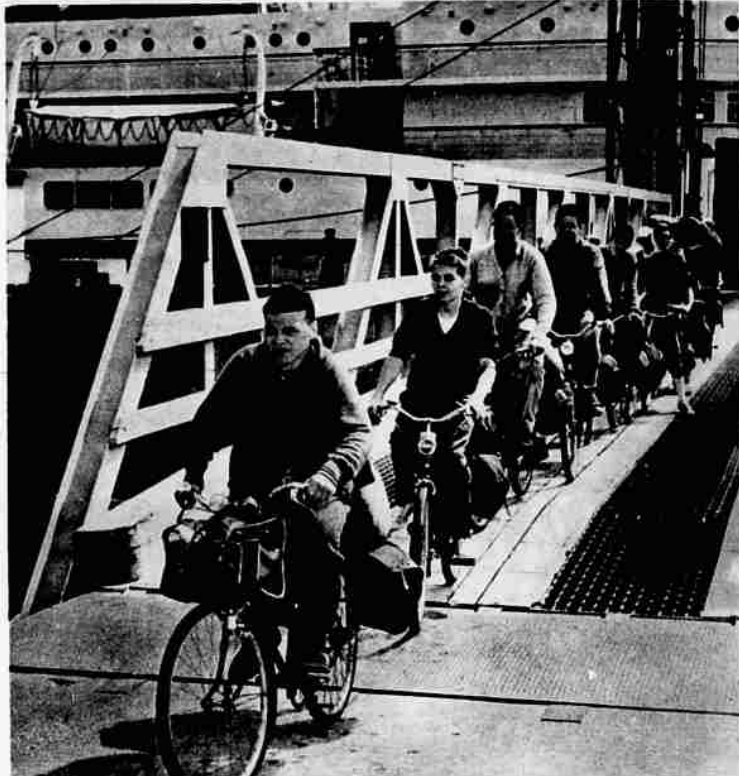


The Teen-Age Invasion of Europe Is On!

Touring the Continent was once reserved for the wealthy, but this summer thousands of youth will travel abroad; here's why and how they're doing it

By THEODORE IRWIN



Each year, chaperoned groups of youngsters learn about the world by touring it.

YOUNG AMERICA is avidly exploring the world beyond Main Street. The shiploads of youngsters scheduled to cross the Atlantic this summer reflect a new travel phenomenon: teens-on-tours. According to travel agencies, the number of adolescents tripping abroad has quadrupled in the past three years. Today they represent 10 percent of all U.S. travel to Europe.

Among our younger set and their parents, the foreign fever has spread throughout the nation. Symptomatic was the recent remark of a gas-station owner in Pendleton, Iowa. "I don't want my boy to be any different than his friends," he said. "I'm sending him to Europe."

The trend is marked by two significant facts: the tender age at which children are journeying without their parents and the democratization of European touring. Even 13-year-olds in junior high school are being signed up. And travel that for so long used to be reserved exclusively for wealthy families is now practiced by a cross section of the middle class.

What's behind the going-abroad epidemic?

"Basically," says Justin J. Cline, executive director of American Youth Hostels, "it's our high standard of living—there's more money to spend. The grand tour of Europe is now within reach of the average teen-ager. Everywhere he looks, he sees enticing ads about faraway places. Many become sophisticated at an earlier age, and this, too, sparks a desire for travel."

Other adult observers contend they find in our gadding youth "a marked cultural renaissance" and a more educationally rounded individual. These adolescents want to see what they've been reading about in school—Buckingham Palace, St. Peter's Basilica, the Louvre, Stratford-on-Avon, the Left Bank.

The many parents who have taken European jaunts also infect their offspring with the travel

virus. Many have revived the idea of years ago that a young person's education is incomplete until he has made the grand tour. Some consider their daughters more marriageable with such a broadened background. Others bear in mind that deans of admission at top-flight colleges seem to prefer travel-stained high-school graduates. Radcliffe, Smith, and Vassar specifically ask applicants to indicate where they've been and their general reactions to foreign journeys.

GENERALLY, the teen-agers go in organized groups of 20 or 25, accompanied by mature high-school or college teachers. Relatively few students nowadays go off on lone-wolf vagabonding rambles; and parents want a fixed itinerary so that Junior can be reached if necessary.

Most of the chaperoned groups travel by ship, where the unfledged can quickly get to know one another, melt their shyness, and enjoy shipboard dances and sports. On the seven student ships under the auspices of the nonprofit Council on Student Travel, a "TRIP" routine (Travelers Recreation-Information Program) includes language refresher courses, art lectures, talks on the history and politics of areas to be visited, international song and dance festivals, and travel-tip sessions.

Shipboard lectures are not always strictly cultural. Last summer, after a college professor concluded his talk on France and opened the floor for questions, a Seattle lad asked, "Where is Harry's Bar?" After another lecture, a girl piped up with, "Are Italian men as handsome as they say?"

Wherever they're headed, there's fun and a certain amount of education inevitably to be absorbed. Among the 25 different trips sponsored by the U.S. National Student Association are ones specializing in medicine, journalism, and sports; on the latter, you can play cricket in England, water-ski in Italy, and climb in the Alps.

Bike tours appeal to the more adventurous teenagers. Using youth hostels, they can get by on \$3 a day for shelter and simple meals. House parents are in charge at hostels set up in schools, camps, churches, farm homes, and community centers. No alcoholic beverages are permitted, and generally there's no smoking. On these strenuous tours, participants must be good cyclists.

Swelling the summer invasion of Europe are young Americans lured by international work camps, an inexpensive way of spending a vacation abroad, though most require the payment of transportation and personal expenses. Many organizations, such as the American Friends Service Committee, enable students to work on some manual-labor project and carry on a program of discussion and study. The American Student Information Service is a clearing house for students who'd like to work abroad on farms, in forestry, construction, resorts, hospitals, child care, and the like. Wages are about \$40 a month with room and board; some pay merely pocket money.

COST OF THE teen-age trips ranges widely. Much depends on the itinerary, mode of travel, and type of accommodation. Youth Hostel trips average \$700 for the summer, while a typical 55-day conducted teen holiday runs to about \$1,300, and a round-the-world ramble can be arranged for about \$2,000.

During their stay abroad, our teen-agers are wide-eyed, eager to absorb all they can, and adventurous enough to taste all sorts of foreign concoctions. Usually the itinerary is so jammed they haven't a chance to be bored or homesick. "The trick," confides a veteran tour leader, "is to wear them out so they won't get into mischief." Meeting foreign students on their own level, they talk gravely about educational systems, politics, social problems. Like their parents, they're in-

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