

# RAIL ACROSS EUROPE - 2017

## OVERVIEW

Tour Date: 11 June 2017 – 8 July 2017

Duration: 28 days

Tour Cost (\$AUD): \$16,950

Single Supplement (\$AUD): \$3,785

*Rail Across Europe is a sublime 28-day journey through some of the most stunning scenery in Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Austria and Germany. In fact, this trip is not so much about the destination, but the journey itself and the glorious landscapes between each port of call.*

Those of us old enough to have been around the block more than a couple of times have probably travelled to most of the great European destinations, perhaps even several times. However, this extraordinary journey presents Great Britain and Europe from a fresh perspective: from the comfort of a railway carriage. Europe and Great Britain are blessed with some of the most scenic and fascinating train routes in the world and this tour has been designed to take advantage of some of the greatest and most famous. From the highlands of Scotland and the Welsh valleys, to the Swiss Alps and the Harz Mountains of Germany, our unique journey features legendary routes as well as a number of heritage steam railways. There are leisurely stopovers in Edinburgh, York, Aberystwyth, London, Paris, St Moritz, Zermatt, Vienna and Germany's undiscovered medieval gem, Wernigerode, and we stay in some of the world's most famous railway hotels, many of them a throwback to the Victorian era – the golden age of railways.

Tour Fitness Level: Moderate

# RAIL ACROSS EUROPE – JUN 2017

## TOUR ITINERARY

### 11/06/2017 Australia – Dubai

Depart from your chosen Australian airport on the flight to Dubai. On arrival we connect with our flight to Glasgow.

### 12/06/2017 Glasgow – Edinburgh (D)

Depart Dubai Emirates EK 27, 07.50

Arrive Glasgow 12.35

We transfer by coach from Glasgow international airport to Edinburgh where we check into the opulent Balmoral Hotel. In the evening we enjoy a hearty welcome dinner in the private dining room of the hotel.

**The Balmoral Hotel**

Edinburgh

### 13/06/2017 Edinburgh (BD)

Today is at leisure to savour one of the most beautiful cities in Great Britain. On the 'must-see' list of highlights in Scotland's grand capital are Edinburgh Castle, the Royal Mile and Arthur's Seat. The castle is home to the Scottish crown jewels and the views of the castle from Arthur's Seat are out of this world. Or you can just stroll down the Royal Mile soaking up the atmosphere and, perhaps, stopping to taste one of Scotland's greatest contributions to world civilisation – shortbread! If your palate leans towards something stronger, there are many pubs where you can taste a range of famous Scottish single malt whiskies. Dinner is in the hotel.

### 14/06/2017 Edinburgh – Mallaig – Arisaig (BD)

Depart Edinburgh Waverley 08.35

Arrive Inverness 11.54

Depart Inverness 13.34

Arrive Kyle of Lochalsh 15.59

Today we start our great railway adventure! Leaving Waverley Station we travel through the Scottish Lowlands en-route to Inverness. The stunning scenery changes from rolling hills and fertile farmland to a true wilderness: welcome to the famous Scottish Highlands! We cross one of the greatest engineering feats of all time, the Forth Bridge, which opened in 1890 and consists of 51,000 tonnes of steel.

Continuing our journey north-west we cross glorious moorland, mountains, lochs and glens before arriving in Inverness. Here we change trains for the second part of today's great journey, to the legendary Kyle of Lochalsh. On arrival we transfer by coach to the beautiful Isle of Skye where we board the ferry for the sea crossing to the fishing port of Mallaig. On arrival we drive the short distance to the village of Arisaig and check into our hotel.

