



Full steam ahead

Train travel has been an important part of transport since the 19th century and has proven itself reliable and convenient throughout the world in the last 150 years. Some train rides, however, have accrued more fame and buzz than others, and these four routes have stood the test of time and offer unique, exciting and luxurious experiences to the modern traveller

THE GHAN AUSTRALIA

On August 4, 1929 the Ghan embarked on its first trip from Adelaide to Alice Springs, which was then called Stuart. The Afghan Express, as it was originally known, was named for pioneering cameleers who made their way into the Simpson Desert at the heart of Australia. The path the Ghan follows today goes between Adelaide and Darwin, crossing through that same desert on its way. One of the highlights of this journey is the incredible comfort provided by the team, with a choice between gold and platinum service, as well as an option to book the

chairman's carriage for a large group. Personalised service and food and wine are provided, with many dedicated dining carriages

and a culinary team that focuses on working with the locals to offer cuisine appropriate to the geographical setting. The three-day



Above: Passengers in the restaurant car on the Trans Siberian Railway **Left:** Luxury dining aboard the Tsars Gold Trans Siberian rail experience

trip allows for gorgeous views of the Simpson Desert, including Uluru, all from the cool interior of the coach. There are 'off-train experiences' in Katherine, Alice Springs, Marla, Manguri and Coober Pedy, to give the chance for guests to stretch their legs or perhaps take a helicopter tour over the area.

journeybeyondrail.com.au/the-ghan/

ROCKY MOUNTAINEER CANADA

This train experience offers many different ways to enjoy a trip on the Rocky Mountaineer, as there are several itineraries to choose from as well as two levels of luxury. While the silver leaf package offers extreme comfort and amazing views, as well as meals served on board, it's the gold leaf package that boasts a second level compartment, an outdoor viewing platform, and a separate dining area. All of the carriages are built with glass domes for better views of the scenery, and all available meals are locally-inspired. Hosts are available on board for any and all needs, and there is no awkward manoeuvring to get comfortable for a sleep, as each night all guests stay in hotels along the route. Guests can choose between such trips as First Passage to the West, which goes from Vancouver through Kamloops and Banff/Lake Louise, Journey through the Clouds, from Vancouver through to Jasper, and many other routes through Canada. rockymountaineer.com



BLUE TRAIN SOUTH AFRICA

Blue Train South Africa started with a dream to traverse the African interior from Cape Town to Cairo. While this dream was never realised, the Blue Train tracks run throughout the entirety of South Africa. As early as the 1920s, this steam powered engine was known for its opulence, with such luxuries as card tables and ceiling fans, and even hot and cold water on tap. In 1997, the Blue Train as it is known today began to make the signature trips across South Africa.

Running on electric and diesel as of today, Blue Train runs from Pretoria to Capetown for a two day trip, or a one day trip from Pretoria to Kruger National Park. The De Luxe suites provide a comfortable interior during the day, but convert into extravagant bedroom suites at night, with customised temperature control and a private bathroom. The Luxury suites are even larger and offer further entertainment options and a bath in the private bathroom. There are cars for socialising, eating, observing the landscape and holding events. bluetrain.co.za

TRANS SIBERIAN EXPRESS RUSSIA

Before the 20th century, train travel had become necessary in Russia, and the Trans-Siberian Express as it is known today was in operation across Russia by 1916. As the longest single-service railway in the world, and the best way to see Russia's vast interior, this 15 day trip is an experience like no other. The on-board accommodation leaves nothing to be desired, with private suites, 24-hour service from attendants, and mouth-watering food and drink options, including breakfast, lunch and dinner each day. With many off-train excursions such as guided tours and authentic dining in local restaurants, even international travelers will enjoy this incredible journey, with on-board Russian language lessons and personal headsets for tour guide commentary. From Moscow to Vladivostok, this trip provides exciting and luxurious experiences across the entirety of Russia and has truly earned its title as 'the big train ride'. thetranssiberiantravelcompany.com



Top: The carriages have a glass ceiling aboard the Rocky Mountaineer in Canada **Left:** The Ghan in Adelaide ready to depart on its 90th anniversary