

Have you ever been snowed or fogged in at London's Heathrow or Gatwick? We were on several occasions, and by the time we got to our destination, Charles DeGaulle Airport in France, the total time from when we left our London hotel until we arrived at the Paris hotel was 11 hours.

We could have crossed the Channel more quickly in a rowboat.



The debate is always current with those who prefer one over the other. You can't depend on comparing prices, because there are vast differences for both air and rail, depending on time of day, day of the week, seating class, package deals, early booking, senior/child/group discounts and a hundred other factors. So, let's just say the average cost is about the same, \$100 round trip.

On paper, of course, flying is quicker. On a clear (rare) day, the flight is 90 minutes from take-off to wheels-down. The train trip is about 130 minutes from station to station. However, all other factors favor taking the train, and not only because winter weather frequently causes flight

delays.

The reality is that Eurostar runs from downtown London's Waterloo Station to downtown Paris' Gare du Nord and reverse, where it is convenient for business, shopping, touring and hotel connections. When flights arrive at airports, they are far away from the city, and require considerable extra luggage lugging, time-consuming hours and costs for bus, taxi or local train transportation from the city to the airport for the departing flight, and the process repeated for the arrival city.

Another reality is that you don't have to get to the train station an hour or two early and fight your way through the crowds to airport security and check-in. Eurostar does require basic check-in security, but it is nothing like the time- and temper-consuming hassle at airports. All luggage travels free on the trains.

Once aboard Eurostar, as it speeds through the Chunnel (tunnel beneath the English Channel), passengers are free to move around the roomy car aisles at any time, buy drinks and sandwiches, converse at tables for four, and relax without the need for seat belts. The London to Paris ride arrives at the Gare du Nord, where other high-speed trains are just steps away to be whisked at 200 miles per hour to other cities in France and and beyond. The same advantages are available when the destination is Waterloo Station for nearby train connections throughout the United Kingdom.

For information about Eurostar, contact RailEurope.com/Eurostar.