



The Bernina Express  
in Switzerland



# RIDE THE RAILS (AND SAVE THE PLANET!)

With 'flight shaming' the new buzz phrase in travel, ELISA ELWIN reveals journeying by train is a great way to see Europe with kids



A family  
enjoying a kid-  
friendly carriage

As people become increasingly conscious of their impact on the environment, train travel is growing exponentially in popularity. Sure, living on an island like Australia we have little choice but to fly to places like Europe, but once we are there, getting around by rail is a great option. Europe's rail network is one of the safest and most modern in the world, with more than 250,000km of tracks taking you everywhere from seaside towns to ski resorts and from major cities

to remote villages. Here are six reasons to hop on a train for your European family holiday.

## 1. GREATER COMFORT

Who wants to be stuck in a cramped, full plane jostling for space in the overhead compartments with kids? On board trains, you will find spacious carriages with large seats, plus room for luggage. You can head to the bar-buffet car at any time during your journey.





Take in the sights in comfort

**2. EASY AND STRESS-FREE**

All the main train stations in Europe are located in the heart of cities and benefit from excellent connections with other public transport options, such as local train networks, taxis and buses. Avoid transfers, long queues at crowded airports and the stress of driving in another country.

**3. ECO-FRIENDLY**

This is the big one! A train generates up to 10 times less CO<sub>2</sub> than a plane, and Eurostar journeys are even carbon neutral! The International Transport Forum reported that the average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of high-speed trains in Europe per passenger/km do not exceed 17g, compared to 153g for planes.

**4. MEET THE LOCALS**

One of the huge bonuses of train travel is it's a great way to meet locals, as well as fellow travellers, and learn more about their culture. You may also get some tips for the destination you are about to visit.

**5. MORE AFFORDABLE**

Travelling by train is cheaper than by plane. Tickets can be very affordable when booked in advance and rail passes allow you to travel as much as you want and benefit from free bonuses. Up to two children aged from four to 11 travel for free with their parents on the Eurail Pass. In Switzerland, children under 16 also travel for free with a guardian using the

Swiss Travel Pass available with Rail Europe. Travelling in the off-season will also help you save money, while you enjoy even more of the luxury of space on the trains.

**6. FAMILY BONDING TIME**

Some trains in France, Switzerland and Finland have kid-friendly carriages with playrooms, providing a great opportunity for families to spend time together engaging in activities such as reading and colouring-in, in a relaxed setting, as they pass some of the most beautiful scenery in the world. On the TGV and Eurostar, you can also book four seats that face each other. (disclaimer) The writer travelled as a guest of Rail Europe.

**TIPS FOR GETTING A GREAT DEAL**

- 1. Book in advance.** For the best deals, purchase your train tickets three months in advance, if possible. And to avoid your class of service being sold out.
- 2. Look out for deals online.** Up to five free travel days on the Eurail Pass are usually released in February each year, and 20 per cent discounts are offered around November
- 3. Have a clear plan so you can determine if point-to-point tickets or a rail pass would best suit your trip** – knowing this could mean big savings

**MORE INFO:**  
raileurope.com.au