



Life in the FAST LANE

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TOPICS:

This Week with Peter

ETIAS: What it Means for Travelers

Stories of a Lifetime

TO: Our Fast Lane Travel Family in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Dubai, Ecuador, all of Europe, Iceland, Iceland, Japan, Kuwait, New Zealand, South Africa, and the USA!



This Week with Peter

Hello from the offices of Fast Lane Travel! This week, I'm sharing some of my favorite memories, a few of Peter's most beloved stories, and another look at the enchanting Ombronetta Estate — along with reflections on the beauty of Germany, Italy, and Austria.

My name is Christina, and I'm delighted to have you with me for a little while. Settle in, take a sip of your brew of choice (time-of-day appropriate, of course), and let's revisit the week behind us and look ahead to the adventures yet to come.

This week with Peter.

It has been a meaningful week for Peter. As some of you know, Peter underwent a **second revision of his carpal tunnel surgery**. This time, the surgeon administered a **nerve block**, which made a tremendous difference in his comfort and recovery. They also **released a nerve cluster** that had been causing him significant trouble after the previous surgery.

The improvement has been noticeable, and Peter is in much better spirits. Your well wishes truly help.

ETIAS: What it Means for Travelers

There's been a lot of chatter about **ETIAS**, the European Travel Information and Authorization System. In short, ETIAS is a pre-travel authorization required for visitors entering many European countries. It's not a visa — more like a quick security pre-check.

At this time, we **do not believe ETIAS will be required for our Dolomites travelers**. However, as we always say: **“Better to have it and not need it, than need it and not have it.”**

We pride ourselves on planning ahead — because as the old saying goes: **“Your lack of planning does not constitute an emergency on my behalf.”**

We live by that one. Staying ahead of the game is how we keep our trips smooth, safe, and enjoyable.

In the following write-up, Thomas, Fast Lanes' European Operations Manager, has written a detailed article explaining ETIAS, its cost, and what travelers should expect.

New travel rules for entering the European Union – ETIAS

ETIAS means: European Travel Information and Authorization System.

This a digital travel authorization for visitors from 59 visa-exempt countries (including the U.S. and Canada) entering 30 European countries.

This system will be launched most likely in the fourth quarter of 2026.

The EU will announce the exact opening date closer to the launch.

The pre-screening will cost €20, and will be valid for three years, or until your passport expires.

Within a 180-day period, you can enter the European Union and the Schengen Area multiple times for stays up to 90 days.

The pre-screening will be required before you board your flight or crossing a border.

The ETIAS is a mandatory travel waiver, which is linked to your passport.

How can you apply for ETIAS?

Use the following link to apply: <https://travel-europe.europa.eu/en/etias>

For your application you need: your valid passport, an email address, and a payment card.

While most applications are expected to be processed and granted within minutes, it is highly recommended to apply well before your travel date to ensure a smooth journey.

What does the mean for you being our customer joining us on our two Fast Lane Travel Tours in 2026?

Most likely, our customers booked on our Dolomites & Alps Tour, will NOT need to apply for ETIAS, as this tour is in the third quarter of 2026.

If there should be any changes, we will inform you!

Our valued customers booked on the Fast Lane Travel Tuscany Porsche Fest, will have to apply for ETIAS.

Please apply well prior before you leave the USA.

You may ask, do I also need a Visa?

Americans do not need a traditional visa to travel to Europe for short stays, but starting in the last quarter of 2026, you will need to register online for an **ETIAS** (European Travel Information and Authorization System) before your trip.

I hope this concise information helps you embark on your trip in a relaxed manner and enjoy your stay in Europe.

I hope to welcome you on one of our Fall trips in Stuttgart and share an amazing time with you together.

With best regards, Thomas Hoeflerlin

Stories of a Lifetime

Peter has been reminiscing a lot this week — decades of world travel tend to leave you with a treasure chest of stories, and he's been opening the lid.

