



BOOKED FOR TRAVEL

Edited by Horace Sutton

How Grand It Was!

"THE GRAND TOUR!" The phrase has a potent sound. It comes by that rightly, for this most popular of the world's travel routes began to be beaten into a broad highway by English bluebloods and gentlemen of quality as far back as Henry VIII's time. Reaching England from Italy, the Renaissance animated the upper classes with a passion to visit Venice, Florence, and, above all, Rome, to expose themselves to the new culture. Now Americans by tens of thousands yearly follow the same there-and-back trail: from London to Italy by way of the Low Countries, the Rhine, and Switzerland, and home via Paris. Or in reverse. A circle tour, elliptical in shape.

Grand Tourists from Shakespeare's time and until that of Thomas Cook traveled by coach, on horseback, or on foot. They took a year or as much as five years. Armed with letters of introduction to princes and savants, they stopped off for sojourns at the courts of petty princelings and at such universities as Heidelberg, Padua, and Bologna to learn languages and polite manners and study the arts. Wine, women, and song were regarded as also part of a young gentleman's education. In their baggage travelers brought back bits of classic marbles, paintings, tapestries, whole fireplaces, walls, and ceilings. Back home, Milord built a new neoclassic or Renaissance wing to his stately home to hold these treasures—which are there for the contemporary Grand Tourist to see.

The travelers of the Grand Tour (the phrase was not invented until 1676) and the exciting stories and glamorous objects they brought back drew from the chimney nook city merchants, poets, and artists. (Shakespeare never made the tour, but such was the magnetism of its destination that he laid several of his plays in Italy, among them *The Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.) In the seventeenth century the elite were followed by plain citizens seized with sudden wanderlust, of whom the epical wanderer was William ("Cut-lugged" Willie) Lithgow, who logged 36,000 miles, mostly afoot, and wrote a travel book which appeared in 1614 as *The Total Discourse of the Rare Adventures and Painfull Peregrinations of long Nine-teen Years*.

That was six years before the Pilgrims landed at the Rock on a different "painfull peregrination." Two hundred years later, their descendants began

crossing to Europe armed with letters of introduction, and set out on the Grand Tour: Washington Irving; Longfellow; N. P. Willis, the "Broadway magazinist"; Bayard Taylor; artists and art students; bookmen; and scions of wealthy New England and Virginia families. The raw United States yearned for culture and sophistication in its turn.

The Grand Tour as done by Americans today is somewhat different from that of Lithgow's day and even Regency times. The travelers of old all went "independent"—there was no other way. No travel agencies or brochures existed, no travelers checks or credit cards. The first conducted group to the Continent consisted of sixty-four ladies and gentlemen from London, led by Cook in 1863 through Switzerland by railway, boat, diligence, muleback, and afoot. They thought nothing of tramping up the Rigi (today conquered by funicular), the ladies in long, heavy skirts. In those days maxi-skirts down to the ankles, not mini-skirts, were worn; the well-dressed lady of fashion wore dozens of yards of cloth. There were heroines in those days.

The railway made a revolution in travel like the one later achieved by the motorcar. In 1800 the word "Tour-ist" had come in with timid hyphen; in 1880 "tripper" was added to signify those who traveled in a hurry and in wholesale lots. John Ruskin, who gave tourism an impetus with his books on painters and architecture, looked down his nose at the "modern steam-puffed tourist." In his autobiography he tells how they did it before steam.

He had his first taste of travel as a boy of fourteen when his parents took him and his sisters on the Grand Tour in 1833. The private carriage they traveled by was carefully chosen, for it would be their home for five or six months. It had to be roomy enough for a family of five, plus luggage, and in bad weather, the courier. The coach's inside was as ingeniously outfitted as a ship's cabin, with concealed drawers, under-seat stowage, and windows of precise

fit to exclude the dust. This heavy vehicle, drawn by four sturdy horses (the postillion mounted on one), did its seven miles an hour, stops included, averaging 40 to 50 miles a day—and never on Sunday!

