

# What you should know about renting & driving a car in Europe



A Special Report by Robert & Andrew Bestor  
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## WHY RENT A CAR IN EUROPE?

A rental car remains the most flexible, liberating way to see Europe. Except in Switzerland, where there are a handful of car-free villages, the automobile offers access to the tiniest hamlets. Keep in mind, the European continent has many more miles of paved roads than passenger rail lines.

Car rental in Europe has become more complicated in recent years. The car shopper must be knowledgeable about insurance, currency exchange, European automobiles, and the ways rental companies and online sellers obfuscate the charges—many of them mandatory—added to basic rental rates. Making the right decisions regarding type of car, insurance coverages, pickup and return points, can save the renter hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of dollars.

This booklet has been designed to assist the reader in making those decisions. To help in understanding our role in the European rental process, interspersed within the advice are copies of actual emails from customers and our partner of 25 years, Auto Europe. They demonstrate our unique, personal, full-service and 24/7 in-Europe, third-party support, with post-rental billing assistance when required.

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

'Keep it simple' is good advice in many of life's endeavors, including renting a car in Europe. Avoiding frills and extras will reduce costs and headaches.

At the start of the year, the best and most straightforward European rental car deals were in France and Germany. There, for from about \$135 to \$150, including the 20% or 19% value added tax, one could get a compact car, VW Golf or similar with air-conditioning and four doors, for a full week. Those prices, however, can quickly escalate if you start adding such extras as additional drivers, automatic transmission, navigation (GPS), starting or ending the rental in a different country, and so on. Such embellishments may also add complications.

You will find rates much higher in Austria, Switzerland, Portugal, the Scandinavian countries and a few others

Picking up a car in one country and returning it another is guaranteed to add a substantial—perhaps prohibitive—cost element, often more than the cost of the rental itself and not all companies will allow one-way rentals.

Every day we hear from people who, with just a small adjustment, could save hundreds of dollars. The idea of picking up a car in Salzburg

*Hi Sabrina,*

*I wanted to let you know we got back from our trip and it was the best decision to rent our car through your company. Pick up + drop off was a breeze and when we needed assistance and couldn't contact either of the Hertz locations in Munich, your 24/7 customer service line was there and promptly provided helpful information. It was so nice to feel supported and assisted; it enabled us to travel stress free and enjoy our time.*

*Thanks so much + I look forward to using your services in the future!*

*Akiko*

and dropping it somewhere in Germany is a case in point. Why not instead take a 10-minute train ride to Freilassing in Germany and begin your rental there? You'll get the car in Germany where rates are much lower than in Austria, and also avoid the \$125-to-\$300 international drop charge.

## BEYOND THE BASIC PRICE

Most car rental quotes for Europe include unlimited kilometers, value added tax, and third-party liability insurance.

### **Value Added Tax**

Most car rental quotes include this tax. It ranges from 8 percent in Switzerland to 25 percent in Norway. Germany is 19 percent, France 20 percent, Italy 22 percent, and Austria 21 percent. VAT is mandatory and, except in very rare, extraordinary circumstances, not refundable.

### **Premium Station Fees**

Though it is often more expensive to pick up a rental car at an airport or rail station than at a city office, we can no longer say that in certain countries the premium station fee is a specific percentage. It varies by rental company and most have changed their pricing formulae.

In Germany, for example, Hertz and Avis city rates are now almost as much as airport and rail station rates. However, with Europcar and Sixt it is still anywhere from 13 to 24-percent cheaper to pickup at a downtown location.

In most cases, you will pay less to rent a car at downtown offices in Austria, but in Switzerland rates are often cheaper at an airport. In France, Belgium and several other countries, the premium station charge is a flat fee whether the rental is for a single day or a month, not a percentage of the total rental price.

✓ **Tip:** Premium station charge only applies to rentals *originating* at premium stations; you can return the car to these locations for no added fee.

**Road Tax**

Almost every driver of a European rental car these days pays some kind of road or license fee. These range from about \$1.10 to \$5 per day, often there is a maximum charge. Usually the road tax is built-in to the overall rental cost, though sometimes it's a separate fee paid locally.

**Eco Fees**

Some countries charge environmental fees. France, for example charges €8 per day to a maximum €48 on all automatics.

**Navigation**

When available, some GPS (Global Positioning System) devices work only in the country of rental, though the trend seems to be toward much broader coverage. The larger and more expensive the car, the better the chance it will come with factory-equipped GPS. Technically-challenged renters may find limited availability of rental agents to assist in learning how to operate the car's nav system. In Germany, if your car is midsize or above, and the supplier is Avis or Europcar, you have a good chance of getting a free GPS. In other countries, however, there is less availability. When GPS is an option, charges range from about \$8 to \$25 per day. You might also consider relying on a smartphone or tablet; Google Maps works offline, without the Internet.

**OTHER COSTS**

There are plenty of other ways rental companies pile on extra charges. The most common are registration fees, contract fees, cross-border fees, winterization charges, even credit card fees. Inquire when booking. Also see page 6, *Other Rental Car Charges*.

**INSURANCE**

This is a VERY important topic. Here is what you need to know:

All European rental companies are required by law to protect themselves and their rental customers with millions of euros in third-party liability insurance. In other words, it is the rental company that covers the customer for damage to property and persons outside the vehicle. What you are responsible for is damage to, or theft of, the car you rented. For that you need Collision (CDW) and theft insurance.

**CDW/Theft: Credit Card or Purchase?**

Except in countries where you are required to purchase CDW/theft, we recommend rentals be paid for with a credit card that provides free CDW/theft coverage. Those who sell CDW/theft point out that most credit cards offer only "secondary" coverage. While that is true, it's

*Dear Gemut.com*

*Thank you so much for getting the refund for us! I booked through you because your advertisement said that if something went wrong, we would have an advocate and that is exactly what you were! I would not have known that it was even possible to request a refund for the insurance and I would have been out the money. Thanks for going the extra mile on our behalf.*

*I will surely tell my family and friends about your company and will use you again the next time we travel to Europe.*

*Lori*

also irrelevant. Since you won't have any other coverage in Europe unless you purchase it from the rental company (something you don't want to do, especially since the credit card coverage is so much better) your credit card becomes primary. The CDW/theft insurance sold by rental companies costs \$10 to \$50 per day and usually has a high deductible, between \$800 and \$4000. Your credit card...provided it offers CDW/theft insurance (be sure to check)...is free and zero deductible.

Proponents of buying CDW/theft are fond of saying that in the event of damage you "just walk away" at the end of the rental. Not so. You don't walk away until you've paid the deductible. In addition, failure to file a police report is often grounds for invalidating purchased insurance.

Some CDW coverage sold by rental companies excludes one-car accidents. In other words, if you get a dented fender while your car is parked and you can't locate the other car's driver, you're on the hook for the repairs. Many CDW policies also exclude damage to the car's roof, glass, wheels, undercarriage, side mirrors and interior.

**CDW/Theft in Italy, Ireland & Israel**

In both Italy and Israel, CDW and theft coverage must be purchased from the rental company. Some credit cards offer coverage in Italy, but it means nothing because all major rental companies require the purchase of CDW and theft. The only question left is will your credit card reimburse the deductible in case of damage or theft? Apparently only Visa will, but confirm with them. This is a murky area.

You may also wind up purchasing CDW/theft in Ireland as not all credit cards provide coverage there. Check with your credit card company. In addition, to avoid purchasing CDW/theft from most Ireland rental companies, the renter must show written proof of credit card coverage.

**Rules for Credit Card CDW/Theft Coverage**

Prior to your departure, contact your credit card company to confirm that your card provides

I UHH &': WKHIW FRYHUDJH LQ (XURSH ,I \RX DUH covered there are just a few basic rules you must follow to ensure reimbursement if the rental car is damaged or stolen.

• 'HFOLQH WKH &': WKHIW FRYHUDJH offered by the car rental company. Don't sign any contract unless you are certain that by doing so you are NOT accepting the company's offer of coverage.

,I \RX DFFHSW WKH SURIIHUG LQVXUDQFH WZR EDG WKLQJV FDQ KDSSHQ RQH \RX SD\ PRUHQSHQVLYH &': WKHIW LQVXUDQFH DQG WZR \RXU FDUG FDUG card coverage is invalidated.

• Protect yourself at the rental counter. Every year a few of our customer inadvertently sign for &': WKHIW FRYHUDJH WKH\ GRQ\ W QHNG once a signature is on a rental contract that calls for insurance, there's no avoiding the charge. To protect yourself we suggest an unusual strategy. First, record the transaction at the rental car counter with a smartphone, and then, just above \RXU VLJQDWXUH ZULWH <sup>3</sup>, KHUHE\ BDFOLQH was read, &': DQG WKHIW LQVXUDQFH %H VXU the arranged over the fax. We were D OHWWHU RI LQVXUDQFH FHUWL\ FDUWLWRU FULP URXG ZHUHG\WV\ HG \$YLV KDG C card company. The purpose is to show the rental agent that you have insurance that will reimburse WKH UHQWDO FRPSDQ\ LI WKHLU FDU\ GDDVHG \RX have a problem at the counter, call our 24/7 help line from the rental counter

• 3D\ IRU WKH HQWLUH UHQWDO <sup>2</sup> HSRV\ W' WD\HV H[WUDV HYHU\WKLQJ<sup>2</sup>ZLWK WKH VDPH FDU\GLW FDUG \RX used to reserve it 'RQ\ W SD\ WKDW HXUR URDG WDI at the end of the rental in cash or with a different credit card. You'll invalidate the insurance.

• Notify the credit card company of damage or ORVV ZLWKLQ WKHLU VSHFL\ HG WL PDU\ RQ this issue with Reservation # 6673608 for Ms. X. varies, depending on the card, but we recommend LPPHGLDWH SKRQH QRWL\ FDUWL RQ W LV\ OLNHQ\ VEXU credit card company has a toll-free number you can use overseas.

• Submit your reimbursement claim within \RXU FUGLW FDUG\ V VSHFL\ HG WL WRO\ W\ typically\ UPLQJ D SDVVHQJHU P within 45 days after the damage or loss, though that may vary by credit card company.

Credit Card Insurance Limitations

• Coverage applies to the cardholder whose name appears on the car rental contract. Other drivers listed on the rental contract are also covered.

