

Press Release
Brussels, March 1st 2016

Thalys launches : the new low-cost alternative between Brussels and Paris

With the slogan "€ 19: hit the road by train!" Thalys clearly states its goal of convincing deal seekers to take the train instead of driving. The key to success? Lighter service and an extended journey time for a low-cost solution that can compete with the car.



Agnès Ogier, Managing
Director of Thalys

"All studies confirm that most people prefer the comfort and speed of Thalys compared to driving. Arriving directly in the centre of Paris, avoiding traffic jams, whilst polluting the least possible. Thalys continually challenges its commercial policy by providing a quarter of its tickets at low prices. **Today we take a new step with a new solution based on a simple equation. Slightly reducing speed and simplifying the service to a maximum can propose a journey at a low price but one which is still faster, safer, more sustainable¹ and more comfortable than by car**", says Agnès Ogier, CEO of Thalys.

IZY is offering a new direct connection between Brussels-Midi and Paris Gare du Nord, **two to three** daily round trips starting **April 3rd**. IZY is offering the public **three** departures on Friday and **three** returns on Sunday especially designed for leisure customers to spend a weekend in Paris or Brussels.

Journey time? With journeys averaging **2h15** based on the selected hours (between 2h08 and 2h30), IZY is offering a competitive solution compared to driving - according to Mappy.be the same itinerary is estimated between 3h and 3h30, not including the time to find a parking space.

Price? IZY has lowered the price of the train between Brussels and Paris in an unprecedented way for advance purchases starting at **€ 19** (tickets sales start two months before departure), while providing an attractive last minute alternative since the guaranteed maximum price of the ticket is **€ 59 in Standard** and **€ 69 in Standard XL** (without options).

IZY is also offers a wide variety of "good deals".

- ☑ For families: children travel for **€ 10 ("Kid" fare: -12 years)**.
- ☑ For the more adventurous: in each train, 10 tickets without guarantee of a seat² are sold online at only **€ 10**, and 25 "folding seat" tickets at **€ 15**

Simplified service: no bar car and luggage limited to one item of larger luggage and one item of small hand luggage. Along the same lines distribution is **100%** digital and customer service is only handled online.

To complement their trip, customers have the opportunity to add several optional services, for example a "Standard XL"³ seat or extra luggage⁴, sold at **€ 10**, or the Text Message option sold at **€ 2** (passenger and traffic information).

¹ A trip with IZY emits on average nine times less CO₂ than by car (source: Ecores).

² Travellers are invited to find an available seat, or to travel standing in car 4 (bar car not used as such) equipped with sciatica supports and high tables.

³ The "Standard XL" seats (larger and equipped with individual electrical sockets) are those that are found in 1st class trains.

The quality of service is guaranteed since trains are operated by **100% Thalys personnel**, which are in line with the company's values, where the customer comes first.

Trains? The IZY service is operated with **two** trains with the ability to run internationally. Each train carries the colours of IZY (green and purple), on its interior as well as on its exterior livery.



Conditions? The IZY tickets are put on sale **two months** before the train's departure, to better meet customers' expectations. Distribution is exclusively online on izy.com and soon on the sites of distribution partners. IZY tickets are not exchangeable or refundable.

Business Model? Thalys teams worked on each of the levers available to them to design this new alternative, guided by the studies conducted with customers and non-users.

- ☑ By using the classic lines in France, and not the high-speed line, IZY reduces its infrastructure cost while preserving the train's speed advantage over the road.
- ☑ By simplifying on-board service, renouncing ticket flexibility and digitalizing distribution and customer service, IZY is able to reduce its operating costs.
- ☑ Result: "low-cost" prices for a city centre to city centre international liaison, in a journey time that remains unbeatable compared to the car.

To find out more and make a booking: izy.com / [@izy_en](https://www.facebook.com/izy) / [Facebook.com/izy](https://www.facebook.com/izy)

⁴ € 10 for pre-registered extra luggage, € 30 if it is registered at the last minute on the platform or during the on-board inspections.

About Thalys

Thalys is the high-speed red train linking Paris to Brussels in 1 hour 22 minutes, and to Cologne and Amsterdam in just 3h14 and 3h16. Since 2011, Thalys also serves the three German cities of Dusseldorf, Duisburg and Essen and since 21 March 2016, Dortmund. Thalys provides a Lille to Amsterdam service since April 2014.

Thalys is a member of Railteam, a collaborative venture between the main European high-speed rail operators, the CER (Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies) and the UIC (International Union of Railways).

Since 1996, Thalys has been the only truly multicultural operator to achieve success in the international high-speed rail business in four countries. The Thalys success story is both commercial - 100 million rail passengers transported - and technical, with for example the successful introduction of on-board WiFi in 2008 and a new train management system, ERTMS, in 2009. For increased efficiency and fluidity, and even greater improvements in terms of customer service and satisfaction, Thalys will become a full-function train operating company by 2015.



A true innovator, Thalys has created an exceptional service which is today considered a benchmark for rail operators worldwide and where its signature slogan "Welcome to our world" is synonymous with passenger comfort, a warm multilingual welcome, high quality catering, the Comfort 1 service package, new communication technologies (all Thalys coaches offer on-board WiFi, a service provided by 21Net and activated by Nokia Siemens Networks)... Since 26 August 2013, Thalys has held NF Transport Service quality certification awarded by AFNOR Certification for its Paris-Brussels line, an international first.

Thalys' TheCard loyalty programme offers customers the opportunity to collect Miles and access a range of services. The programme is open to all rail passengers at thalys.com.

Thalys on Twitter :  twitter.com/thalys_en

Press contact

Thalys

Peter Lybeer, Eva Mertens

+ 32 2 504 05 98

press@thalys.com