Papa Ruskin was a wealthy wine merchant, but was not rich enough to afford an *avant-courier* to go ahead and book the next inn's choicest rooms and arrange for fresh horses at posting stations. They had the next best thing, a courier who rode with them. The function of this new class of professionals, as the author explained it, was:

to make all bargains and pay all bills, so as to save the family unbecoming cares and mean anxieties, besides the trouble and disgrace of trying to speak French or any other foreign language. He, farther, knew the good inns in each town, so that he could write beforehand to secure those suited to his family. He was also acquainted with the sights. . . . He invariably attended the ladies in their shopping expeditions, took them to the fashionable shops, and arranged as he thought proper the prices of articles.

Charles Dickens ten years later came along in his own coach-and-four. Here is part of his account, boiled down, for he wrote it as if paid by the word:

You have been traveling along stupidly enough, as you generally do in the last stage of the day; and the ninety-six bells on the horses have been ringing sleepily in your ears, and it has become a very jog-trot, monotonous business, when at the end of the long avenue of trees a town appears, and the carriage begins to rattle and roll over horribly uneven pavements. . . .

And here you are—rumble-rumble clatter-clatter in the yard of the Hotel de l'Ecu d'Or; and everybody comes out open-mouthed for the opening of the carriage door.

The landlord dotes to that extent upon the courier that he can hardly wait for his coming down from the box, but embraces his very legs and boot-heels as he descends. "My courier! My brave courier! My friend! My brother!" The landlady loves him, the chambermaid blesses him, the waiter worships him. The courier asks if his letter has been received. It has, it has. Are the rooms prepared? They are, they are.

The door is opened. Breathless expectation. The lady of the family gets out. Great Heaven, Madam is charming! The sister of the lady of the family gets out. Ah, sweet lady! First little boy gets out. Ah, what a beautiful little boy! First little girl gets out. The landlady, yielding to the finest impulses of our common nature, catches her up in her arms. The baby is handed out. Angelic baby! The baby has topped everything. All the rapture is



expended on the baby. Then the two nurses tumble out; and the enthusiasm swelling into madness, the whole family are swept upstairs as on a cloud.

Dickens was traveling with his wife and sister-in-law, five little Dickenses, and two nurses, all tucked into one carriage. The brave courier rode on top.

The bourgeois Ruskin-Dickens kind of journeying Englishmen became known along the Grand Tour as "milords." It was they who pioneered modern travel and put on the pleasure map such places as Spa and Baden Baden, Lucerne and Interlaken, Nice and Monte Carlo. It was ungracious of Ruskin years later to describe the travel-agented, train-toted tourists he saw as "the poor modern slaves and simpletons who let themselves be dragged like cattle through countries they imagine themselves visiting." For, after all, the milords were being carried along, too, dependent on a courier, unable and unwilling to speak the language of the country—cattle, in short, but first-class.

It is easy enough to imagine what Ruskin would say about today's 100 per cent American tourist (or tripper) on his transatlantic jet crossing to his hurried, packaged descent on "eleven countries in twenty-one days." The Ruskins took half a year. The original Grand Tourists did six countries in about 1,100

days. How pokily things went in the old days!

Another thing that has changed is the travails of travel. You are aboard the Paris-Le Havre boat-train, or at the airport waiting for the world's most experienced airplane. Around you are your countrymen homebound from their Grand Tours. What a wonderful time they've had! Venice—fabulous! The view from the Jungfrauoch—wow! The women go on to talk of shopping triumphs while the men trade amazements at Europe's prosperity, especially Germany's.

Sooner or later someone remarks that everything would have been perfect but for Salzburg (or Nice, Brussels, Heidelberg), where their confirmed reservations were not honored and the desk clerk was so rude!

Ha! Now the fat is in the fire. One comes to the post mortem of every trip: the catalogue of woe. The fat man got dysentery in Rome. The thin lady's luggage went astray. Mr. Tumulty's raincoat was stolen, and in a cathedral at that. Mrs. Spoonbill arrived in London at 7:30 a.m. and couldn't get into her room until check-out time at 2 p.m. Add the hotel that was dirty, the palms that were always outstretched, the wildcat strike that tied up the railways, and the cab drivers you were sure cheated you, though of course how could you count in that money?