**DCaution:** ,I \RX XVH \RXU FDU\ WR SD\ RU another person's rental, that person will not be FRYHUHG IRU & 'FDUGLW the rental must be in the name of card holder ,I DGG LWL RQDD drivers are added they are also covered.

‡ %H DZDUH WKDW VRPH YHKLFOHV DUH HPSW IURP FUGLW FDUG &': WKHIW FRYHUDJH \R\WLP

24/7 In-Europe Service

Hello Bob,

This is to provide an update on the car swap for JH\W\ FOLHQW OUV ; :H KDYH FRQ\ UPHG a vehicle that is blocked for her tomorrow after 2 pm local time in Miesbach. I have spoken with OUV ; YLD WHOHSKRQH DQG VKH KDV FR will proceed to the same downtown location she picked up at in order to swap vehicles.

Rachel, High Reservations Manager  
Auto Europe Group

Dear Bob,

This is to advise you of Auto Europe Reservation number US##### for Mr. Larry X. We \ HOGHG D FDOO IURP OU ; HDUO\ WKLV advise he had been in a vehicle accident close to the German/CZE Rep border, he was not injured but the vehicle was no longer drivable. BDFOLQH assistance was read, a tow truck took the damaged vehicle. Fax was phoned for the Newman to a replacement vehicle.

We followed up with Mr. X every 30 minutes of the process and have left a voicemail if further assistance is needed.

Best Regards,  
Kyle Inman  
Auto Europe, Reservations Manager

Dear Andy and Bob,

Good morning, I am emailing to advise of the an issue with Reservation # 6673608 for Ms. X.

We received a call from Europcar Pisa to inform upon arrival, Ms. X is on Europcar's Watch List. Meaning they are unable to provide the rental vehicle due to an outstanding bill from a past rental. We immediately moved the reservation WRO\ W\ typically\ UPLQJ D SDVVHQJHU P transmission and matching the previous quoted pricing to get our mutual customers on their way. , DWWDFKHG DQ XSGDWHG FRQ\ UPHG F rental voucher. If you have any questions or the need for further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Unfortunately Auto Europe does not have immediate access to the information pertaining to this Europcar Watch List issue. If you would like Auto Europe to investigate this matter with Europcar please advise and we will assist.

Kyle Inman  
Reservations Manager, Auto Europe



FDUV DQG H[SHQVLYH YHKLFOHV VXEK DV 3RUVFKH  
Bentley, Ferrari, 9-passenger vans, trucks, and top  
FDWHJRULHV RI OHUFHGHV %0: DQG \$XGL DUH XVXDQQ  
QRW FRYHUHG +RZHYHU PRVW SDVHG RYHU YDQY  
DQG VHOHFWHG %0: OHUFHGHV DQG \$XGL FDUV DUH  
covered. Check with your credit card company. For  
D VPDOO FKDUJH \$PHI RIIHUV H[SDQGHG FRYHUDJH  
IRU PRUH H[SHQVLYH YHKLFOHV

‡ <RXU FUHGLW FDUG OLPLWV LWV &': WKHIW  
coverage to a certain number of rental days.  
Some Mastercards cover rental contracts of up to  
GD\V ORVW 9LVD \$PHULFDQ ([SUHV VHH 7LS  
below), and Diner's Club cards provide coverage  
to 31 days. If your rental period exceeds those  
limits you will not be covered for any portion of the  
rental. Check with your credit card.

,Q VRPH FDVHV LQ RUGHU WR GHWHUQLW WKH UHQWDO  
company's offer of insurance, you may have  
to provide proof of insurance. Your credit card  
company can email you a letter that proves you  
KDYH &': WKHIW FRYHUDJH :H VXJJHUR D\RXU strategy: 8VH RQH GULYHU ,I  
that letter with you to Europe to show at the rental  
counter.

DTip: \$PHULFDQ ([SUHV FDUG PHPEHUV  
PD\ QG LW ZRUWKZKLOH WR HQUROO LQ WKH DGG HIWUD GULYHU FKDUJHV  
Premium Car Rental Protection. Enrollees in this  
SODQ JHW &': WKHIW FRYHUDJH RQ Benta Guaranteed? WUBK SWD DRU WKH UHQWDO  
long as 42 days. The cost is \$19 to \$25 per rental  
but coverage is "primary" and there are other  
EHQH VV LQFOXGLQJ FRYHUDJH RI WKH HIDEW QRLXQW LQ GROOMUV XQWLO  
cars and the 9-passenger van.

When CDW/Theft is Included in the Rate

,W LV VWDQGDUG SURFHGXUH IRU ROOLOH XURSH  
based car rental brokers to offer insurance for  
FROOLVLRQ &': DQG WKHIW DV SDUW RI WPA RU EDVLE  
price, not as an option. Sounds great but there's  
a catch. This something to be avoided. Your  
credit card provides better coverage for free. This  
LQFOXGHG &': DQG WKHIW LQVXUDQFH  
a substantial deductible, usually in the \$1,000  
to \$3000 range and you do not have the option  
of declining this insurance and relying on the  
FRYHUDJH SURYLGHG E\ IRXU FUHGLW  
WR UHGXFH WKH GHGXFWLEOH RU 3  
near zero you will have to purchase additional  
LQVXUDQFH RIWHQ UHIHUUHG WR DV  
"Super Cover."

### OTHER RENTAL CHARGES

Knowing in advance precisely how much your  
European rental car will cost is becoming ever  
PRUH GLI FXOW ORVW RI XV NQRZ  
UDWH SOXV YDOXH DGGHG WD[ EXW  
complicated.

)ROORZLQJ LV D FKHFNOLVW RI SRVW  
charges and strategies for dealing with them:

- Extra Drivers: \$GGLQJ DQ H[WUD GULYHU

Dear Mahlon,  
Apparently you have been billed for insurance.  
Auto Europe is in contact with Europcar and if  
it is not refunded by Europcar, Auto Europe will  
refund. It may take a few days but you will get  
your money back.

Bob

Hi Bob,  
Thank you, this is why we love booking  
with you. Appreciate your insight and  
understanding. Looking forward to the next  
trip.

Best,

Mahlon

which can only be done at a rental counter— is  
seldom free and can cost as much as \$6 to \$25  
per day. **Your strategy:** 8VH RQH GULYHU ,I  
that's not practical, then determine the cost in  
advance and factor it into the rental decision. The  
lowest rental rate may not be the best overall deal  
if you have to pay for CDW/Theft insurance at the  
rental counter.

• In Which Currency is the Price of Your  
Rental Guaranteed? WUBK SWD DRU WKH UHQWDO  
dollars but in local currency, so you won't know  
how much you're paying. **Your strategy:** Pay in advance in  
US dollars. **Your strategy:** Pay in advance in  
US dollars.

• Credit Card Fees: IRX ZDLW XQWLO IRX JHW  
to Europe to pay for your rental, most credit cards  
will charge a 3% foreign transaction charge. The  
same goes if you book through an overseas broker.  
**Your strategy:** 3D\ LQ DGYDQFH LQ WKH 8 6  
cancel without charge.

• Late Charges: Bring the car back a few  
days of a one-hour grace period for late returns.  
**Your strategy:** Check the pickup time stamped  
on your rental contract and make sure you return  
the car earlier than that time.

• Fuel Charges: IRX WKH UHQWDO FRPSDQ\ KDV  
WR QOO WKH IXHO WDQN ZKHQ IRX UHWXU  
pay as much as \$18 per gallon, and perhaps a  
refuelling charge as well. Bring back a near-empty  
tank and you might pay more than \$200 for fuel  
plus a refueling charge. **Your strategy:** Fill up  
as close to the return location as possible and save  
yourself the trouble. **Your strategy:** Fill up  
at the rental station. **Your strategy:** Fill up  
at the rental station.

• More Fuel Charges: KHWKHU IRX ZDQW LW  
or not, some European rental stations charge for  
fuel. **Your strategy:** Fill up  
at the rental station. **Your strategy:** Fill up  
at the rental station.

• Extra Drivers: KHWKHU IRX ZDQW LW  
or not, some European rental stations charge for  
extra drivers. **Your strategy:** Fill up  
at the rental station. **Your strategy:** Fill up  
at the rental station.

empty tank. Your strategy: Not many options here other than to bring the car back on fumes.

- Diesel Additive - AdBlue: Your European

everyone knows the fuel tank of a internal FRPEXVWLRQ HQJLQH PXVW EH SHULRGLFDOO\ UH;OOHG there is another product required to keep a (XURSHDQ GLHVHO HQJLQH UXQQQLQJHI Auto Europe Customer Service Team: DGGLWLYH FDOOHG \$G%OXH :KHQ \$G%OXH UXQV ORZLW DGYHUVHO\ DIIHFWV HQJLQH SHUIRUPDOFH :KHQ LWTV gone the engine will no longer operate. Though there is an AdBlue dashboard warning light there is no gauge to track its level. Thus, when the agent at the rental counter hands you the keys to a diesel engine car make sure the AdBlue level LV IXOO MXVW OLNH WKH IXHO WDQN RI %OXH IRU 30LHWNRVWHQ IDKU]HXJJU UH;OOHG \RX FDQ GR VR DW PRVW YHUVLFH VWDLRQV EDUWV OHVW XQJ 5HQWDO FRVWV YHKL ,W LV XVXDOO\ DGGHG QH[W WR ZKHU WKH IXHO WDQN LV base performance???) There seems to be no UH;OOHG DQG LWV FDS LV XVXDOO\ EOXH WR OOH KDV WR explanation of that charge. EH UHSOHLVKHG HYHU\ WR PLOHV \RX

- Cleaning Charges: Returning a rental car

WKDW UHTXLUHV H[WUDRUGLQDU\ FODUWV IRU H[DPSOH IRU H[DPSOH IRU H[DPSOH KDLU RQ WKH XSKROVWHU\ IRU H[DPSOH IRU H[DPSOH IRU H[DPSOH H[WUD FKDUJHV RQ \RXU FDUGLW FDUW to reduce the CDW deductible to zero. Why then strategy: Take care of the rental car; don't assume the supplier will accept it any condition.

- One-Way Fees: 8QWLO DERXW WZR \HDUV DJR

a fee to pick up a car in one city and return it in a different city in the same country was a rarity. ,Q KRZHYHU GRPHVWLF RQH ZDWHV before purchased CDW. UXOH UDWKHU WKDQ WKH H[FHSLRQ O VRPH LQVWDQFHV you will even pay to return the car to a different location in the same city—downtown to airport, for H[DPSOH )RU WKH PRVW SDUW WKH VHFKRQJHV UDQJH from about \$15 to \$50, but in some cases they can be as high as \$200.

