

and admissions. Considering the runaway inflation in Europe, this represents reasonable travel in any language.

For \$206, or \$25 or so per day, there's the eight-day "Charleston's Gardens and Historyland Tour" from New York or Washington, D.C., to Charleston, with stops in Virginia at Colonial Williamsburg and Petersburg and in North Carolina at Tryon. A more extended southern trip—"Spring Fiesta in the South"—takes thirteen days to wend its way from New York to Atlanta, Mobile, Biloxi, New Orleans, the Bayou country, Baton Rouge, Birmingham, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, Charlottesville, and then home. It's a real bargain at \$354, or \$27 per day complete.

In addition to all the escorted tours offered by the two giants of the bus industry, Continental Trailways and Greyhound, one can make all kinds of independent arrangements, stopping

wherever and for as long as one likes, going from Albuquerque to Zanesville. That's the beauty of bus travel. You *can* get there from here.

No doubt the best buys of all are Greyhound's Ameripass and Continental Trailways' Eaglepass, which offer almost unlimited travel throughout the United States for thirty days for \$149. For an extra \$50, you can spend an additional thirty days. Some vacationers fly to the state or region of their holiday choice, then use their thirty-day bus pass for crisscrossing the area in depth.

Besides the two major bus lines, many bus companies within a state or region have special tours. Most local travel agencies, as well as bus stations in many towns, are replete with schedules, guides, and reams of data about bus possibilities.

Luxury bus trips, despite my personal naïveté about them, are certainly not a recent invention. Who has been support-

ing buses all these years, causing the bus lines to evolve so many elaborate tours and complex schedules? I put this question to Thomas Stevens in Continental Trailways' New York office. "More people than you'd think," he said, smiling. "Some people are afraid of flying. As passenger trains have become almost obsolete and exorbitant to boot, buses have picked up the slack in land travel."

SENIOR CITIZENS, long canny about stretching limited retirement income and with sufficient time for leisurely travel, have been bus buffs for years. Schoolteachers with flexible summer schedules and foreign visitors with their economical unlimited travel passes also are enthusiasts. And recently, as inflation soars, more and more families have discovered that seeing America by bus is really *seeing* America, not flying *over* it.

Summer is by far the favorite season

Buses in Europe

Buses in Europe haven't generated the lore and legend of the American Greyhound, but they do provide a reliable, comfortable supplement to the Continent's rail network. It was the national railroads that created Europabus, a means of transport to places trains don't travel. Europabus runs regular intercity service and special tours, including guides, meals, and hotels, to such areas as the Loire Valley and the Alps. With a Eurailpass, you can ride Europabus for at least 50 percent off regular fares.

British buses offer an even better bargain. With the lengthening of Britain's motorways, the National Bus Company's vehicles can almost equal the speed of trains. An eight-day CoachMaster ticket costs just twenty dollars, and regular fares are equally appealing. For instance, from London to Bristol and back, 236 miles altogether, the fare is less than five dollars if you return the same day, just over six dollars any other time. Along the way the driver may make a tea stop—so you can also spend a penny. Ireland, despite a thinning rail and bus schedule, offers a two-week Irish Rambler Ticket for forty-three dollars standard, fifty-five dollars first class, good for bus or train travel.

In Italy CIAT provides tours between cities, day trips, and a five-day tour of Sicily. The buses are equipped with a bar,

and soft drinks are served by the hostess/guide. CIAT's Silver Ribbon service between Rome and Florence—a daylong trip via Assisi, Perugia, and Siena—takes in several walking tours and a lunch stop (not included in the price) for \$14.50. An all-day sojourn to the famous villas outside Venice costs seventeen dollars, a price that covers transport, entrance fees, guide, tips, lunch, and tea. The five-day tour around Sicily (\$213 per person) includes deluxe lodging and two meals each day.

Some of Italy's private bus companies also serve regions of the country. Others, like SITA, send coaches all the way to northern Europe. SITA's Milan-Brussels trip (thirty hours) costs twenty-five dollars, though a second-class train ride, just fourteen hours, is less than thirty dollars. Another bus company, Autostradale, can take you all the way from Bonn to Athens for fifty-nine dollars, a sum that includes demi-pension (two meals a day) and two nights' lodging.

Cityrama of France offers thirty-four bus trips through Paris and its environs. Double-decker coaches are equipped with multilingual commentary, a hostess, and bar service. For example, "The Complete Paris Tour" costs six dollars for three hours. You can see "Modern Paris" in the same time for \$4.50. Evening excursions include "Paris Illuminations and *Son et Lumière* at the Invalides" for \$4.50 or "Paris by Night 'Lido,'" featuring the Bastille and the

"Apaches" dances, Montmartre's Pigalle, and the Lido for thirty-one dollars, and you're out until 2 A.M. Full-day forays to Fontainebleau and Versailles cost twelve dollars (lunch not included), and a day trip to Chartres and Rambouillet is two dollars less.