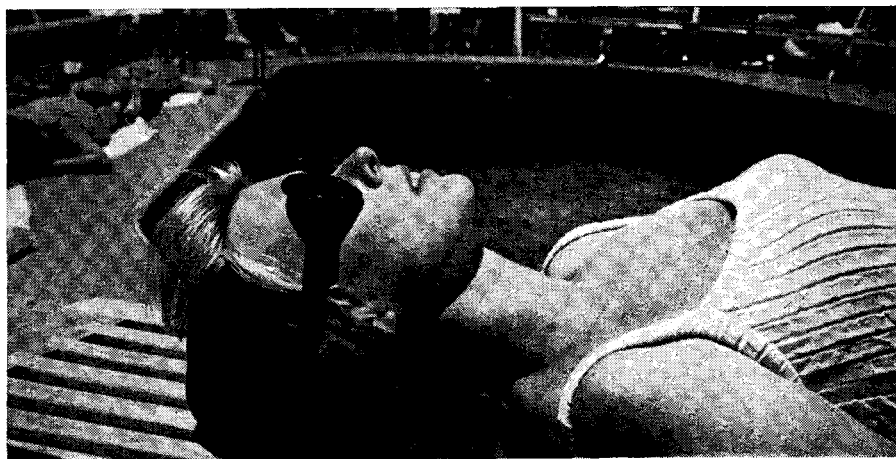
It might ease the minds of homing Grand Tourists if they knew the worse woes which beset sixteenth- to eighteenth-century travelers. Then, the least of one's trouble was that it took a minimum of five days to reach Calais from Paris, and that, arrived there, one often waited ten days for a favorable wind for the cross-channel voyage. Young Washington Irving's ship, bound from Genoa for Sicily, was captured by pirates with knives in their teeth. They plundered it, but after reading Irving's letters of introduction to celebrities, touched their forelocks and left his trunks unopened. Humorous amateurs, they left behind a receipt for what they took.

Boswell's Grand Tour diaries are full of unhappy matter. "A dreary inn it was. . . . At night we were laid thirteen in a room, beside a Danish woman and three children. . . . Sad travelling. About 12 at night as the wagon was rumbling down a hill one of its wheels fell into a deep hole, and there we stuck fast." Now and then he was lucky. "I had a genteel large alcove with a pretty silk bed. I find my happiness depends upon small elegancies."

FROM the sixteenth century for some years into the nineteenth, travelers were stopped at thirty-one different customs stations between Cologne and Basel. Every little duchy and palatinate took its bite. One could bribe one's way, but bribes added up to formidable extras. At Channel ports customs officers confiscated what they liked from one's luggage. Through the centuries the innkeeper-robber was in business. He scorned itemizing a bill, and from his inflated round number it was silly to appeal to the local magistrate. And there was no travel after dark.

In many parts the roads were so infested by bandits (deserters, usually, from crazy wars) that travelers journeyed in groups, like Chaucer's pilgrims. In Fôy-Notre Dame, Belgium, a festival commemorates those days. Soldiers escort villagers attired as pilgrims to the miracle-working church as they once escorted genuine pilgrims through the woods. The inveterate traveler Tom Coryat was terrorized in 1608 by two tramps near Baden Baden (now one of the most tramp-free places in the world), but so successfully did he pretend to be a mendicant friar that they gave him some pennies.

The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travelers were troubled by two other plagues besides banditry: disease and religious differences. The English, having broken with the Pope in Bluff King Harry's days, were at times set upon in fanatical regions. Disease was bound to be communicable when inns slept travelers a dozen to a room and three or four to a bed. Vermin abounded



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and fed off all. At the common table guests dipped into the common wooden bowl groping for bits of meat with hands generally dirty. No tableware was furnished; every man carried his own knife. Coryat in 1607 was astounded when in Italy he saw people using a strange pronged instrument, the fork. A wonderful idea! He bought several with which to astonish the home folks.