,QWHUQDWLRQDO RQH ZD\ UHQWDOV GURSSLQJ WKH car in a country other than the country of rental— always call for a hefty fee.

:K\ VR" &DUV UHJLVWHUHG LQ )UDERFH from RM is Germany and not waste any H[DPSOH FDQQRW EH UHQWHG LQ DQ RWKHU FRAM. Do not be going back to the supplier the rental company must ship the vehicle back WR )UDQFH RU ;QG D UHQWHU ZKR ZLOO UHWXUQ LW WR LWV point of origin. That can take several days which removes the car from revenue service. One-ways between cities such as Frankfurt and Paris are more affordable because it's fairly easy for a rental FRPSDQ\ WR ;QG D FXVWRPHU ZKR ZLOO UHWXUQ WKH \RX FDQ ;QG D UHQWDO FRVWV YHKL car to where it came from, thus making the one-way charge fairly low (about 200 euros). But make the cities Frankfurt and Caen and the one-way can double or triple.

2QH ZD\ IHV RQ UHQWDOV WKDW LOYROYH WDO\ RU 6SDLQ DUH TXLWH H[SHQVLYH WISLFDQ\ LQ WKH VDF)UDQJH DQG OHDYLQJ IURP 5RPH

## We've Got Your Back

From: Robert Bestor [mailto:bob@gemut.com]

Auto Europe, International Customer Service Manager

Subject: Re: US Voucher # 3333333

Hi Auto Europe Customer Service Team:

There may be missing something but the signed rental agreement does not seem to show a CDW charge of €216. On the untitled document, which does not bear Mr. xxxxx's signature or initials, I see the line item "CDW = 26000 TP = 26000," but I don't see the €216 anywhere. On the signed rental agreement is a charge of €216 for Super CDW. According to the reservation system for this rental, Super CDW is deductible to zero. Why then would there be a charge for Super CDW when there is no charge for regular CDW? There seems to be no deductible to reduce.

Based on the documents provided, I don't see how Mr. xxxxxx could have known he was signing for €216 for Super CDW. It is not clear that he even saw the untitled document. According to the reservation system for this rental, Super CDW is deductible to zero. Why then would there be a charge for Super CDW when there is no charge for regular CDW? There seems to be no deductible to reduce.

Since 2002, Mr. and Mrs. xxxxx have rented

FDUV IURP \*HPXW FRP \$XWR (XURSH DQ

Never before purchased CDW.

Many thanks, Bob

To: Robert Bestor [mailto:bob@gemut.com]

From: Auto Europe, International Customer Service Manager

Subject: Re: US Voucher # 3333333

Hi Bob,

, DJUHH ZH ZLOO UHIXQG WKH FOLH

Do not be going back to the supplier. Thanks!

ZLOO UHWXUQ LW WR LWV Customer Service Manager, Auto Europe

\$1500 range, not including the cost of the rental itself. A one-way rental between Scandinavia and the US is not possible. So don't paint yourself into corner by booking "open jaw" travel that has you arriving in, WKDW ZLOO GR LW ZLOO EH DW OHDVW also apply when pickup is in an eastern European country and return is in a western European country (and vice versa); and sometimes it's just not possible. So don't paint yourself into corner by booking "open jaw" travel that has you arriving in, VDF)UDQJH DQG OHDYLQJ IURP 5RPH

ZLWKRXW ; UVW IXOO\ XQGHUVWDQG  
between the two cities, be it by car, air, or rail.

• Other Charges: Some rental cars in France, mainly automatics and larger cars, pay an HQYLURQPHQWDO IHH , Q , UHODQG charge a one-time credit card fee. There is also a trend toward "cross border" fees for driving out of the country of rental.

### EXTRA EQUIPMENT

• GPS Navigation: Sometimes free on upscale cars but seldom on economy, compact or PLGVLJH YHKLFOHV 3ULFHV YDU\ IURP DERXW longer rentals. Some GPS systems operate only in the country in which the car was rented.

• Seats for Children: These are mandatory in PRVW FRXQWULHV ([SHFW WR SD\ ¼ SHU UHQWDO SHU VHDW

• Winter Tires: Mandatory in some countries, but often unavailable in countries other than Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The winter tire fee is usually included in the basic rate.

• Ski Racks: Available for most cars at about SHU GD\ WR D PD[LPXP RI DERXW rental.

### TRANSMISSION

An ability to drive a car with standard transmission will save on your European rental FDU , Q DGGLWLRQ YDQV DQG VWDWLRQV transmissions are somewhat scarce in (XURSSHDQ UHQWDO ÀHHWV , Q VRPH automatic transmission costs 50-percent more than the same car with manual transmission. The message is clear, learn to drive a 'stick.'

### AGE RESTRICTIONS

There is no upper age limit for renting a car LQ PRVW FRXQWULHV +RZHYHU D IHH , UHODQG WKH 8 . 'HQPDUN DQG FHU countries won't rent to older drivers, though H[FHSWLRQV DUH RIWHQ SRVLEOH age ranges from 19 to 24 and in most cases GULYHUV LQ WKLV DJH UDQJH PXVW SD\ RU SXUFKDVH &':

### GEOGRAPHIC RESTRICTIONS

Most European rental cars can be driven DQ\ZKHUH LQ :HVWHUQ (XURSH DQG former Eastern bloc countries as Poland, Czech 5HSXEOLF 6ORYDNLD 6ORYHQLD Cars bound for countries such as Romania, %XOJDULD 6HUELD %RVQLD DQG countries will substantially cost more and may UHTXLUH DGGLWLRQDO LQVXUDQFH

Dear Bob,

Europcar has responded to our request to review the billing from your client's recent rental and have agreed to adjust their billing to Auto Europe so that we may credit the client for the unused days due to medical reasons. They have also UHIXQG HG WKH , QWHUQDWLRQDO RQH ZD 7KH RQH ZD\ IHH ZDV SDLG DW HXU locally. This amount was refunded by Europcar to the credit card. We have also refunded \$722.30 to the Visa card for the unused days. Please allow DERXW IRU WKLV FUHGLW WR Sincerely,

Sincerely,  
Auto Europe LLC  
Customer Service

FDUV PD\ QRW EH WDNHQ WR , WDO\ DQG rented in Europe are not permitted to travel to \$IULFD RU FHUWDLQ LVODQG :KHQ UHV sure to ask about geographic restrictions.

### INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT IDP

Though it is unlikely you will need to show DQ , '3 DW D UHQWDO FRXQWHU LW LV WK countries and there are reports of customers ZLWKRXW WKH , '3 EHLQJ GHQLHG FDUV & WKDW UHTXLUH DQ , QWHUQDWLRQDO 'ULY \$XVWLD %RVQLD +HU]HJRYLQD &URDWL 5HSXEOLF \*HURQD \*UH FH +XQJDU\ , W Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Spain. WKH ODZ DQG FDQW SURGXFH DQ , '3 , W VHSDUDWH OLFHQVH EXW D WUDQVODWLR of home driver's license. The document supplements but does not replace the home license which is necessary to rent a car anywhere LQ (XURSH 7KH , '3 LV DYDLODEOH IRU DE

Do not be deceived by scammers who sell , '3' IRU IURP WR RQO\ \$\$\$ DQG 1\$& 8 6 6WDWH 'HSW WR

### ABOUT WINTERIZATION

Germany German law requires winter tires when driving in "wintry" conditions and rental car companies FKDUJH HIWUD IRU WKHP WKRXJK WKH FK usually included in the basic rental car rate. The penalty if your car doesn't have winter tires, and you are caught driving in snow, is about ¼ :RUVH KRZHYHU IRX PD\ EH ;QDQFLD IRUPHU 6RYLHW 8OLRQ hable if you don't have them and are involved in an accident on snow. And, since you would be breaking the law, driving without winter tires



might also void your insurance coverage.

:LQWHU WLUHV LQ DUH QRZ PDQGDWRU\ IRU \$YLV (XURSFDU DQG +HUV] UHQWDO November 1-March 31.

The good news is if you're not in the mountains, your chances of actually driving on snow are pretty low. And when it does snow in Germany, roads are quickly cleared.

Austria

:LQWHU WLUHV DUH PDQGDWRU\ basic rental car price.

Switzerland

Mandatory and included in the rate.

France

Europcar, which dominates the France rental car market, offers winter tires only on a few only a few, mostly high altitude, stations.

Italy

Some regions of the country now require winter tires

Other countries

Four-wheel drive vehicles in all countries are feel more comfortable with front-wheel drive cars in ice and snow, though no rental company will guarantee front-wheel drive.

### LEASE INSTEAD OF RENT

This a wonderful option for longer rentals; no insurance uncertainty, wondering what kind of car you will get, or where you can drive it

There are numerous advantages to the lease/buy-back program:

- You get a brand-new-from-the-factory car to equipment, including GPS.
- You pay one price, there are no other charges GPS, premium station fees, and others.
- The deal includes full, zero-deductible insurance
- The car can be driven virtually anywhere in Europe.

‡ 1R H[WUD FKDUJH IRU PXOWLSOM

### THE RIGHT RENTAL CAR FOR YOU

:KHQ FKRRVLQJ D FDU IRU (XURSH UUV FRPH WR JULSV ZLWK WKH UHQWDO QR )RUG 9LFWRULDV RU /LQFROQ 7RZ UHQWDO ÀHHWV 7KDW NLQG RI SDV

### Our Advice Works

I guess it's too late to do anything about it, but 12 I noticed the fuel gauge showed a half empty tank. With everything that was going on I forgot about it until I looked at the rental agreement today. It says a full tank. So I suppose I have to return it with a full tank. I'll be out over \$40 on that deal. I'm turning it in tonight.

John M.

Hi John,

My suggestion is to return the car with a full tank and request a refund. Based on past experience, you may not get the refund, but if you return the tank full you will be charged about \$18 per gallon plus a fee for the rental company having \$100.

Receipts from your fuel purchases might support your claim.

Bob

Hi Bob, , W ZRUNH GONG LW DQG WKH\ JDYH PH D refund.

Thanks & Merry Christmas to you & yours!!!

John M.

