

Travel



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Nuremberg — mecca of German train riders

By Joy Schaleben Lewis
special writer

NUREMBERG, West Germany — Ah, the great German railroad system.

It weaves its rails across mountains, forests and fields, linking hamlets to villages to towns to cities, seemingly to connect everybody to everywhere to everything — on time. Comfortable and clean, German trains offer cheery service, compartments adorned with pictures and restaurant tables brightened with flowers.

And then there are the German train stations — the bahnhofs. In many, you could actually live for months.

Yes, at the bahnhof, you can dine, exchange money, get tourist information and make hotel reservations. You can also get your clothes cleaned, take a shower, go to the post office, make long-distance calls, rent bicycles, buy international publications, go souvenir shopping, see a movie, take in a pop show, buy flowers, browse in bookstores, enjoy a beer and gorge on huge sausages at inexpensive stand-up bars. Why, you can even stay the night at a Bahnhof Mission Center. Cots go for just a few marks.

Germany's railroad has earned it veneration. The year 1986 marks 151 years of German rails.

IT BEGAN with a little red, green and black steam locomotive christened the "Adler" — the Eagle. Right on time, it left Nuremberg at exactly 11 a.m. on Dec. 7, 1835. With a cargo of two barrels of Bavarian beer, it chugged six kilometers (3.7 miles) west to Furth.

An Englishman, William Wilson, was the proud engineer of the made-in-England engine. His service was so esteemed, he earned more than the first top director of that astonishing new mode of travel — a true milestone for European transportation.

Eight months later, King Ludwig I of Bavaria rode the Adler from Nuremberg to Furth. He enthusiastically endorsed the railroad line — not only because it bore his name.

Nuremberg is a mecca for train buffs and for anyone wanting to romance the rails. At the German Transport Museum, visitors see two ornate blue and gold carriages of King Ludwig II's royal train.

The king had some set-up: A glittering salon with red velvet throne-like chairs, huge mirrors and gilded ceilings, a gold and green bed-



NUREMBERG STREET SCENE — The view along Karolinenstrasse street is of the Lorenzkirche church.

room, a marble restroom and even a terrace for enjoying the lush Bavarian landscape in sunshine — a miniature castle on wheels.

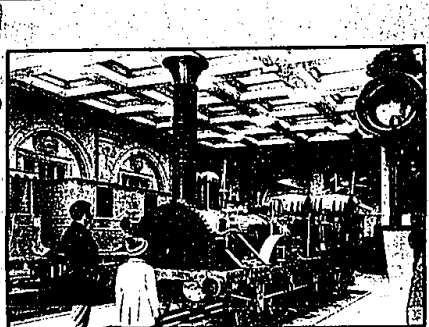
ALSO AT the museum are the 1908 Bavarian State Railways engine capable of the then-sensational speed of 125 miles per hour and 14 other vintage engines.

One room has hundreds of signal boxes, another has 160 model trains — the largest collection in Europe. A model railway show runs once an

hour on the half hour. The setting is a typical Bavarian village tucked in the hills. The 450 tiny cars do much of their maneuvering in a copy of Nuremberg's shunting station.

The Transport Museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Entrance is 60 cents for adults, 45 cents for students and children.

With so much looking to do, the Germans thought it would be fun to experience the nostalgic past first-hand. So, steam engine rides with vintage coaches run between Nurem-



The transport museum in Nuremberg features 15 vintage engines including a 1908 Bavarian State Railways model. Diners enjoy lunch in front of a city landmark — the home from 1509 to 1528 of painter Albrecht Durer.



berg and Bayreuth and Nuremberg and Amberg, from May through September.

The line to Amberg, about 40 miles east of Nuremberg, is especially popular with outright rail devotees. They love its steep incline between Hartmannsberg and Etzelwang.

THE 80-MINUTE trip leaves Nuremberg at 10:20 a.m. and departs Amberg at 3:10 p.m. That gives you a good four hours to explore Amberg, a pretty medieval town surrounded by

a wall and towers. The adult round-trip is \$10 first class, \$8 second class. For children under 12, corresponding costs are \$5 and \$4.

Railway fanfare aside, just visiting Nuremberg itself is a treat.

Strolling through the walled, old city center, your delighted senses topple over each other. Dazzling sights, tantalizing smells, the sound of music and charming street scenes capture your attention.

