

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Cunard taps rail trend, offers luxury trip extensions by train

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The option to extend a Cunard voyage in Alaska with Rocky Mountaineer offers guests a chance to further explore the glacial wild. Image credit: Cunard

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

British cruise line Cunard is once again tapping into the appeal of sojourns by rail, this time in partnership with Vancouver-based luxury scenic train company Rocky Mountaineer.

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Passengers aboard Cunard's Queen Elizabeth ship, which sails through Alaska, now have the option to extend their expedition in one of two ways. Travelers can either book a three-night train ride after the fact, or a four-night rail excursion ahead of hitting the sea both packages enable guests to experience a wide variety of terrains and landscapes.

"Cunard partnered with Rocky Mountaineer for the first time in 2019 when we began offering voyages in Alaska again, and the positive feedback from our guests was resounding," said Jackie Chase, director of public relations at [Cunard North America](#), in a statement.

"We are always looking for ways to connect our guests with bespoke experiences and Rocky Mountaineer is an exceptional one that resonates with our guests and offers them an incredible way to see the beauty of Alaska from a different perspective," Ms. Chase said.

Land to see

Cunard is promoting a land-and-sea approach to travel with the partnership, which encourages an immersive mode of travel.

The summertime seaside experience, in and of itself, will feature onboard education from Cunard experts, bespoke afternoon teas alongside new dining options and a dance-filled ball plus other sources of entertainment.

Now, in addition, visitors can add what the brand's luxury train partner has to offer to that lineup herein, rail views become the ultimate luxury.



The luxury sightseeing tour company's train cars offer panoramic views of Western Canada and the American Southwest. Image credit: Rocky Mountaineer

Expansive glass-dome windows allow for 180-degree panoramic views of snow-capped mountains, shimmering lakes and winding canyons, offered from all angles, according to Cunard.

Between an onboard dining room serving culinary dishes with ingredients culled from the itinerary, and a complimentary bar, service is next-level.

Panoramic views of the Canadian mountains will surround the train, allowing guests to get a terrestrial feel for the region. The Rocky Mountaineer train is the only passenger train on the route, adding an unmatched level of exclusivity to the package.

Depending on the sail date, guests can explore Canadian landscapes by land for three or four nights.



Guests can expect pacific northwestern forests, snow-capped mountains and GoldLeaf service during their journey. Image credit: Cunard

While the three-night journey takes travelers on a journey from the seaside city of Vancouver to Calgary in the east, the four-night route gives visitors a chance to explore Banff, running west. Three-night tours start at \$2,850 per person, and four-night pre-cruise voyage tours start at \$3,250 per person.

"Train journeys are extremely popular now as travelers are looking for trips that offer the luxury of time, to unplug and immerse themselves in their surroundings," Ms. Chase said.

"This synergistic partnership allows guests to experience two iconic adventures in one trip sailing on Queen Elizabeth and riding the Rocky Mountaineer both in the utmost of luxury."

Tracking nostalgia

Cunard, which owns historic liners such as the Queen Mary 2, Queen Anne, Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth, can now be slotted into a long-running list of luxury brands embracing train travel, as the trend makes waves throughout the industry.

As the demand for locomotive experiences surges, brands such as Belmond are announcing new routes ([see story](#)).

The LVMH-owned brand in December 2022 announced its first train journey into the Rhne-Alpes region. The premiere trip will not take place until December 2023.



Belmond announces its alpine route will debut next December. Image credit: Belmond

Back in May of 2022, the brand also announced it would return to Rome ([see story](#)).

As the route was reinstated, Belmond's Venice-Simplon-Orient-Express embraces an ultra-luxe approach to travel. With five-star service, grandiose dcor and a 1920s aesthetic throughout, a campaign for the arrival fused stylish train travel with nostalgia.

The growing demand for nostalgic experiences can be felt across industries. This can be seen with Montblanc's recent promotion of century-old pen designs ([see story](#)), and Gucci's latest Jackie 1961 campaign ([see story](#)).

These journeys bring an age-old mechanism into the modern day, offering a picture of timelessness for guests to take hold of in an unchartered era of travel.

"Train travel is still a great option for those nostalgic travelers who are looking for a unique experience," said Damon Banks, editor of *LuxeGetaways Magazine*, in a statement.

"Cruise lines that can combine cruising with added train travel to see the local destinations are providing added travel options for savvy travelers," he said. "While there's no shortage of luxury travelers looking for new and unique travel adventures, many are choosing nostalgic travel options such as romantic train journeys and themed localized journeys after not being able to travel during the pandemic."