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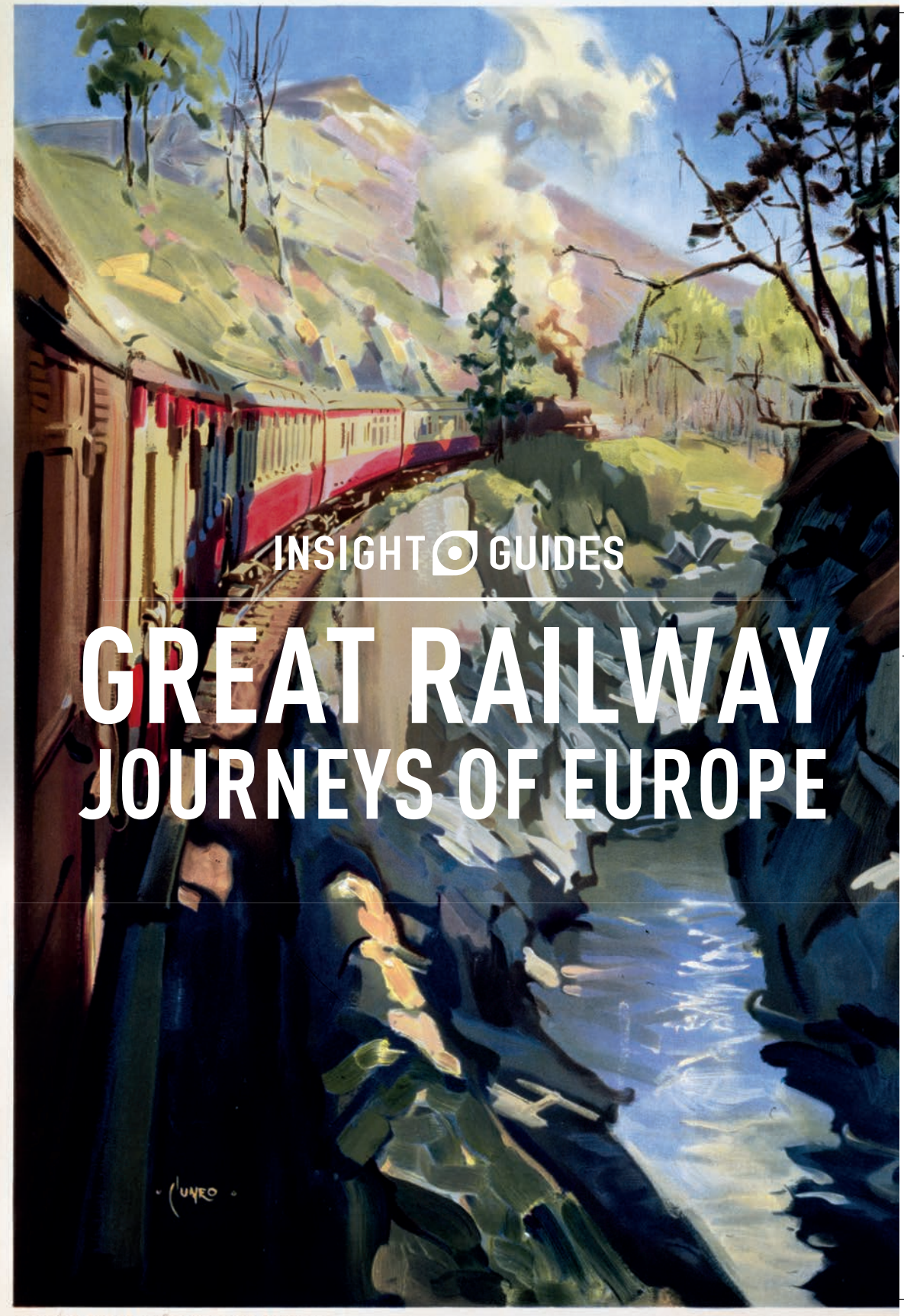
Opening Extract from...