FOR A HEADLONG PLUNGE into France, Cityrama's twelve-day grand tour of "Highlights of France from the Cave-man to the 'Concorde'" costs \$318 per person, with lodging in three-star hotels, two meals a day included. Cityrama also has a choice of half-a-dozen one-to-three-day itineraries: Mont-Saint-Michel and the châteaux of the Loire, three days, ninety-five dollars per person, all-inclusive; Rheims-Champagne, one day, thirteen dollars, includes a taste of champagne but not lunch.

The famous Alpine Postal Coaches crisscross Switzerland, providing the traveler and the resident with service to remote villages and Alpine resorts, filling in where trains leave off. Yellow buses, easily identified by their melodic horn signal, carry some fifty million passengers over the 4700-mile network each year. The drivers are bilingual and have had special training that includes one year as a truck driver and a mechanic. They often double as guides. A full day's excursion from Interlaken, crossing several famous mountain passes, stopping for lunch (not included), and back costs eleven dollars. D.B.

for bus travel, though in certain cities, such as Philadelphia, the winter weekend ski trips to the mountains of western New York are a best-seller. And no wonder! For fifty-seven dollars you can have a three-day ski weekend that includes hotel accommodations, transportation, four meals, ski rentals, live entertainment two nights, and one free ski lesson. Some seven hundred skiers—or twenty busloads a weekend—take advantage of this special package.

Among the favorite longer trips for easterners is the thirty-day "California and the Golden West" run, which includes the National Parks, Grand Canyon, Disneyland, Los Angeles, San Francisco, the Old Mormon Trail, Salt Lake City, Santa Fe, Las Vegas, and back. The Pacific Northwest tour, with a man's-eye view of the Canadian and U.S. Rockies, is another popular trip. Westerners and midwesterners enjoy coming east to the historic cities of Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and New York.

BUS TRAVEL is gregarious, no doubt about it. A misanthrope wouldn't survive a cross-country trip much beyond Pittsburgh. But even on a crowded bus (and ours began to fill up after Philadelphia), the decibel level is fairly restrained. Tape reels of innocuous Muzak-type music are played at low volume. ("I bought a tape of Christmas music," Elaine told me, "and played it all through December. Everyone sang carols. We had a ball.") Passengers sleep, read, gaze out the window (and from their elevated seats they really have a commanding view), chat cozily, and doze again. Escorted tours are planned to allow a maximum of two continuous hours on the road between breaks—and daylight driving at all times (except for special night outings within a tour city)—to avoid seat fatigue.

You who discover the open road are not limited to escorted or independent tours or even regular schedules, if you travel by bus. You might want to think big—à la Paramount Pictures or the Philadelphia Eagles—and charter one of Continental Trailways' three Executive specials. Each comes complete with bar, refrigerator, ice-cube maker, wall-to-wall carpeting, built-in closet, semicircular lounge, rattan draw-drapes, and telephone. At \$1.50 a golden mile, one can luxuriate all the way from Miami to Boston or be a Little Big Spender, rent the Executive for a cocktail party, and never leave the terminal. □

