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### **From My Desk at Hidden Spaces Travel**

There is something romantically mystical about trains. The melodic rhythm of wheels clacking on the tracks to the far-off sound of the whistle announcing its presence. The vision of standing on the platform with the bellows of steam surrounding you in a mystical haze. The

excitement of watching the train leave the station and turn the first bend with anticipation of the journey ahead. Young or old, the fascination with trains is ageless...timeless.

In the past ten years, luxury train travel has become more popular with travelers who want to step back into time in the opulence of yesteryear. They want to experience the beauty and majesty of new and far off places at a slower pace, so they can drink in the surrounding beauty without the hustle and bustle of schedules, crowds of people at every turn. These travelers are the ones that want to experience each destination and discover the hidden treasures that are waiting to be discovered.

When planning their vacation, many people automatically think of the beach, a cruise, or perhaps a mountain get away for a week. And like most of us who have traveled for a while, while those destinations are wonderful and great experiences, there are times where we long to experience something new, something different. If you fit into this category, then this issue of my monthly newsletter is for you.

This month, I wanted to highlight the possibilities of luxury train travel around the world. Like most travel options, there are different ways to step back into time, experience a destination through a new lens, and discover a different type of getaway that will leave you wondering why you hadn't thought of it sooner. So, come aboard, pour a glass of wine, and allow yourself to be immersed in the possibilities of luxury train travel.

**Travel Smart. Dream Big. Wander Well.**

Sonya Waters

Founder | Hidden Spaces Travel

## Train Travel Reimagined

While train travel carries a sense of romance and nostalgia, it's important to note that not all rail experiences are the same.

Around the world, train travel takes on different forms—ranging from elegant, multi-day luxury journeys to scenic routes through breathtaking landscapes, to short, immersive excursions closer to home.

Understanding these differences can help you choose the experience that best fits your travel style.

## Luxury Rail – Immerse Yourself in the Age of Elegance

If you are in search of a unique vacation—something you may never have considered—then look no further than luxury rail. These journeys offer a truly distinctive way to travel, where the experience itself becomes just as meaningful as the destination. Often described as 5-star hotels on wheels, every detail—from your private stateroom to the beautifully appointed dining cars—is thoughtfully designed with elegance and comfort in mind.

## Hidden Spaces Travel Tip

Depending on where a rail journey begins, travelers may need to take a short flight to the departure city. I can help coordinate the entire itinerary—including flights, hotels, and rail reservations—so that your journey is

While Europe is home to some of the most iconic luxury rail journeys, equally remarkable experiences can be found around the world—from the refined elegance of Africa’s Rovos Rail to the richly immersive journeys aboard India’s Maharajas’ Express.

seamless from start to finish.

### **The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express**

For those who love history and the idea of stepping back in time, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express offers a journey unlike any other. This iconic train reflects the timeless sophistication of an era when travel was graceful, intentional, and steeped in tradition. It once carried renowned figures such as Agatha Christie and members of European royalty and continues to evoke the romance and intrigue of that golden age.

As you move through its beautifully restored carriages, you can almost imagine the stories that unfolded within them—quiet conversations, elegant dinners, and the gentle rhythm of the rails carrying travelers across Europe.

Each stateroom is a hidden treasure, thoughtfully designed to reflect the refined glamour of a bygone era. With itineraries ranging from 6 to 13 days and space for just over 100 guests, these journeys offer an intimate, boutique experience. Because of the limited availability, planning 9 to 12 months in advance is highly recommended—but for many, it is well worth the wait.

### **The Royal Scotsman**

While journeys like the Orient Express capture the grandeur and romance of traveling across

Europe, the Royal Scotsman offers something more intimate—an invitation to slow down and fully immerse yourself in the beauty of a single destination. One is iconic and far-reaching; the other deeply personal and richly connected to place—both unforgettable in their own way.

The Royal Scotsman has been thoughtfully designed to capture that same timeless elegance, blending classic style with modern comfort.

Launched in 1985, its beautifully restored carriages reflect an Edwardian country-house aesthetic, with rich wood finishes, classic fabrics, and a warm, inviting atmosphere throughout.

Traveling through the breathtaking landscapes of the Scottish Highlands, this experience is smaller in scale, offering a more personal journey with curated excursions that allow you to connect more deeply with the region.

Depending on the itinerary selected, your overall vacation may also include additional hotel stays and connecting travel through destinations such as London. As with many luxury rail experiences, advance planning is recommended due to limited capacity.

### **Begin Your Journey**

Luxury rail travel offers more than just a way to get from one destination to another—it invites you to slow down, take in the beauty around you, and experience travel as it was once meant to be.

Depending on the journey, some itineraries may also include select overnight stays in luxury hotels, adding another layer to the overall experience while maintaining the elegance and ease of the journey.