WUXQN VSDFH GRHVQ W H[LVW <RX FDQ 0HUFHGHV VHULHV %0:V DQG \$XGL \$ V start at more than \$800 per week, require two FUHGLW FDUGV DW SLFNXS FDQ W EH GU DQ\ HDVWHUQ FRXQWU\ DQG DUH SUREDE from credit car insurance. So get used to the idea RI 2SHOV 9:V )RUGV 3HXJHRWV )LDWV 6NRSDV DQG VPDQHU 0HUFHGHV %0: D

Subcompact/Economy: Typical cars: Opel & RUVD 9: 3ROR )LDW 3XQWR 2ND\ IRU W not interested in burning up the Autobahn. Trunk space is small and once in a while there is no air-conditioning.

Compact: 7\SLFDO FDUV 2SHO \$VWUD 9: \* Ford Focus, Peugeot 308. Comfortable at 80 to PSK \*RRG WUXQN ;JXUH RQH ELJ VXLV

two small ones, or two large ones. Should also be room for a garment bag and/or a soft duffel or two. Both two-door and four-door models, occasionally with a sunroof. Fine for three adults who go easy on the luggage. Air-conditioned.

Intermediate: 7\SLFDO FDUV 2SHO ,QVLJQLD UHQWDO ÀHHWV 7KDW NLQG RI SDV 9HQMVDWR R DQ RQGHR 5HQWDO /DJX Skoda Octavia. Our recommended category for

two couples. O.K. on the Autobahn but a bit underpowered with four people and luggage.

Full-size: Typical cars: Mercedes C-class, Audi A4, Peugeot 607. Full-size is a misnomer. Most of the cars in this category are no larger, in some cases you want a nicer car, by all means rent a full-size; and luggage space you're wasting your money. (See About Vehicle Categories" on page 17)

Station Wagon: Sometimes referred to in Europe as a Kombi. Come in three sizes: premium categories. You pay more for a wagon than for the same model sedan. Though wagons offer more luggage space, unless you pull the retractable cover—which reduces the luggage space like the midsize sedan over the compact wagon; more passenger comfort and almost as much space as a 7-passenger van is our recommendation.

MPV (Multi-Purpose Vehicle): Somewhat larger than a station wagon, MPV vehicles have created a new rental category. In our opinion these cars are more comfortable for four persons and luggage than a regular intermediate sedan or even an intermediate station wagon.

Warning: Some companies advertise these vehicles come with two folding jump seats but they occupy more space than a regular sedan. There are two important reasons why you may be better off with two midsize cars; luggage space and money. A seven-passenger vehicle may be OK for hauling kids to soccer games but will it have enough storage space to handle luggage for a roomier nine-passenger van but your credit card will be charged for the extra space.

Vans: You're taking the family to Europe and everybody wants to ride together in the same vehicle. One of those seven-passenger minivans There are two important reasons why you may be better off with two midsize cars; luggage space and money. A seven-passenger vehicle may be OK for hauling kids to soccer games but will it have enough storage space to handle luggage for a roomier nine-passenger van but your credit card will be charged for the extra space.

### Customer Service Examples

Hi Bob

3 OHDVH EH DGYLVHG +HUWJ KDYH FRQ; KDYH UHIXQGHG WKH FOLHQQW 1/4 \*36 They have informed us the adjustment is being made today, but may not appear on the next billing cycle. Thank you for your patience. \$XWR (XURSH & XVWRPHU 6HUYLEFH 0DQD

Hi Bob

With this one, unfortunately, Budget US is not going to refund. The rental agreement was signed, it shows as Accepted, and the amount was disclosed.

However, based on Mr. X's loyalty to Gemut.com and Auto Europe, we will refund 50% of the cost as a gesture of goodwill.

We have credited \$70.00 to the Visa card. \$XWR (XURSH & XVWRPHU 6HUYLEFH 0DQD

Dear Sabrina

As the GPS was listed as included in the rental agreement, we have credited the amount to the credit card. \$XWR (XURSH & XVWRPHU 6HUYLEFH 0DQD

Dear Andy

Please be advised, Auto Europe has successfully disputed Hertz's upgrade charge. The credit card which should post within the next few business days. \$XWR (XURSH & XVWRPHU 6HUYLEFH 0DQD

Dear Andy

Please be advised, Auto Europe has received a response from Hertz. They have asked us to forward their apologies for their billing error and downgrading the client.

(XURSFDU KDV FRQ; UPHG WKH\ KDYH UHIXQGHG WKH FOLHQQW 1/4 \*36 €143.06 upgrade fee in full, to the credit card presented locally. Please allow a few business days for this to post.

Auto Europe has also refunded the difference between the category reserved and that received, in the amount of \$165.25 to the credit card used to prepay Auto Europe. Please allow a few business days for the refund to post as well.

\$XWR (XURSH & XVWRPHU 6HUYLEFH 0DQD

Protection) will probably not provide collision and theft insurance coverage; you'll have buy it from the rental company. Often two midsize sedans will

Seven and nine-passenger vans have three passenger assumes three persons per seat—three in front, three in the center seat and three in back. Seven-passenger vans have front buckets, a shorter center bench seat or two buckets, and a rear bench. The seven-passenger van is great for

Tip: You may not be able to rely on a credit from their insurance coverage (H[FHSW IRU WKH \$PHULFDQ ([SUHV 3UHPLXP FRYHUDJH, 9DQV become scarce every summer. Book early.

Luxury Cars: Power and engineering make them somewhat safer than the run-of-the-mill or Audi A8 will be much higher and will not be covered by most credit card insurance.

### SAVE MONEY & AVOID PROBLEMS

rental customer should consider when deciding on a rental car. Not every recommendation will apply to every renter:

#### Avoid Airport/Rail Station Pickups

Commence your rental at a European airport Though several companies in Germany still charge airport and rail station rates are now comparable to charge for returning a car to a "premium station."

#### Avoid Sunday Rentals

The vast majority of off-airport rental locations in Europe are closed Sundays making it likely you will pay an airport pickup fee if you plan to start a rental on that day.

#### Avoid Small Towns

Fewer cars to choose from and less savvy agents make renting a car in a small town a bit more adventurous than in Europe's major cities. The small-town rental agent, who deals mainly with European customers, may not be completely

### More Customer Service Results

Dear Andy,

Thank you for bringing our mutual client's rental concerns to our attention. Please be advised, we have received a response from Europcar. They have asked us to forward their apologies for the disappointment with their service.

Europcar have agreed to refund the cost of

WKKH\* 36 X L Q J K O C D F K H ... VKRXOG SF FUHGLW FDUG ZLWKLQ WKH QH[W EXV \$XWR (XURSH &XVWRPHU 6HUYLEFH

Dear Bob,

Thank you for bringing Mr. X's concerns to our attention.

Please be advised, we have refunded 50% of the rental cost, in the amount of \$136.52 and the requested €20.00 for extra tolls/fuel etc, as \$25 to the American Express ending in ####. Please

Dear Bob,

Please be advised, we have successfully disputed Hertz Germany's insurance refunded the €755.23 which should post by their next statement.

7KH UHPDLQLQJ FKDUJH RI ¼ UHODW mandatory road fee as noted in the voucher. \$XWR (XURSH &XVWRPHU 6HUYLEFH

Dear Bob,

Thank you for bringing Mr. X's billing concerns to our attention.

Please be advised, Auto Europe has successfully disputed Avis' upgrade charge. €238 Euro to the credit card presented locally. 3OHDVH DOORZ D EXVLQHVV GD\ IRU \$XWR (XURSH &XVWRPHU 6HUYLEFH

Hi Bob,

I am pleased to inform you that Auto Europe has successfully disputed Hertz's LDW/Theft protection, and Super Cover charges.

+HUW] KDYH FRQ¿UPHG WKH\ KDYH UHIX ¼ HXUR WR WKH FUHGLW FDUG SUHV Please allow a few business days for this to post. \$XWR (XURSH &XVWRPHU 6HUYLEFH

familiar with the terms and conditions of bookings made from North America. Most Europeans, for collision and theft insurance and the small town agent may assume you want that coverage when charges on your credit card when you return home. Not understanding that North American credit cards provide free insurance, the agent may insist you purchase that coverage.

Another issue is the smaller selection of reservation for an automatic transmission car, many small town rental stations don't have them Occasionally the system breaks down and when the renter arrives there simply is no automatic with what's on hand and if there's no automatic manual may be the only option.

Avoid Small Companies

Most of the rental cars in Europe belong to is prominent in Germany and growing rapidly elsewhere. Enterprise is now a European presence to help—and a replacement car—as possible. Germany alone.

Suppose you're somewhere up around the making noises like a wounded cat; would you rather it be an Avis or a small company with only too, that if you're picking up a car at an airport, your chosen company is really at the airport. Smaller suppliers often require that you phone from the airport and request a shuttle to their off-airport location. That means you'll ride the shuttle both ways, the start of the rental and at the end. The major companies mentioned above usually have rental counters and vehicles right at the airport; you'll sign the contract then walk to the car.

Understanding Full-Size & Larger Cars

spend the money. But if it's space you're after, category car. The price increase from midsize to for a midsize station wagon may be as little as half the price of a full-size wagon. And, though into the "full size" category, it has slightly less wagon. (See About Vehicle Categories page 17).

24/7 In-Europe Support

Dear Andy

Because the letter from our credit card company certifying the collision insurance was in my name they insisted that we would have to buy insurance. Fortunately we had a copy of your at which would be approximately 2 or 3 am your time. The young woman we spoke to was very good and extremely helpful. She was able to talk with the Europcar manager and tell him she was going to switch everything from the original voucher into Holly's name and that there would be no need to add insurance. Once again, just wanted to say how thankful we were for the assistance that morning.

Dear and Holly

Stick With One Driver

Nearly all rental companies charge a fee if you want to list more than one driver on the rental contract. Early in this report we mentioned a "best deal" price of less than \$175 on a compact car in good if there will be more than one driver. Avis and contract. Early in this report we mentioned a "best deal" price of less than \$175 on a compact car in good if there will be more than one driver. Avis and contract. Early in this report we mentioned a "best deal" price of less than \$175 on a compact car in good if there will be more than one driver. Avis and

Think Twice About International One-Way Rentals

Two problems with a one-way rental between simply not possible. The one-way charge is always in addition to other rental charges and can range from around \$100 to \$4,000. At the lower end of the scale are one-ways between such cities as involving small cities are frequently not possible or to drop a Frankfurt car in Paris decided to instead leave it in Tours. The drop fee went from \$125 to \$350. One-way fees are now common even on rentals within the same country.

