

# TYPES OF TRAINS IN EUROPE

Not all trains were designed equal! There are many types of trains, with their own advantages that give different travel experiences.

## High-speed trains

Would you like to reach your destination very quickly? How about speeds of 300 km/h? Plenty of high-speed lines cross Europe in all directions, all offering 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class comfortable coaches and catering services. The booking of seats is compulsory and it must be paid a supplement.

## Other day trains

There is also a complete timetable of domestic and international trains which run with normal speeds and can take you at the destination fast and without delays. Usually these trains are called InterCity trains (IC) or Eurocity (EC). Other trains, such as Direct, Interregio or Express trains stop more frequently.

## Local trains

Slowly and easily – this is the speed of many local trains that you can find all over Europe. Bypassing the small cities or fields, you will closely see the local life and far from the crowded tourists groups. The other passengers will be ordinary people traveling to their jobs, school or market. You will get off the train and explore a picturesque village. You will have a tasty meal at a domestic restaurant! This is a part of Europe that each traveler should visit at least once. Local trains have sometimes only 2<sup>nd</sup> class coaches. The booking of seats is not compulsory.

## Picturesque legendary routes

Clear lakes, deep quays, snowed up mountains, splendid slopes – Europe is rich in picturesque devious routes which are full of extraordinary landscapes. You should try the route between Perpignan and La Tour de Carol from France or the Italian train between Ventimiglia and Cuneo. It is sometimes compulsory or recommended to make a reservation. Here are some of the routes with the most beautiful landscapes of Europe:

<b>Austria</b>	<b>Arlberg (Bludenz – Innsbruck)</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Sofia – Dábova
<b>Croatia</b>	Split – Ogulin
<b>Germany</b>	Black Forest (Offenburg – Konstanz)
<b>Germany</b>	Rhine Valley (Mainz – Koblenz)
<b>Germany</b>	Moselle Valley (Koblenz-Trier)
<b>Hungary</b>	Szababattyán – Balatonfüred - Tapolca
<b>Norway</b>	Flåm Railway (Myrdal – Flåm)
<b>Norway</b>	Rauma (Dombås – Åndalsnes)
<b>Poland</b>	Walbrzych Główny – Jelenia Góra
<b>Slovenia</b>	Ljubljana – Celje
<b>Spain</b>	Madrid – Aranda – Burgos
<b>Switzerland</b>	Glacier Express (Davos/St.Moritz–Zermatt)
<b>Switzerland</b>	Golden Pass (Luzern - Interlaken - Montreux)
<b>Switzerland / Italy</b>	Bernina Express (Chur – Lugano via Italy)
<b>Switzerland / Italy</b>	Centovalli Railway (Locarno–Domodossola)

## Night trains

Imagine you fall asleep slowly swinging by the rail rhythm and arriving at the destination the following day in the morning, relaxed, fresh and ready for another day of trips. European night trains with names such as “**Rome**”, “**Komet**” or “**Wiener Walzer**” attend the important cities of Europe and provide a wide range of places of accommodation for all social categories. The seats reservation is necessary and the owner of InterRail Passes must pay a supplement. Although some night trains provide also “ordinary” places, we would like you to take into account the fact that some trains have only sleeping places.

Most of the night trains provide either sleeping cars or berth cars and some of the trains have folding benches. If your budget is limited, you should consider the berth cars or the folding bench.

The berth cars are mixed compartments (men and women together) with four 1<sup>st</sup> class open beds and four or six 2<sup>nd</sup> class beds. We assure one bed sheet, one blanket and a pillow, but prepare to sleep with your street cloths. Folding benches are available in few trains and in general only at 2<sup>nd</sup> class.

For a maximum comfort and intimacy, you should book a seat at 1<sup>st</sup> class (one or two passengers) or 2<sup>nd</sup> class (two or three passengers) compartment. These compartments are usually equipped with a sink. You can find the toilet at the end of the hall. These compartments are for one unisex, excepting the case when couples or families occupy all the compartments seats. The places supplement at sleeping cars is, of course, bigger. To have an ensured place, it is recommended to make the reservation as soon as possible.

You can make the reservation at any big railway-station.

### **Hotel trains**

A Hotel Train is a luxury night train with a wide range of sleeping places, varying from folding benches and berth cars to luxury compartments with compartment services. Most Hotel Trains have restaurant and bar coaches, and in the supplement are included the supper and the breakfast. The reservation is compulsory. InterRail Pass gives you the right to a reduction for some of the Hotel Trains.

### **Keep dreaming...**

In the night trains, the customs and the passports checking take place while you sleep, therefore, it is a frequent method for the coach attendant to collect your identity cards and the passport for the customs formalities. You will have your documents in the morning and you could enjoy an uninterrupted night sleep.

## **RAILWAY STATIONS – ADVICES AND TIPS**

The stations can be crowded, interesting and sometimes overwhelming places. In Europe, the stations are usually safe enough, but those with a traffic crowded with tourists can attract pick-pocket thieves. You should take care of your goods! Here are some advices which can be very helpful in your journeys.

### **Check the railway station!**

Most of the important cities have many railway stations and the trains from and to these cities do not always stop in all cities. Carefully check the proper railway station from which you have to take the train so that you won't miss it. If you have to go off at a certain railway station in a city that you wish to get, check if the train really stops there.

### **Train timetables and information about the platform**

Most of the European railways have a website where you can consult the train's timetable, information about the platform and even makes online reservations. You can find information about the timetables of the international trains consulting the timetables on [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de)

The departures and the platforms planning are published in every railway station. At the important ones, the electronic displays offer information constantly brought up to date. On the platforms, you'll usually find displays which confirm the arrival or the departure time and the destination of the following train.

### **Where can I find...?**

It could be frightening to be in a country and not knowing the language. In railway stations, you will find universal maps to be able to manage easier. It will help you find touristic information, restaurants, exchange offices and others.

### **Luggage**

Most of the important railway stations have luggage trolley, luggage desks or automatic houselets (with coins). In trains, the luggage shelves are above the couches or at the end of the coach, but we advise you to keep an eye on your luggage, because the railway undertakings are not responsible for

the lost luggage or stolen ones. Because you will carry your luggage during the trip, it would be a good idea to make it as easy as possible.

### **Climbing, descending and occupying the seats**

You checked the timetable and you know the on board line, now you are ready to get on the train! If you made a booking, you will find the coach and also the place number printed on the travel card. In certain railway stations, the platforms displays show the composition of the train's coaches of long distance and also the night trains and they indicate the place where your coach will stop. Be ready to get on the train when the train arrives at the station, the stops in the railway stations are usually short.

You can see if a coach is a 1<sup>st</sup> class or a 2<sup>nd</sup> class after the number on it, near the door or on a window; some trains have both classes on the same coach. Be very careful at the destination and/or number of the coach display, which are near the doors. The train's coaches can be separated and sent in different directions, so make sure that the coach you are in goes to your destination.

Once you found the coach, finding the seat is easy. If you have a reservation in a compartment, look for a sign on or near the door compartment and find the number of the seat on the travel card, written on the list. For coaches without compartments, the seat number is written on the head rest. Be ready to give up the seat that does not belong to you, but to the person which has a reservation.

### **Have we arrived?**

The stops in the railway stations are always announced, or could be announced in a foreign language that you don't understand. Verify the train's timetable, write down the arrival and the name of the last railway stations before yours, to be ready to get off the train when you arrive at the destination. The railway stations names are written on the platforms. Ask an employee of the railways or a passenger, if you are not sure.