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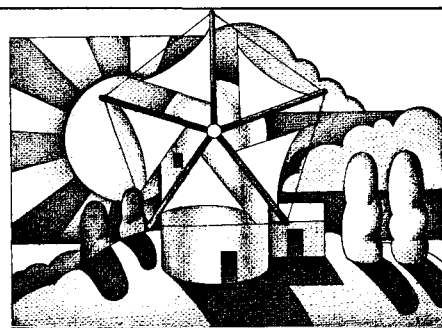
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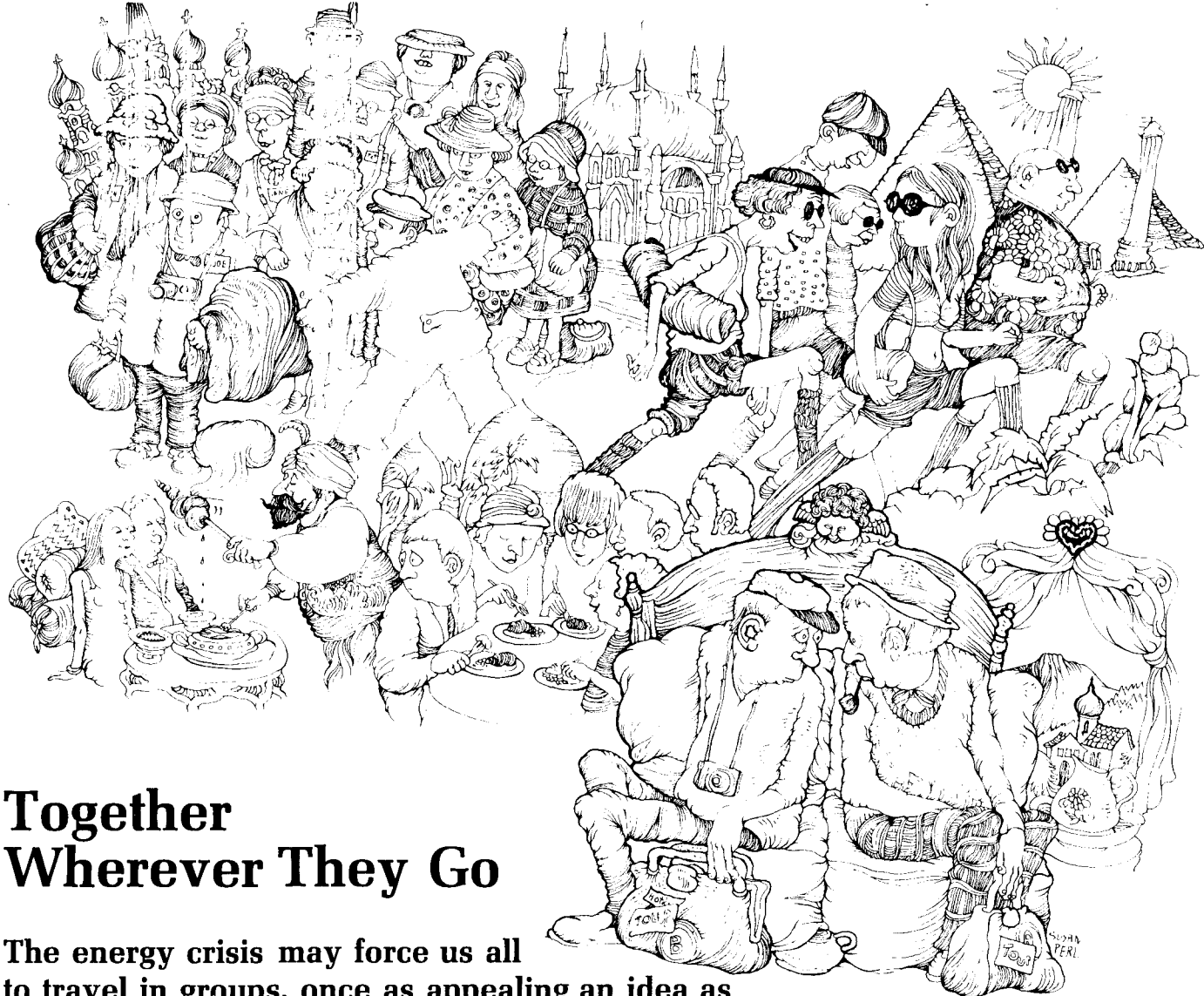
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Together Wherever They Go

The energy crisis may force us all to travel in groups, once as appealing an idea as a trip to the gallows. Here's how to do it painlessly.

by Ila Stanger

In the not so distant past, most of us would rather have gone to the gallows alone than go anywhere with a group. We all have at least one small Mittyesque vision of traveling the world on our own, charting unknown seas, hacking through uncrossed terrain, stumbling on ancient civilizations, piloting our own plane across the Atlantic, and conquering Europe in a Maserati.

But the shock of the energy crisis—no matter what its degree of reality—has reminded us of the social and financial price of our escalating greed and our insistence on going it alone, even if we could get gas for that Maserati. A new consciousness is filtering through, the reverse chic of the concerned and slightly

exhausted world citizen who will share his travel with others. It's a kind of inconspicuous consumption.

In this case, necessity is the mother of a trend. The practicalities of our situation are that underbooked flights are being canceled, and desirable hotels are block-booked by the giant travel agencies. So, if you're on a plane filled with a group, you're more likely to take off, and if you arrive with one, you're more likely to have a place to rest your head. And as prices for fuel go up and international currencies rise and fall like yo-yos, individual travel is becoming astronomical in price and confusion.

The encouraging side to all this is that the word *group* is increasingly elastic and can stretch to fit an enormous variety of travel concepts. It doesn't necessarily mean being whizzed around like a school of barracuda, swimming past the *Mona Lisa* in fifteen seconds, and gobbling up Rome in a day-and-a-half. That old cliché of the escorted tour—sort of a

Kiwanis Club meeting on the move—still exists. But some group packages can mean as little as just sitting on the plane with people who have bought into the same plan and whom you will never run into again, except on the flight back.

There are, of course, still disadvantages to traveling in a group. Maintaining a facade of civility with people who have nothing in common except a desire to save money on this particular trip. Finding yourself in a world-famed restaurant with free agents at other tables ordering exotic dishes from all over the menu, while you're stuck with the native equivalent of London broil and rice pudding. Arriving in a strange locale, feeling a bit like a Martian (which has happened to us all at least once when we were on our own), but feeling like a Martian traveling with a tribe of conquering Venutians is something else again. And as we all know, loving mankind is a lot easier than loving an individual with whom you have to share a car or a hotel room. The laws of homicide still hold even away from home.

But the modern difficulties of traveling

On the editorial staff of Harper's Bazaar for ten years, Ila Stanger has specialized in features on the arts and on travel. She has been travel editor for the last four years.