GREAT RAILWAY JOURNEYS OF EUROPE

Insight Guides

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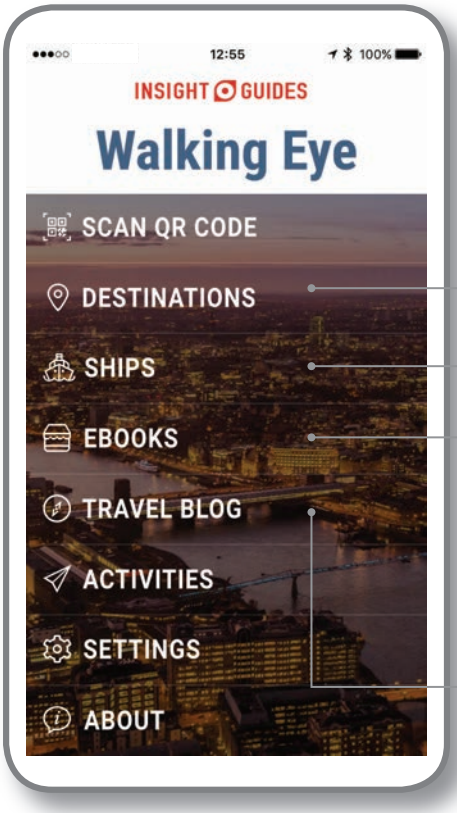
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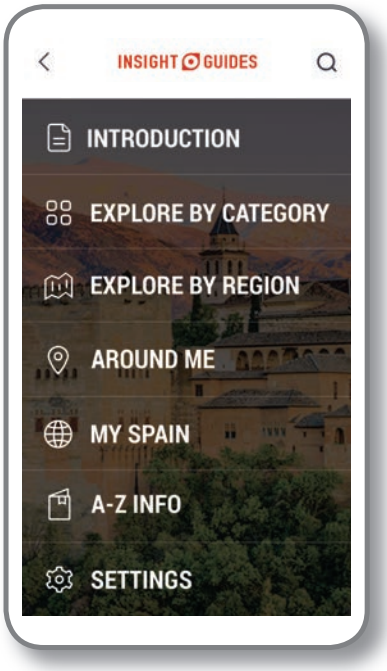


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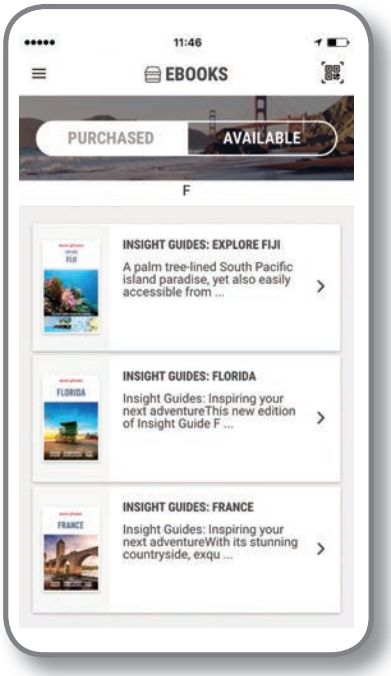


HOW THE DESTINATION CONTENT WORKS

Each destination includes a short introduction, an A–Z of practical information and recommended points of interest, split into 4 different categories:

- Highlights
- Accommodation
- Eating out
- What to do

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Inside front cover European Railways: Regional Maps
Inside back cover European Railways: Featured Route Maps

LEGEND

Insight on

THE BEST OF: EUROPE'S RAILWAY JOURNEYS



The Royal Scotsman passes Loch Dubh.

CLASSIC JOURNEYS

Settle–Carlisle. Britain's most spectacular main line, through wild, hilly countryside with great walks from stations. See page 113.

Seville–Madrid. The dash across the southern *meseta*, Spain's central plateau, lined with olive groves, ends in the splendid station of Atocha with its tropical garden. See page 172.

Geneva–Milan. The train is by far the best way to enjoy the picturesque northern shore and vineyards along Lake Geneva, which just happens to be special enough to be a Unesco World Heritage Site. See page 187.

Train passing Lake Geneva.



LUXURY TRAINS

The Royal Scotsman. There's no more stylish way to see Scotland than a journey aboard this sumptuous train. See page 106.

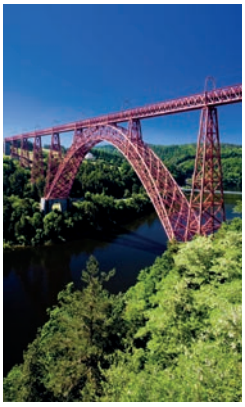
The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express. Its history, immaculate period carriages, outstanding food and perfectly delivered service make this the most romantic of trains. See page 80.

El Transcantábrico. Luxury on the narrow-gauge railway along the Bay of Biscay on Spain's northern coast. See page 165.

Grand suite on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.