WHY WE DON'T LIKE HOTEL DELIVERY

Yes, in past years this was a convenience some rental companies offered free. Now, however, you'll pay at least \$35 and what if the delivered car isn't station you'll likely have a choice of cars.

BEST RATES? GERMANY & FRANCE

Though itinerary may limit your choice, it's

useful to know which countries have the best UHQWDO FDU UDWHV \*HGHUODOO\ , WDO\ 6ZLW]HUODQG Austria, Portugal and the Scandinavian countries have the highest prices. Germany and France are the lowest. Get a quote at 800-521-6722.

### EUROPEAN RENTAL CAR CHECKLIST

So you've made your Europe car rental reservation, and your trip is fast approaching, but you fear that upon your weary arrival something will go wrong at the rental desk. Even the most savvy travelers have encountered problems. You will need to be on your toes. Begin by reading this valuable checklist:

#### Before You Go

- Read your voucher/reservation carefully. This document covers all vital aspects RI \RXU UHQWDO , Q WKH ERRNLQJ SURFHVV V RPH UHQWDO details may not be discussed via e-mail or phone.

- Print copies of your voucher/ UHVHUYDWLRQ FRQ¿UPDWLRQ. Put these with other trip documents and you will always have contact info for the company you booked the car with, as ZHOODV WKH UHQWDO VXSSOLHU \$LYLHUW]HWF & XVWRPHU 6HUYLHF

- Local charges, know what to expect. 7KHVH FDQ LQFOXGH URDG WD[ DLUSRW WD[ DGGLWLRQDO drivers, optional insurance, and any optional HTXLSPHQW \RX UHTXHVW /RFDO FKDUJHV YDU) E) country, location, and company. Know what they DUH EHIRUH \RX JR 5(\$' 7+( 928&+(5 7KDW ZD\ 7KH\ KDYH FRQ¿UPHG WKH\ KDYH UHIXQ there are no surprises.

#### At the Pick-up Location

- Present your auto rental voucher. The YRXFKHU RU ZULWWHQ FRQ¿UPDWLRQ RI \RXU ERRNLQJ SDJH HQDEOLQJ WKH DJHQW WR HQDEOH UHVHUYDWLRQ ,W LV DOVR FRQ¿UPDWLRQ UHVHUYDWLRQ ,W LV DOVR FRQ¿UPDWLRQ rental and is your defense against overcharges

**DTip:** ,I \RX UHVHUYHG PRUH WKDQ WKH VDPH VXSSOLHU EH VXUH WR FRQFOLQJ WKH VDPH VXSSOLHU bookings prior to the rental date. Otherwise the rental agent may locate the wrong reservation in the CRS (computer reservation system) and issue a contract at a different—higher—rate.

- Call the 24/7 help line. For our customers, most problems that arise at the rental counter can be solved in minutes via a toll-free, 24/7 customer service help line (emergency numbers are in the email sent with your voucher... do not call Gemut.com as we are not open

/HW\VD\ \RX\YH ERRNHG DQ EXW WKH UHQWDO DJHQW RIIHUV D QXPEHUV ,W\VD\ \RXU VDIHW\ QHW

Dear Andy, WDO\ 6ZLW]HUODQG Thank you for bringing Mr. X's billing concerns to our attention.

Please be advised, Auto Europe has successfully disputed Hertz's CDW & Theft Protection charges.

+HUW] KDYH FRQ¿UPHG WKH\ KDYH UHIXQ €1,240.47 to the credit card presented locally. Please allow a few business days for this to post.

Thank you for giving Auto Europe the opportunity to resolve this matter on Mr. X's behalf.

\$XWR (XURSH & XVWRPHU 6HUYLHF

Hi Bob, We have reached a solution for Mr. X. He will be refunded in full for the locally purchased Roadside Assistance Insurance.

We apologize for any inconvenience. \$XWR (XURSH & XVWRPHU 6HUYLHF

Hi Bob, Please be advised we have successfully disputed Hertz's additional day charges.

€55.07Euro. This should post by the next billing cycle to the credit card presented locally. \$XWR (XURSH & XVWRPHU 6HUYLHF

Dear Andy, QG \RXU Thank you for bringing our mutual client's billing concerns to our attention.

Please be advised Auto Europe has received a response from Hertz. They have asked that we forward their apologies for their billing error.

They have refunded the cost of the GPS, in the amount of €101.15 to the credit card presented locally.

\$XWR (XURSH & XVWRPHU 6HUYLHF

**DWarning:** Do not leave the rental location XQOHVV \RX DUH VDWLVL¿HG ZLWK WKH YH been given, and the contract you have signed.

(FKDQJLQJ WKH FDU ODWHU RQ FDQ EH C you have signed a contract that calls for payment R\XQZDOWHG LQVXUDQFH IRU H[DPSOH H[WUHPHO\ XQOLNHO\

- Changes to the rental while in Europe:

8VH WKH VDPH WROO IUHH QXPEHU  
 E\ 1RUWK \$PHULFDQ EDQNV RIIHU &':  
 for auto rentals in most of Europe. There are  
 H[FHSWLRQV VXFK DV ,WDO\ ZKHUH  
 SXUFKDVH &': DQG WKHIW ,Q DOO RWKHU  
 UHFRPPHQG WKDW FOLHQWV GHFOLQH &':  
 of the coverage offered by the credit card. Call your  
 credit card issuer for details.

,I \RX SODQ WR UHO\ RQ FRYHUDJH  
 card you want to be certain you're not charged for  
 H[SHQVLYH &': DQG WKHIW LQVXUDQFH  
 company. First, tell the agent you do not want or  
 need any additional insurance, and that you are  
 covered by your credit card. Prudent renters will  
 FDUU\ D ³/HWWHU RI &RYHUDJH' SURY  
 FDUG FRPSDQ\ 8QIRUWXQDWHO\ \RX  
 to sign a rental contract in the local language -  
 \*HUPDQ )UHQFK ,WDOLDQ 6SDQLVK  
 law and, though it may do so as a courtesy, the  
 rental company is not required to provide a copy in  
 English (be sure to ask for one, however).

Complicating this process is the fact that several  
 rental companies no longer obtain customer initials  
 that indicate acceptance or rejection of additional  
 services; just one signature on the bottom of the  
 FRQWUDFW LV UHTXLUH G 7KLV V LJQ  
 to all terms of the contract—which may include a  
 charge for optional insurance. Though with scant  
 NQRZOHGJH RI WKH ORFDO ODQJXDJH;  
 WR GHWHUPLQH H[DFWO\ WKH WHUPV  
 still should look it over and ask to be shown the  
 SDUVV WKDW UHODWH WR &': PRVW  
 FRPSDQLHV XVH WKH WHUP &': RU /':  
 :DLYHU DQG WKHIW LQVXUDQFH ,Q  
 looking for the word abgelehnt—declined.

Customers booked through Gemut.com/Auto  
 (XURSH KDYH D VDIHW\ QHW ,I WKH  
 EHLQJ LQFRUUHFWO\ FKDUJHG IRU &'  
 call a toll-free-from-Europe number and request a  
 note to that effect be placed in their booking record.  
 Of course, the signed contract is the controlling legal  
 document but in a post-rental dispute where you are  
 claiming an unauthorized charge, that note in the  
 UHFRUG PDGH DW WKH WLPH RI UHQWDO  
 your credit card company in your favor. Some  
 customer append this phrase under their signature  
 ZKHQ V LJQLQJ WKH FRQWUDFW ³, GHFOLQH &':  
 Theft insurance."

DTip: &KHFN ZLWK \RXU 9LVD FUGLW FDUU  
 RXU LQIRUPDWLRQ LV WKDW PDQ\ 9LVD  
 FRYHU WKH &': WKHIW /': GHGXFWLE  
 FDUV UHQWHG LQ ,WDO\

- Decline pre-paid fuel. Prepaid fuel is

D EDG GHDO :LWK WKLV RIIHU \RX

**No Automatic? AF 24/7 Support to the Rescue**

86 ± \*HPXW FRP 0V /LOLD ;  
 CDAR / Hertz URU Aachen DT Q DO: Aachen  
 DT / 7 days. Conf #G#####/ Status:

RESOLVED WRPHU PXVW  
 from outside the Aachen downtown location to  
 advise agent at counter was refusing to honor  
 reservation. We called branch. No answer.

\*\*\*Solution: Phoned Tobias X and Rafael X,  
 Hertz Germany, for assistance. Tobias now  
 our phone conversation.

\*\*\*Action Required: Please look for email or  
 delivery and at what time, the please contact  
 and advise client at number and email below.

automatic vehicle was delivered to the customer  
 and on her way.

Dear Bob and Andy,

Good evening, I am emailing you to advise  
 of the following resolved reservation issue. Per  
 email from Hertz, the automatic vehicle has been  
 delivered to our mutual customer directly and  
 she is on their way. Hertz has apologized for the  
 inconvenience. I have tried following up with Mrs.  
 a voice mail was left. If any further assistance is  
 needed please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best Regards,  
 Kyle Inman

Auto Europe Reservations Manager

driving around on fumes, especially when heading  
 though you will have paid for fuel left in the tank  
 at the end of the rental, you won't get a refund.

- Ask for instruction on vehicle operation.

Your car's sound system may have unfamiliar  
 with a GPS be sure it's set on English language  
 mode. Finally, be sure you know whether you have  
 a gas or diesel engine. Figure on a charge of at  
 the tank with the wrong fuel.

- Inspect the car. ,I WKH FDU LV GLUW\ LQV  
 or out, refuse it. Check for obvious and not-so-  
 obvious damage (rental scratches). Make sure



any damage is acknowledged in writing by the rental

FRPSDQ\ ,W TV D JRRG LGHD WR WDN  
IURP DOO VLGHV 9LVXDOO\ LQVSHFW, WLUHV IRU ZHDU DQG  
LQADWLRQ OHYHO 0DNH VXUH WKHUH TV D VSDUH

- Extending the Rental. Once you're in Europe, you may want to add days to your rental.

'RQ TV MXVW UHWXUQ WKH FDU ODW  
GDLO\ UDW H ,I\RX ERRNHG ZLWK X  
WROO IUHH QXPEHU WR FDOO EDFN  
ZKDW WKH H[WUD GD\ V ZLOO FRVWDQ\ RI LW ULJKW RU ZURQJ 7KH\ GLG L

- When in doubt, call the toll free help line.