Nor was England the foreign traveler's Utopia. When Voltaire visited London, some toughs took exception to his Frenchy looks and flung mud and insults at him. The philosopher mounted a stone horse-block, harangued them as brave lads, and regretted not having been born an Englishman. They hurried him and carried him to his lodgings on their shoulders.

This recital of old tourist troubles leads to Ye Olde Travell Kitte, designed to anticipate and counter not only misfortunes but boredom. Although nothing like a Muirhead or Baedeker guidebook was invented until near the middle of the nineteenth century, many early Grand Tourists published, along with their experiences, advice on What to Pack. Here is a roundup of some objects considered essential or helpful for a travel kit:

A brace of pistols. A dagger. A stout walking stick "in case of meeting a surly dog or stranger."

Tablecloth, napkins, bedding.

Knife, fork, spoon.

Spices.

A bag of oatmeal. Silver teapot, tea leaves, and a kettle [as an American today carries powdered coffee].

Pocket detachable door-bolt. [Many inns had no locks to their doors.]

Rug for cold marble floors. Long woollen drawers.

Medicine chest: dental forceps, castor oil, laudanum [as a pain-killer].

A clay pot of earth kept moist to hold under the nose to avoid seasickness. [Keeping in touch with Mother Earth?]

A bottle of vinegar for fumigation of one's quarters. Heat the fireplace shovel red-hot on being shown into your room, and throw vinegar on it.

A flute to while away dull hours. [Today, crossword puzzles, solitaire, detective stories.] Sketching materials. [Today, camera.]

The last word is to Shakespeare:

Think on thy Proteus, when thou haply seest

Some rare noteworthy object in thy travel:

Wish me partaker in thy happiness.

In short, "Drop me a line—'Wish you were here.'"

—LAWRENCE AND SYLVIA MARTIN.

This article was adapted from the Martins' new book *Europe: The Grand Tour!* published this month by McGraw-Hill.

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FOR THE ART enthusiast, Montreal's Expo 67 offers a heady menu, richer than normal eyes can absorb in a short visit. Topping a prodigious round of paintings, sculpture, and architecture are Canada's splendid International Fine Arts Exhibition, France's comprehensive survey of Gallic art, and occasionally spotty but often stimulating group shows in other national buildings. Even more impressive are numerous outstanding achievements in contemporary architecture, notably the German, American, and Dutch Pavilions, to say nothing of the shimmering Gyrotron, a simulated space ride in the amusement area.

All these buildings, either hung from or predicated on interrelated self-supporting metal bars and tubes, are freed from the orthodox columns of routine glass and steel architecture. As such, they become open translucent structures eminently suited to flexible modern needs, which, to be sure, are nowhere better exemplified than in a temporary international exposition. Industrial design, too, is admirably served, in contrast to its often haphazard vulgarity at New York's recent fair. Outdoor lights, plastic telephone booths, directional signs, spacious new Métro stations, and, not least, the entire conception of the Minirail, from its comfortable cars to its enticing itinerary, testify to thoughtful overall planning.

Expo 67 is geographically immense, including several islands and literally acres of buildings. To cover only its most important art concentrations demands sturdy legs no less than agile eyes. Among these concentrations, the No. 1 triumph belongs to Canada and to its official Fine Arts Exhibition effectively housed in a newly erected museum. The show encompasses 188 works spanning all periods and representing every corner of the world. Many are familiar masterpieces from the great museums of Japan, India, Egypt, the United States, Mexico, and from most of Europe's important art centers. The U.S.S.R. and France have been especially generous, the Louvre alone having lent no fewer than eleven fine works.

To accommodate Expo 67's main theme, the show deals with "Man and His World." Divided into nine different sections, such as "Man and Work," "Man and Love," "Man and His Ideals," the exhibition rises above these arbitrary classifications because it was selected