



# THE SHOESTRING TRAVELER

December 1998

## First-Time Courier Gets Cheap Flight to Seoul & Generous Exchange Rates

By Robert Montgomery

IAATC Member, Bakersfield, California

When I received the September, 1998, issue of the *Air Courier Bulletin*, I decided to investigate courier travel.

I telephoned *Jupiter Air (Micom America)* in Inglewood, California, to see if they needed a courier to Seoul, South Korea. They asked me if I could go they next day -- the last-minute fare would be \$200 roundtrip! This was hard to pass up, but 26 hours advance notice wouldn't allow me to prepare. We agreed on an *Asiana Airlines* flight leaving in four days for \$350 roundtrip. This was still an incredible bargain.

The *Jupiter* representative met me at the Los Angeles Airport on the day of the flight and informed me that I would have no paperwork to carry. When I arrived at Kimpo Airport in Seoul another representative met me at baggage claim, asked for my customs declaration form, and we cleared customs together. My duties were then over until the return flight ten days later. I took a *Korean Airlines* shuttlebus to the *Holiday Inn*, where I had reserved a room in advance for US\$95 a night. The reservations number in the U.S. is (800) 251-4848.

### Taxi Tips

Most places of interest in Seoul can be reached by taxi at a fare of between US\$3-\$8. I used taxis in the city except when on an organized tour. There are two classes of taxi: the luxury cabs with yellow tops and the blue-top cabs which charge about 40% less. Be aware that most taxi drivers speak little or no English. A good plan to avoid confusion, is to take two maps along, one in English and one in Korean.

If your driver makes a U-turn and heads back the way you just came, don't be alarmed. There are legitimate "U-Turn" markers painted on the pavement that return vehicles to the mainstream of traffic -- and onto your destination.

As of September, 1998, the Korean won was exchanging at 1,340-1,390 to the dollar. I found the best exchange rate at Kimpo Airport, and the worst one at my hotel. After subtract-

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## Good Value, Good Times in Germany & Holland

By Dirk van Oostendorp

IAATC Member, Florida, New York



My September flight to Frankfurt aboard *Lufthansa German Airlines* was the first time I flew for *World Courier*. I was allowed one piece of checked luggage, but no carry-on bag. *Lufthansa* has a code-share agreement with *United*, and they applied the frequent-flyer miles to my *United Mileage Plus* account.

I had made prior arrangements from the U.S. for a rental car on my arrival. The arrangements had been made with *Kemwel* (Tel: 800-678-0678); I went to the *National* desk at the Frankfurt airport and was issued a contract with *Alamo*. It seemed like a pretty universal kind of deal including all those companies, but things went very smoothly and I got more frequent-flyer credit. The 20-day rental cost was \$278 with unlimited mileage — which is a good thing because I put 4,000 km. on the car.

### Holland's Train-Taxis

I have visited Germany and Holland often because I have friends and family in both countries. I had a car on this trip, but I traveled by train on an earlier trip and have a helpful hint for other visitors to Holland. The smaller towns across The Netherlands don't always have the public transportation that's available in big cities like Amsterdam, so they provide a service known as the Train Taxi.

When purchasing a rail ticket to a smaller town, mention that you want to buy a Train Taxi voucher as well — they only cost an additional US\$3 and can only be bought at the time of ticket purchase. The taxis are waiting at the town's station when you arrive, and they will take you anywhere in town for the voucher. This is always convenient and sometimes very good value if the station is far from town. If you have a rail pass of some kind, just mention that you may need to use the Train Taxis when you buy the pass, and then show the pass to the driver.

On one occasion, the convenience was expanded by my

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