The End of the Rental

- Return the car with full tank. , I SUH SDLG  
fuel is a not a good deal, then the cost of having  
WKH UHQWDO FRPSDQ\ ,OO WKH WDN  
,W OLNHO\ ZLOO PRUH WKDQ GRXEO  
a normal retail service station.

- Keep your fuel receipt. Even if you just top-off the tank and pay in Euros, you NEED a UHFHLSW ,I WKH DJHQW PDNHV D  
the tank even 1/4 empty, at \$18 per gallon the charge will be substantial. Your receipt is the only proof otherwise.

- Inspect the car again. Be sure no new GHQWV RU GLQJV DUH SUHVHQW ,I  
after-hours, take a few pictures of the car as proof of its condition.

- Get written proof that the car was returned full of gas with no damage. This is not always possible which underscores the importance of the items above.

- Pay any balance due with the same credit card you used to reserve the car. , I you use a different card or pay in cash you will invalidate your credit card insurance. DTip: Debit card and the Discover card will not be accepted.

- Decline Direct Currency Conversion (DCC) :KHQ WKH WLPH FRPHV WR SD\  
charges in Europe you may be asked if you'd like WR EH ELOOHG LQ 8 6 GROOMUV 7  
Conversion and is simply a device whereby the purchaser pays for a worthless service. DCC enables the vendor, and the company that sells '&& WR WKH YHQGRU WR XVH DQ H[  
favorable to them but not to you. Consumer advocates say DCC on an overseas transaction will cost the customer an additional 3%-5%. Demand to pay in euros with your credit card and take DGYDQWDJH RI WKH EHVW H[FKDQJH

### OVERSEAS CAR RENTAL BROKERS

,Q WKH ODVW IHZ \HDUV D QXPEHU  
based, European car rental websites have come online. For the most part, they are headquartered LQ WKH 8 . ,UHODQG \*UHHFH 6RXWK \$IULFD DQG 1HZ

### Sometimes it Helps to Know People in High Places

Hi Bob,  
3HU WKH EHORZ FRQUPDWLRQ IURP VXS  
agreed now to refund the FULL upgrade charge.

As you already know, and I'm CERTAIN on this  
through this, they would not have refunded  
KDYH VRPH LQAXHQFH ZLWK WKH VXSSOL  
WKDW LQAXHQFH EHFDXVH \*HPXW FRP DV  
8QQDPHG \$XWR (XURSH 93

Hi Bob,  
Following on from my email last night, I can now  
FRQUPWKH SUHFH\RX SD\ DV  
##### has been refunded. The amount  
RI ... DSSUR[LPDWHO\ ZLOO SRVV  
FXVWRPHUV DFFRXQW ZLWKLQ ZRUN  
Please accept my apologies for any inconvenience caused.  
8QQDPHG \$XWR (XURSH 93

I have done this for you. I will  
WKHLU SULFHV DUH TXLWH DWUDFWLYH  
you provide a credit card online for a car rental in Europe be sure you're aware of the following.

#### Insurance

Since most European credit cards don't SURYLGH IUHH &': WKHIW LQVXUDQFH PD  
prices quoted by overseas brokers include this insurance. That sounds good, but there is a catch. The included insurance carries a high deductible RU H[FHVV IUHTXHQWO\ PRUH WKDQ  
to reduce that to zero you'll have to purchase additional coverage at about \$15 to \$40 per day. Since your credit card requires that you decline DQ &': WKHIW FRYHUDJH RIIHUG E\ WKH  
company to accept the rental car company's insurance invalidates your free, zero-deductible credit card insurance.

Beware, too, overseas brokers who advertise  
GDPDJH \RX ZLOO SD\ WKH H[FHVV RU G  
and seek reimbursement from the overseas FRPSDQ\ 5HDG WKH QH SULQW 7KHU D  
posts at online travel forums made by customers who were unable to obtain reimbursement. Below, in italics, verbatim, is one broker's rules for getting your money back:

To obtain a refund we need you to strictly follow the instructions below in case of an accident, damage or theft:

• You have to inform immediately our local car rental partner.

• You have to contact the police and take a written report, even for the smallest damage made. When you pick up your rented car, please ask for details.

• When you return the car to the rental station, you also have to make a theft or damage report with our local car rental partner. To get back the excess, you must send these documents to Economy Car Rentals by post:

• Theft / damage report and police report. Vehicle must never be removed from the place of accident until the police report has been completed. In case of any accident to the car, you must immediately contact the nearest police station and make an accident report. If you do not report it to the police and comply with the requirements under the country's law, the insurance becomes invalid. The report should VWDWH LI WKHUH ZDV DQ\ LQÀXHQFH RI DOEFKRO BU drugs. It is essential that you also report any accident or damage to the Car Rental Company. In case of other damages to the rented car, the above procedure should also be followed. If the vehicle is damaged while parked, you have to report the damage to the police and to the car rental company before the car is moved.

- Copy of the rental agreement / contract.
- Receipts of payment, to prove how much you have paid, and your credit card statement where we can see the amount that was taken from your credit card.

Currency Guarantee

"Off shore" online quotes are invariably in euros or pounds sterling, with an accompanying HWLDPDW RI ZKDW WKH 86 GROODU XPENU WZLQV FDIHG GD\ DQG QLJKW E Some sites use conversion rates that make their GROODU SULFHV ORRN YHU\ DWWUDFWLYH. RZHYHU YLQFH Europe to assist customers having trouble at the rental counter. They can and will go over the head of rental counter personnel. Should you have a breakdown (doesn't happen often but it does happen) you may have to deal with a rental company that is far from your location and you may have to wait days - not hours - to get a UHSODFHPHQW FDU 2XU PDMRU VXSSOLHU DQG (XURSFDU KDYH WKRXVDQGV RI RI¿ Europe. DUV DQG Adding It All Up So, while it might seem that you're getting a low rental car rate from an off-shore website, any of the following occurrences could not only be inconvenient but wind up costing money you didn't plan to spend:

Rentals made through Gemut.com and Auto (XURSH DUH JXDUDQWHHG LQ 8 6 GROODU XPENU WZLQV FDIHG GD\ DQG QLJKW E once booked, the quoted rate locks-in and does QRW FKDQJH UHJDUGOHVV RI FXUUHQFH. AXFWXDWLRO And remember, if you pay for your car in euros overseas you are very likely to be assessed a 3% foreign transaction charge by your credit card company. For a quote call 800-521-6722 or go to www.gemut.com.

Cancellations and changes

Typically, there is a charge to change or cancel bookings made through "off shore" companies. These change and cancellation fees range from about \$10 to the full amount of the rental. Read the site's "terms and conditions."

9 LUWXDOO\ DOO ERRNLQJV PDGH YLD however, can be changed as often as necessary, or canceled without penalty. As long as cancellation is prior to the time of rental, all money is refunded.

+ RZHYHU XQOHVV \RX FDQ SURYH D PH emergency, it is unlikely you will receive a refund for any unused rental days.

What if Something Goes Wrong

, W ZRXOG EH QLFH LI DOO RI WKH KXQC thousands of North Americans who rent cars in (XURSH HDFK \HDU KDG D VPRRWK DV VLO 8 QIRUWXQDWHO\ WKDW LVQW WKH FDVH Europcar, National and Budget —the companies who supply the vast majority of the rental cars in Europe—employ human beings. And, given the ¿ HUFH FRPSHWLWRQ IRU \RXU UHQWDO F rental car company jobs are not high paying ones. :KLOH RI (XURSHDQ FDU UHQWDO HPSO eager to serve, mistakes are made. Even with computers, reservations sometimes get lost and billing errors are all too frequent.

All this raises the question, how do you contact and deal with an overseas company when :

• You are at the rental car counter and are told they don't have the kind of car you booked or they FDQW ¿ QG \RXU UHVHUYPDWLRO "

‡ <RX UHWXUQ WR WKH 8 6 DQG ¿ QG D XQH[SODLQHG FKDUJH RQ \RXU FUHGLW F

:KHQ \RX ERRN ZLWK \*HPXW FRP \RX D provided a 24/7 toll-free-from-Europe phone

8 6 E\ SHUVRQQHO WUDLQHG VSHFL¿ FDOO

Europe to assist customers having trouble at the rental counter. They can and will go over the head of rental counter personnel. Should you have a breakdown (doesn't happen often but it does happen) you may have to deal with a rental company that is far from your location and you may have to wait days - not hours - to get a

UHSODFHPHQW FDU 2XU PDMRU VXSSOLHU DQG (XURSFDU KDYH WKRXVDQGV RI RI¿ Europe. DUV DQG

Adding It All Up

So, while it might seem that you're getting a low rental car rate from an off-shore website, any of the following occurrences could not only be inconvenient but wind up costing money you didn't plan to spend:

‡ ,I \RX JHW D VFUDWFK RU ZRUVH RQ

‡ ,I WKH GROODU GURSV

‡ ,I \RX QHHG WR FKDQJH \RXU UHQWDO

‡ ,I \RX QHHG WR FDQFHO \RXU UHQWDO

‡ ,I \RX DUH RYHUFKDUJHG RQ \RXU UHQWDO

‡ ,I WKHUH LV D PL[ XS LQ \RXU UHQWDO

‡ ,I \RX UHWXUQ WKH FDU D GD\ RU

Final Note: Gemut.com books all its European rental car and lease customers with Auto Europe, which, in many instances, provides special rates not offered to the general public. Phone us at 800-521-6722 or click for a quote

### NAVIGATION: GPS MAPS

Be aware that the GPS device provided with your European rental car may work only in the FRXQWU\ LQ ZKLFK LW LV UHQWHG there to be an instruction book in English. A GPS does not replace, but supplements, good 1:200,000 or 1:150,000 scale maps. Even the best GPS devices sometimes create puzzling routes. So be sure that among the items you load into your European rental car are maps of the areas you will travel. That way you'll quickly know when the GPS is sending you the long way 'round. As old-fashioned as they may be, maps provide an overall perspective of the region and are useful in quickly locating interesting towns and sights. :KLOH WKH \*36 LV JUHDW LQ WKH FRXQWU\VLGH EHWHZHHQ towns and villages, it's positively indispensable in large cities.

ODQ\ H[SHUWV VDA\ JRRG SRUWDEOH \*36 2XU RZQ H[SHULHQFH ZLWK D \*36 bears that out...and, unlike many a European rental car's GPS, it works throughout Europe.

