

What's new this month

WELCOME

This month's edition of the European Rail Timetable includes the latest updates to European rail schedules including many in Germany where engineering work alterations are affecting journeys at various locations around the country.

Our *Summer International Supplement*, which includes advance versions of all international tables valid from June 10, has been updated further and will be found towards the back of this edition from page 585.

ROUTE OF THE MONTH

For this month's travel report our regular correspondents, Susanne Kries and Nicky Gardner, offer a wonderful insight into rail travel in Ukraine where, on a recent visit, they sampled a three hour journey south from Lviv to Ivano-Frankivsk. Turn to page 36 and immerse yourself in this delightful journey through the Carpathian hills viewed from the comfort of a compartment in a Ukrainian sleeping car!

INTERNATIONAL

The commencement of Leo Express services between Praha and Kraków three times a week from April 1 (as reported in our April edition) did not materialise. However, we understand that a May or June start date is now proposed and provisional timings are shown in Table 99.

Duplex TGV sets have not been passed to run in Spain so TGV 8541, the 1252 from Paris Montparnasse, currently has to terminate at Hendaye (at 1735). This had been causing problems for passengers wishing to connect with *Hoteltrain 313* Surex/Sud Expresso for Portugal which leaves Irún at 1845. However, a helpful decision has been made to start the journey of train 313 at Hendaye (departing at 1835) meaning a comfortable connection is once again available (Table 45).

FRANCE

Chemins de Fer de Provence services between Nice and Digne are partially operated by bus until July 12 (Table 359). The affected section is between Plan du Var and St André les Alpes, although the bus replacement service may operate beyond these points on certain journeys. Overall journey times should be relatively unaffected, although certain minor stations are not served during this period. The summer steam service between Puget Théniers and Annot will once again operate, but only after the line has fully reopened to rail traffic.

NETHERLANDS

We have added timings of the recently introduced rail service to Eemshaven where trains connect with sailings to and from the German island of Borkum (Table 498). The new line to Eemshaven is an extension of the branch line from Groningen to Roodeschool, not previously included in our timetable.

ITALY

New Nuovo Trasporto Viaggiatori (NTV) services between Milano and Venezia will commence on May 1. Initially, there are five train pairs, three of which also serve Torino (Table 600).

SPAIN

Engineering work on a bridge at Redondela has been completed and *Alvia* services 4275/4354 now run as a rail service throughout between Madrid and Pontevedra (Table 680).

GERMANY

Two lengthy periods of engineering work that were due to end in April have been extended meaning amended timetables will remain in place for the time being. The line between Schwerin and Bad Kleinen, which has been temporarily closed since January 8, was due to reopen on April 15 but will now remain closed for a further eleven weeks with a revised reopening date of July 1. Tables 836 and 837 have been updated with timings until June 30, whilst a special version of Table 830 will be found on page 567 with amended schedules during this period. Work on the line between Berlin and Bernau started in February 2017 with services on the line to Stralsund via Pasewalk diverted and retimed. This line was due to reopen on April 1, but will now remain closed for another six months with work continuing until October 11. Tables 845 and 949 have been updated to reflect this change. Please note that the affected tables in the April edition were based on the original reopening dates and so should be disregarded.

Continuing on the theme of temporary line closures, the whole route between Freiburg and Donaueschingen is currently closed for an extended period so that upgrade work can be carried out. This is part of a major regional rail project known as *Breisgau S-Bahn 2020*. The service between Freiburg and Sebrugg is operated by bus until October 31, 2018, whilst the section between Tiisee and Neustadt will be closed to rail traffic until March 31, 2019. Journeys between Neustadt and Donaueschingen will be disrupted for an even longer period with no trains running until November 2019. Table 938 has been fully updated with the current bus schedules.

Engineering work north of Rosenheim will affect all services using the München to Salzburg and Kufstein routes from May 16 to August 5. Most services are retimed during this period with some services cancelled and others requiring a change of train at Rosenheim. A special version of Table 890, together with a panel showing changes on the affected part of Table 951, will be found on page 568.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The line between Tanvald and Harrachov, which due to the steep gradient has sections of rack and pinion (no longer used by regular trains), has gained through trains from Praha from April 14. The service is provided by extending two Praha – Tanvald trains through to Harrachov at weekends (Table 1142). The mountain resort of Harrachov is also served by the cross-border Liberec – Szklarska Poreba trains (Table 1141) which were introduced several years ago.

HUNGARY

Amongst several timetable amendments from April 8 is the retiming of train 18602 to leave Budapest 30 minutes later at 0835, although the arrival time at Keszthely remains unchanged at 1157 (Table 1220).

TURKEY

Since publication of our April edition, Turkish Railways has issued yet another version of its high-speed schedules, this time valid from April 5 (Table 1570). The latest changes appear to be linked to the recent introduction of Baskentray suburban services between Kays and Sincan via central Ankara. During construction work for the Baskentray project, a number of regional and main-line services were suspended, but there is currently no indication as to when or if these trains will be reinstated.

UKRAINE and MOLDOVA

Ukraine Railways had a general timetable revision from March 25 with many trains retimed. Amongst the changes are the withdrawal of the through sleeper from Sumy to Moskva (Table 1755), whilst the Chernihiv – Moskva portion of train 5/6 is reduced from daily to alternate days (Table 1740).

There are also some timetable revisions in Moldova from the same date. In particular, the Chisinau – Odesa train (Table 1720) has been retimed in both directions and now runs additionally on Fridays as well as at weekends.

BEYOND EUROPE

This month's Beyond Europe section covers North America and will be found on pages 570 to 583. All of our Amtrak and Californian tables have been updated with the latest information available. Please note that the revised San Joaquin services in Table 9330 start on May 7 and the *City of New Orleans* service shown in Table 9255 starts on May 8. *Brightline* services in Florida have been updated in readiness for the service extension to Miami (Table 9248).

Owing to the work on the Empire Connection rail link and Spuyten Duyvil Bridge, the *Empire Service*, *Ethan Allen Express*, *Adirondack* and *Maple Leaf* trains will all be rerouted from New York Penn Station to Grand Central Terminal between Saturday May 26 and Tuesday September 4. In addition, the *Lake Shore Limited* will only operate between Boston and Chicago, with New York City and Hudson Valley customers connecting with the *Empire Service* at Albany-Rensselaer. Amtrak has not yet finalised the schedule changes but we should be able to provide further details in our Summer edition.

We have received no further updates from VIA Rail in Canada since the last time this section appeared in February.