SCENIC BYWAYS



Garabit Viaduct, France.

Shrewsbury–Swansea. Linking a succession of spa towns, this line traverses some of the finest landscapes in Wales. See page 116.
Clermont Ferrand–Nîmes. This meander through the Cévennes Mountains and the valleys of the Massif Central called for impressive engineering works. See page 136.
Trier–Koblenz–Giessen. Both parts of this journey astride the Rhine follow rivers but the landscapes are very different. See page 258.
Sweden's Inlandsbanan. Few railways in Europe traverse such remote country as this seasonal line up the spine of the country. See page 280.

ISLAND RAILWAYS

Corsica. An efficient metre-gauge railway runs through spectacular mountains and valleys, and is the best way to see the island. See page 154.
Mallorca. The island has a developing and efficient railway system, but the most scenic journey remains the link between the capital and Sóller. See page 177.
Sardinia. The astonishingly circuitous 4.5-hour journey between Arbatax and Cagliari takes you through the tangled *macchia* and ancient woods of the Seulo Mountains. See page 224.

The Soller Tramway, Mallorca.





Glacier Express on the Oberalp Pass.

MOUNTAIN RAILWAYS

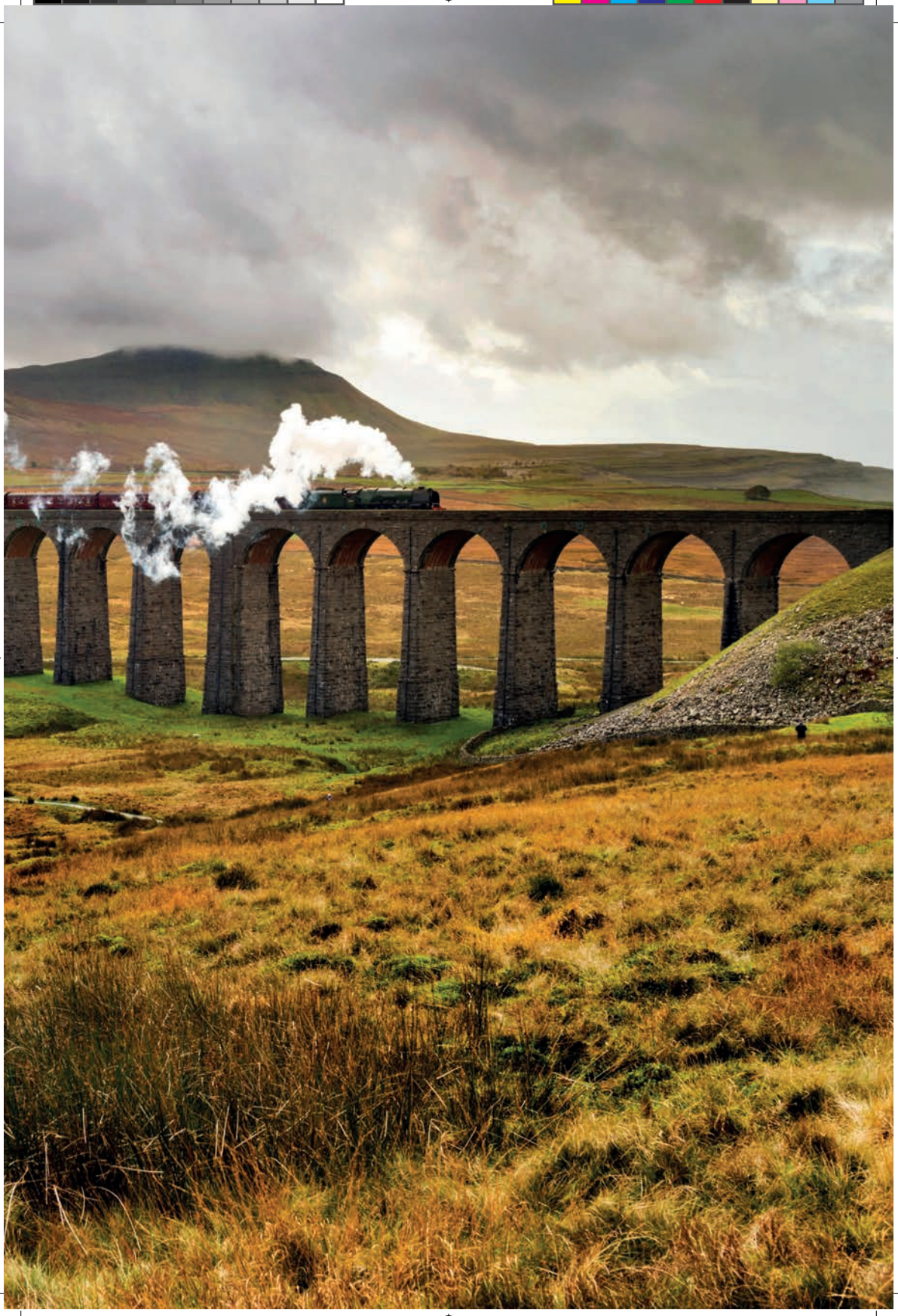
Le Train Jaune. Yellow narrow-gauge trains clatter across the hills of the Cerdagne with the mountains of the Pyrenees seldom out of sight. See page 153.
The Glacier Express. Europe's finest mountain railway journey, between Zermatt and St Moritz, is extremely popular, so booking is vital. See page 192.
The Harz Mountains. The narrow-gauge network, made up of three lines, that threads the historic landscapes of the Harz is one of the most characterful in Europe. See page 262.

