

## What's new this month

### WELCOME

Welcome to the February 2016 edition of the *European Rail Timetable* which, as always, includes the latest updates for rail and shipping schedules around Europe. Of particular note are some significant alterations in Spain from February 1.

### ROUTE OF THE MONTH

Following on from their November article describing the journey from Zagreb to Sarajevo, Nicky Gardner and Susanne Kries, editors of *hidden europe* magazine, make a quick return to the Balkan region for another fascinating cross-border journey. This time they start their trip in the Macedonian capital, Skopje, and take the daily train across the border into Kosovo and on to its capital, Prishtinë. *Route of the Month* will be found on page 35 and current timings for this route are shown in Table 1375.

### TIP OF THE MONTH

What items of luggage and animals can accompany you whilst travelling around Europe by train? Well, in our regular *Tip of the Month* feature on page 36, Nicky Gardner and Susanne Kries investigate some of the more unusual items you can and can't take with you on European rail journeys.

### INTERNATIONAL

Eurostar has made adjustments to certain services from February 28 (Table 10).

The London to Marseille Eurostar service will be diverted and call at Lyon St Exupéry instead of Lyon Part Dieu on Mondays and Fridays from April 3 to 29. The Avignon and Marseille arrivals will actually be a few minutes earlier on those days as a result of this (Table 17). Please note that the northbound service is not affected and will continue to call at Lyon Part Dieu as usual.

Thalys has made a number of alterations to their timetable from April 3 and Table 18 has been updated accordingly.

Timings at Dordrecht, Mechelen and Brussels Nationaal Airport of the Amsterdam to Brussels Inter City service are now shown in the main body of Table 18. Previously these stops were shown in a footnote.

It has been confirmed that the two remaining return services between Brussels and Basel via Luxembourg, *Vauban* and *Iris*, will cease running from April 3 (Table 43). These withdrawals are part of a wider reorganisation of regional services in the Lorraine region of France from that date.

### GREAT BRITAIN

At the time of going to press there are still three lines in Great Britain affected by the extreme weather conditions that hit the country in late December and early January. The line between Carlisle and Glasgow via Lockerbie (Table 151) is currently closed due to weakened bridge foundations at the Lamington viaduct on the River Clyde. The line between Llandudno Junction and Blaenau Ffestiniog (Table 160) is closed due to flooding at North Llanrwst. Both lines should reopen by the end of February, but check locally for up-to-date information and replacement services. The third closure is between Dover and Folkestone, where the sea wall has been undermined by strong winds and high tides and large cracks have appeared. Some sections must be completely rebuilt before normal services can resume. Tables 101 and 102 have been updated with the revised schedules, which includes replacement bus services over the affected section, and these will remain in place until further notice.

### FRANCE

The most significant rail event in France in 2016 was originally planned to take place on April 3 with the opening of the TGV Est high-speed line extension to Strasbourg. However, following the tragic accident in November last year when a test train derailed at high speed, the opening has been postponed for three months and the new faster services will now commence on July 3. A section of the route around the site of accident will initially be operated with just a single track and so there are likely to be some adjustments to the timings that were originally proposed.

Please note that most tables in our French section are currently valid until April 2, but we should have timings beyond this date confirmed in time for the April edition.

### ITALY

Not reported previously is the closure of the short line between Ancona and its port station, Marittima. Consequently, Table 632 has been deleted from our pages.

### SPAIN

Following the opening of the high-speed line between Olmedo and Zamora, services from Madrid to North West Spain have been considerably altered from February 1.

*Alvia* services on the Madrid – Zamora – Ourense route have started using the new section of high-speed line mentioned above. In addition, the newly introduced Zamora to Madrid *Alvia* service, which we reported on last month, now starts from Santiago de Compostela at 0515 with the corresponding return train from Madrid arriving back in Santiago at 2359 (Table 680).

*Trenhotel 852/851 Rías Gallegas* Madrid – Zamora – A Coruña/Pontevedra and *Trenhotel 752/751 Atlántico* Madrid – León – Ferrol have now been combined between Madrid and Monforte de Lemos and run via León, meaning Zamora is no longer served. One portion then continues to Pontevedra with the other part of the train running first to A Coruña before doubling back to Betanzos and then on to Ferrol. Tables 680, 681 and 682 have been updated with the revised timings and routings.

Services on the Madrid – Ávila – Salamanca route have been recast. One daily service between Ávila and Salamanca has been withdrawn together with a thrice weekly service between Madrid and Salamanca (Table 679).

*Alvia* train 4088 from Ponferrada to Madrid has been retimed to run 45 minutes earlier (Tables 681 and 682). The two pairs of *Media Distancia* trains between Madrid and León have also been retimed (Table 681).

The *Intercity* services that ran on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays between Miranda de Ebro and Bilbao to provide connections with trains from and to Madrid, have been withdrawn. Many *Media Distancia* trains between Madrid and Vitoria/Gasteiz and Irún have been retimed (Table 689).

