

How to travel around Europe (and beyond) without flying. At a drop-in coffee morning we talked about this and thought the following links would be of interest. For combined rail and ferry offers:

Irish Ferries Rail/Sail – Britain to (Republic of) Ireland

Stena line Rail and Sail – Britain to Netherlands

and Everyone recommended the wonderful Man in Seat 61 website

This tells you how to travel by train all over the world with information on ferries, hotels and lots of other things thrown in. Even if you never, ever intend to travel on a train it is worth hours of browsing time and at the end you will surely be tempted.

For freighter travel Rowena recommended The Cruise People (<http://www.cruisepeople.co.uk>). In spite of the name they also specialise in booking passengers onto freighters – a great way to travel if you are prepared to be flexible and self sufficient.

For train travel on a multi country European trip Rachel recommended using the websites [www.interrail.eu](http://www.interrail.eu) and [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com). To decide if it's cheaper to get a pass or separate tickets, you have to say how many, and which countries, you are visiting and how many days you will be doing rail travel. There is a journey planning app for your phone, which enables you to book many trains and reserve seats on those high speed services which require it. A pass will allow one free journey within your own country, one on your outward journey, one on the onward journey, and will cover one Eurostar train in each direction. For simple trips where a pass probably won't save money, try the app Loco2, which is a pun (low CO2), to be brilliant, it enabled me to book and pay for all five trains involved between London and Prague in a few minutes.

The number of sleeper trains in Europe is reducing. You can still go overnight from France to Italy and across France, though day time TGV is quicker and generally cheaper.

The benefits of train travel I find are many: much less stressful than all the checking in etc involved with flying; a real sense of journeying from home country through changes of landscape, culture, architecture and food, and a greater chance of interesting conversations with fellow passengers than is usual in planes.”