

RAIL HOLIDAYS TO ITALY

Holidays by rail to Italy are an increasingly popular way to travel. There are numerous ways of travelling by train to Italy, from the splendour of the Orient Express to the speed of Eurostar and TGVs. Whilst you can travel overnight on a sleeper from Paris to Milan or Venice, there are more leisurely ways of travelling, enabling you to enjoy the changing European scenery as you go, perhaps stopping off in France, Switzerland, Germany and even Austria en route.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OPTIONS for travelling from the UK to Italy by train. All options at this stage involve the Eurostar from London to Paris. Then there is the possibility of a direct service from Paris, either overnight on a sleeper or a daytime time. The sleepers have a variety of cabins available. Whilst it is possible to get to Milan in one day from London, it's worth breaking the journey en route, usually in Switzerland, and then enjoying the spectacular Alpine scenery the next day as you travel south. Finally there is the splendid Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, the ultimate train journey across western Europe.

For the return journey, similar options are available with sleepers, daytime services, stopping off en route in Switzerland or Paris and the Orient Express. The decision as to which way you travel depends partly on where in Italy you are trying to get to, as you can't really get further than Milan from London in one day (for example, if you leave London at 09.17 you can get to Milan at 21.45), how much time you have to spend journeying and your budget. If you do have time, then breaking the journey in Switzerland is highly enjoyable and a stay in Switzerland combines well with a stay in Italy, either to complement it or as a contrast.

With our rail holidays we include transfers at the Italian end and can book a private car for you in Paris to take you between stations, although most clients will take a taxi from the rank. We provide you with information about the major stations you will be passing through and information on the on-board services of the trains you will be travelling on.

Within Italy there are fast inter-city trains that run between the major cities, meaning that Venice to Florence takes about 2 hours as does Milan to Florence, Florence to Rome and Rome to Naples. Once in Italy, depending on the holiday you choose you may or may not need a hire-car for local transportation. Obviously if you're staying in the cities or on the Lakes or the Amalfi Coast, you either shouldn't have or don't need a hire to get around, but if venturing into the countryside such as Tuscany or Umbria, you do need a car to make the most of your holiday. Finally, lots of clients choose to travel by train one way, usually on the outward journey, and then fly back (to save time and on price).

FULL RANGE OF OUR RAIL HOLIDAYS TO ITALY

A selected few of our full range of rail holidays to Italy are featured on the next few pages but here is a total list (see website for more details):

- Exploring southern Tuscany by rail
- Florence and Tuscany touring holiday by rail
- Florence, Venice and Rome by train touring holiday
- Lake Como by train
- Lake Garda by train
- Lake Como on the Bernina Express
- Lake Maggiore by train
- Over the Alps to Venice by train
- Over the Austrian Alps to Venice and the Veneto by train
- Piemonte by train
- Sicily by train
- Venice by Bernina Express
- Amalfi Coast by train
- Tuscany and Umbria by train
- Verona, Opera, Lake Garda and Lake Geneva by train



Eurostar



Standard premier onboard Eurostar



Luna Hotel Baglioni in Venice

WHY NOT TRAVEL ONE WAY TO VENICE ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS?

THE ULTIMATE TRAIN JOURNEY across western Europe, from London to Venice, which allows you to enjoy the luxury of rail travel as it used to be. Conjuring up the romance of travel in the Twenties and Thirties, when rail travel flourished and was deemed to be the only civilised way to travel across Europe, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express continues that tradition of elegance and refinement today. The London to Venice journey allows you for almost a day and a half to breathe in the style and service of a by-gone age, whilst enjoying the changing scenery as you travel across some of Europe's most spectacular scenery. All meals on board are provided.



Cabin on the Orient Express



Restaurant car on board the Orient Express



The journey London to Venice

You depart from London Victoria station late morning, having brunch on board the British Pullman before reaching the coast. You cross with Eurotunnel to Calais and then board the historic Continental train. Dinner is taken en route to Paris and then by breakfast time you have reached the Alps. You enjoy lunch and tea on board before reaching Santa Lucia station in Venice, on the Grand Canal in the late afternoon.

The journey Venice to London

You depart from Venice mid-morning, heading towards Verona, the Dolomites and the Alps. You enjoy lunch and tea and then you are heading west into the sunset at dinner time. Overnight on board and then from Paris the train heads back to Calais and the Eurotunnel crossing. Late afternoon arrival at London Victoria.

