

"Two for the Road" European Road Trip

Written by Jill Kerr Tepe

Monday, 30 January 2012 00:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 21 February 2012 11:50

The open highway and an unending horizon. A painter's palette of autumn colors smearing past the window.



Our only companions are passing church spires in disappearing hamlets. What could be more perfect for my husband and me than jaunting through Europe in our own little car *à la* Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney in

[Two for the Road](#)

? I don't flatter myself that I resemble Audrey's waifish figure robed in designer fashions. And our car, a humble and humorously-proportioned white Peugeot was a far cry from the posh white Mercedes-Benz 230SL roadster in the film. But we left Audrey and Albert in the dust in the sense that my husband and I actually ENJOY being together, and our countryside meanderings

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became another precious memory in our bank of unforgettable experiences.

{vimeo}35731560{/vimeo}

[On an iPhone? View Jill's European road trip video at: http://vimeo.com/35731560](http://vimeo.com/35731560)

I had crossed nearly every form of European transportation off my list: budget continental flights, trains through multiple countries, enough subways, trams, cable cars and funiculars to last a lifetime, the clichéd tour bus through 13 countries, taxi cabs, gondolas, canal boats, hovercrafts across the English Channel, cruises through the Bosphorous Strait, and even gondola lifts through the Swiss Alps. Heck, we've even hitched rides from an Italian garage owner through the Tuscan hills. But the issue is that none of these vehicles run on my schedule. And as a traveler who wants to do what I want to do when I want to do it, I decided it was time that Nick and I take the wheel. Literally. And I am convinced that the liberating experience of driving through the European countryside ought to be mandatory therapy for any mass-transit-weary traveler.



We devised our plan: after 3 days spent relaxing in Paris, we would rent a car to drive from Paris to the town of Reims in the Champagne district. We wouldn't have much need for the car in Reims (driving around seemed dangerous after hopping through the Champagne houses), but our hotel offered affordable parking. And after 2 days in Reims, we would drive north across the border into the Ardennes Forest of Belgium for a 1-night respite in the village of Chimay, before continuing on to deposit the car in the center of Brussels and hopping a train for Bruges (where we would have no need of a car).

Mercifully, drivers in France and Belgium use the same side of the road as Americans, so our biggest hurdles were road signs, language barriers, and jockeying for position in the aggressive driving culture of European countries (You will not find any minivan soccer moms waving you over to merge peacefully).

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Edith is a patchwork of colors, with a mix of red, orange, and yellow, and a few green leaves still clinging to the branches.



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