One favorite he shared:

Years ago, six travelers took a small boat out on a hot, clear day. The ocean was calm, the sky was perfect, and once they were far from shore, they decided to jump in for a refreshing swim.

Beautiful idea — except for one small oversight. **No one had considered how they would get back into the boat.**

A little forethought might have saved the day, but alas, the ocean had other plans. It's a gentle reminder that even the most idyllic moments can turn into lessons in preparation.

Salt, Trade, and the Old World

As a child I was able to visit one of the salt mines in Austria, and it left an indelible memory of riding a salt mine cart into the side of the mountain and whooshing down a well-used slide that ended in the most beautiful pool of crystal clear water.

Peter told me where I went and shared a story about **salt** — once one of the most valuable commodities in the world. Before refrigeration existed, especially in Roman times, salt was essential for preserving food. It became a form of currency, a unit of trade, and a lifeline for entire regions.

This led to a discussion about the **salt mines of Austria**, which for centuries supplied surrounding communities with the mineral that kept societies functioning. These mines weren't just industrial sites — they were the beating heart of survival, commerce, and culture.

In next week's Petergram, if Peter doesn't have full use of his hands, then I shall be writing you another story about the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish and the story of coffee.

Sitting with Peter and listening to his stories, I am always mesmerized by not just his life, his stories, but also about the lessons that we are later able to implement into making our tours better than any other tour offered.

Why do we keep talking about Tuscany? Well... because our other adventures are already in motion (Le Mans), completely spoken for (Dolomites), or just teasing us with a few remaining spots — and Tuscany is still waving at us from the doorway saying, "Come on in, there's room!"



Tyrol: Where Austria, Germany, and Italy Meet in Pure Alpine Magic

Peter has also been reflecting on one of his favorite corners of Europe — the **Tyrol region**, that extraordinary stretch of the Alps where Austria, Germany, and Italy meet in a tapestry of mountains, valleys, and cultures that feel both distinct and seamlessly intertwined.

Tyrol is one of those places that doesn't just *look* beautiful — it feels beautiful. The air is crisp in a way that makes you breathe deeper. The mountains rise like ancient guardians. Villages cling to hillsides with a kind of quiet confidence, their church steeples pointing skyward as if reminding you to look up and take it all in.



Austria's Tyrol

Austria's side of Tyrol is all about dramatic peaks, emerald meadows, and that unmistakable Alpine charm. Wooden chalets with flower-laden balconies, cows grazing on slopes so steep you wonder how they stay upright, and lakes so clear they look like polished glass. There's a peacefulness here — a sense that life moves at the pace of the mountains.



Germany's Bavarian Touch

Cross into Germany and the scenery softens just a touch, but the beauty remains just as striking. Bavaria brings its own flavor: fairy-tale villages, onion-domed churches, and that warm, hearty hospitality that makes you feel instantly at home. The mountains frame everything like a painting, and every turn reveals another postcard moment.



Italy's South Tyrol

Then, almost without warning, you slip into Italy — and the world shifts again. South Tyrol blends Alpine ruggedness with Italian warmth. The Dolomites rise in pale, jagged towers, glowing pink at sunset. The food becomes a delicious fusion of Austrian comfort and Italian elegance. Even the light feels different — softer, golden, almost theatrical.



A Region Defined by Nuance

What makes Tyrol so special is the **nuance** — the way three cultures coexist in harmony, each leaving its mark on the landscape, the architecture, the food, and the people. You can hear German, Italian, and Ladin spoken within the same valley. You can eat apple strudel for breakfast and handmade pasta for lunch. You can hike through Austria in the morning and sip an Italian espresso by afternoon.

It's a region that reminds you how borders can divide on a map but blend beautifully in real life.



Please stay healthy and happy. I'm looking forward to the great times we will have together again with my Team on one of the fabulous tours we are planning for 2026. All the best to you, **Peter**