**Arisaig Hotel**

Arisaig

### 15/06/2017 Arisaig – Edinburgh (BD)

Depart Arisaig 10.26

Arrive Glasgow Queen St 15.30

Depart Glasgow Queen St 16.05

Arrive Edinburgh Waverley 17.14

The rail trip from Arisaig to Fort William is deemed by many to be the best in the world – so sit back and enjoy this truly magnificent journey. Leaving Arisaig we head back through more glorious countryside, as the train takes us through cuttings and

tunnels and across bridges and viaducts until we come to one of the most famous views in Scotland and arguably the most spectacular rail vista of them all: the great Glenfinnan Viaduct. Arriving in Fort William, we change trains and head to Glasgow on the famous West Highland Line. We pass Ben Nevis – at 1,343m, Britain's highest mountain – and cross another famous landmark, the Horseshoe Viaduct, before arriving in the delightful town of Crianlarich. The line now drops sharply and our route takes us alongside Loch Lomond with its 'bonnie bonnie banks'. On arrival in Glasgow we take our connecting train back to Edinburgh after a momentous day.

**The Balmoral Hotel**  
Edinburgh

**16/06/2017 Edinburgh – York (BD)**  
Depart Edinburgh Waverley 08.52  
(Stopping at Carlisle, Keighley, Leeds)  
Arrive York 17.55

Today we head south towards Carlisle, taking a route through Carstairs and Lockerbie and over Beattock Summit. Crossing the border into England, just east of the small border town of Gretna, famous for its Green, we arrive in Carlisle. Here we change trains and set off on one of the most celebrated and glorious rail journeys in England, the Settle to Carlisle Line, which offers some of the most breathtaking landscapes in the country. The line features 14 tunnels and 22 viaducts (including the famous 14-arch Ribbleshead) and the summit of the line, Ais Gill, is the highest point on any railway in England. Our train eventually pulls into Leeds, where we catch a connecting train to York and check into one of the city's finest hotels, the Royal York.

**Royal York Hotel**  
York

**17/06/2017 York (BD)**

Today is free to sample the delights of this great city. The Royal York Hotel is superbly situated close to York Minster and the city centre and there are many options such as walking along the city walls or through the famous Shambles. But, if you're still in 'train mode', why not pay a visit to the marvellous National Railway Museum? Here you'll find the biggest collection of royal railway carriages in the world including Queen Victoria's lavish 'Palace on Wheels', as well as 300 years of railway history.

**18/06/2017 York – Aberystwyth (BD)**

Today's journey takes us south-west through Yorkshire and the Midlands into Wales. Leaving the grand Victorian elegance of York railway station behind, our route takes us through important cities including Leeds, Derby and Burton-on-Trent, where more than 10% of the nation's beer is brewed! Changing trains in Birmingham, we head out of this industrial heartland through the idyllic Shropshire countryside and across the border into Wales. The scenery becomes more rugged as we near our destination, the charming coastal town of Aberystwyth.

**Marine Hotel**  
Aberystwyth

**19/06/2017 Aberystwyth (BD)**

It's time to let off a bit of steam! Today we travel on one of the 'Great Little Trains of Wales' – the Vale of Rheidol Railway. A narrow-gauge steam locomotive takes us 19 km up the beautiful Rheidol Valley to the remarkable Devil's Bridge. We return to Aberystwyth early afternoon and the rest of the day is at leisure to enjoy the Welsh seaside.

**20/06/2017 Aberystwyth – London (BD)**

An early morning start today as we head to Shrewsbury, where we change trains for the Heart of Wales Line. This famous route, which was saved from closure by public pressure in the 1960s, and again in 1987, runs for 190 km through the beautiful Welsh countryside and is something of a national treasure. Arriving in Swansea, we change trains and catch the express to London. We travel on the magnificent line Brunel built for the Great Western Railway, famously nicknamed 'God's Wonderful Railway'. Arriving in Paddington, we transfer by tube to Kings Cross Station where we check into the beautifully restored St Pancras Renaissance Hotel.

**St Pancras Renaissance Hotel**  
London

**21/06/2017 London (BD)**

Today we enjoy a full-day sightseeing tour of the capital by luxury coach.

**22/06/2017 London (BD)**

Today is at leisure and our hotel is centrally located to many of London's famous sights.

