

Patrick: Train or Plane – Trip by Eurostar

Dateline Paris October 19 2025

I had a good time in London and had lunch with some cousins and also a friend who was visiting London from San Francisco. I had lunch with my friend from San Francisco. He wanted to have lunch in a quiet restaurant. He complained that the restaurants in London were very loud and he only wanted to have lunch in a place that was quiet. I managed to reserve a table at a neighborhood restaurant that was quiet.

We started lunch at about midday, and we finished probably at about 2pm in the afternoon. We stayed for some coffee as well and at about 2:30pm we left the restaurant. I was amazed to see that quite a number of people were coming in to have lunch so late it seems that the English now are eating lunch much later than what they used to do.

The following day, I was due to leave on the Eurostar train to go to Paris. There were several notifications on my phone and by email that I should arrive at Saint Pancras Station, where the Eurostar leaves from to go to Paris, at about three hours before the train was due to leave. This was due to the fact that the European Union was arranging to have all passengers coming into the European Union to be photographed and fingerprinted.

This was all supposed to happen at some kiosks, which would be staffed by people who could help you get your fingerprints and photographs taken. So, I got up very early in the morning and took a taxi to Saint Pancras station.

When I got there, I found that there were no kiosks and no one was there to assist you with photographs and fingerprints. So, immigration was very easy. There was only a very bored and unhappy looking official who stamped your passport without asking any questions. His stamp was very faint, and I wanted to point this out to him but thought better of it. I suspect he was most upset as he was being replaced by a kiosk. Kiosks don't take any holidays or complain about working conditions.

I suppose that the authorities never got around to installing this equipment and once again it has all been delayed. So, I sat in the station with my luggage for about two hours waiting for the train to leave.

My Eurostar train for Paris left on time and I was seated in the 1St class section. The seats were very comfortable, and they served lunch with wine. The train took about 2 ½ hours to get to Paris from London.

The Eurostar train has become extremely popular because flying even though it may be a little cheaper is much more inconvenient. If you fly, you have to get to the airport, which is always a long way out of the city and then you go through security and eventually get on your plane. Once you arrive at your destination, you will once again be a long way from the city, and you have to get transportation from the airport to your hotel or apartment.

If you take the train, it is much easier as it leaves from the center of a city and then arrives at the center of another city, which is your destination. So, the result is that people are now using the train a lot more than they used to. My train was 16 carriages long, which would be about ¼ of a mile in length. My train to Paris was full and probably had enough seats for about 750 people.

On the train there was a screen which showed how fast the train was going. Our train got up to a speed of about 150 mph.

Once I arrived in Paris, there was no problem in getting a taxi to my hotel because the taxi rank was very close to the Eurostar platform at the Gare du Nord.

The hotel that I stay in in Paris is called an apartment hotel. In your apartment you have own kitchen so you can make your own meals. The hotel caters to people who stay for extended periods.

Once I arrived in Paris, I went to this hotel. I then unpacked my suitcases and went to a neighborhood grocery store, which is just across the street from the hotel. I bought the necessary supplies for breakfast and lunch. Usually, I go out for a dinner in the evening or visit with some friends.

Fortunately, a new Italian restaurant has just opened on the corner of the street near my hotel. Last time I was in Paris, that location was occupied by a working man's bar. The tables were sticky, and they only served beer and possibly some hamburgers and hotdogs. So, this new restaurant is a great improvement for the neighborhood.

There is a lot happening in Paris. Some museums have had robberies. Also, the political situation has become very difficult as the government is having a lot of trouble passing a budget so I will cover this in my next dateline.

Signing off for now from Paris regards to all. Patrick

[Kindly send your replies directly to Patrick]