Departure dates London to Venice

The 2016 London to Venice departures are on

March 20, 31
 April 7, 14, 17, 28
 May 8, 15, 19, 22, 29
 June 9, 16, 19, 23, 30
 July 7, 14
 August 11, 18
 September 15, 18, 22, 25
 October 2, 6, 13, 16, 20, 30
 November 3, 6

Departure dates Venice to London

The 2016 Venice to London departures are on

March 19, 30
 April 6, 13, 16, 20, 27
 May 4, 7, 18, 21
 June 8, 15, 18, 22, 29
 July 6, 13
 August 10, 17
 September 14, 17, 21, 24
 October 5, 8, 12, 15
 November 2, 5

Prices

Add the following for travelling one way on the Orient Express to our holiday prices for the Venice through the Alps holiday.

£1550 per person for travelling outbound London to Venice (you return by sleeper from Venice to Paris in a 2 berth sleeper and then Eurostar – no overnight in Zurich)

£1620 per person for travelling inbound Venice to London (but this journey includes the overnight in Zurich on the way out and the journey in the day time from Paris to Zurich and then Zurich to Venice via Milan).

VENICE THROUGH THE ALPS

This is a magnificent journey with a jewel of an end-destination: Venice. We offer a holiday that takes a day-time journey to Zurich from Paris with an overnight stop in Switzerland and then a magnificent day as you head south through the Alps through the Gotthard and into Italy.

YOU TRAVEL FROM LONDON ST PANCRAS by Eurostar to Paris Gare du Nord, and then you continue from Paris Lyon by TGV to Zurich. London to Paris takes only 2 hours and 15 minutes and Paris to Zurich takes only 4 hours and 40 minutes on a direct train. You can leave London at about 9 am and arrive into Zurich at about 6.30 pm. You can also leave London at about 11.30 am (more convenient if you are travelling in from outside London perhaps) and then with the same sort of change in Paris, you arrive in Zurich at about 8.30 pm. You can spend a night or two in Zurich. We would recommend these hotels: The Baur au Lac for top of the range luxury, the Schweizerhof for four star convenience to the railway station or the Hotel du Theatre for 3 star design simplicity.

The journey from Zurich to Venice is convenient and relaxing. You leave at 08.31 and arrive in Venice at 15.40 with a change in Milan or you can leave at 11.09 and arrive in Venice at 17.40 also with a change in Milan. There is a restaurant service from Zurich to Milan on the 11.09 departure or a snacks and drinks service on the 08.31, but really it is the scenery that is abundantly striking on this route. You head south towards the Alps, passing the lakes of Zug and Lucerne towards the mighty Gotthard. Once through the Gotthard, you're in the Italian part of Switzerland heading towards Lugano, on another magnificent lake. From here it's a short distance to the Italian border at Chiasso. There is a good connection in Milan and then you head east stopping at the historic cities of Verona, Vicenza and Padua before reaching Venice Santa Lucia, a few paces from the Grand Canal.

In Venice we can offer a fantastic range of hotels, from the cosy, traditional Hotel Bisanzio to the luxurious Cipriani, with lots in between such as the Ca'Sagredo, on the Grand Canal. We recommend at least 3 or 4 full days in Venice.

For your return journey, this depends upon inclination and time. You can fly back from Venice or you can take the train back. There is a sleeper service from Venice to Paris overnight with double sleepers and 4 or 6 berth couchette accommodation. Back in Paris, you take the Eurostar from the Gare du Nord back to London St Pancras, even stopping the night. You can also take a daytime service if you want the scenery all the way again or prolong your stay in Europe with perhaps a stopover in Lausanne or Geneva en route.

INCLUDED IN YOUR RAIL HOLIDAY

- Eurostar standard class London to Paris return
- Paris to Zurich standard class one way
- Zurich to Venice via Milan first class one way
- Venice to Paris one way in a double sleeper
- One night's bed and

- breakfast in Zurich at the Hotel du Theatr
- Three nights bed and breakfast in Venice
- Private water taxi transfers from Venice Santa Lucia Station to the hotel and back

Prices from about **£1340** per person based at the Hotel Bisanzio in Venice

£1750 per person based at the Hotel Ca'Sagredo in Venice

£1930 per person based at the Hotel Luna Baglioni in Venice



Classic view of Venice



TGV Lyria service



Ca' Pisani in Venice



Swiss scene

LAKE COMO BY BERNINA EXPRESS

In this rail holiday to Lake Como, arguably the most dramatically beautiful of all the Italian lakes, you take in some of the most spectacular scenery of the Swiss Alps viewed through the panoramic windows of the Bernina Express. This holiday includes a night in Zurich but more time can be allowed in Switzerland on the way out or on the way back.

