



The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express

Introduction:

The world's most celebrated train, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express carries passengers across Europe in the style of a bygone era.

The glamorous carriages, sumptuous cuisine and personal service, which is beyond comparison, make a journey on the VSOE the perfect place for a celebration or special holiday.

Bombed, shot at and marooned in snow drifts, the history of the Orient-Express is both legendary and colorful.

The carriages which today form the famous Venice Simplon-Orient-Express each have a history of their own, with long years of service criss-crossing the frontiers of Europe, operating for a variety of railway companies. The carriages have taken on characters of their own as intriguing as the characters of those who traveled within their cozy confines.



Pioneers of Luxury Travel



The history of 'luxury' train travel can be traced back to 1864 when the innovative railway builder, George Mortimer Pullman, created a train in Britain, featuring the ultimate in nineteenth century technology and opulence and was far more advanced than anything that existed in Europe.

In the 1870's the first sleeping carriages and parlor cars in Britain went into service and for the first time meals were served on board a train. The first all Pullman train in Europe, the Pullman Limited Express, began operating in 1881. It ran from London to Brighton and was the first train to be illuminated by electricity.

Shortly afterwards, by connecting trains to ferries, George Mortimer Pullman made safe and comfortable train travel between London and Paris a reality.

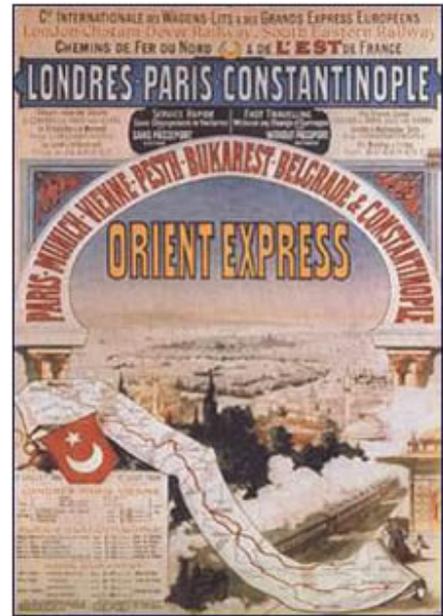
Georges Nagelmackers, a young Belgian railway enthusiast, also began building luxury railway carriages and gradually proceeded to do for continental train travel what Pullman had for Britain. In 1881 after experimenting with several demands, Nagelmackers introduced the first restaurant car aboard a continental train.

Continental Travel

With sleeping carriages and restaurant cars in place, Nagelmackers was finally able to fulfill his dream and on 4 October 1883 the first Orient-Express train service was inaugurated. The initial route ran from Paris to Giurgi (on the Danube in Romania), via Strasbourg, Vienna, Budapest and Bucharest.

By the turn of the century, the great age of rail travel was in full swing. The Simplon Tunnel - at 12½ miles, the world's longest - was built in 1906, cutting the trip from Paris to Venice significantly, and by 1921 the Orient-Express was running an extended Simplon-Orient-Express route to Istanbul.

The 1920s and 1930s were the heyday of the legendary train. Elaborate meals, decadent company and fine wines characterized this era of rail travel. Royalty, celebrities, courtesans and spies intermingled as they traveled in opulence throughout Europe. Small wonder that this provided the perfect setting for Agatha Christie's most famous work, *Murder on the Orient-Express*.



The Second World War put paid to all of this. Ferry services were cancelled and cross-frontier travel became impossible. In the depression that followed, economy not premier carriages were added to the rakes. Air travel was faster and cheaper and although the Orient-Express continued to operate until May 1977, its final run consisted of just one shabby sleeping compartment and three day cars.

Mystery & Intrigue



The Orient-Express has always been involved in mystery and intrigue, both fictional and real. Most famous of all is Agatha Christie's novel 'Murder on the Orient-Express' in which her detective Hercule Poirot investigates the murder of a passenger. The Hollywood movie, starring Albert Finney as Mr Poirot, was partly filmed aboard the train and in replica carriages in a studio.

As a star of six motion pictures the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express most recently helped Cruella da Ville make her escape to Paris in *102 Dalmatians*. There have been a total of 19 books written about the train and even a piece of music entitled 'Orient-Express Variations' has been written.

In reality the various carriages of the Orient-Express have been the scenes of history and intrigue. For example, Sleeping Car 3425 was a part of the Orient-Express service used by King Carol of Romania. Whilst His Majesty King Boris III of Bulgaria, a keen railway enthusiast, used to take to the footplate and drive the train himself.

Sleeping Car 3309 for example, was part of the service, which in 1929 was stuck in a snow drift for 10 days, sixty miles outside Istanbul, along with a full complement of passengers who survived only with the assistance of nearby Turkish villagers.

Some Orient-Express carriages also saw active service during the Second World War, either because they were taken over by the German Army or were being used by the US Transportation Corps.

Rebirth of a Legend

The fabled train was however saved by entrepreneur and rail enthusiast, James B. Sherwood. In 1977 he bought two of the trains carriages at a Sotheby's auction in Monte Carlo. The next few years and US\$16 million were spent locating, purchasing and restoring some 35 vintage sleepers, Pullmans and restaurant cars.

On 25 May 1982 the legend was reborn when the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express made its maiden run from London to Venice.

Today, the gleaming carriages of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express continue to transport passengers across Europe in exquisite surroundings on one of the most romantic journeys in the world.

The world of the Orient-Express is now truly international and passengers can enjoy a similar experience on board the Eastern & Oriental Express in S.E Asia and the Road To Mandalay in Myanmar (Ancient Burma).



Onboard Information

Step aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express and you step back into a more gracious, elegant age. Your personal steward, instantly available to attend your every comfort, will show you to your compartment of gleaming wood, polished brass, soft towels and crisp linen. Your comfortable compartment is a restful retreat offering panoramic views of ever changing landscapes.

