

Interview Notes for Take Your RV To Europe

Suggested Introduction

Today we have a very special program for everyone who has ever dreamed of touring Europe for weeks and weeks, taking in all the great sights the continent has to offer, but thought they could never afford it.

It turns out making that dream come true is not so outrageous after all. In fact, as our guest today will tell you, touring Europe doesn't have to be all that more expensive than sitting at home, kicking a round the house, and going to the movies.

The secret is taking your own RV along with you on your Grand Tour of Europe. Impossible, you say? Well, just wait until you hear what our guest, Adelle Milavsky, has to say. Adelle and her husband Ron have learned the secrets of touring Europe in your own RV and they've done the math to prove that it's the most economical way to go.

As a matter of fact, they've written a book — *Take Your RV To Europe: The Low-Cost Route to Long-Term Touring* — that tells you exactly how to do it.

Commonly Asked Questions

Adelle, is this really the cheapest way to see Europe?

It depends on how long you want to stay. If you just want to pop over for a week or two, then this definitely won't work for you. You could do it if you really wanted to, but it would be expensive. But if you want to stay for two months or more, then this is definitely the cheapest way to go.

How do you figure?

We compared the cost of visiting Europe the "usual" way — staying in hotels, eating in restaurants, renting a car or taking trains or planes between cities — to our actual experiences traveling in our RV, including all the shipping costs. Then we compared the cost of renting an RV in Europe. Shipping our own was far cheaper.

We also figured out what it would have cost us to stay home for the same period of time. It turned out that our long-term touring strategy cost only about \$50 more per person per day than staying home. We include all the calculations in *Take Your RV To Europe*, so people can check our math.

So the key is taking your own RV. How did you get it there?

We shipped on what's called an RO-RO ship, for roll-on roll-off. It's like the ones that transport cars from one port to another. You drive it to the dock, and someone drives it onto the vessel. A few weeks later, you fly to Europe to meet it at its destination.

Isn't it expensive to ship such a large vehicle?

Of course it costs money, but remember that your RV is also your hotel and your rental car. And you'll be saving a great deal on food costs since you can eat "at home." In fact, that's one of the best things about traveling this way. You can shop in open-air markets and buy the same food as the local population, things you just won't find in restaurants that cater to tourists.

Isn't there a lot of paperwork?

No, that's all done by the freight forwarder who handles the transaction, and since you are bringing the vehicle home, there are no import problems.

Wasn't there a language problem?

Not really. We do not speak other languages but we found that Europeans do speak more than one language. Even if they may not speak fluent English, people in markets and tourist venues speak enough English to deal with the British tourists who visit. We never

really had a problem. In some circumstances we would make use of a handheld translator to give us the French (or German) noun – and then we would use English and our hands to make ourselves understood. That was a lot of fun.

Is RV camping in Europe very different compared to the U.S.?

There are lots of campgrounds and most are comparable to those in the U.S. There *are* differences. In *Take Your RV To Europe*, we go into them quite thoroughly. The biggest difference we found is that RVing in Europe is not just a rural activity as it tends to be here.

In Europe, there are terrific campgrounds very close to the center of major cities like London and Paris. In Paris, we camped in the Bois du Boulogne! And there is always public transportation from the campground to the tourist areas. You drive into the campground and hop a bus or train to join the other tourists. You can stay as long as you like – and go where you please.

RVs use a lot of gas. And gas is very expensive in Europe, right?

Yes it is, and in fact Ron told everyone that it was thrilling when you saw the cost of a fill-up. But what is more important is that distances between stops are much shorter and you stay in one place more than one day. We rarely drove more than 150 miles a day or drove every single day. Although the cost of gas was higher per gallon, we didn't spend any more on gas over a 72-90 day period than we spent in the U.S. on a similar trip.

Another interesting point is that the cost of gas is going up a lot faster in the U.S. than it is in Europe, so the difference won't be as great as it was in the past.

Are the roads in Europe okay for big vehicles?

If your RV is in the mid-range — say 28-30 feet — you will have no trouble at all. There are lots of other motorhomes on the roads, including huge American rigs. But we don't recommend taking a rig longer than 30 feet. The highways are all modern and most of the back roads are okay. Of course, there are some places where the roads may be narrower

than you are used to. But the real problem with longer rigs is the campgrounds; the space they have for larger rigs is often quite limited.

What made you decide to write a book about all this?

After we made the first trip to Europe, we found people were very interested in the mechanics of shipping and very intrigued by the idea. We also found traveling by RV in Europe to be the least expensive, least restrictive way to tour. You always have a good bed and a clean bathroom if needed – and no reservations are required. We felt a lot of people would love to know how it's done. So I sat down to write a book that would explain exactly how to do it.

How can our listeners order the book?

Take Your RV To Europe is in bookstores and online at places like Amazon.com.

If people want to get a taste of what it's like, they can visit our web site. It includes pictures we took on our trips and excerpts from the letters we sent home. The address is www.rv2europe.com. That's R V, the number "2", europe.com