

# GOING PLACES

JOHN COONEY



Rocky Mountaineer

## MAKING TRACKS

*the world's great train journeys*



Travel, for most people, is all about speed. It's about getting from point-A to point-B as fast as possible. And I understand the rationale, because I'm one of those people. But there is a less frantic way to enjoy the world. A long train journey gives you views you can't see from the road, sights you don't get out the window of a plane, and a sense of romance that you miss when you're in a mad, screaming hurry ...

Not all trains are created equal, of course. Your crowded suburban train won't do it for you – nor, probably, will your weekend choo-choo ride to Grandma's. But, at the other end of the scale, there are trains that spoil you, trains that pamper you, trains that almost make you swear-off cars forever. There's nothing quite like a soft seat in a luxury carriage ... the rhythmic rock'n'roll of the tracks, cocktails and cuisine on tap, and scenery to die for out your big picture-window.

These are the World's Great Trains. And what they offer us are the World's Great Train Journeys ...

You must've heard, for example, of the ultra-posh **Orient Express**, which runs from London to Paris to Venice to Istanbul and all the way back again. Or the alluring, long-distance **Trans-Siberian Railway**, which links Moscow

to Vladivostok, 9000kms away. Or the closer-to-home **Trans-Alpine**, between Christchurch and Greymouth, which climbs the take-your-breath-away Southern Alps without taking a breath.

But here are three beauts that should be on your 'bucket-list'. And you should do them soon ... ideally, with someone you love!

**1** The **ROYAL RAJASTHAN ON WHEELS** may not sound like a train, but it is. Rekindling the charm of a bygone era, it showcases a vibrant, colourful chunk of Northern India, once the playground of Moghuls and Rajputs. Think multi-hued turbans and glittering saris ... sacred rivers and wild tiger reserves ... gigantic citadels and eye-popping palaces. Think Taj Mahal.

This train is a regal treat, a hotel-on-rails, with state-of-the-art restaurants, mouth-tantalising menus, ensuite bedrooms, plush

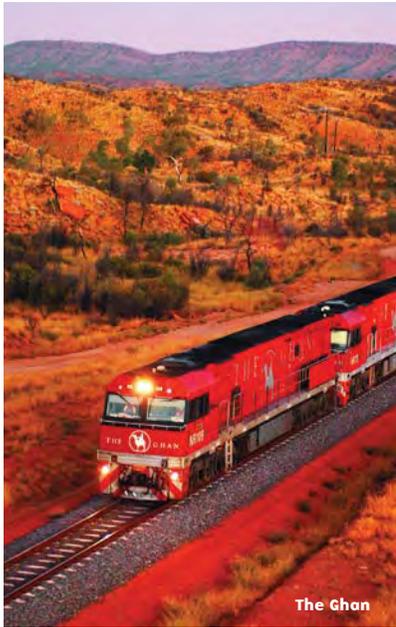


MY WIFE MADE ME JOIN A BRIDGE CLUB. I JUMP OFF NEXT TUESDAY. (GROUCHO MARX)

lounges, and unashamed wall-to-wall wowness. And that seven-day taste of Rajasthan? Well, it starts with a red-carpet welcome, flower garlands, and a band playing a royal salute ... and simply gets better, with highlight-stops at places you never dreamed you would visit: Delhi – Jodpur – Udaipur – Jaipur – Varanasi – Agra – and more.

Luxury rail-travel has come a long way since the first 'iron horse' thundered across India. And if you want to feel like a Maharaja, this is the train for you!

**2** If you prefer adventures that are easy to get to, well, **THE GHAN** is just next door – a legendary romp-by-rail through the vast red heart of Australia, with stacks of photo-ops, weird wildlife, outrageous history and indig-enous culture.