There are multiple itineraries and experiences to explore, each offering something unique. If luxury rail has sparked your interest, I would love to help you find the journey that best fits your travel style.

You can email me directly or visit [www.hiddenpacestravel.com](http://www.hiddenpacestravel.com) to schedule your complimentary consultation.

## Scenic Rail – A Journey Through the Landscape

Not all rail journeys are defined by formal dining and historic carriages. Some are designed to showcase the natural beauty of a destination—where the landscape becomes the main attraction and the journey itself is centered around what lies just beyond your window.

In North America, scenic rail experiences offer a relaxed and immersive way to explore vast and breathtaking terrain. Routes such as the Rocky Mountaineer wind through the Canadian Rockies, revealing towering mountains, rushing rivers, and wildlife along the way. These journeys are less about stepping back in time and more about being fully present in the moment, taking in the ever-changing scenery at a comfortable pace.

Many of these journeys are designed as daytime experiences, with overnight stays in carefully selected hotels along the route—allowing travelers to both enjoy the scenery by day and explore each destination more fully.

This style of travel focuses on connection—to the land, to the rhythm of the journey, and to the quiet beauty that often goes unnoticed when traveling by other means. While the accommodations are comfortable and thoughtfully designed, the true highlight is the view itself.

Beyond North America, similar scenic rail experiences can be found around the world. From the expansive landscapes of Australia to the dramatic mountain crossings of New Zealand and the high-altitude

journeys through parts of South America, these routes offer a different perspective—one rooted in exploration and natural beauty rather than formality.

For travelers who are drawn to the journey as much as the destination, scenic rail offers a refreshing and memorable way to experience the world.

## Rail Excursions – A Taste of the Experience

Not every rail journey requires a multi-day itinerary. For those who are curious about train travel or simply looking for a unique addition to their trip, rail excursions offer a wonderful introduction.

These shorter experiences—often lasting just a few hours—focus on creating memorable moments along the way. From scenic routes through wine country to thoughtfully curated dining experiences, many excursions are themed, offering everything from wine tastings and culinary journeys to mystery dinners and scenic tours.

In places like California's Napa Valley and other destinations around the world, these experiences combine beautiful surroundings with local flavors, making them a perfect addition to an existing vacation—or even a special outing on their own. Some even offer the opportunity to host special events, such as intimate wedding celebrations or private gatherings in a truly unforgettable setting.



For many, these journeys become a first step—one that often leads to a deeper interest in rail travel and the desire to explore longer, more immersive experiences in the future.



## Where to Find Hidden Spaces Travel

I truly enjoy meeting and connecting with people in person—hearing about your travel experiences, your favorite memories, and the places you’ve always dreamed of visiting. If

you're in the area, I would love for you to stop by and say hello!

While you're there, feel free to enter our travel giveaway—it's just a fun way to say thank you for stopping by.

And if you know someone who loves to travel as much as you do, feel free to share this newsletter with them—I'd love to connect with fellow travelers.



**Nicole Snow was the winner of our travel basket giveaway at the Chester Trunk Show!**



**May 9**

9:30-4:30pm

16441 Court St, Amelia  
Court House, VA 23002



**July 2, 2026**

3pm - 11pm

4042 Anderson  
Highway, Powhatan,  
Virginia 23139



**TBD**

## Travel Smart Tip: Why Comprehensive Travel Insurance Matters

Luxury rail journeys may move at a slower pace, but getting there still requires thoughtful planning—especially when flights are involved.

Before you go, keep these tips in mind:

- **Arrive 1–2 days early** to allow for travel delays and adjust to time changes
- **Ease into your destination** by enjoying local food, culture, and surroundings before your journey begins
- **Allow extra time at the airport**, especially for international departures
- **Ensure you have proper identification**, such as a Real ID or passport
- **Pack essentials in your carry-on**, including medications and a change of clothes
- **Consider travel insurance** to protect your investment from unexpected disruptions
- **Plan pre- and post-stays** just as you would for a cruise—this enhances your overall experience

Working with a travel advisor ensures each of these details is thoughtfully coordinated, so your journey feels seamless from beginning to end.

Have a travel topic you'd love to see featured in a future newsletter? I would love to hear from you—simply email me at [swaters@hiddenspacestravel.com](mailto:swaters@hiddenspacestravel.com) and share your ideas.

If you know someone who enjoys travel as much as you do, feel free to forward this newsletter along. I'd love to connect with fellow travelers.

### Looking Forward

Next month's topic will be "Flexible Independent Travel"

## Sign up for the full experience

If you want to experience the allure of the rail travel as part of your 2026 plans, I would love to begin designing the experience with you.

Reply to this email or schedule a complimentary planning consultation by clicking the button below.

The best journeys begin with a thoughtful conversation.

— Sonya

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### Hidden Spaces Travel Agency

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