《德国女大学生火车安家》

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How one German millennial chose to live on trains rather than pay rent

When others get off the train to finally go home, Leonie Müller stays behind. That's because she already is home: The train is her apartment, and she says she likes it that way.

????????????????·???Leonie Müller??????????????????????“??”??????????????

The German college student gave up her apartment in spring. "It all started with a dispute I had with my landlord," Müller told The Washington Post via e-mail. "I instantly decided I didn't want to live there anymore — and then I realized: Actually, I didn't want to live anywhere anymore."

??The Washington Post??“????????????????????????????????——????????????????????”

Instead, she bought a subscription that allows her to board every train in the country for free. Now, Müller washes her hair in the train bathroom and writes her college papers while traveling at a speed of up to 190 mph. She says that she enjoys the liberty she has experienced since she gave up her apartment. "I really feel at home on trains, and can visit so many more friends and cities. It's like being on vacation all the time," Müller said.

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The 23-year-old's unusual housing choice has gained her media attention in Germany and appeared on national news sites such as Spiegel Online. "I read, I write, I look out of the window and I meet nice people all the time. There's always something to do on trains," Müller told German TV station SWR in an interview. Since risking the move, Müller's life fits into a small backpack in which she carries clothes, her tablet computer, college documents and a sanitary bag.

??23????????????????????????????????Spiegel Online????????????????????????????SWR?????????“????????????????????????????????????”??

So far, her experience contradicts studies that have recently claimed that "long commutes are killing you." And financially, she benefits from living on a train: The flat-rate ticket costs her about $380, whereas she had to pay about $450 for her previous apartment. However, living cheaper is not the only goal she has in mind.

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"I want to inspire people to question their habits and the things they consider to be normal," Müller told The Post. "There are always more opportunities than one thinks there are. The next adventure is waiting just around the corner — provided that you want to find it."

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Müller frequently travels late at night, although she tries to sleep at the apartments of relatives or friends. Often, she is accommodated by her boyfriend, her mother or grandmother.

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"Normally, we would have to have a long-distance relationship, but living on a train enables me to see him all the time," Müller told German TV station SWR regarding her boyfriend. "Most of my friends really like the idea, although some consider it to be quite adventurous. Others, however, have reacted more negatively: They feel offended by the fact that I question the ordinary way of life and living."

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Living on a train is also supposed to have an academic purpose: Müller is documenting the unusual experiment on a blog. Her final undergraduate paper will be based on her experiences as a modern train-nomad. The only problem? "Possessing a headset that mutes most surrounding noises is crucial," she said.

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