It is no longer possible to show all services between Madrid and Valladolid in Table 663, so all *Avant* high-speed trains between these cities have been moved to Table 679.

### DENMARK and SWEDEN

Identity checks continue at Kastrup airport for passengers travelling from Denmark to Sweden. Eastbound Øresundståg services start at Kastrup and passengers from København are required to catch other services from the capital to Kastrup. There is no identity check if travelling westbound from Sweden to Denmark and Øresundståg services continue through to København, but there are fewer trains at peak times (Tables 703 and 737).

During this arrangement, *Snabbtåg (Sn)* services operated by Swedish Railways between Stockholm and København run only between Stockholm and Malmö (Table 730).

Identity checks are also currently taking place at the Danish border for those travelling from Germany, and at the Swedish frontier on sailings from Poland.

It is unclear just how long these procedures will remain in place, and as they may change at any time readers are advised to check locally or on [www.skanetrafiken.se](http://www.skanetrafiken.se) for the latest information.

### GERMANY

Timings on the routes between München and Salzburg/Kufstein are subject to change from February 26 because of engineering work taking place between München and Rosenheim. Special versions of Table 890 and the München to Kufstein section of Table 951 will be found on page 572, with timings valid from February 26 to May 9.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 34**

## What's new this month (continued from page 3)

### CZECH REPUBLIC

Private operator Regiojet now includes sleeping accommodation in its Praha to Košice overnight service (Table 1160), using former couchette cars purchased from Austrian Railways. Accommodation is in six-berth compartments, but there is a second option more like a sleeping car with one, two or three berths. In the latter all the beds are on one side of the compartment, whilst the other side remains as a seat so passengers can choose whether to sit or lie down. Unlike a conventional sleeping car compartment there is no washbasin. Wi-Fi is available and the company is considering the addition of air conditioning for the future.

### SLOVAKIA

Competition on the Bratislava to Košice route (Table 1180) has taken its toll and Slovakian Railways has withdrawn all IC trains from January 18. Friday train 1601 (now 1603) has, however, been diverted to Humenné via Prešov to replace Friday IC 1503 and there is a similar arrangement on Sundays in the opposite direction, although these trains are currently only dated until February 27 in timetables.

Private operator Regiojet, having announced an increased service on the Bratislava to Košice route from December, made a last-minute decision to cut back to three trains each way, as shown in Table 1180. One casualty is the overnight train, which ran on three days per week each way.

### SERBIA

Following receipt of additional information, further changes have been made to our Serbian tables, including the reintroduction of the route between Kraljevo and Stalać to our pages (Table 1372).

### TURKEY

It has been reported that rail services between Konya and Karaman may restart at some point this month (Table 1581).

### MOLDOVA

Moldova has issued a new timetable and tables 1726 and 1730 have been updated.

### SHIPPING

P & O Ferries will not operate the Larne – Troon route this year; all Larne sailings will be concentrated at Cairnryan port. Unfortunately, 2016 schedules were not available at press date (Tables 2005 and 2080).

### BEYOND EUROPE

This month's Beyond Europe section features South East Asia, Australia and New Zealand with tables numbered 6000 to 6510.

Malaysian Railways (KTM) is now running more electric ETS trains over the modernised Gemas – Kuala Lumpur – Ipoh – Butterworth – Padang Besar section of line. We understand that KTM will shortly introduce a completely new timetable for this route, probably from mid-February, and so we have taken the opportunity to completely recast Table 6000. Unfortunately full details were not available as we went to press but, when the new timetable starts, the diesel-hauled Intercity trains 1/2, 20/21 and 35/36, will no longer operate over the electrified section. Instead, at the southern end of the route, a diesel-hauled Intercity connection will be provided between Gemas and Johor Bahru Sentral. For journeys across the border into Thailand a twice daily diesel shuttle train, operated by the State Railways of Thailand, started running in December between Hat Yai and Padang Besar connecting with services operated by the new ETS trains and timings for these are included in Table 6000.

In Australia, Queensland Rail is issuing a new timetable on April 1 although, other than a few minor alterations to Table 6330, there are no major changes to services shown in our tables.

### RAIL PASSES

Our International Rail Pass feature has been fully updated this month. There has been some important changes to both *InterRail* and *Eurail* passes for 2016.

The flexibility of *InterRail* has increased with new global passes available for seven and fifteen days within one month. In addition the ten day pass, previously valid for travel within fifteen days, is extended to cover a one month period, and the five days within ten pass becomes five days in fifteen. However the most significant change is the inclusion of two free journeys for all *Global Pass* holders (one outbound and one inbound) between any station in their country of residence and its border, an airport or seaport.

Similarly, *Eurail* changes include a new seven day within one month pass, a five day within one month replaces the five day within ten pass, and the 21 day continuous pass is now valid for 22 days. Minor rebranding sees regional passes come under the *Select Pass* banner available for two, three or four bordering countries. One country passes continue and now include Scandinavia.

Finally, youth and senior versions of the *BritRail London Pass* are introduced.

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