**23/06/2017 London – Paris (BD)**

**Depart London St Pancras 11.24**

**Arrive Paris Gare du Nord 14.56**

Our journey today starts at the magnificently restored St Pancras station, the terminus for the Eurostar service and gateway to the continent. Opened in 1868, St Pancras is recognised as one of the finest Victorian buildings and it is a must to look around this fantastic station. We board the high-speed Eurostar for the lightning-fast journey to Paris. Some 40 minutes after leaving London the train slows to about 160 km/hr and we enter the Channel Tunnel, to emerge in France 20 minutes later. The scenery continues to flash by during our 300 km/hr trip until, 2¼ hours after leaving St Pancras, we pull into Gare du Nord station in Paris. We then make the short walk to our hotel.

**Le Relais Hotel**  
Paris

**24/06/2017 Paris (BD)**

Today we enjoy a full-day sightseeing tour of 'Gay Paree' by luxury coach.

**25/06/2017 Paris (BD)**

Today is a full day at leisure in beautiful Paris with a special, uniquely Parisian, dinner in the evening.

**26/06/2017 Paris – Zermatt (BD)**

**Depart Paris Gare de Lyon 08.09**

**(Via Geneve and Visp)**

**Arrive Zermatt 15.14**

Hopefully well refreshed after our three-night stay in the world's most romantic city, we are back on the rails as we head to the Alps. Get ready for some sensational alpine scenery as we journey across the border into Switzerland. Changing trains at Basel, which actually borders three countries (France, Germany and Switzerland) we travel on to Geneva. Here we change again for the train to beautiful Zermatt, in the shadow of the mighty Matterhorn.

**Hotel Simi**  
Zermatt

**27/06/2017 Zermatt (BD)**

Today is at leisure in spectacular Zermatt where we can simply relax and enjoy this glorious setting or perhaps take a cable car or a rack and pinion railway to one of the various vantage points offering staggering views.

#### 28/06/2017 Zermatt – St Moritz (BD)

What a journey we have in store today as we travel on the world-famous Glacier Express to St Moritz. 'Express' is something of a misnomer as the train takes eight hours to travel 290 km. But why rush when you are travelling through some of Switzerland's, if not the world's, most spectacular scenery? It's a phenomenal railway journey and undoubtedly one of the major highlights of our entire trip. Arriving in the ski resort of St Moritz, we make the short walk to our hotel.

**Hotel Eden**

St Moritz

#### 29/06/2017 St Moritz (BD)

Today is at leisure in St Moritz but, for those who can't get enough of their railways, there is the option to travel on one of many beautiful routes emanating from the town – such as the famous Bernina line or the delightful Engadin line.

#### 30/06/2017 St Moritz – Vienna (BD)

Depart St Moritz 09.02

(Via Chur and Sargans)

Arrive Wien Westbahnhof 18.44

Today we leave St Moritz and cross the border into Austria: our destination - the magical capital, Vienna. En-route we pass through more stunning alpine landscapes and on arrival we transfer to our hotel where we enjoy a hearty Austrian dinner.

**Mercure Westbahnhof**

Vienna

#### 01/07/2017 Vienna (BD)

After breakfast we enjoy a full-day tour of Vienna where we see such famous sights as St Stephen's Cathedral, with its distinctive roof and towers, and the magnificent Hofburg imperial palace.

#### 02/07/2017 Vienna (BD)

Today we enjoy a full day at leisure in this beautiful city. There is also the opportunity for the 'rail nuts' among us to travel on the magnificent Semmering line. Early evening we board our coach for the short drive to the magnificent Schonbrunn Palace, former imperial summer residence of the Habsburg monarchs. Here we enjoy our last night in Vienna with dinner and a musical concert within the palace. A fitting finale to our stay in the famous city of music!

#### 03/07/2017 Vienna – Wernigerode (BD)

Depart Wien Westbahnhof 08.36

(Via Nurnberg and Hanover)

Arrive Wernigerode 18.42

Today we travel into Germany and head for the beautiful old town of Wernigerode. It's a big train ride (more than 1,100 km) but the distance is almost inconsequential as we travel on the German ICE high-speed train, which cruises at speeds of up to 300 km/hr. We change trains at Nurnberg and Hanover, with an early evening arrival at Wernigerode.

