

# TOP 5 LUXURY TRAINS WORLDWIDE EXCEPT ORIENT EXPRESS



The railroad is a prosaic means of transport for getting from A to B quickly. Some travelers love the railroad. The trains promise leisure and enjoyment and offer the opportunity to experience foreign cultures and regions in a relaxed way. In addition to well-known offerings such as the Venice-Simplon-Orient-Express, there are more and more of these five-star hotels on rails. However, beside the Orient Express here are five of the most exclusive train trips that leave nothing to be desired, even for discerning rail tourists. Tourism Review introduces top five luxury trains for travelers to enjoy.

## Across Africa in Style - The Pride of Africa

A 6000 km rail journey from South Africa to Tanzania via Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia with the comfort of a luxury hotel: the "Pride of Africa" is "perhaps the most luxurious train ever."

The Pride of Africa consists of 20 restored railroad cars from the 1920s and 1930s with 36 suites for a maximum of 68 guests. They are pampered all around: butler service is a matter of course; exquisite meals with matching South African wines are served at the festive dinner; saloon and observation cars with balconies offer comfortable relaxation and views of lush landscapes, jungle and steppes, mountains, lakes, and deserts.

On the journey from Cape Town to Dar es Salaam (or vice versa), guests experience one highlight after another: safaris in several national parks inhabited by hundreds of thousands of wild animals, boat trips, city tours, the Rift Valley with 300 bridges and 23 tunnels, the gigantic Victoria Falls. Above all, there is a doctor on board.

In the best category, the Royal Suite with double bed, lounge and bathroom, the 15-day trip costs around US\$ 24 000 per person.

## Luxury Train Riding through Andalusia

For a long time, the Al Andalus stood idle. Now it has been extensively restored and offers style and luxury on the journey through Andalusia. The train consists of saloon cars from 1928 to 1930 and sleeping cars, restaurant and bar cars, where Spanish delicacies are served. One car is equipped with panoramic windows.

The eleven-day journey goes from Málaga to Tarifa, the white city of Vejer de la Frontera, famous Seville, Jerez de la Frontera, home of fighting bulls and sherry, Cadiz with its picturesque old town by the sea, Ronda, set in the middle of a wild mountain landscape, Granada and its famous Moorish castle district, the Alhambra, and Córdoba with the Mezquita, a huge mosque converted into a cathedral.

In a deluxe double compartment, the trip costs from US\$ 8 300 per person, for single travelers from US\$ 12 300.

## **Canada with Joy: From Toronto to Vancouver**

A good two-week rail journey across Canada, called "GoldLeaf", goes from Toronto first to the imposing Niagara Falls. In the evening, the transcontinental train journey begins with the "Canadian" and its Art Deco-style carriages. Elevated seats under the glass dome of the observation car offer a panoramic view of the passing landscape.

In Jasper you spend the night in a lodge at Pyramid Lake. The next day you visit Jasper National Park, Maligne Canyon and Maligne Mountain Lake with its postcard island, Spirit Island. During a bus ride over the Icefields Parkway the next day there are fantastic views of the glaciers of the Columbia Icefield.

In Banff you stay three nights in a hotel to explore the national park extensively. On the eleventh day of the trip you cross the Rocky Mountains on the famous "Rocky Mountaineer" and arrive in Kamloops in the evening. The next day you continue to Vancouver. From there, among other things, a visit to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, is on the agenda.

The two-week journey costs in the best train class and in sleeping car compartments from about US\$ 13 700 per person for couples, from about US\$ 15 900 for single travelers.

## **About the Emerald Isle in the Grand Hibernian**

In addition to numerous hotels, the Belmond Group (part of the luxury goods group LVMH) operates seven luxury trains, including the Venice-Simplon-Orient-Express. The latest addition is the "Belmond Grand Hibernian," which has been operating in Ireland since 2017.

A maximum of 40 guests travel in five sleeping cars, two dining cars and one panorama car as if in a five-star hotel. The onboard cuisine meets the highest standards. Among other things a seven-day Grand Tour is offered, which runs from Dublin through green landscapes, past wild coasts and romantic lakes, over Cork, the mighty castle Blarney, the city Galway, the north-Irish capital Belfast and the Wikingerhafen Waterford back to Dublin and brings Ireland's high points to the travelers nearer.

Prices per person (excluding flights to Dublin) start at about US\$ 11 000 but can fluctuate because Belmond works with "dynamic pricing."

## **From Moscow to Beijing by**

The Trans-Siberian Railway runs across Russia over 9288 km from Moscow to Vladivostok. It can also be booked as a luxury vacation trip, for example in the special train "Tsar Gold". Apart from the train experience, there are excursions in Moscow, in Kazan, in the history-steeped Ekaterinburg, in Novosibirsk and Irkutsk. With specialities from the onboard kitchen, caviar and vodka tastings, you will travel through the endless expanses of Siberia.

After a cruise across the tranquil Lake Baikal, the luxury trains of "Tsar Gold" continues through the steppes of eastern Siberia across the Mongolian border to Ulaan Baatar. From there one flies either home or further to Beijing, where again five experience-rich days can be spent. The 16-day trip costs in the best category, called Bolshoi Platinum, from a good US\$ 17 500 per person for couples and from about US\$ 28 500 for single travelers.

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