THE JOURNEY STARTS FROM THE UK Eurostar to Paris where you change to a high speed TGV train onwards to Zurich. Following a night or more in Zurich, you travel onwards to Chur and then on the famous Bernina Express through the very heart of the Alps. The four hour journey on the Bernina Express from Chur to Tirano is truly spectacular. The train travels mostly at low speeds giving time to take in the snowy mountains, pine forests, pretty villages and mountain lakes. The line crosses 196 bridges and 55 tunnels. At its highest point at Ospizio Bernina, the route reaches 2,253 metres before dropping 1,800 metres down to Tirano on the Italian border. In Tirano there is time for lunch before taking an onward local train to Lecco on Lake Como. This is an attractive route, at first passing vineyards perched precariously on hillside terraces, and then travelling along the eastern edge of Lake Como. At Lecco, you will be met at the station and taken by car to Bellagio and your hotel for the next four nights – Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni.

Following your stay on Lake Como, there are several options for your return home, including an extension in Lausanne on Lake Geneva.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day one

Your rail holiday starts with a journey by Eurostar from London St Pancras or Ebbsfleet to Paris Nord station, leaving at about 8.30am. On arrival in Paris you change stations to Gare de Lyon where you may be able to have lunch at the famous Train Bleu restaurant. From Paris Lyon, high-speed TGV takes you across France and into Switzerland arriving into Zurich at about 6.30pm. Spend one night in Zurich at the hotel Du Theatre. The hotel is a ten minute walk from Zurich station and well situated if you wish to explore the city.

Day two

Return to Zurich station at about 6.30am for the hour and a half journey to Chur. Along this route you will start to travel into the Alps. Once in Chur, with a simple change of train you get onto the Bernina Express at 8.30am for the stunning four hour journey through the Alps to Tirano. Upon arrival in Tirano you will have time for lunch in one of a number of restaurants and cafes near the station. Continue by train to Lake Como, arriving late afternoon in Lecco before being taken by car to your hotel for the next four nights.

Days three to five

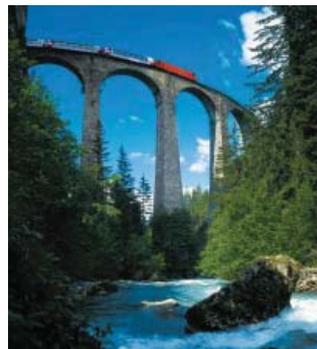
At leisure to do as much or as little as you like around Lake Como from your base at Villa Serbelloni.

Day six

You will taken from your hotel by car to Milan Porta Garibaldi station where you take the TGV to directly to Paris, leaving at around 8am and in Paris around 4pm. The final leg of the journey is the Eurostar back to the UK where you arrive at about 7.30pm.



Bernina Express



Bernina Express



Hotel jetty



Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio

INCLUDED IN YOUR RAIL HOLIDAY

- Return standard class travel on Eurostar London to Paris
- One way standard class train travel Paris to Zurich
- One way standard class train travel Zurich to Tirano including the Bernina

Express

- Car transfer from Lecco to Bellagio and from Bellagio to Milan
- Bed and breakfast accommodation at the Hotel du Theatre (one night) and at the Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni, Lake Como (4 nights in a deluxe room with

lake view).

- One way standard class rail travel from Milan to Paris

From **£2290** per person (subject to train, flight and hotel seasonality)
First class rail on Eurostar and other room types all available on request.

VENICE, FLORENCE AND ROME

The three great cities of Venice, Florence and Rome are easily and effortlessly visited by train, and allowing Expressions Holidays to organise your rail holiday really does remove the strains and stresses of travelling. In fact, nothing could be more straightforward or enjoyable than visiting these Italian cities by train. Extend the holiday with an overnight in Paris on the way out and perhaps an overnight in Lausanne, Switzerland on the way back.

START YOUR RAIL HOLIDAY by taking the Eurostar from London to Paris in the early afternoon and then the overnight sleeper train to Venice, arriving mid morning.