The Brocken Railway runs through the Harz Mountains.





The Thames-Clyde Express, hauled by The Duchess of Sutherland locomotive, crosses the Ribblehead Viaduct in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.



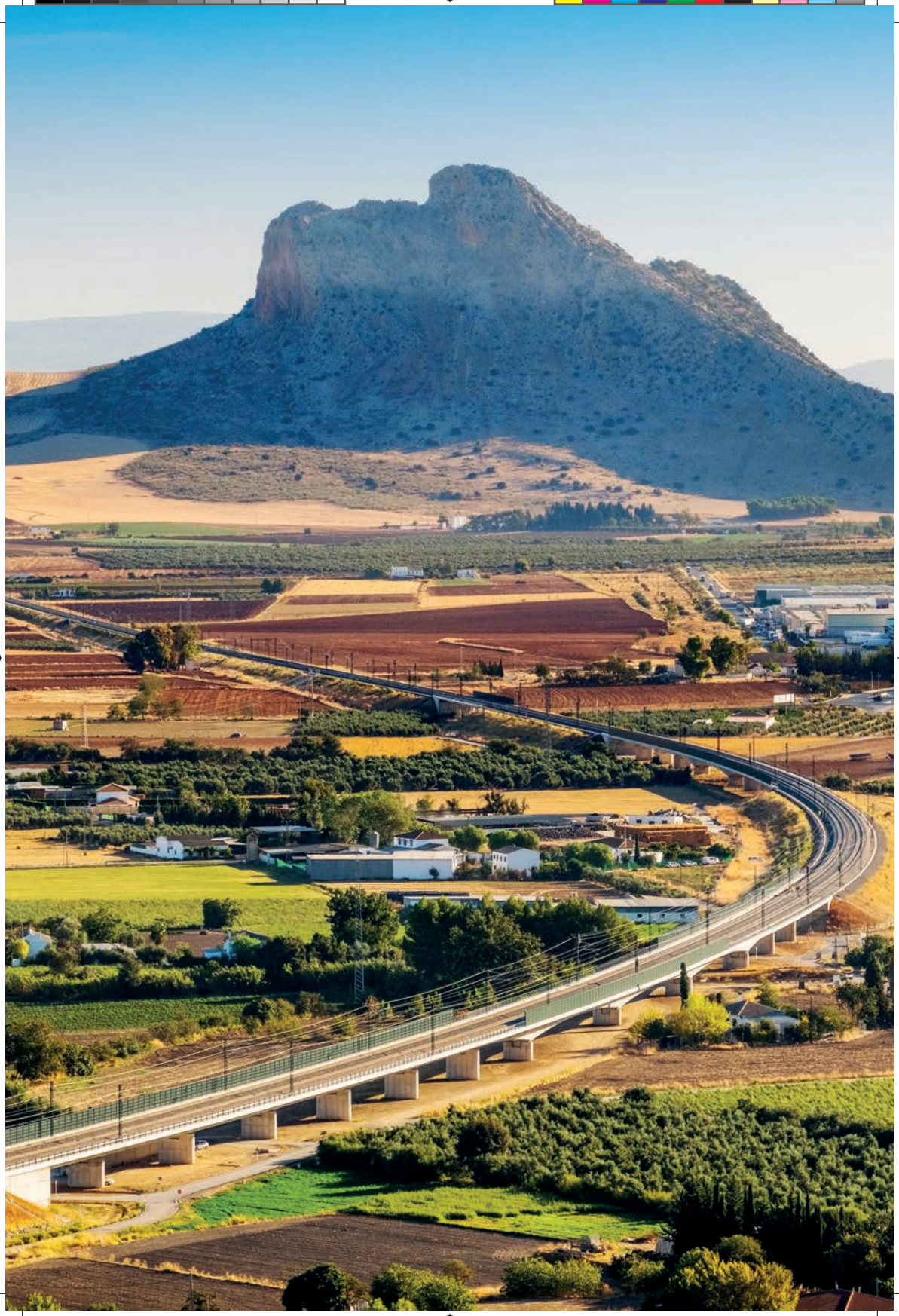


Cogwheel railway with Mount Schynige Platte in the background, Bernese Oberland, Switzerland.





The AVE high-speed line passes La Pena de los Enamorados (Lover's Rock), in Andalucía, southern Spain.





The Falkenstein Bridge passes over the Niederfalkenstein Castle, Austria.

EUROPEAN RAIL TRAVEL

The magic of train travel lies in its ability to provide an endlessly changing procession of landscapes and cultures



Train track runs along the coast in Calabria, Italy.

'Dear Victoria, gateway to the world beyond England. How I love your continental platform, and how I love trains anyway. Snuffing up the sulphurous smell ecstatically, so different from the feint, aloof, distantly oily smell of a boat. But a train, a big snorting hurrying, companionable train with its big puffing engine, sending up clouds of steam and seeming to say impatiently, "I've got to be off, I've got to be off, I've got to be off", is a friend.'

This book is for those who can identify with these words, written by Agatha Christie, or who think they might be able to, given the chance. Of the various modes of travel, only sailing ships and the grand liners have rivalled the train in the affections of their users and the wider public. For a century and a quarter, their appeal was bound up with the atmosphere and character of the steam railway, which artists, composers and novelists sought to capture. Yet even today, with the romance of steam confined to heritage railways and the occasional forays of museum locomotives, railways continue to exercise an immense appeal.



ICE train in Diersfordt, Germany.

Even at its most basic, the train remains one of the most civilised forms of overland transport. The freedom train travel gives to work, read or stare out of the window with one's thoughts is, for millions each day, unrivalled. As the playwright Stephen Poliakoff said, one of the joys of train travel is the way the landscape rolls past the window like a film at the cinema.

