Stoccolma-Oslo; (11/8) Sebbek-Oslo-Stebakk-Oslo-Stebakk-Oslo; (12/8) Skoyen-Stebak-Oslo-Stebakk; (13/8) Oslo-Stebakk; (14/8) Oslo-Bergen; (15/8) Bergen-Flam-Bergen-Oslo; (16/8) Oslo-Copenhagen-Amsterdam; (17/8) Amsterdam-Heemskerck; (18/8) Heemskerck-Koog Zaandijk-Heemskerck; (20/8) Heemskerck-Amsterdam-Bruxelles-Courtai; (21/8) Courtai-Brugge-Courtai; (22/8) Courtai-Bruxelles; (23/8) Bruxelles-Paris; (Ricky met me in Paris and made an appointment in Marseille); (23/8) Paris-Toulouse; (25/8) Bordeaux-Marseille; (we travelled together to Aix); (26/8) Marseille-Aix en Provence-Marseille; (26/8) Marseille-Nice-Ventimiglia-Genova-Roma (27/8).

The Author: From 17/8 to 16/9/1990 to France, Germany and Yugoslavia.

(17/8) Roma-Paris; (21/8) Paris-Chartres; (24/8) Paris-Meaux-Paris; (25/8) Paris-Meaux-Reims-Epernay-Nancy-Metz-Marseille

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(we met Ricky and "Mastiff" in Marseille); Marseille-Aix en Provence; (26/8) Marseille-Avignon-Besançon; (27/8) Besançon-Dijon-Chalon sur Saone; (28/8) Chalon sur Saone-Tournus-Dijon; (29/8) Dijon-Strasbourg-Offenburg-Darmstadt; (30/8) Darmstadt-München-Ljubljana; (31/8) Ljubljana-Villa Opicina-Trieste; (31/8) Trieste-Roma (1/9).

Ricky Blatti, "Mastiff" and Claudio Pinello. From 24/7 to 23/8/1991.

(24/7) Roma-Frankfurt; (25/7) Frankfurt-Kassel-Hamburg-Fredericia; (26/7) Fredericia-Aalborg-Frederikshavn-Göteborg; (28/7) Göteborg-Malmö-Lund-Malmö; (29/7) Malmö-Eslov-Höör-Stehag-Höör-Malmö-Linköping; (30/7) Linköping-Vastervik-Linköping; (31/79) Linköping-Norkkeping-Stockholm-Üppsala-Stockholm-Üppsala; (1/8) Üppsala-Stockholm-Üppsala; (2/8) Üppsala-Stockholm-Märsta-Sigtuna-Märsta-Üppsala; (3/8) Üppsala-Stockholm-Üppsala-Kiruna; (5/8) Kiruna-Abisko-Boden; (6/8) Boden-Haparanda-Tornio-Kemi-Helsinki; (8/8) Helsinki-Hameenlinna-Tampere-Helsinki; (9/8) Helsinki-Lapeenranta-Kouvola-Mikkeli-Kuvola-Helsinki; (10/8) Helsinki-Turku-Stockholm; (11/8) Stockholm-Hässelholm-Helsingborg-Koebenhavn-Hamburg; (12/8) Hamburg-Köln-Aachen-Köln; (13/8) Köln-Paris; (15/8) Paris-Chartes-Paris; (16/8) Paris-Fontainebleau-Paris; (18/8) Paris-München; (19/8) München-Mittenwald-Seefeld-Innsbruck-Roma.

The Author's last Inter rail journey. From November 2nd to December 1st 1991 to Greece, Turkey, France and two hours in Switzerland.

(2/11) Tagliacozzo-Pescara, Pescara-Bari, Bari-Brindisi, by ferry:

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Brindisi-Patraso. (3/11) Patraso-Pirgos. (4/11) Pirgos-Olympia-Pirgos, Pirgos-Kalamata, Kalamata-Micene. (5/11) Micene-Corinto, Corinto-Diakofto, Diakofto-Kalavrita-Diakofto, Diakofto-Corinto. (6/11) Corinto-Eleusi, Eleusi-Atene. (8/11) Atene-Salonicco. (9/11) Salonicco-Pition. (10/11) Pityon-Alessandropoli-Pityon. (10/11) Pityon- (11/11) Istanbul (Sirkeci station), Cevizli-Istanbul (Haydarpasa station)-Cevizli (12/11) Cevizli-Istanbul (Haydarpasa)-Cevizli (13/11) Cevizli-Istanbul (Haydarpasa), Istanbul (Haydarpasa)- (14/11) Konya, Konya-Çumra, Çumra- (15/11) Istanbul (Haydarpasa), Istanbul (Sirkeci)- (16/11) Salonicco, Salonicco-Lianadeion. (17/11) Lianadeion-Paleofarsalos-Atene. (18/11) Atene-Corinto, Corinto-Argos. (19/11) Argos-Eleusi, Eleusi-Patraso, by ferry: Patraso-Brindisi. (20/11) Brindisi-Bari, Bari-Roma Termini (the following four days served to rest, eat and wash dirty washing in Rome). (25/11) Roma-Foligno-Assisi. (26/11) Roma-Ostiense-Paris. (27/11) Paris-Nîmes. (28/11) Nîmes-Toulouse Matabiau, Toulouse Matabiau- (29/11) Paris Austerlitz, Paris Gare du Nord-Amiens-Paris, Paris-Lyon. (30/11) Lyon-Paris, Paris-Montbard, Montbard-Dijon, Dijon-Lausanne, Lausanne- (1/12) Roma Termini.

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Conclusions

*Et's uh long ole road bu' Ah'm gonna
fin' de en'
et,s uh long ole road bu' Ah'm gonna
fin' de en'
an' w'en Ah gi'dere Ah'm goin'tuh
shake han's wid
uh fren.*

From "Long Old Road", traditional
blues

A book can never be compared to direct experience but let's hope that these few notes may serve to introduce the reader to an Inter rail journey. These explorations are made up of small and often tiring ingredients whereby a free and totally disorganised journey may be tasted. You just have to learn to dose them well. So "God save Coupè". The railway lines are our home!

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Luca Conti
INTER RAIL-MAN

cover by
Stefania Giustini

translated by
Luisa and Bianca Ara

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