

# Holiday exodus begins with rail and road delays

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The Easter getaway began yesterday with Channel Tunnel passengers enduring a nightmare start to the holiday. Two separate incidents led to hours-long delays to those taking Folkestone-Calais shuttle trains and high-speed Eurostar services between London and Paris and Brussels.

A fatality near Lille in northern France involving a French high-speed train resulted in diversions and delays to Eurostar trains. Then a Eurotunnel passenger shuttle train broke down in the tunnel leading to further delays.

Angry customers facing hours of delays tweeted pictures of extensive queues of upwards of a thousand people with lines snaking around the main concourse of St Pancras station.

One customer, Nick Jones, wrote: "Five hours late, downgraded seats, not sat together on our anniversary trip and chaos at check in."

Further transport mayhem on roads and rail ensued yesterday evening. First Capital Connect customers bound for Brighton were faced with delays after a person was hit by a train at Bedford.

Many major roads saw traffic jams and delays as families made the most of the spring sunshine to head on holiday.

Around 1.6 million Britons are set to head abroad over the weekend, with Spain the most popular destination. Some 370,000 passengers are expected to fly from Heathrow, 200,000 from Gatwick, and 120,000 from Stansted, as well as 110,000 from Manchester and 100,000 from Scottish airports.

Roads to south-west England are likely to be the busiest, according to the AA but congestion is expected to ease off by this afternoon. Rail disruptions are expected due to extensive engineering works over the weekend.