

So about those marvelous French TGVs...



Yes, these look like happy people on a train, desperate to try and get off quickly just in case they might make their connection.

Normally it's the air travel part of the trip that's stressful, but not this time. This time it was the beloved French TGV high-speed trains, those same trains that have served me so well for... over a decade... not once being off-schedule by even a minute. Seriously! But this time? Wow. Like a different world. The first train left the airport on time, but within half an hour came to a stop in the middle of nowhere, with an ominous 5-beeps coming over the PA system. And an announcement that the train was stopped for "security." This happened again. And one more time. At its first stop, it was 18 minutes behind. We had a 10-minute connection to make.

It never made up the time. I really thought, over 4 hours, that it might. That it could. That it would. But no, it remained frighteningly-consistent. Until just outside of Bordeaux, when it happened again. We arrived at Bordeaux 22 minutes late, certain that our connection was already gone. Nevertheless I looked at the platform display and it still showed our connecting train on the schedule, even though it was in the past. And on the adjacent track, no less! Within a few minutes an announcement came in apologizing for this train being late, and it showed up a couple minutes later.



So many bikes all over the place that people are literally tripping on them.

Relieved? Well yes, but let me tell you it was one sorry excuse for "First Class" TGV. Run down cars, packed to the gills (nobody was checking tickets), no place for luggage.

But we did finally get to Lourdes, 45 minutes late, but that's a whole lot better than had we mis-connected and arrived 4 hours later! To say we were tired is an understatement.