**Hotel Travel Charme**

Wernigerode

#### 04/07/2017 Wernigerode (BD)

Wernigerode is a charming German town on the northern slopes of the Harz Mountains. It is close to the old East German border and many of the buildings in the magnificent old town date back to medieval times. Today we spend a few hours riding the steam train to the summit of Mt Brocken. In Soviet times, the USSR's main 'listening station' to the West was on Mt Brocken and today it is a museum, accessed by the same train line built by the Russians. It's a magnificent trip through the forest on a wonderful railway that, in addition to carrying tourists, is part of a 150-km network providing a vital link between neighbouring towns.

#### 05/07/2017 Wernigerode (BD)

Today is at leisure to explore this lovely town. The old castle offers great views across the town and is well worth a visit in its own right. There are also several very interesting museums, as well as organised guided walks. In the evening we enjoy a farewell dinner in the hotel.

#### 06/07/2017 Wernigerode – Frankfurt – Dubai (B)

Depart Wernigerode 13.18

(Via Hildeshiem and Frankfurt Main)

Arrive Frankfurt Airport 18.12

Today we catch the early afternoon train to Frankfurt airport and connect with our flight back to Australia via Dubai.

Depart Frankfurt Emirates Airlines EK 48, 22.20

#### 07/07/2017 Dubai – Australia

Arrive Dubai 06.40

In Dubai we connect with the flight to our chosen Australian city.

#### 08/07/2017 Arrive Australia

We arrive back in Australia today.

## RAIL ACROSS EUROPE

### If I travel alone, do I have to pay the single supplement?

If you do not want to share a hotel room with another person in the group, you will have to pay the single supplement. However, if you are willing to share we will team you up with another passenger of the same gender in the hotels. If a match-up is not possible, we will upgrade you at our expense.

### Is portorage included?

In the hotels yes, but at railway stations, no.

### What is the suggested luggage?

More than any other Travel Directors' tour, it is essential to pack light for this trip. We recommend a soft case or bag, with wheels, with a total weight when packed, of no more than 15kg. In addition, a small day pack is recommended. In the UK we will have luggage transportation between the hotels, but not on the continent. This means you will be responsible for transporting your own luggage from hotel to trains and vice versa.

### How close to the railway stations are the hotels?

In virtually all cases the hotels are within easy walking distance of the railway stations and never more than a ten-minute walk.

### Why are lunches not included on this tour?

For the simple reason that more often than not we will be on a train during the day and it is impossible to organise group lunches. However, breakfasts and dinners are included every day and there will always be the opportunity to grab a snack at a station or on the train itself.

### Can I extend my stay in Europe?

This is possible and we encourage you to discuss this with your consultant. You are normally able to use any point that Emirates flies out of but you may be subject to a deviation fee and any extra applicable airport taxes. The Rail Pass within Europe may also be extended and upgraded on application.

### How much money do you recommend I take and what are the best currencies for this trip?

Everybody has different spending habits, but generally we would recommend taking around £500, €500 and 250 Swiss francs.

### Do I need any visas for this tour?

Australian and New Zealand passport holders do not require visas for this journey.

### Do I need vaccinations for this journey?

No vaccinations are mandatory on this route but we would recommend you seek advice from your doctor. Tetanus should certainly be up to date.

### Is the water safe to drink?

Yes, the tap water is safe to drink on this tour.

### Are credit cards acceptable?

Credit cards are widely accepted throughout the journey and ATMs are available along the entire route. However it is not recommended to rely on these as your main source of funds.

**Are there internet facilities en-route?**

Most of the hotels we use have internet facilities. There are also many internet cafes in the near vicinity of the hotels offering cheaper access.

**Do mobile telephones work?**

Telstra and Optus mobiles work throughout the entire journey. You will need to ensure you have global roaming. Contact your service provider for further details.

**How much should we tip the guides and porters?**

There is no need to tip guides or porters as all tips and gratuities are included in the tour cost.