

Time Out Flight-Free Europe



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As concerns grow about global warming and more people look for holidays closer to home, Time Out has put together a selection of inspirational trips to Europe (and sometimes beyond!) that won't cost you or the planet a single air mile. Europe's railway system is getting faster and sleeker, and now that Eurostar trains depart from St Pancras, with great connections to the north of the UK, continental destinations are more accessible than ever before. You can get to Paris in two hours 15 minutes, Brussels in under two hours and Strasbourg and Cologne in under five. By 2010, Europe will have 4,000 miles of high-speed lines - and some very boutique-y sleeper cars, making plane-free holidays a realistic and stress-free alternative to air travel. But "Flight-Free Europe" isn't just a railway guide. It also includes trips by boat - including the new cruise-style ferries - bicycle and motorbike, even car (now hire companies are offering greener options), covering a variety of destinations from classic cities to undiscovered countryside. For each, we give a selection of the best places to sleep, eat and experience, and some great ideas for side trips. There are also activity breaks and a section of longer journeys to undertake for their own sake, bringing back the idea of the Grand Tour and rescuing the romance of travel. This book snapshots journey time: Under two hours - city breaks in Brussels and Dublin; cycling in Pas de Calais; wilderness hiking in the Orkneys. An easy day - city breaks in Marseilles, Cologne and Lyons; wine-tasting along the Rhone; best of Brittany. Overnighters - city breaks in Toulouse, Turin and Barcelona; touring the Canal du Midi on a peniche; exploring Spain's Picos de Europa. Grand tours - Scottish Isles and Iceland; Orient Express; Baltic ferry-hopping; yachting in Croatia; Trans-Siberian Express; Stavanger, European City of Culture 2008, and the Norwegian fjords.

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目录:

[Time Out Flight-Free Europe_ 下载链接1](#)

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