

### **Tips to make your “Gourmet-vacation” affordable.**

**A food and wine centered vacation doesn't have to break the bank. World traveler and food and wine enthusiast Peter Blattmann offers his secrets to keeping your next trip within budget without sacrifice.**

#### **Head for Smaller Destinations**

First, refrain from gourmet dining while you visit the landmarks of Paris or Florence. On the contrary, Burgundy or Tuscany offer more affordable gourmet indulgences. Finding these local gems is simpler than you might think. The trick? Follow the locals—they dine out frequently and know who offers the best value.

Start by asking your B& B owner or a friendly fromagerie clerk for a few of their favourite restaurants. Not only are the prices at a fraction of those in big cities, but each region prides itself in showing off local specialty ingredients and dishes.

It's not unusual for local restaurants to fill their tables with diners at random, which offers another prospect for gathering recommendations for your next day's dining—and a great opportunity for a free lesson in European eating habits. Be prepared for many courses in small portions, each accompanied with a different glass of wine. You'll more than likely fall in love with the wines: chefs understand how to use condiments and sauces to enhance their flavour.

#### **Stay Local**

With accommodation being the other major expense on a dream vacation, family-run Bed and Breakfasts offer the best value, both in price and experience. Breakfasts usually include a variety of cheeses and charcuterie, a sight better than the simple continental offered in most hotels. You'll find listings through local and national tourist offices websites.

#### **Stay Flexible**

There's romance in the journey itself, and my third suggestion is a favourite of mine to enjoy that voyage. Purchase a “Rail-Drive” pass from your travel agency, which allows you a few days of rail and rent-a-car travel during a two-month period. The beauty of it is that you'll be able to rent a car at one location and drop it off at another, where you can continue by rail to another car at your destination—and so on.

#### **Treat Yourself**

There are always a few very special occasions where only the best is good enough. If you happen to be saving for that trip of a lifetime, [www.gourmet-travel-experience.com](http://www.gourmet-travel-experience.com) can make your dream a reality, designing for you the ultimate gourmet travel experience. A series of tours of an unparalleled quality stand close scrutiny from the very finest of palates. In creating these journeys, I've drawn on over 40 years of experience, both as a chef and wine connoisseur, to provide exclusive access to the most famous wineries that are closed to the public. The hotels have been chosen for your ultimate comfort, and we have selected the very best restaurants in each region for their award-winning cuisine and personalized service.

Years of travel have developed my broad network of food experts and chefs around the world, offering you intimate behind-the-scenes experiences with specialized gourmet food producers and cooking classes with master chefs. Group sizes are kept small, so you'll be in the company of friendly like-minded travelers. Accomplished experts lead all tours and you are equally welcome, whether as a beginner or an experienced connoisseur. Our mission is to create superb gourmet travel experiences that are delightful, educational and yet enormously fun and memorable.

To view or register for any of our tours or view the photo gallery of past tours, please visit our website [www.gourmet-experience.com](http://www.gourmet-experience.com) or phone toll free 1-888-682-9297.