Half-timbered houses, churches

adorned with medieval art and a castle with a view to the forests beyond compete with tiny gingerbread houses, jovial organ grinders, flutists and violinists, hops jammed with miniature wood toys, and an open market crammed with fruits, vegetables, souvenir and hawkers demonstrating their "indispensable" wares.

WHAT FUN. And how amazing, considering that 41 years ago 90 percent of old Nuremberg was destroyed in 59 air raids in the final five months of the war. It is restored.

Nuremberg's most famous son is the painter Albrecht Durer. His four-story house — built for a rich merchant in 1459 — is a museum. He lived there from 109 until he died in 1528. The paintings and drawings are Durer's replicas, an impressive, especially the charcoal drawing of his 63-year-old mother. She had 18 children; 15 died young.

Streets in old Nuremberg are closed to cars except for taxis and commercial vehicles. So walking is easy. Eventually, everyone ends up at the main market square, world-famous for its Christmas fair. If you happen to be in love, turn the "ring" welded to the lattice work around the square's fountain. Nurembergers say it brings good luck and happiness to lovers.

Famed Nuremberg sights are the Imperial Case, the Gothic churches of St. Sebald, St. Lorenz and the Church of Our Lady, the Toy Museum, the medieval torture prison, and the German National Museum. However, life's only so much sight-seeing anyone can do in a stretch.

A GOOD time-out break is in the old city section known as the Handwerkerhof — a medieval artisan's courtyard. It's a little area of half-timbered houses beneath the city's towers and walls. Craftsmen show off their age-old techniques.

In the Handwerkerhof Rostbratwurstküche. Grilled sausages, a Nuremberg specialty, is its specialty, too. They come six on a plate with red cabbage, sauerkraut, homemade rolls and potato salad.

Martin Luther once said, "Nuremberg shines forth throughout Germany like a sun among the moon and stars." At words still for Nuremberg.

For more information on Nuremberg or the vintage rail excursion write the German National Tourist Office, 747 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017 or call (212) 34-3300.

AAA offers new range of trip, travel insurance

A program to provide trip insurance tailored to meet the needs of air, ship, rail, bus and car travelers has been introduced by AAA Michigan starting Jan. 1.

The Travel Related Insurance Policy (TRIP) is a flexible program which allows travelers to select their desired coverage from a range of insurance options for travel, baggage, trip cancellation, or interruption and personal protection during a trip.

"TRIP insurance combines comprehensive travel protection with ease of purchase for AAA Travel Agency clients," said Peter Erickson, AAA Michigan Travel Services director.

"Travelers can purchase TRIP at the time they make arrangements or they can mail in for the insurance."

ONE OF the biggest benefits of the new program is a 24-hour toll-free service line which travelers can use anywhere to obtain coverage information or service.

TRIP is offered on travel up to 180 days in length and provides coverage on a worldwide basis, unlike many programs which exclude "hot spot" trouble areas. Charter coverage also is available.

"We feel there is a strong need for this type of competitively priced travel insurance protection," Erickson added. "TRIP enhances the programs we already offer."

Travelers can choose the amount of coverage they want in one to four key areas:

- Air travel — covers accidental death, dismemberment or loss of

sight and covers the policyholder while traveling to and from the airport.

- Baggage — covers loss of luggage and personal possessions, including travel documents and credit cards. All bags are provided easily identified tags to assist in getting lost luggage returned.

- Trip cancellation and interruption — covers traveler if trip is canceled due to injury, illness or other unforeseen circumstances as well as covering lost deposits and other expenses due to the default of airline, cruise line or tour operator.

- Personal protection — covers liability, accidental death, medical expense and emergency assistance.

"Persons can obtain any combination of travel, trip cancellation and

personal protection insurance desired," Erickson added. "An important advantage to this program is that a person only buys what is needed. A person doesn't have to buy the whole package."

TRIP information is available to all AAA Michigan travel offices statewide, including locations at Detroit's Renaissance Center and Cobo hall.

AAA Michigan, which is the state's largest travel agency, anticipates that up to 35,000 persons will take advantage of the program during 1988.

The program allows travelers to select their desired coverage from a range of insurance options for travel, baggage, trip cancellation or interruption.

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