

Day 1 - 9th September

Interrail Travel

We set off on our adventure that we won, starting on Friday 9th September, hoping we have remembered everything and double checking passports and train tickets. The amazing thing about inter rail travel is the snapshots of cities, and countries that you get as you travel to France through Switzerland to Italy, Austria and back through Switzerland to France. The wonderful scenery goes past your window for a day, and then you have a day of exploring and getting to know a place in the 2 nights that you stay in traditional inter rail fashion, as you need to move on to explore more! Train



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travel will always be popular, especially combining city week-end breaks in one long holiday as we planned to travel from Bletchley to Dijon for our 1st inter rail day; then Dijon to Milan but taking a couple of hours break in the journey at Lausanne; Milan to Venice; Venice to Innsbruck, and finally returning home from Innsbruck to Paris and back to Bletchley. We won 5 inter rail days in a 15 day period to cover France, Italy and Austria, but you can get 3 day one country passes if you prefer, or a 7 days pass in a month, but you would need to buy a Eurostar ticket (we luckily had this complimentary too) as this is not covered by the inter rail pass. Even the UK portion of the trip from Bletchley to Euston in our case, was covered by the Inter rail pass as you can take one outbound and one inbound trip in the UK.

At St Pancras Station

St Pancras International station makes an impression, as it is the magnificent new home of the Eurostar terminal which has meant that the whole area has been re-developed. We walk past the British Library, where the free exhibition Punk 1976-78 shows the music and rare artefacts from the birth of the Sex Pistols to its impact on our youth – when we saw the exhibition we forgot how much the pink brand was everywhere on tickets and posters. There is a lot to see in this area of London and the new House of Illustration exhibition at King's Cross is worth a visit with Quinton Blake's artwork for BFG – it is quite hard to find, but walk up a new boulevard of trees to the relatively new bridge over Regent's Canal into Granary Square, where in summer the big screen shows the tennis matches while you relax in a deck chair! If you are too early for your Eurostar train then do call into the Gilbert Scott bar and restaurant at St Pancras Hotel for a treat, as this building has been wonderfully restored, and has the most fabulous staircase with stars on a blue background, which matches the fairy tale façade.

The excitement mounts as you come to the streamlined high speed Eurostar train. Walking past the statue of Sir John Betjeman who is looking ready to board a train, we remembered that the famous poet saved the station from demolition back in the 1960's.

On-board

In Standard Premier on Eurostar we were served a wonderful breakfast of croissant, rolls, cherry jam, yoghurt, apples and almond pastry with choice of drink before we went through the tunnel to France. The view changed to French steeples by woods from our air conditioned Eurostar seats. We pull into Dijon, capital of Burgundy which conjures up pictures of vineyards and wine, after the high speed train journey of 1 hour and 35 mins from Paris, and have the quick transfer to our hotel which is opposite the station, the Campanile Dijon Centre Gare.



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We cannot wait to explore Dijon, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site, and a city renowned for its mustard, blackcurrant liqueur and gingerbread. The Dukes of Burgundy held court here in medieval times.