Your meals on board will be unforgettable. Set the tone with a visit to the Bar Car, famous for its delicious cocktails and welcoming atmosphere. Then on to one of our three dining cars, softly muted lighting enhances the mood while fine linen, French silverware and heavy crystal invite you to prepare for a meal to remember.

The Dining Car



Meals on board the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express are an unforgettable delight. All dishes are freshly prepared onboard by French chefs, with the finest supplies taken onboard during the train's journey.

Lunch, dinner and brunch are served by the Italian waiters in one of the three individually styled Restaurant Cars: Lalique, Etoile du Nord or Chinoise. Breakfast and afternoon tea are served in passengers' compartments. Table d'hôte meals are included in the fare, while an à la carte menu and 24-hour compartment service is available additionally.

The Maitre D' will come to your cabin to take your lunch and dinner reservations.

Sample Brunch Menu

Brouillard d'Oeufs au Saumon fumé
Scrambled eggs with smoked salmon

Homard Rôti au Beurre de Cresson
Broiled lobster with fresh cress butter

Pommes Rosettes
Potato and chive whirls

Tarte Tatin
Caramelized apple tartlet

Café de Colombie
Colombian Coffee



Sample Dinner Menu

Homard rôti à l'Américaine
Fricassée de Legumés printaniers
*Baked lobster tail, Lobster and brandy sauce,
Stirfried spring vegetables*

Magret de Canard et Fois gras au Parfum de Truffes blanches
*Roast duck supreme, white truffle flavoured
"foie gras"*

Panaché de Pâtissons et petite Oignons
Baby pumpkins and silver onions

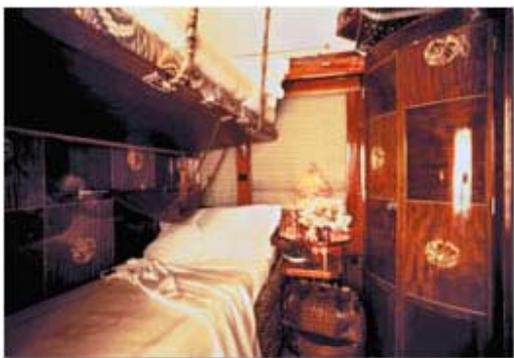
Pommes Cocotte
Sautéed potatoes

Plateau de Fromages de France
Fine French cheeses

Croustillants au chocolat noir et Glace à la Bergamote
*Crispy bitter chocolate and bergamot ice-cream
dessert*

Mignardises Café de Colombie
Colombian Coffee

The Sleeping Car



Traveling in private compartments, passengers are attended by Cabin Stewards throughout the journey, and are assured of attentive yet discreet service. Each compartment has its own original washbasin cabinet with hot and cold water, and at night-time becomes a comfortable bedroom, complete with soft towels and crisp linen.

Passengers may select from two types of compartment: Double and Single. Cabins convert in moments from daytime seating to a comfortable bedroom.



Cabin Suite



Combining two interconnecting cabins to create a private lounge with a banquette sofa, footstool and small table and a sleeping compartment with an upper and lower bed. A washbasin with hot and cold water is enclosed in a cabinet and towels and toiletries are provided. Facilities include 24-hour steward service called by a bell, international electric sockets (230 volts) and 115 volt socket for razors, individually controlled radiators supply heating. Some compartments are fitted with a personal safe. Overhead luggage racks are provided for the storage of a limited amount of luggage and two coat hooks and two hangers for hanging up clothes in each of the compartments.

Double Compartment (night time)



A private lounge during the day with a banquette sofa, footstool and small table converts to night configuration with an upper and lower bed. A washbasin with hot and cold water is enclosed in a cabinet and towels and toiletries are provided. Facilities include 24-hour steward service called by a bell, international electric sockets (230 volts) and 115 volt socket for razors, individually controlled radiators supply heating. Some compartments are fitted with a personal safe. Overhead luggage racks are provided for the storage of a limited amount of luggage and two coat hooks and two hangers for hanging up clothes.

The Bar Car



Famous for its delicious cocktails and welcoming atmosphere the Bar Car is the heart of the train. It is truly a unique, intimate and stylish experience that resounds to the voices of royalty, heads of state and celebrities such as Gregory Peck, Alan Whicker and Cher.

Transformed and designed by Gerard Gallet from a dining car, the bar car is the ideal rendezvous to enjoy relaxed conversation and warm to the skills of our resident pianist. Dressing for the occasion is all part of the experience. Our guide is that you can never be overdressed aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.

But whilst you relax in the Bar Car ponder this question – which came first, the baby grand piano, or the carriage that surrounds it?

The Boutique



Our intimate onboard boutique is located at the rear of the Lalique car.

What better way to remember this memorable journey, than to enjoy a gift from The Collection Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.

These train inspired home accessories include our original art nouveau brass table lamp and hand blown French crystal. Plus, classically fashioned ladies' and gentlemen's accessories in luxury pure silk, cashmere and velvet. So whether you are choosing something for yourself, or selecting a gift for a friend, it will forever remain a beautiful memento of your journey.

Onboard Train Staff



Our staff will be happy to assist you throughout your journey on board the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express:

Pullman Steward:

Your steward on the British Pullman train will serve your meals and any other drinks or refreshments you may require.

Cabin Steward:

The steward responsible for your carriage on the VSOE will be available at all times and may be called by the bell in your cabin. He will take care of your passport during the journey, change your cabin from day to night configuration, serve breakfast and other refreshments in your cabin as required.

Train Manager:

The Train Manager will be on hand throughout the journey. He is there to help should you have any queries while on board. If you should wish to speak to him, please tell your steward who will contact him on your behalf.

