



<https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/grand-railroad-hotels/index.html>

# Do the locomotion with me (Part II)

How do the Hotel and Train businesses intersect? What are some of the longest, nicest, or scariest train routes? Read on to learn more 😊!

## Hotels with Railroad Roots<sup>1,2</sup>

Many of the US grand railroad hotels were constructed between the 1880s and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was a fine time to be rich and a fine time to operate a luxury hotel (before cars and planes changed travel patterns forever). Some of those hotels are still taking reservations. For instance:

- *Grand Hotel*, Mackinac Island, Michigan - To meet a rising demand for suitable summer lodging on Mackinac Island, in 1886, the Michigan Central Railroad, the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad, and the Detroit and Cleveland Steamship Navigation Company partnered to form the Mackinac Island Hotel Co. The wood-frame Grand Hotel opened the following year to guests who arrived by steamer and rail to sit and socialize on the hotel's impressive 660-foot-long front porch. Rates were \$3 to \$5 a night 😊. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cars had arrived on the island but were quickly banned by a law that was strictly enforced in the 1930s. The island is still car-free today.
- *The Breakers*, Palm Beach, Florida - In the 1890s, magnate Henry Morrison Flagler extended the Florida East Coast Railroad to what is now West Palm Beach. After establishing the grand *Royal Poinciana* hotel in 1894 on Lake Worth, Flagler opened the oceanfront *Palm Beach Inn* in 1896. Renamed *The Breakers* in 1901 because of its proximity to the breaking waves, the hotel is in its third incarnation after fire destroyed the original wood-frame building in 1903 and another fire blazed through the hotel in 1925. Today's hotel, which opened in 1926, is a lavish Italian Renaissance-style resort. The rail station and the trestle that serviced it were destroyed in the 1930s, so cars are now the norm for arriving guests.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/grand-railroad-hotels/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand\\_railway\\_hotels\\_of\\_Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_railway_hotels_of_Canada)

- *The Greenbrier*, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia - Guests were “taking the waters” in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, more than a century before the railroad bought the resort and revived it for 20th-century visitors. In 1869, the first passengers stepped off the train practically on the resort’s doorstep, but it wasn’t until 1910 that the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway purchased the property with big plans for expansion. The railroad-built Greenbrier Hotel opened in 1913, complete with a new spa and golf course. Though rail traffic has long since declined in favor of cars and airplanes, the Greenbrier is still accessible by train.

Canada followed a path like that of the US, opening its first grand railway hotel, the *Windsor Hotel*, in Montreal in 1878. Although it was not owned by a railway company, the hotel was built to serve railway visitors from nearby Windsor Station. Given its location next to Montreal's main train station, the Windsor served for years as the permanent residence of executives of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and Grand Trunk Railway. The railways' role in constructing and operating large hotels was inaugurated with the opening of the *Hotel Vancouver* in 1888. Two weeks later, the CPR opened the *Banff Springs Hotel*, followed by the *Château Frontenac* in Quebec City, which quickly became the city’s symbol. Designed to rival any hotel in Europe its location overlooking the city made it an easily identifiable landmark as viewed from passing trains or ships plying the waters of the Saint Lawrence River.

## Fun Facts<sup>3,4,5,6,7,8,9</sup>

- The Trans–Siberian Railway which connects Moscow with the Russian far east is the world's longest direct rail route, running for 9,259 kilometers (or 5,753 miles). The journey passes through the Ural Mountains, Siberia's birch forests and Lake Baikal, taking six days according to *The Telegraph*. The second-longest route without changing can be found in Canada with the journey from Toronto to Vancouver covering 4,466 kilometers or 2,775 miles. Third place goes to China where the stretch between Shanghai and Lhasa covers 4,373 kilometers of 2,717 miles.
- Some train journeys are scarier than others. For instance, the Georgetown Loop Railroad (USA) is an engineering marvel that was built to access the silver mines in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A narrow-gauge track located in the Rocky Mountains and overlooking the terrifying deep valley will give you goose bumps throughout the journey. The Devil's Gate High Bridge on this route is the scariest point with strong winds coming from all sides!
- Japan's Shinkansen high-speed rail network is considered one of the safest worldwide. It opened in 1964. Since then, it has carried nearly 7 billion passengers without a single fatality due to collision. The only derailment occurred in 2004 during the Chuetsu Earthquake, but despite eight out of ten cars leaving the track there were no casualties.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.statista.com/chart/24638/longest-direct-rail-journeys/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://blog.akbartravels.com/beware-these-dangerous-train-routes-in-the-world-are-not-for-the-fainthearted/#:~:text=Connecting%20the%20cities%20of%20Jakarta,the%20scare%20creeps%20in%20instantly.>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.euronews.com/travel/2023/10/19/murders-spectres-smugglers-are-5-spooky-train-journeys-in-europe>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.trailfinders.com/blogs/the-world-s-9-most-scenic-train-journeys>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/bus-train/worlds-most-luxurious-trains#:~:text=Seven%20Stars%20in%20Kyushu%2C%20Japan,and%20a%20refurbishment%20in%202022.>

<sup>8</sup> [https://books.google.ca/books?id=h7i0fXpIIJC&q=how+railroads+grew+cities&redir\\_esc=y#v=snippet&q=how%20railroads%20grew%20cities&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=h7i0fXpIIJC&q=how+railroads+grew+cities&redir_esc=y#v=snippet&q=how%20railroads%20grew%20cities&f=false)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.up.com/customers/track-record/tr031020-time-zones.htm#:~:text=On%20November%2018%2C%201883%2C%20the,are%20still%20in%20place%20today.>

- The *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express* is mythical for a reason. The train's classic route runs from London to Venice, stopping in Paris and Verona on the way. Cars are adorned in Art Deco finery, creating an atmosphere of old-school glamour. The restored 1920s carriages exude mystery. The name 'Orient Express' conjures scenes of snowed-in rail cars as detective Poirot prowls the corridors in search of a murderer in Agatha Christie's thriller 😊.
- It's because of the needs of railroads that Americans now have four time zones! In 1883, the railroads adopted four U.S. time zones: Eastern, Central, Mountain and Pacific, which are still in place today. The time zones were set one hour apart, allowing railroads to coordinate train schedules across the entire country 😊.

Part of the fun of staying at one of the original grand railway hotels is to enjoy beautiful, sparkling clean rooms.

Unfortunately, staff shortage is the **Number 1** problem in the hotel industry. This is why offering an electronic tipping solution like **Tip&Go**, which can increase employees' earnings by up to 30%, could go a long way in encouraging hotel housekeepers to stay in the business.

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