



European Consumer Centre France

Young consumers: what you should know if you travel by train in and to France.

Travelling by train

- ◆ Transport by train is provided by a single company, the SNCF.
- ◆ Reserving tickets is possible for all trains except regional trains (TER), without paying a booking fee. It is advisable to reserve a seat early for journeys which take place in the rush hours ("white periods"), and on certain days (e.g., departure dates in holiday periods). For some trains prior booking is actually compulsory: TGV, Corail TéoZ, and the Corail night train. A reservation can be made online or at the ticket counter in the train station.
- ◆ **Before getting on the train, you have to "validate" your train ticket.** The ticket is then valid for 24 hours after validation, for the journey detailed on the ticket. If, for a legitimate reason, you were not able to buy your ticket before getting on the train, you should immediately look for the inspector in order to purchase a ticket as soon as possible. Even if a fine is still applied, it will be reduced in this case. Generally, ticket inspections on trains are frequent, and penalties are strictly applied.
- ◆ **A ticket bought via the Internet and printed by the traveller does not need to be validated,** but it is necessary to have all the relevant paperwork: your ID card or passport, and documentary evidence showing for example that you meet the conditions for having a reduced-fare ticket
- ◆ **In every case, you have to be able to present these details to an inspector.** Should this be impossible? The inspector is entitled to ask you to pay the full price for the ticket, or to impose a fine.
- ◆ Note: **all the TGV, TER and CORAIL trains are completely non smoking.**

Exchanging tickets

- ◆ **Exchanges can be made at the train station and the SNCF booking kiosks as well as in automatic payment stations.** However, the process is different depending on whether the ticket is bought with or without a prior reservation.

Pre-booked Tickets

- ◆ **An exchange can be made without paying extra, before the departure of the train and for up to one hour after the departure of the train, either in the station or at the booking kiosk in the departure town:** but the change must cover the same route as the one originally booked.

- ◆ For Corail trains, (except TéoZ and national night trains), it is possible to obtain a new booking with a reserved seat (you will have to pay 1, 50 €, following the general terms and conditions) if seats are still available on the new Corail journey.

- ◆ **An exchange can also be made during the whole period for which the train ticket is valid**, but without the guarantee of a seat.

- ◆ **In all other cases, tickets are not exchangeable.**

Unbooked Tickets

- ◆ **These are valid for two months** (from the day of purchase). An exchange is possible without extra payment from before the day of travel, up to and including the whole period during which the ticket is valid; but only if an exchange is made for a booked train ticket, or for a lower priced ticket or if the customer is ready to pay for a small upgrade.

- ◆ **In all other cases, an extra payment of 10 % of the price for the ticket will be charged.**

- ◆ **Note! Some tickets are not exchangeable**, such as Prem's tickets and tickets printed via the Internet.

Ticket Refunds

- ◆ **The refund of a ticket can be requested** at the counter, in the SNCF booking kiosks or at the agency where the ticket was bought. This must be requested before the departure of the train.

- ◆ **To obtain a refund, the ticket must not have been validated.**

Booked train tickets

- ◆ **A full refund is made for cancellations requested before the departure of the train.** It will be a refund of only 50 % if the cancellation is requested after the departure of the train. Refunds cannot be asked for more than 60 days after the day of departure.

- ◆ **For all the other cases, no refund is possible.**

- ◆ **Be aware of tickets purchased which are subject to price reductions or special offers as they are not all refundable.** Furthermore, only tickets priced at more than 4,60 € are refundable.

For unbooked tickets

- ◆ A fee of 10 % of the price for the ticket will be charged on the amount of a refund which is requested between the day of purchase and during the 60 day period of validity which follows.

- ◆ **Be careful with tickets subject to particular conditions, notably group tickets.**

- ◆ A lost or stolen ticket cannot be refunded, nor a duplicate issued.

- ◆ **For train tickets paid for by cheque or in cash**, the refund is made by bank transfer only. It is therefore imperative to communicate your bank details (IBAN and SWIFT) to the SNCF, so that they can pay you.
- ◆ **For payments by credit card**, the refund will be made on the credit card.
- ◆ For further information, have a look at the traveller's guide of the SNCF, which is available in French and English on the Internet: www.voyages-sncf.com.

Luggage

- ◆ For security reasons, **travellers have an obligation to label their luggage before getting on the train**. Labels are available at the counters of train stations.
- ◆ **If you lose your luggage, address a complaint to the lost and found desk at the arrival station, or at the final destination of the train**. A sum 9 € is charged to return items.

If you, as a foreign consumer, are feeling mistreated by a French professional, the European Consumer Centres (ECCs) will be pleased to help you to find an amicable settlement of the dispute. You can find further information and a complete list of all ECCs under: http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/redress/ecc_network/index_en.htm

ECC France (French/English/German)
+49 7851/991 480 as well as 0820 200 999 for calls
from France for only 9 Cents per minute

