

What's new this month

WELCOME

Following our latest two-month publication hiatus, the European Rail Timetable team are pleased to return with our April 2021 edition which includes various updates since we last published in January.

Despite progress being made with the Covid-19 vaccination roll-out, disruption to everyday life continues with countries imposing varying levels of restrictions in an attempt to curb the spread of the virus. The provision of public transport continues to be affected with reduced services running in many areas. During these unpredictable times social distancing rules continue to apply and the wearing of face coverings on public transport remains compulsory across most of Europe. Restrictions on international travel varies between different countries so, for the foreseeable future, it is particularly important to consult official government travel advice before undertaking any essential journeys.

As a result of the latest situation we are still encountering difficulties compiling reliable timetables as railway companies review their schedules on an ad hoc basis to adapt to the rapidly changing environment. We have done our best to produce an accurate timetable based on information available to us in the lead up to publication. The availability and type of data varies between countries with some showing full schedules (with cancellations or alterations indicated separately) whilst others are only showing trains that are currently running, sometimes for only limited periods of time. Where possible we have tried to show full schedules with known service suspensions indicated by either a note and/or a shaded column. It is important to note that there are likely to be amendments or cancellations that currently apply which are not shown in our tables and that further short notice changes are possible, especially if local or national lockdown conditions are imposed or revised.

However, the vaccination roll-out does offer some hope that non-essential international travel may once again be permitted later in the year. As a result, our own plans are to recommence normal publication from this point on so that readers can start to plan for future journeys once it is deemed to be safe for all concerned.

Regular readers will be aware that we would normally publish an extensive Summer Supplement in the April edition with advance timings for international services valid from the mid-June timetable change. However, owing to the continued uncertainty of exactly what services will be running during the summer period, we have decided to reduce this to only show a small selection of known changes in a four-page mini supplement on pages 639 to 642. To fill the space normally occupied by the supplement, we have decided to publish the latest Beyond Europe tables for India, North America, South-East Asia, Australia and New Zealand (which would have appeared in our cancelled February edition) in addition to the Chinese, Japanese, South Korean and South American sections which normally appear in April.

CAR CARRYING TRAINS

The newly announced service operated by Austrian Railways from Bratislava to Split will convey cars and so has been added to Table 1.

INTERNATIONAL

As mentioned above, we have produced a mini four-page Summer Supplement which will be found on pages 639 to 642 showing the most significant changes that are expected to be implemented from the mid-June timetable change. We have also included timings of the proposed low-cost high-speed services between Barcelona and Madrid which will be operated by *Ouigo* and *Avlo*.

Eurostar's latest timetable, which is valid until May 16, shows a single daily return service continuing to run between London and Paris and also between London and Amsterdam via Brussels (Tables 10 and 18). If conditions permit, Eurostar plan to recommence running train 9074/9057 between London and Marné la Vallée-Chessy (station for Disneyland) on three days a week from July 16, reducing to two days a week from September 10 (Table 17).

Thalys has issued a timetable valid from April 1 to 18, with a subsequent version covering the period from April 19 to May 30. Notably, the latter period indicates a marked increase in service. All relevant tables have been updated accordingly.

The introduction of Train 301/300 *Berlin Night Express* Stockholm – Malmö – København – Hamburg – Berlin has been put back from March 31 to June 11. The plan is to run daily until September 5, then twice a week until October 2 (see the summer version of Table 50 on page 639).

Organisers of the *Kulturzug / Pociąg do Kultury / Culture Train* between Berlin and Wrocław were hoping to restart services on March 19 but are now looking at either April 23 or May 13 depending on the prevailing conditions (Table 58).

Trains EC 173/172 *Hungaria* Hamburg – Budapest and *Railjet* 257/256 *Vindobona* Berlin – Graz will not call at Praha hlavní nádraží or Pardubice from April 6, running non-stop between Praha Holešovice and Brno (Table 60). This is due to engineering work in the Czech Republic.

