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Contact: Sally Scanlon
203-488-5341 • sally@intrepidtraveler.com

Tour Europe? Stay at Home? RV and Do Both!

Is it cheaper to tour Europe than to sit at home watching TV?

Not quite. But Adelle and Ron Milavsky have twice proven that you can do it for very little more. In 2002, the two adventurers spent 83 days seeing France and the Benelux countries in depth for less than four thousand dollars more than it would have cost them to stay home. They did it again in 2003, spending 77 days in the British Isles.

Their secret? They took their own RV to Europe.

“If you want to tour Europe comfortably for six weeks or more, there’s no cheaper way than taking your own RV,” say Adelle and Ron, who have the receipts to prove it. “And you can’t beat the comfort and convenience of traveling in your own home on wheels.”

The idea of combining the ease and freedom of RV travel with a European tour came to the couple after their first RV trip in 2001. They took their 21.5-foot RV on an 11,000-mile trek across the U.S. and back from their home in Florida, to their summer place in Connecticut. “We had so much fun, we wanted to do it again,” says Ron. “The question was, where?”

It wasn’t long before the food-loving couple with a passion for history and culture began thinking seriously about taking that next long RV trip in Europe. “We’d been there before,” says Adelle, “but always on vacation trips of two or three weeks, staying in hotels and eating our meals in restaurants.” The idea of taking an RV trip through the heart of Europe became more and more attractive the more they thought about it.

But there were a lot of unanswered questions. Should they rent a rig there, buy a rig in Europe and then sell it back at the end of the trip, or take their own? Could they afford it? Was it even feasible to take an RV to Europe?

After weeks of research and scores of often fruitless phone calls, the two finally gathered the information they needed and compared the costs. They were surprised and delighted to discover that shipping their own rig was the least expensive option. So off they went.

“It was so much more convenient than we imagined,” Adelle enthuses. “There seem to be RV campgrounds everywhere, even in the Bois du Boulogne, which is in the heart of Paris.”

Rigid touring schedules went out the window as the Milavsky’s followed their hearts to romantic castles and their noses to rural markets. Some of their fondest memories were due to serendipity as they indulged their curiosity or picked up tips from fellow travelers.

“On the way to Paris, we stumbled on the site near Peronne where the armistice was signed after World War I and decided to explore it for a few days. We never could have done that if we’d had hotel reservations,” Adelle explains.

Milavsky’s Culinary Laws

- French beef tastes a lot better than it looks.
- The same is true of French chickens.
- French pork and veal tastes even better than it looks.
- If there’s anything better than a fresh baguette it is a fresh baguette with poppy seeds.
- French pastry is to die for. Even if it is bought in a supermarket.
- Belgian chocolate is the best.
- So is Belgian beer.
- Smoked eel in Holland is even better than Nieuwe Haring.
- Nieuwe Haring in Holland is not new, unless it is sold during strawberry season.
- No one knows what’s in an andouille.

—more—

One of the best parts of the trip was finding local food specialties in open-air market stalls and cooking their own meals from the best of local ingredients. “Europeans, especially the French, take their food very seriously,” Ron notes. “The only problem was that we couldn’t eat or drink nearly enough of the wonderful things we saw for sale.”

The sky-high cost of gas in Europe was initially a concern. “But Europe is so much more compact,” Adelle notes. “We wound up spending about the same on gas as we had on our cross-country trip back home.”

The Milavskys were meticulous about tracking costs for their adventure. When it was all totted up, the cost of their eleven-week odyssey worked out at almost exactly \$100 a day for the two of them. “That included the cost of shipping the RV, our airfare, and all our European expenses,” Adelle says.

“Then we figured what it would have cost to stay home,” Ron adds. “After we omitted expenses like mortgages, which you pay whether you’re away or not, we determined that going to Europe cost only about \$40 or \$50 more a day than we would have spent staying home and kicking around the house and going to the occasional movie.”

Although they originally planned to ship their RV home after their first trip, Ron and Adelle had such a great time, they decided to leave their rig in Europe for their next trip, and their next. “Storage is remarkably simple,” Adelle says, “And cheaper than you’d imagine.”

The Milavskys share their hard-won knowledge in their book, “Take Your RV to Europe: The Low-Cost Route to Long-Term Touring” (Branford, CT: The Intrepid Traveler, \$19.95, ©2005), which includes detailed price breakdowns, contacts, and worksheets to help others who wish to follow in their RV tracks. The book is available in bookstores or directly from the publisher at www.IntrepidTraveler.com.

The couple will be back on the road next summer, after celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in June 2005 with their children and grandchildren. Their RV can’t wait for them to return.

To request a review copy of **Take Your RV to Europe**, to arrange an interview with Adelle and Ron, or for any additional information, please contact Sally Scanlon at The Intrepid Traveler at 203-488-5341 • sally@intrepidtraveler.com • fax 203-488-7677

Take Your RV to Europe:

The Low-Cost Route to

Long-Term Touring

by Adelle and Ron Milavsky

320 pages 8.5” x 11”

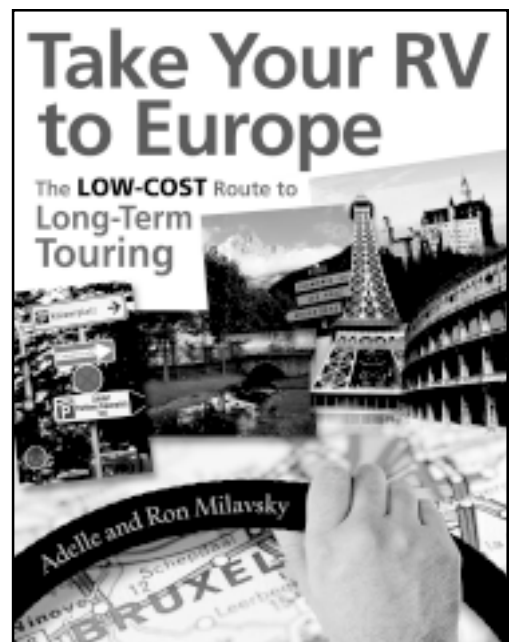
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Glossary, bibliography, index

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Take Your RV to Europe is available in bookstores nationwide, from online bookstores, by calling 203-488-5341, or by visiting www.IntrepidTraveler.com
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