On arrival, we can either arrange for you to have an early check-in at your hotel, or you can leave your bags there and explore the city whilst your room is made ready. Alternatively, why not spend the night in Paris and then take a daytime train from Paris to Venice crossing the Alps or head for Switzerland and break your journey there before continuing south and experiencing the spectacular scenery of the Gotthard. We suggest you spend 3 nights here in Venice with its bobbing gondolas, Byzantine and Gothic architectural gems and shimmering light. Continue your rail holiday by boarding a high-speed train for a journey of around 2 hours from Venice to Florence, where you spend the next 3 nights. Explore the ancient capital of the Medicis and the home of Renaissance treasures before heading south by train and reaching Rome in 1 1/2 hours. Enjoy 3 nights in the Italian capital exploring the wealth of cultural monuments and sights on offer. Leave Rome very early morning to travel by daytime rail service to Paris via Milan, then journey on by Eurostar from Paris to London, arriving late evening. Alternatively, we recommend breaking the journey in an Alpine destination such as Lausanne or Zurich.

HOTELS USED IN THIS RAIL HOLIDAY

Hotel Ca' Sagredo, 5 star, Venice

On the Grand Canal near the Rialto Bridge, this magnificent palatial hotel boasts precious frescoes and marble staircases.

Hotel Helvetia and Bristol, 5 star, Florence

A small deluxe hotel with charm, character and personal service. Its central location makes it extremely convenient for sight-seeing.

Hotel Inghilterra, 5 star, Rome

A charming hotel, of enormous elegance, quality and comfort in one of the best locations in Rome.

We have many other hotels in all three cities that we can include to vary the price of the holiday.

INCLUDED IN YOUR RAIL HOLIDAY

- Eurostar from London to Paris, sleeper train from Paris to Venice, daytime service from Milan to Paris, Eurostar from Paris to London.
- First class rail travel from Venice to Florence, Florence to Rome and Rome to Milan.
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast at the Ca' Sagredo in Venice.
- 3 nights' bed and

- breakfast at the Hotel Helvetia and Bristol.
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast at the Hotel Inghilterra.
- Private return water taxi transfers from Venice Santa Lucia station to the hotel. Private return car transfers from Florence Santa Maria Novella station to the hotel. Private return car transfers from Rome Termini station to the hotel.
- Optional private car transfer in Paris between stations both ways. This

service can be arranged for you by us on request.

From **£2,400** per person (subject to train and hotel seasonality)

First class rail on Eurostar, and other room types all available on request.



Hotel Ca' Sagredo, Venice



Florence



Hotel Inghilterra, Rome



TGV in France

TO SICILY BY TRAIN

This epic journey encompasses some spectacularly scenic train journeys as you witness the change in landscape as you travel from north to south: the undulating fields of northern France give way to the mountains as you head east, you cross the Alps by train, follow the Mediterranean coast south of Naples into the toe of Italy and then you witness the crossing of the Strait of Messina with your train on the ferry!

TRAVEL BY TRAIN FROM London to Zurich where you spend one night, then continue on to Milan for another night, enjoying the stunning Alpine scenery en route and giving chance to spend some time in the cities of Zurich and Milan. Then you make the journey to Naples, where you stay for one night, before travelling southwards to your final destination in Sicily where the rail journey includes the train boarding a ferry. Spend 3 nights in Taormina (we have a choice of hotels), then return to the UK by plane.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day one

Leave London at about 9am by Eurostar to Paris, before changing stations and continuing on the high speed TGV Lyria to Zurich where you arrive at about 6.30pm. Check into your hotel for one night.

Day two

Set off from Zurich at about 9am, travelling to Milan on the spectacular Gotthard route through the Alps, passing striking scenery including the lakes of Zug and Lucerne. Once through the Gotthard Pass, you're in the Italian part of Switzerland heading towards Lugano which is located on another magnificent lake. From here it's a short distance to the Italian border at Chiasso. Arrive in Milan where you spend one night.

Day three

Leave Milan early morning, your train heads further south, passing through Bologna, Florence and Rome before arriving into Naples by lunchtime. This allows you to spend the afternoon sightseeing. You spend one night in Naples at the Grand Hotel Vesuvio.

Day four

Leave Naples at about 10am to travel to Taormina-Giardini, following the dramatic coast south through Campania, Basilicata and Calabria to reach the Strait of Messina where your train boards the ferry for the crossing to Sicily. Arrive into Taormina late afternoon and transfer to the Hotel Villa Belvedere where you spend three nights.

Days five and six

At leisure to explore Sicily.

Day seven

Leave your hotel in Taormina to take a British Airways flight from Catania to London Gatwick.

