

Eau de Vie

a wine, spirits, and travel newsletter

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The Shifting Sands of International Phone Plans

If you have a smart phone and you want to use it when traveling in Europe there are two main concepts to keep in mind.

1. If you are connected to wifi then the Internet and some text messaging is free.
2. If you aren't connected to wifi your phone will work normally but using it is going to cost money.

Phone companies are constantly changing their plans and this can make it frustrating to figure out. Here are the current prices for the major US carriers for using a phone while traveling in Europe.



International day pass: \$10/day, unlimited talk, text and you use your data associated with your plan. **AT&T Passport:** \$60/month, 35¢/minute talk, free text and 1GB of data. Each additional GB is billed at \$50.

verizon Travel Pass: \$10/day, unlimited talk, text and you use your data associated with your plan at 4G LTE speeds up to 512mb then speed is throttled to 2G. **Monthly International Travel Plan:** \$70/month, 100 minutes talk, 100 texts, and 500MB of data or, \$130/month, 750 minutes talk, 1000 texts, and 2 GB of data.



If you have the \$80/month Sprint Unlimited plan you get free text and 20¢/minute calls and unlimited 2G data. (2G data is speeds at 128kbps, 4G is 3-6mbps, 2G is quite slow.) If you wanted faster speed you pay \$5/day for unlimited 4G LTE.

T-Mobile Unlimited 2G, you pay roaming rates for phone calls. For faster speeds pay \$5/day for 512MB or \$35/ for 10 days and 5GB or \$50/month for 15GB.

Keep in mind as you look at these prices that T-Mobile and Sprint are merging. Also new to the phone service world is Google Fi which has surprisingly uncomplicated plans that charge \$10/month per GB and \$20/month for unlimited talk and text. If you exceed 6GB in usage they only charge you \$80, \$20 for the talk and \$60 for the data. Google Fi works worldwide and seamlessly switches networks. Calls made from international destinations are charged 20¢/minute. Google Fi uses Sprint's network.

There is one final option: a foreign sim card. But that will be a topic for a future column.

Lambrusco

In the heat of summer I don't want to drink heavy red wine or even light red wine. I want refreshing, cool, crisp white or rosé wines. But if you must have a red and you want an easy drinker, something for a picnic or a day at the beach, might I suggest you reacquaint yourself with Lambrusco?

Riunite is the best known Lambrusco brand. During the 70's and 80's it was the most imported Italian wine to America and their [advertising jingle](#) had a lot to do with their success.

Riunite is a sweet Lambrusco but the grape can make a very nice dry crisp style when fully fermented. There are various levels of dryness and these will be noted on the bottle in Italian. They are: secco (bone dry/dry), amabile (off-dry/sweet) and dolce (very sweet). The wine is noted for high acidity, berry flavors and is made *frizzante*, or lightly sparkling.

Many of the wines now exported to the US include a blend of Lambruscos from different regions in north central Italy. The wine should be inexpensive, under \$10/bottle. It may have a screw cap and you may find yourself enjoying it more than you imagined. I'd get an extra bottle.



RUM

~ August 17th ~

[7 spots still available](#)

We will be sampling: Jamaican, White, Gold, Dark, Agricole and Spiced.

Practical Information:

Class starts @ 7:30pm ~ *sharp*
@ 2620 E. Superior Street.

Cost is \$15/pp.

Class size is limited to 20.

Light *hor d'oeuvres* after tasting.

R.S.V.P. required.

September 14th ~ **TEQUILA.**

Blanco, Reposado, Anejo,
Mezcal, Raicilla and Sotol.

SWEET TOOTH

The discovery of the new world brought a cornucopia of new foods to European diets. Some of the highlights in this list are potato, tomato, corn, avocado, blueberry, pumpkin, cashew, pecan, walnut, vanilla, tobacco, chili peppers, and cacao (chocolate).

Can you imagine Italian food without the tomato? So many foods come from North and South America that it's hard to believe that they were not available to European palates until after 1492.

But one food the Europeans did have knowledge of was sugarcane.

The Persians, followed by the Greeks, encountered the famous "reeds that produce honey without bees" in India between the 6th and 4th centuries BC. They adopted and then spread sugarcane agriculture. Merchants began to trade sugar from India, which was considered a luxury and an expensive spice.

Sugarcane evolved in tropical New Guinea and slowly spread to Southeast Asia, and India. But most European climates were not conducive to growing sugar. But if a tropical colony could be founded a sugar plantation would make its owners very wealthy.

This was on Christopher Columbus's mind when, on his second voyage to the Americas, he returned to the island of Hispaniola with sugar cane. He kicked off a rush to build sugarcane plantations throughout the Caribbean.

France found its sugarcane islands so valuable that it traded its portion of Canada, famously dubbed "a few acres of snow," to Britain for their return of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Lucia at the end of the Seven Years' War. The Dutch similarly kept Suriname, a sugar colony in South America, instead of seeking the return of the New Netherlands (New York).

Along with the sugar, the colonial powers planted cacao plantations and in turn married the two, creating the modern chocolate bar.

A by product of refining sugar is called molasses. If you mix molasses and water it will ferment and make a very weak, 2-4% beer. But you can distill that beer and make a clear spirit. We call that spirit Rum.



The Canal Lateral a la Loire plus the Chateau ^{AND} Cathedral Tour

We have 8 spots open for our Fall 2020 France canal boat cruises.

If you are interested in joining us or you'd just like to know more

[follow this link to our Fall 2020 trip planner.](#)



If you enjoy this newsletter please consider sharing it or inviting others to a spirits tasting class. If you aren't already subscribed, but would like to, send an email to david@savvynomad.com.