

What's new this month

WELCOME

Welcome to the first edition of the *European Rail Timetable* in 2017, a year that will see the completion of a number of key high-speed projects around Europe. The most significant during the current timetable period will be in France where high-speed lines to both Rennes and Bordeaux are scheduled to open on July 2, transforming services to western France. We hope to provide full details of the new faster schedules in our Summer edition later in the year.

Following the start of the new timetable period on December 11, we have been able to recheck many of our tables and make any necessary adjustments. We will, of course, continue the process of checking and updating our tables throughout the year.

ROUTE OF THE MONTH

Our regular travel correspondents, Nicky Gardner and Susanne Kries, enjoy a journey on the *Latorca* from the Hungarian capital, Budapest, to the Ukrainian town of Mukacheve, located just over 40 kilometres from the border between the two countries. The train departs Budapest Nyugati at 0723 and provides a daily overnight service between the Hungarian and Ukrainian capitals. However, the early evening arrival in Mukacheve means your sleeping car accommodation will be converted to comfortable seats for the entire journey. Turn to page 34 to read more about this journey across former Habsburg lands.

TIP OF THE MONTH

Those wishing to travel across Europe overnight usually have a choice of accommodation ranging from regular daytime seats to luxury sleeper compartments with en suite facilities. In our regular *Tip of the Month* feature, which will be found on page 35, Nicky and Susanne provide an overview of the various options that are available.

INTERNATIONAL

Following the withdrawal of overnight train **3731/3730** Paris – Cerbère/Portbou, we have adjusted Table **13** so that overnight train **3981/3980** Paris – Toulouse – Latour de Carol can be shown instead. This service provides an alternative overnight option between Paris and Barcelona via Latour de Carol, albeit with a longer journey time than before. In fact, during the summer months, arrival in Barcelona will actually be after the first TGV of the day arrives from Paris! Similarly, in the opposite direction the connecting train from Barcelona departs before the last TGV service to Paris. However, as well as providing a convenient overnight option, this route offers a wonderfully scenic journey through the Pyrenees and is featured as Route 7 in our *Europe by Rail* guidebook – on this route it's the journey that counts, not the speed!

Further to last month's news item regarding the possible provision of a direct Moskva – Kraków sleeping car, we no longer believe this through car will be running (Table **95**).

GREAT BRITAIN

The line between Armathwaite and Carlisle remains closed as repair work continues following a landslip which severely damaged parts of the line one year ago. However, this section is now expected to reopen to rail traffic on March 31, thus restoring services along the entire length of the iconic Settle to Carlisle route (Table **173**).

A new late evening service from London to York on Mondays to Fridays was a late addition to Virgin East Coast's schedules and this has now been included in Table **180**. The train departs London Kings Cross at 2257, calling at Peterborough, Grantham, Newark and Doncaster.

GERMANY

Many journeys operating over the Bitterfeld to Halle route are subject to alteration until April 17. During this period most regional trains shown in Table **848** are subject to bus replacement with amended timings. Long-distance services from and to Berlin are diverted resulting in extended journey times and, in most cases, the timings at Berlin and Lutherstadt Wittenberg have been altered. Therefore, Table **850** has been updated to reflect the current schedules.

There are numerous other locations around Germany where engineering work will affect long-distance services over the coming months and, to help readers plan their journeys, we have included a summary of the most significant alterations on page 367. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and other alterations may occur, particularly at weekends and during holiday periods.

SLOVAKIA

Regiojet has announced that it will be withdrawing its Bratislava to Košice service, with the last trains running on January 31. This affects three daily trains each way in Table **1180**.

SLOVENIA, CROATIA and BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Almost without warning, the daily Zagreb – Sarajevo train has been discontinued. Coaching stock on this service was due to be replaced by more modern Talgo stock from the start of the new timetable, so it is hoped curtailment is only temporary, but in the meantime a second Doboj – Sarajevo train pair is operating in the timings of the former Zagreb – Sarajevo service (Table **1350**).

Schedules for the Bosnian Federation, unavailable at press date last month, have now been updated (Tables **1350** and **1355**).

It appears that Metković – Ploče bus services have been withdrawn, but we are awaiting confirmation of this (Table **1355**).

SERBIA-MONTENEGRO

Services on the Bar line are subject to alteration until July 15 owing to engineering work between Beograd and Lajkovac (68 km). Day trains are subject to bus replacement, and night trains are suspended until the work is completed (Table **1370**).

ROMANIA

Tables have been further updated and all local services fully checked, including those run by private operators.

RUSSIA

As usual our Russian section includes selected timings for domestic services in Georgia (Table **1979**), Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Table **1980**), all of which have been updated this month. A further change is that we are now showing local time (GMT +5) for the western part of Kazakhstan, in line with Kazakhstan Railways. This includes the towns of Atyrau, Aktau and Aktobe. Note, however, that the booking system of Russian Railways, which includes domestic trains in Kazakhstan, currently shows these timings one hour later using GMT +6, which is the time zone which applies to the rest of the country.

BEYOND EUROPE

This month's Beyond Europe section covers India and will be found on pages 564 to 575. All tables have been checked against the latest timetable provided by Indian Railways and it should be noted that there are several train number changes.



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