Technology Alert: The Google Maps app in your smartphone will work at least as well in Europe as the vast majority of GPS devices rented from rental companies. The only hitch in Europe LV SD\LQJ IRU GDWD :L)L LQ UHQWDO FDUV LV, RIWHQ available at about \$10 per day). You can probably buy a data package from your phone service provider that will be cheaper than renting a GPS. Just monitor your data usage.

### ABOUT VEHICLE CATEGORIES

The categories to which European rental companies assign their vehicles is often LQFRQVLVWHQW DQG FRQIXVLQJ )RUHIDPSOH YRPH compact companies put the Audi A3 in the intermediate category. Size-wise, however, it's a compact; QR ODUJHU WKDQ WKH 9: \*ROI 2SHO 6HULHV LQ category. Most rental companies put the Mercedes & ODVV DQG WKH %0: 6HULHV LQ category, though neither car is as large as most intermediate category vehicles.

,Q )UDQFH KRZHYHU IXOO VL]H FRXOG a Peugeot 607—192 inches long and 21 cubic IHHW RI WUXQN VSDFH :H VDA\ 'FRXOG' EH should never forget that VSHFL¿F PDNHV RU PRGHOV are being marketed by European car rental

companies, only a category is promised such as economy, compact, intermediate, standard, fullsize, OX[XU\ HWF 6R WKH HXUR TXHVWLRQ happens when you show up at the rental counter LQ 3DULV H[SHFWLQJ WKDW LQFK 3HXJ hand you the keys to a "full-size" C-class Mercedes, which is almost a foot shorter and has much OHVV OXJJDJH FSDFLW\ (YHQ WKH OX[X category E-class Mercedes is just 191 inches in length.

,I \RXUH VSHQGLQJ PRUH PRQH\ IRU D rental car in Europe, make sure the cars in the category you're booking are truly bigger, not just PRUH OX[XULRXV WKDQ WKH FDWHJRU\ EH

### WANT A CERTAIN MAKE/MODEL?

Many rental car customers have their hearts set RQ D VSHFL¿F PDNH DQG PRGHO FDU 3,W DW KRPH '3, PLJKW EX\ RQH '3, WIV H[DFV QHHG '3, WIV ZKDW , KDG ODVW \HDU DQG 32K DQG , JRWWDI KDYH GLHVHO '

8QOHVV E\ FKDQFH WKH H[DFW FDU \RX the lot when you arrive for pick-up, you will get D FDU LQ WKH FDWHJRU\ ERRNHG , QVWHD DW KRPH '3, PLJKW EX\ RQH '3, WIV H[DFV Passat you desperately want, it may be a Ford 0RQGHR 2SHO , QVLJQLD 6NRGD 2FWDYLD perhaps half a dozen other cars in the intermediate PDWH 36 GHYLFH FDFW ZKHQ \RX VDUWO\ ER months in advance of your trip, the rental company may not have even known the composition of its ÀHHW RQ WKH GDWH RI \RXU UHQWDO

+HUH URXJKO\ DUH WKH PDLQ FDWHJRU economy, compact, intermediate, standard, fullsize, 689 OX[XU\ SUHPLXP SOXV VWDWLRQ ZD automatics in most of those categories. There are DOVR YDQV 689V VSRUWV FDUV DQG FRO both manual and automatic.

A rental company's reluctance to guarantee a certain car with certain equipment at a certain IXWXUH GDWH LV XQGHUVDQGDEOH , WIV WR JXDUDQWHH D FDWHJRU\ OHW DORQH DQG PRGHO /HWIV VDA\ D PXOWL QDWLRQD Germany such as Europcar has 30 different car FDWHJRU\HV , W PLJKW EH PRUH :HOO X DV DQ HIDPSOH 7KHUHV D FRPSDFW VHJ compact sedan automatic, a compact station wagon manual, and a compact station wagon automatic. I (XRSFDU GHFLGHV WR KDYH D GLHVHO each of those compact categories they have just doubled their compact categories from four to eight. Apply that to all categories and there are now FDWHJRU\HV UDWKHU WKDQ , QVWHD sure 30 different car categories are available at

WKH SURSHU WLPD DW VRPH alone, it's now 60 categories. Realize there are no-shows, last minute cancellations, late returns, and customers with no reservations showing up at the rental counter, and it soon becomes clear that rental companies can only estimate their need for compact station wagons with automatic transmission at the Frankfurt Airport at 3:30pm RQ -XQH OHW DORQH D VSHFL F PDNH DQG model compact wagon with diesel and factory-installed GPS.

So, you may ask, why don't the rental FRPSDQLHV KDYH D FXVKLRQ RI H[WUD FDUV" &DUV in reserve in 30 different categories, around the clock, at 400 locations in Germany? Great for the customer, but when cars sit they don't earn and the cost of adding thousands of non-revenue vehicles to the inventory will only drive up rental prices.

This is what rental companies will guarantee: car category, number of seat belts, air-conditioning, DQG WUDQVPLVLRQ ,I WKH FDU GHYFULSWLBO RQ WKH reservation says diesel and/or GPS then those items are also guaranteed. Nothing else; not a trunk or hatchback, color, sunroof, fold-down seats, QRWKLQJ +RZHYHU \RX FDQ EH FHUWDLQ RI VRPH VRUW of sound system including a radio, Bluetooth and/ RU 86% SRUW WR FRQQHFHWR \RXU VP DORQJ DQG RU 86% SRUW WR FRQQHFHWR \RXU VP DORQJ DQG There will be an outlet to power your devices.

Frankly, it's time-wasting and futile to pursue a VSHFL F PDNH RU PRGHO ,I WKH (XURSDU TXRWH DVV\OHPHQW C-Class, it's probably because the company's marketing department feels those models attract more bookings when used in advertising and in issuing online quotes. There are other cars in the fullsize category and you may get one of them. Probably the best strategy is to visit the rental location a day prior to pickup and very politely ask LI LW PLJKW EH SRVVLEOH WR JHW DQ ;<= FDU HTXLSHG ZLWK EODK EODK EODK :H VDI\YHU\ rental agents have little patience for customers VHHNLQJ D VSHFL F YHKLFOH DQG \RX :H FDXWLRO DOO FXVWRPHUV ZKR GULY DP DJHQW DW D EDG WLPD ,YH JRW \RXU FRPSDFW LHV SDUWLFXODUO\ )OR DXWRPDWLFV RQ WKH ORW IRU WKH VLIWUHFHWR IRORV DKLFOHV HQWHULQ UHVHUYDWLRQV FRPLQJ LQ WKH QH[W KRXU DQG SWRELV JX ZDQWV D 9: \*ROI ZLWK 7XUERGHLHVH O DQG 36

### MECHANICAL PROBLEMS

European rental cars are mostly new, low mileage vehicles and breakdowns are rare... EXW WKH\ GR KDSSHQ ,I \RX KDYH D SURENHQ DORQJ DQG \RX PD\ EH DEOH WR H[FKDQJH WKH FDU RU KDYH LW DUH FRPSDFW DUH VLIJQV DUH LQ ,WD EH LQFRQYHQLHQW ,I WKH FDU LV QR ORQJHU GULYDEOH the rental company will have provided a number WR FDOO IRU WRZLQJ VHUYLFH FRQW H[SHFW D WRZ WUXFN WR DUULYH LQ PLQXWHV and depending on the circumstances, you may be

RI FHMHQW HGPWR \SD\ IRU WKH WRZ ,I IRU H clutch goes out on your manual transmission rental car, the rental company may hold you responsible for the tow and WKH FOXWFK 5HSDLULQJ D AD DQRWKHU H[DPSOH RI D FRVW W\SLFDOO\ renter and not covered by any insurance.

,I \RX KDYH FDU SUREOHPV DQG DUHE through Gemut.com, you can also call for assistance on the 24/7 toll-free-from-Europe number provided with your reservation.

### "VIGNETTES"

European rental car drivers should be aware that certain countries require vehicles traveling on motorways and autobahns to display a special windshield or windscreen sticker known as a "vignette." A car rented in a country that requires a vignette will be properly equipped for that country, but will not come with vignettes for other countries. Thus, a traveler who picks up a car in a country which does not require a vignette will be responsible for purchasing the necessary sticker if the vehicle is driven into a country that requires it.

Which countries require vignettes?

\$XVWULD %XOJDULD &JHFK 5HSXEOLF Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland require a vignette sticker for driving on principal PRWRUZD\V WKDW DUH VLPLODU WR 8 6 , highways. The motorist must purchase a different sticker for each country that requires it. Cost and validity duration of a vignette varies by country.

Where to buy a vignette

9LJQHWWHV FDQ EH SXUFKDVHG DW ER and nearby gas stations. Fines for not displaying WKH SURSHU ZLQGVKLHOG VWLFNHU VWDU Cars without vignettes can be detected by roadside cameras. For more info on vignettes click here.

### RESTRICTED ZONES IN ITALIAN CITIES

H FDXWLRO DOO FXVWRPHUV ZKR GULY LQ WUDQVSRUW LHV SDUWLFXODUO\ )OR VLIWUHFHWR IRORV DKLFOHV HQWHULQ UHVHUYDWLRQV FRPLQJ LQ WKH QH[W KRXU DQG SWRELV JX O DQG 36 monitored by roadside cameras and cars without permits are ticketed. Some unaware visitors who drive in and out of these zones multiple times UHFHLYH PXOWLSOH WLFNHVV 7KH ;QH I LV DERXW ¼ ,Q DGGLWLRQ \RXU UHQW will charge your credit card a fee to provide your name and address to the ticketing agency. SURENHQ DUH VLIJQV DUH LQ ,WD the date of the violation. These restricted zones DUH VLIJQV DUH LQ ,WD do not come equipped with the necessary permits.

