

Interrail is for u3a – a summary

What is it?

- A pass to travel on almost every train in Europe on the travel days you choose.
- On a travel day you can travel on as many trains as you wish.
- Buy it in paper form or as a phone app.
- Buy it up to 11 months in advance – you don't have to specify any dates until you start using it.
- Just enter your journey before you board and then show it when asked.
- If you change your plans during the day you can change them on the Pass.

Key websites

- Man in Seat 61 (www.seat61.com) - everything about European rail travel explained - in plain English.
- Interrail (www.interrail.eu) - explains the choices and sells the pass.

Pass choices

- Global (all Europe except UK) or Country
- Standard or First
- Continuous or flexible
- How long - from four days to three months
- Mobile app or paper pass (Delivery charge for paper pass)

Buying it from Interrail

- Subscribe to the Interrail newsletter and watch for discounts.
- The Interrail website defaults to Youth discount and 2nd Class so check it is showing Senior prices.
- A paper pass is posted to you. A mobile pass is emailed.
- Buy it months in advance, load it on the phone but don't activate it.
- Save journeys in advance but only activate each pass day just before you use it.
- Website might be showing prices in Euros.

Crossing the Channel

- You have two outbound/inbound days on a Global Pass which are valid in the UK. They cover your journey on Eurostar and any journey to London the same day.
- If you overnight in London before catching the Eurostar then you have to pay for a train ticket from Chester to London. A CIV ticket to St Pancras (explained on Man in Seat 61) is the best one to buy. Or explore buying two Global passes to cover the period of your trip and so get four inbound/outbound journeys.

Supplements and reservations

- You have to book and pay a supplement on some high speed or InterCity trains
- The Interrail website and the app tell you which journeys require supplements.
- Book supplements and make seat reservations on national rail apps (like the Deutsche Bahn app) or on the Interrail app if it works.
- Local/regional trains don't have a supplement.

Eurostar

- Eurostar ticket is included in Interrail but you have to reserve a seat at a supplement.
- There are only a limited number of seats on each train for Interrail passengers so book as early as you can.
- Best to book direct on Eurostar website (www.eurostar.com).
- You can't choose your seat when you book but you can change it and book a special meal (eg vegetarian) after you have made the booking under 'Manage your booking'.
- You can check in up to 30 minutes before departure but that is cutting it fine. Best to allow an hour. Security and passport checks (UK and France) are quick and simple.
- Chester to Amsterdam or Paris or Cologne is easy to do in a day from Chester with only one change (two to Cologne) and a 400 yards walk from Euston to St Pancras.
- There is a walking route through side streets that avoids Euston Road.
- St Pancras is a civilised station, unlike Euston.
- No more checks once you get off the train – the French checked your passport before you boarded at St Pancras. On the way back the UK check is before you board in Amsterdam, Brussel or Paris.

Resources

- Book - 'Europe by Rail' by Nicky Gardiner and Suzanne Kries.
- Deutsche Bahn (DB) app is simple to use and covers all of Europe.
- Facebook groups:
 - 'Interrail'
 - 'Interrailing for the Older Crowd'
- Some specialist travel agencies for individual rail holidays
 - Byway Travel – useful website for planning your trip (www.byway.travel)
 - Ffestiniog Travel (www.ffestiniogtravel.com)
 - Railtrail Tours (www.railtrail.co.uk)
 - Tailor Made Rail (www.tailormaderail.com)

Rangers and Rovers UK

- GB Rail Rover Guide (www.railrover.org)
 - Highland Rover (4 days in 8)
 - Spirit of Scotland Pass (4 days in 8 or 8 days in 15)
 - Ffestiniog Round Robin (day pass)
 - North West Rover (4 days in 8)
 - Explore Wales Pass (includes Chester) (4 days in 8)

Chester u3a contact

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