



Of the many songs about the joys of travel, this one praises the scenic beauty of a trip by rail. Although the old Cannonball was fictional, the words still ring true:

*By the great Atlantic Ocean
On the wide Pacific shore,
Heard the queen of flowing mountains,
To the South Belle by the shore,
She's long, tall and handsome,
She's loved by one and all.
She's a modern combination
Called the Wabash Cannonball!*

Most seniors today consider only air or cruises when they travel for pleasure. However, travel by luxury train can be a fun and enjoyable way to spoil yourself while seeing a country without enduring the hostile environment of airports and limited daily views of cruises. Train journeys can range from overnights to months crossing continents. Some more complex rail trips may include brief cruises and hotel stays. The variety is virtually unlimited, so here are just five examples of the most luxurious trains in the world.

Royal Canadian Pacific: This upscale line travels through the Rocky Mountains in the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia. It has hosted famous guests including Winston Churchill, Queen Elizabeth II when she was still a princess and her parents, and John F. Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline.

The passenger cars are modeled on England's Royal Scotsman design. Each trip accommodates only thirty passengers and the service is top notch. Enjoy five star dining in

classic luxury as you view some of the most beautiful scenery North America has to offer.

The Royal Scotsman: This train does tours of Scotland and England of from two to seven nights. The decor is charming 19th Century. There are two dining cars and the observation car offers fantastic views from its deck.

The train has fourteen twin, two double and four single cabins. Each features a dressing table, full length wardrobe, private bathroom with shower, individual heat controls and panoramic windows.

Rovos Rail: Schedules range from 48 hours to a 28-night trip that goes one way from Cape Town, South Africa, to Egypt, and includes a Nile river cruise. There's a lounge, observation cars and decks. The dining cars feature local foods, including game meats and fresh, seasonal produce.

There are three room options on the Rovos. The Pullman features a writing area, ensuite bathroom with shower, personal safe, and minibar. The Deluxe Suite offers a lounge area and a Victorian tub. The most luxurious is the Royal, with all above features plus its own private lounge area.

Venice-Simplon Orient Express: Agatha Christie book and movie made this classic train journey famous, and it still retains the vintage 1920s Art Deco passenger cars. True to the Roaring 20s style, it's coal-heated and cooled by outside fresh air.

Bathrooms are shared, with no showers or tubs. For those needs, there are frequent overnights at hotels en route. The lounge car in Art Nouveau style, with fresh flowers and a pianist in the evenings. There are three dining cars with a maitre d' in charge, who checks personally with each passenger on menu choices. Trips across Europe range from two to seven nights.

Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express: This train offers long tours through Russia, Mongolia, China, and Kazakhstan. The trips range from 14 to 21 nights. The Silk Road journey goes from Moscow to Beijing. There are two dining cars and a lounge car, which features a pianist.

The most luxurious cabins are the Imperial suites, with a king-size bed, sitting area, dressing table, ensuite washroom with shower, air conditioning, wardrobe, DVD/CD player with LCD screen and two large picture windows. There's butler, laundry service and luxury hotel rooms at stops en route.

Luxury train travel provides those extra touches that make a vacation special, including good food, great scenery, excursions, excellent service and much more. Pricing depends on seasons and other factors. For your next trip, consider taking the train.