INCLUDED IN YOUR RAIL HOLIDAY

- One way standard class travel on Eurostar London to Paris
- One way standard class train travel Paris to Zurich
- One way first class train travel Zurich to Milan
- One way first class train travel Milan to Naples
- One way first class train

- travel Naples to Taormina
- Bed and breakfast accommodation at the Hotel du Theatre (one night), the Carlton Hotel Baglioni (one night), the Grand Hotel Vesuvio (one night) and the Hotel Villa Belvedere (three nights)
 - Transfer from Taormina station to hotel, and back to Catania airport
 - Flight with British Airways

- one way from Catania to London Gatwick, Euro traveller

From **£1910** per person (subject to train, flight and hotel seasonality)

First class rail on Eurostar, Club return with BA or other airlines and other room types all available on request.



Sicilian harbour



Agrigento



Basket making in Sicily



View from the Hotel Belvedere

LAKE MAGGIORE BY TRAIN

Experience the romance of rail travel as you journey through Europe by train to the delightful Hotel Cannero Lakeside Resort on Lake Maggiore. There are several ways of travelling here by train and the proximity of Switzerland makes this an ideal destination to stopover in on the way out or on the way back.

THERE ARE SEVERAL OPTIONS available for your rail holiday from London to Lake Maggiore. One option is to take a morning Eurostar from London to Paris and then the TGV Lyria service to Geneva. Depending on how early you can leave London you can either get to Stresa on Lake Maggiore by about 20.30 (with changes again in Brig and Domodossola) or by about 21.40 with a change in Geneva only and then direct to Stresa. Another option is to break the journey en route either in Geneva, Lausanne or Zurich. From Geneva or Lausanne you travel to Stresa. From Zurich you can travel in a glass-topped panoramic coach to Locarno with one change in Bellinzona. A final option is to travel by Eurostar from London to Paris in the afternoon in order to take the overnight sleeper service from Paris Gare de Lyon to Milan. However, you do arrive in Milan very early at just after 5.30 am the next morning before continuing on to Lake Maggiore by private car transfer. (With this option you might want to reserve an extra night at the hotel so that you have the use of the room from when you arrive).

Spend 7 nights at the Hotel Cannero, located in the town of Cannero. Cannero is undoubtedly one of the most unspoilt and tranquil spots on Lake Maggiore with its winding cobbled streets, enchanting lake views and backdrop of wooded mountains. From Cannero you can take excursions by boat to various other resorts and islands the lake, including Isola Bella and Isola Madre.

At the end of your stay on Lake Maggiore, we arrange to take you to Milan by car in the evening in order to take the return sleeper train which arrives in Paris at 10.30am. You then change stations in Paris and conclude your rail holiday by taking the Eurostar back to the UK at any time from about 13.00 hrs onwards. Daytime alternatives to this return journey are also possible but may involve spending a night in Paris or Switzerland en route, depending on the seasonal timetable.

Hotel Cannero, Cannero, 4 star

The welcoming Hotel Cannero reflects the quaint charm of its picturesque surroundings, offering attentive service to ensure that guests feel relaxed and well looked after. The original 17th century building has been restructured to make the most of its excellent position. We include rooms with lake view, and excellent meals are served from the restaurant's lakeside terraces.

INCLUDED IN YOUR RAIL HOLIDAY

- Return travel on Eurostar London to Paris in Standard class.
- Standard class rail travel from Paris to Stresa.
- Car transfer from Stresa

to the hotel and back to Milan.

- Travel on sleeper service Milan to Paris in a two berth sleeper compartment.
- 7 nights' half board accommodation at the Hotel Cannero in a lake view room

From **£1,950** per person (subject to train and hotel seasonality)

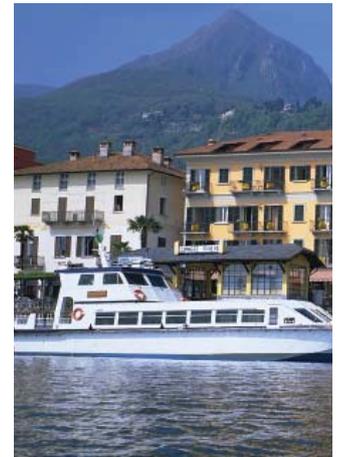
First class rail on Eurostar, and other room types all available on request.



Hotel Cannero



View of the lake from a room



Travel by boat when you're there



Lakeside terrace at the Cannero