The *Alpen-Syllt Nachtexpress* is scheduled to run twice a week between Westerland and Salzburg this summer and will convey an additional portion between Westerland and Konstanz. The planned extension from Salzburg to Bad Gastein will not now be implemented. The summer version of Table 78 (on page 639) has been adjusted to accommodate these changes.

All ÖBB *nightjet* international overnight services are currently suspended but Austrian Railways hope to resume services with a staggered return between April 28 and May 1.

GREAT BRITAIN

South Western Railway was expected to start running a near normal service on its main-line routes from March 29 (Tables 105, 106 and 108). There will be a delay to the reopening of the Island Line between Ryde and Shanklin with the original reopening date of April 1 being put back to May 16. Replacement bus services will continue to operate until the line reopens (Table 107).

Northern Trains has issued new schedules on Mondays to Saturdays from March 8 on various routes. These generally involve a reduction in service level and will remain in place until at least mid-May. The relevant tables have been updated with revised timings.

The Heart of Wales line between Shrewsbury and Swansea was finally expected to fully re-open on March 29. Some trains now run to and from Carmarthen, instead of Swansea (Table 146).

Hull Trains is planning to restart services from April 12 with up to three trains a day in each direction (Table 181).

The second phase of work to remodel London King's Cross station will run from April 26 to June 6. As we published details of the first phase in the January edition we have decided to publish the second phase schedules this month. LNER and Grand Central services are affected the most during the work as the number of platforms available are reduced (Tables 180, 182 and 183).

IRELAND

Iarnród Éireann issued a revised timetable with minor amendments valid from March 21. Unfortunately these were received too late for us to update the relevant tables this month. The May digital edition will, of course, include a fully updated Irish section.

FRANCE

The Hauts-de-France region has introduced a weekend TER service between Paris Nord and Lille Flandres via Longueau and Arras. At present there are two return services on both Saturdays and Sundays, details of which can be found in Table 256.

The recent renaissance of European overnight rail travel has reached France with the welcome reintroduction, from April 16, of a service between Paris and the Côte d'Azur (which last ran in December 2017). As is standard for French overnight trains, it will convey first class (4-berth) and second class (6-berth) couchettes together with reclining seats. Timings will be found in Table 361, although those using the service should check their reservation for confirmed timings as schedules are sometimes adjusted.

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Newslines (continued from page 5)

FRANCE (continued)

The line between Valence and Veynes is currently closed to rail traffic until the mid-December timetable change to allow major route upgrade work to take place. During this period all services are replaced by bus between Valence and Gap. Table 358 has been updated with the revised timings. This nine-month blockade means the overnight train between Paris and Briançon is not able to run along its normal route. The solution has been to temporarily run the service between Paris and Modane with a connecting bus service provided between Modane and Briançon, timings for which have been included in Table 358.

Another section of line temporarily closed is the scenic *ligne des Cévennes* between St Georges d'Aurac and Nîmes. From March 30 to July 1 buses are replacing trains along the affected section, although the southern most section between Alès and Nîmes is scheduled to reopen to rail traffic from June 4. We are therefore showing two versions of Table 333 with the main table, on page 197, showing schedules from March 30 to June 3 and a separate version, valid from June 4 to July 1, included on page 213.

ITALY

The Thello service between Nice and Milano has been reduced to one train pair per day (Tables 580 and 610). All other numbered trains have been checked against the latest available information but are liable to change at any time.

SPAIN

A new stretch of high-speed line has opened between Elche/Elx and Orihuela, branching off from the Madrid – Alacant high-speed line at Monforte del Cid, with a twice daily service operating between Madrid and Orihuela (Table 668).

Certain services in Tables 652 and 670 have been withdrawn.

FINLAND

Our Finnish section has been updated with the latest timings and is now valid until June 6. While coronavirus restrictions remain in place, a number of trains are suspended on certain days of the week – these cancellations are indicated with an appropriate note.

GERMANY

The section of line between Hausach and St Georgen is currently closed to rail traffic until July 27. As a result, journeys on the Karlsruhe to Konstanz route are partially replaced by bus. Table 916 has been adapted and fully updated to show the revised schedules – those parts of the journey operated by bus are indicated with shaded timings. The line will fully reopen from July 28 to September 12 before another period of work will see the same section of line closed again from September 13 to November 25.