Read more about this at <http://www.bella-toscana.it> FRPSDFW DUH VLIJQV DUH LQ ,WD

## BEWARE MULTIPLE RESERVATIONS

often not required to hold a reservation. Problem  
 LV \RX PLJKW JHW RQH WRR PDQ\ /HW TV VDI \RX ERRN  
 Avis online, then call [Gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com) for a quote and  
 QG WKH\ KDYH D ORZHU SULFH DO WR 2 SW KHU\ ZLQX DOORZ V RPH FDUV WR W  
 book the car with Gemut but, because there was  
 QR SD\ PHQW LQYROYHG ZLWK WKH ¿ Slovakia and Slovenia—also  
 forget all about it. Now, at the rental counter the  
 agent uses your name to call up your booking in his  
 reservation system. Maybe he sees two bookings,  
 PD\EH KH MXVW VHHV WKH ¿ UVW KL LKHU SUEHFG ERNLLQ  
 and that is the one he uses to print your contract.  
 , Q \RXU MHW ODJJHG VWDWH \RX V L Q WKH GBEXPHQWV  
 that are put in front of you without giving them  
 P XFK VFUXWLQ\ :KHQ \RX UHWXUQ WR WKH 8 6 \RX JHW  
 a nasty surprise, you paid the higher rate. Avoid  
 WKL V E\ FDQFHOLQJ DOO ERRNLQJV H PHSW WKH RQPH \RX  
 want, and make sure the rental agent is handed a  
 copy of the voucher you were sent by Gemut.com.  
 (Get an email quote at [http://www.gemut.com/  
 rental-quote.html](http://www.gemut.com/rental-quote.html) or phone 800-521-6722.)

## DRIVING A CAR TO EASTERN EUROPE

You may want to drive a rental car into  
 Europe's "eastern" countries (essentially those that  
 ZHUH EHKLQG WKH ,URQ &XUWDLQ X QWLO 6 LQFH  
 PRVW WUDYHOHUV À\ WR ZHVWHUQ (XURSH ODQGLQJ LQ  
 cities like Frankfurt, Munich, Amsterdam, Paris and  
 Rome, the most common eastern travel scenario  
 is to rent the car in the west and drive into the  
 east. The most visited countries by car from the  
 ZHW DUH WKH &]HFK 5HSXEOLF + X Q JDUW D OPH S EGO  
 Slovenia and Croatia are also popular. Only the  
 most adventurous head for countries such as  
 %RVQLD 5RPDQLD %XOJDULD DQG D QW D OPH S EGO

Germany is probably the best place to start  
 ZKHQ FRQVLGHULQJ DQ HDVWHUQ D XWR WRXU 9LHQGD TV +HUH DUH VR  
 SUR[LPLW\ WR VHYHUDO HDVWHUQ FRXQWULHV PDNHV LW WKH  
 QH[W EHVW VWDUWLQJ SRLQW WKRXJK \$XWULD UDWHV DUH  
 VLJQL¿FDQWO\ KLJKHU WKDQ \*HUPDQ

An "Open jaw" itinerary is appealing but  
 H[SHQVLYH 7KH LGHD RI SLFNLQJ XS D FDU LQ XQLK  
 or Frankfurt and dropping it in Prague or Budapest  
 is appealing but rental companies have been  
 slow to allow such travel. The few companies  
 that permit one-way rentals between eastern and  
 western countries charge substantial drop fees.  
 They range from about \$350 to \$2,000.

Rental companies aren't keen to let cars go  
 HDVW 8QLQWHQG HG ³RQH ZD\ UHQW D OPH S EGO  
 stolen) are still not an uncommon occurrence. Thus,  
 they only allow certain car categories and brands  
 LQWR WKH HDVW )RUJHW 0HUFHGHV À%V LKLU \$XGRHVQ 1W WDNH D FDU JRLQJ  
 you're taking a car east, it will likely be an Opel,  
 )RUG RU 6NRGD <RX 1OO DOVR ¿QG LW GLI¿FXOW WR UHQW DQ

Automatic transmission for east travel. No matter  
 what kind of car you drive east, make sure you park  
 it overnight in a locked or patrolled garage, and be  
 careful where you park during the day.

East Travel Alert. Now in 2020, most major  
 DEAST TRAVEL ALERT. NOW IN 2020, MOST MAJOR  
 ' 2 &]HFK 5HSXEOLF &URDWLD +XQJDUV  
 Slovakia and Slovenia—also  
 Those \$135 to \$149 per week cars we referred to  
 HDUOLHU DUH QRZ 2. IRU =RQH GULYLQJ

Those \$135 to \$149 per week cars we referred to  
 HDUOLHU DUH QRZ 2. IRU =RQH GULYLQJ  
 )RU ³=RQH WZR ²FRXQWULHV VXFK DV 5  
 Bosnia, Serbia, et al—plan to pay substantially

more. You may also be required to rent the car for  
 a minimum period, pay "cross-border" fees, and  
 SXUFKDVH HWUD LQVXUDQFH

Though borders are more open these days,  
 and you may not need paperwork to cross them,  
 don't let that tempt you to take a car east without  
 permission. To do so would violate the rental  
 contract and thus void all insurance coverage.

Check other requirements for driving in eastern  
 FRXQWULHV 3RODQG IRU H[DPSOH UHTX  
 international driver's permit.

, I \RX JHW TXRWHV RQOLQH DW ZHEVL  
 ([SHGLD 7UDYHORFLW\ RU UHQWDO FRP  
 don't assume these prices will permit east travel.  
 Best to get guidance at 800-521-6722.

## DRIVING EUROPE'S SUPER HIGHWAYS

Though written with Germany in mind, this  
 DGYLFH DSSOLHV WR DOO (XURSHDQ VXS  
 Driving the Autobahn is serious business.

At 130 to 200 kilometers per hour (80 to 125  
 mph)—occasionally even higher—things happen  
 much more quickly on European highways than  
 on our more sedate, though less predictable,  
 UHHZDV DQG WXUQSLNHV +HUH DUH VR

on driving them. Though they apply mostly to  
 Germany, where there is often no limit, the  
 principles are the same in other countries where  
 the limit is typically about 80 mph.

Left lane, right lane, big difference  
 D FDU LQ XQLK

First-time Germany Autobahn drivers either  
 HQMR\ WKH IDVW GULYLQJ RU DUH DSSDQ  
 quickly, they learn that only the fastest drivers—  
 those traveling 160 to 225 kilometers per hour  
 (100 to 141 mph)—can stay in the left lane.

At speeds below that, they are repeatedly  
 required to vacate the left lane by faster cars. Some  
 come on so quickly they will virtually materialize  
 in your rearview mirror with their left turn signal  
 blinking and, if you're slow to react, headlights  
 DV LKLU \$XGRHVQ 1W WDNH D FDU JRLQJ  
 long to overtake one going 9 0 mph.

Tips on passing

The major danger on the Autobahn is the KXJH GLIIHUHQFH LQ VSHHG EHWZHHQ ODQHV WKHUH are only two in your direction, the left will have vehicles traveling 50 to 80 mph faster than the big trucks in the right lane, which are plodding along at 60 miles per hour—slower on hills. Drivers traveling 75 to 100 mph are caught in a no-man's land—too slow for the left lane and P X F K W R R I D V W I R U W K H U L J K W are in the right lane cruising at a sensible (for Germany) 140 kph (88 mph). Ahead, just as you round a long curve, is a giant truck going 60 mph in your lane. Your rearview mirror reveals a % 0 : F O R V L Q J I D V W L Q W K H O H I W O D Q H D W V D \ Your choice is to stand on the brakes and pray you don't rear-end the truck, or jump on the accelerator, switch to the left lane, and hope the Beamer doesn't rear-end you.

A high level of concentration is required for this sort of driving, particularly if you venture in that 75 to 100 mph no-man's land. A few hours of such driving takes it's toll. You will be tired.

Rolling with the Big Boys

, I \ R X K D Y H D I D V W F D U D Q G Z D Q W W R F R P S H W H Q W L W W H Q F R Q \ U P D W L R Q U W K H \ A L H U V L Q W K H O H I W O D Q H \ R X \ T O O K D O H U W 3 D V V L Q J D O L Q H R I W U D I \ F J R L Q you're hurtling along at 110 mph becomes a major problem rather quickly if someone in the right lane decides to change lanes in front of you. There might be room on the left shoulder, but that's your only out. : D W F K H Y H U \ Y H K L F O H L Q W K H U L J K W O D Q H O L N H D K D Z N I R U any sign that they have a lane change in mind.

Etiquette

, Q W K H 8 Q L W H G 6 W D W H V R Q H V H H V drivers camping in the left lane at precisely 65 mph. Blithely they roll along, secure in the knowledge that they're traveling the speed limit D Q G E U H D N L Q J Q R O D Z V : H O O a r e L Q \* H U P D Q \ ( \* A u t o m & A u t o E u r o p e b o o k e r s o n l y) breaking the law, and German drivers will quickly deal with them.

, W L V G L I \ F X O W W R L P D J L Q H D Q \ R Q H F Z I L a n k k e e p D e c i p t L Q J W K H R Q V O D X J K W R I \ A D V K L Q J O L J K W V D O C F O R Y H W D L Q A I D W L Q J that European drivers use to deal with slow left lane drivers. Almost never will they resort to SDVVLQJ RQ W K H U L J K W , Q V W H D G W K H V U L G H W K H V O R Z H U F D U \ V E X P S H U \ A D V K K H D G O L J K W V D Q G H Y H Q E O R Z W K H K R U Q , I \ R X \ U H D \ O H I W O D Q H U \ Z K R U H V E V W V H Y H U R Q H no matter who wants to pass, you may wish to rethink that practice. German drivers have a way of making nonconformists conform.

7 U D I \ F 7 L F N H W V

Most European countries have dense networks R I W U D I \ F F D P H U D V + X Q G U H G V R I W K R X

car drivers are being cited for speeding, running red lights, following too closely, and driving in restricted zones.

You probably won't know you've been caught until your credit card is charged weeks or months later. That charge is the administrative fee rental companies impose for providing your name and address to the police thereby enabling them to notify you of the violation.

notices mailed from Europe. Neither we nor the U H Q W D O F R P S D Q \ F D Q K H O S \ R X Z L W K D W and you must pay the admin fee. You agreed to that charge when you signed the rental contract.

SUMMARY

: H F R Y H U H G P X F K J U R X Q G L Q W K H V H and hope they have helped you understand the rental process. Since we can't be with you at the rental counter we suggest you clip the list below and use it at a European rental car reference.

Click and Save

Picking up the Car:

- Pay in local currency, not dollars
- Present same credit card as used to book
- Read contract. Don't sign if unsure
- Request contract copy in English
- Request instruction for vehicle operation
- Take photos of car
- For assistance, call 00 800 223 5555 5\*

Returning the Car:

- Avoid cleaning charges, return car clean
- Remove all personal gear
- Pay any charges with same credit card
- Take photos

Europe Car Rental Quotes

: H E [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com)

Phone: 800-521-6722