

PARIS ON \$150 A DAY
(Originally Published November 1977)

We were in Europe again this fall from early September until early October, traveling most of the time in France and enjoying four weeks of unusually good weather. While vacationers still crowded the beaches along the whole of France's Mediterranean coast, taking advantage of the prolonged balmy weather, vineyard owners were wringing their hands over the poorest grape crop in decades and delaying the harvest until mid October. We revisited Avignon, stayed in Carcassonne for the first time and then went up through the Bordeaux vineyards to Royan on the Atlantic coast just north of the Gironde estuary. We toured horse farms in Normandy, ate fresh oysters out of the shell at Cancale on the Brittany coast and stopped in the chateau country along the Loire valley.

One would be hard pressed to find more varied or more beautiful countryside of fertile farmlands than that of France. And it is no wonder that the French countrymen are noted for their stubborn attachment to the land. No matter what the political ferment or drift of city dwellers, it will take more than another revolution to establish true communism or collective farming among France's hardheaded, conservative, small landholders.

Paris, too, remains the loveliest and most interesting of all the world's great cities. But what we really started out to report was that the cost of living in France (and even more in West Germany and Switzerland, where we were for a few days beginning and ending) continues to rise.

Ten years ago, clutching Arthur Framer's *Europe On \$5 A Day* when we took our first European excursion, travel was considerably cheaper. There was even an occasional day when one could approach that bargain figure. Since then, with the dollar's decline in value (especially in relation to the German Mark and Swiss Franc) and the steady progress of world wide inflation, even Mr. Frommer has had to retreat. His latest titles, *A Dollar-wise Guide to Europe* and *Europe On \$10 A Day*, are indicative of the changing times; but on this trip there were no days where one could hope to get by for as little as \$10. Even a railroad station plat-du-jour lunch for two in Strasbourg exceeded that figure.

There are, of course, extremes. Here are a couple of examples of one day's expense per person to illustrate two ends of the scale:

<u>Paris:</u>		
Hotel	390F	\$81.50

Breakfast	27F	\$ 6.00
Lunch	38F	\$ 8.40
Transportation,	10F	\$ 2.20
Dinner (Bateaux	175F	\$36.50
		\$134.60
<u>Castillan (Cote</u>		
Hotel	90F	\$18.75
Breakfast	(incl)	.00
Lunch (roadside	5F	\$ 1.10
Dinner (no wine	36F	\$ 8.00
		\$27.85

The accounts given assume that you have gotten to Paris or Castillan without significant expense, and that you are doing nothing there except eating and sleeping while you enjoy the scenery. If you visit museums, buy souvenirs, have a before-dinner scotch, rent a car and travel on toll roads, or move about by plane or train, you should add at least another \$25 to \$50 to the daily figure.

There are ways, even today, to travel more cheaply in Europe, but you need to be young, have a rail pass, be equipped for backpacking and hitchhiking and enjoy sleeping outdoors or in youth hostels.

Or, if you are older, you need to have accumulated enough European friends so that you can drop in and freeload for two or three days each week to average out the hotel and restaurant eating expense.

Anyway, if you expect to visit Paris, Frankfurt, Zurich or Rome, want the comfort of a decent hotel room with bath and eat one good meal a day, take money. Paris on \$150 dollars a day may soon sound like a bargain rate.

(c) *The Bulletin of the Muscogee County (Georgia) Medical Society*, "Doctor's Lounge", Nov 1977, Vol. XXIV No. 11, p.10