The high-speed line between Kassel and Göttingen will be closed for twelve weeks from April 24 to July 16 so that planned upgrade work can take place. During this period an amended service will operate with significantly increased journey times as trains have to use much slower diversionary routes. We have included special versions of Tables 830, 900 and 902 on pages 566 to 568 with full details of the amended schedules.

FlixTrain services shown on page 366 remain suspended for now, although tickets are available on its website for travel from June 24.

POLAND

We have only had time to make partial updates to our Polish tables after timetable amendments were issued by Polish Railways valid from March 14.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Owing to long-term engineering work a number of tables are revised from April 6 as outlined below.

In Table 1150 most trains will not call at Pardubice or Česká Třebová, running instead non-stop from Kolín to Brno via Havlíčkův Brod. Trains *RJ 257/256 Vindobona* and *EC 173/172 Hungaria* will call only at Praha Holešovice, omitting their usual Praha hlavní nádraží stop. Please note that several *Railjet* services in these tables do not operate until April 28 and that the *Regiojet* service to Budapest appears to have been temporarily withdrawn. In Tables 1151 and 1160 trains depart Praha earlier and arrive later than previously. A small number of services in Table 1160 have been withdrawn.

HUNGARY

Until at least April 5, a reduced service (in some cases with revised schedules) operates between Hungary and Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania and there are no trains to Poland, Ukraine, Serbia and Croatia. Revised timetables for some routes are due to come in to effect from April 11 but these had not been confirmed as we went to press and so are not included in this edition.

TURKEY

We understand that some regional services may have been reinstated although we are still awaiting confirmation of this. We will make any necessary updates in the May digital edition.

RUSSIA

International services to Belarus have been reinstated. Trains 29/30, 79/80 and 359/360, which previously transited Belarus on their way to and from Kaliningrad, are now making station calls in Belarus. In addition trains 1/2 are only running between Moskva and Orsha (Table 1950). All other international services remain suspended.

GEORGIA

After a three month pause, Georgian Railways has restarted operation of services from Tbilisi to Batumi, Zugdidi, Ozurgeti, Poti and Kutaisi (Table 1995).

BEYOND EUROPE

As well as the Japanese, Chinese, South Korean and South American pages that normally appear in the April edition, we have also included the latest versions of other Beyond Europe sections that would have been shown in the cancelled February edition.

Japanese Railways (JR) issued its annual timetable change on March 13 and all our tables have been checked and updated with the new schedules. Unusually, JR West's Tokyo – Hakata service (Table 8005) is only indicated as being valid until April 30 although the daily services shown in our table are not expected to change from May 1.

Tables in our Chinese section have all been updated with the latest available information. Please note that certain tables have been modified somewhat to hopefully make them easier to read.

VIA Rail in Canada has re-issued its Corridor schedules with effect from April 1 (Tables 9010 and 9015).

Amtrak has announced that Northeast Regional overnight services 65, 66 and 67 will now also convey sleeping-car accommodation between Boston and Washington (Table 9215). Because of increased federal funding, Amtrak's long-distance services, which in November were reduced to running just three times a week, will revert to daily operation from late May. There will be a staged return to daily running as follows: From May 24 – California Zephyr, Coast Starlight, Empire Builder and Texas Eagle.

From May 31 – Capitol Limited, City of New Orleans, Lake Shore Limited and Southwest Chief.

From June 7 – Crescent, Palmetto, Silver Meteor and Silver Star.

Malayan Railways (KTMB) has issued revised schedules for its ETS and Commuter services valid from April 1.

In Australia, *The Overland* service between Melbourne and Adelaide is running once again (Table 6395).

In Argentina SOFSE has revised many of its services, the most notable being an increase in direct services on the Buenos Aires – Mar del Plata route (Table 9960A) together with the provision of connecting services to Pinamar.

In our South Korean pages all tables have been checked and updated with the latest available information. Most of the train numbers have been altered since we last published this section. Table 9976 now includes the KTX high-speed service which was launched earlier this year, on January 5.