The Ghan



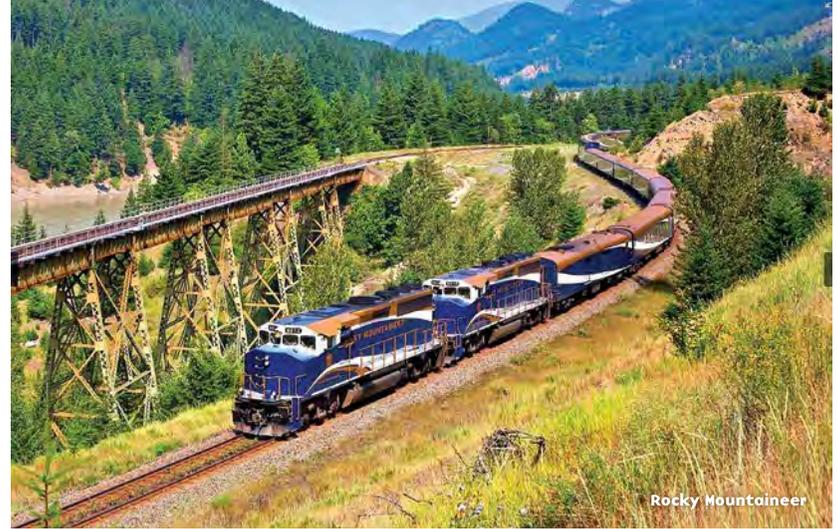
It's hot out there in the Outback, and I'm glad I wasn't one of the sunburnt pioneers who laid the first tracks. But the route they chose is pretty much a straight line – from Darwin in the north (with its jumping crocodiles and Kakadu National Park) to Adelaide in the south (with its lush Barossa Valley vineyards). And most travellers stop in the middle for a day or three – to ooh-and-aah at historic Alice Springs, monumental Katherine Gorge, and the sun rising huge over orange Uluru.

Picture yourself going to bed in your private sleeper-cabin ... waking to a yummy breakfast in the classy dining car ... then relaxing in the spacious lounge while the sunburnt Aussie Red Centre rolls by on the other side of the glass.

Wait: don't just PICTURE IT – decide now you'll DO IT!

**3** If you get up early, you can hitch a ride on the **ROCKY MOUNTAINEER** – my favourite train in chilly North America. It winds its way through the Canadian Rockies, via the Kicking Horse Canyon and jaw-dropping Spiral Tunnels ... and it's been voted "the most spectacular rail adventure in the world". I can't think of a more perfect way to eyeball the stunning peaks, gushing ravines and scenic landscapes that litter this vast wilderness.

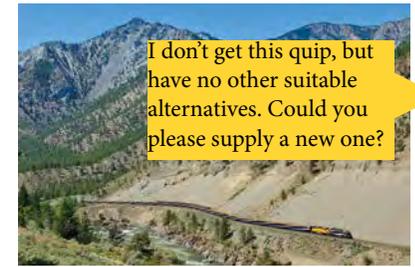
We began our visit in Calgary, wild-west home of the Calgary Stampede



Rocky Mountaineer

("the most fun you can have with yer boots on ...") ... and spent 48 hours in Banff, soaking up gorgeous Lake Louise, and stomping around on the Athabasca Glacier. Somebody saw a grizzly, but I was in the wrong place at the wrong time, darn it! Then, before you could say "Toot-toot!" our famous luxury train was rumbling down the tracks ...

*Final destination?* Vancouver, on the left-hand edge of the continent. *Highlights?* Too many to mention. *Service?* Waited-on, hand and foot! *Memories?* We're still "wasn't-it-marvellousing!" today ... ❁



I don't get this quip, but have no other suitable alternatives. Could you please supply a new one?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ENJOY ONE OF THESE TRAIN JOURNEYS YOURSELF? JOHN & ROBYN COONEY WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU JOIN THEM. PHONE 0800 277 477 FOR DETAILS, OR VISIT WWW.JOHNCOONEY.CO.NZ.

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| <p><b>Royal India</b></p> <p>30 DAYS<br/>Rajasthan on Wheels<br/>Delhi<br/>Jodhpur<br/>Udaipur</p> <p>To Mumbai</p> <p>MAR 2015<br/>Luxury<br/>Royal Train<br/>Varanasi<br/>Jaipur<br/>Agra</p> <p>MIDLIFE MADNESS IN INDIA</p> <p>HOUSEBOATING • TIGER-VIEWING • ELEPHANT-RIDING</p> | <p><b>Great Australian Train Journey</b></p> <p>From Darwin<br/>Kakadu<br/>Katherine<br/>Alice Springs</p> <p>To Adelaide<br/>Uluru<br/>Maggie Beer<br/>Barossa</p> <p>JUNE 2015</p> <p>MIDLIFE MADNESS IN THE GHAN</p> | <p><b>ALASKAN CRUISE</b><br/>with Rocky Mountaineer Train</p> <p>23 DAYS<br/>Vancouver<br/>Skagway<br/>Glacier Bay<br/>Denali</p> <p>JUNE 2016<br/>Kamloops<br/>Banff<br/>Canadian Rockies</p> <p>midlife madness in ALASKA</p> <p>WHALE-WATCHING &amp; BEAR-SPOTTING</p> |
| <p>join Grapevine's John &amp; Robyn Cooney on a luxury rail adventure<br/>phone: 0800 277 477 – email: roger.glynan@lionworld.co.nz</p>  |   |   |