For travellers intent on exploring and experiencing a country, train travel has its rewards. Robert Louis Stevenson said that the best way to see a country was from the window of a train. After all, what can you learn from the window of a plane? For Paul Theroux 'A train isn't a vehicle. A train is part of a country. It's a place.' Although European trains are not the mobile souks of a country such as India, they still offer the opportunity to meet people; only the most reclusive of rail travellers are without their stories about people met and conversations enjoyed.

This book highlights some of the great European railway journeys and gives advice on how to use the railway networks, including a range of

passes that make train travel both simpler and cheaper. Most of the journeys have been selected for the scenery that passengers enjoy, though some are included as important links between other journeys or as epic transcontinental migrations that call for a couple of nights' rest and recuperation at their end. Though air travel has whittled away the number of overnight trains, there are still enough left to create that unrivalled sense of anticipation that accompanies the late evening departure of a long train of sleeping cars from beneath a dark vault of ironwork. By dawn it may have crossed several borders, and passengers awake to quite different landscapes and architecture, best appreciated from a seat in the restaurant car for breakfast. Part of the magic of European rail travel is the variety of landscapes and cultures encountered in such a compact area. In just a few hours the train can have migrated from western affluence to eastern influences and from northern chill to southern warmth.

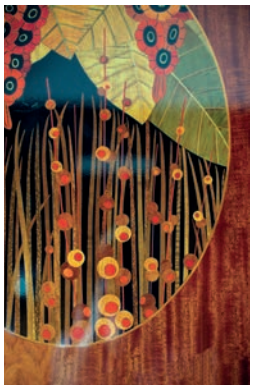


Crossing the Laxgraben Viaduct, Switzerland.

By travelling by train rather than plane or car, you are making a major contribution to minimising the environmental impact of travel. With tourism one of the fastest-growing global industries, it is more crucial than ever that more environmentally friendly forms of transport are chosen by individuals and encouraged by governments.

HOW WE CHOSE THE JOURNEYS

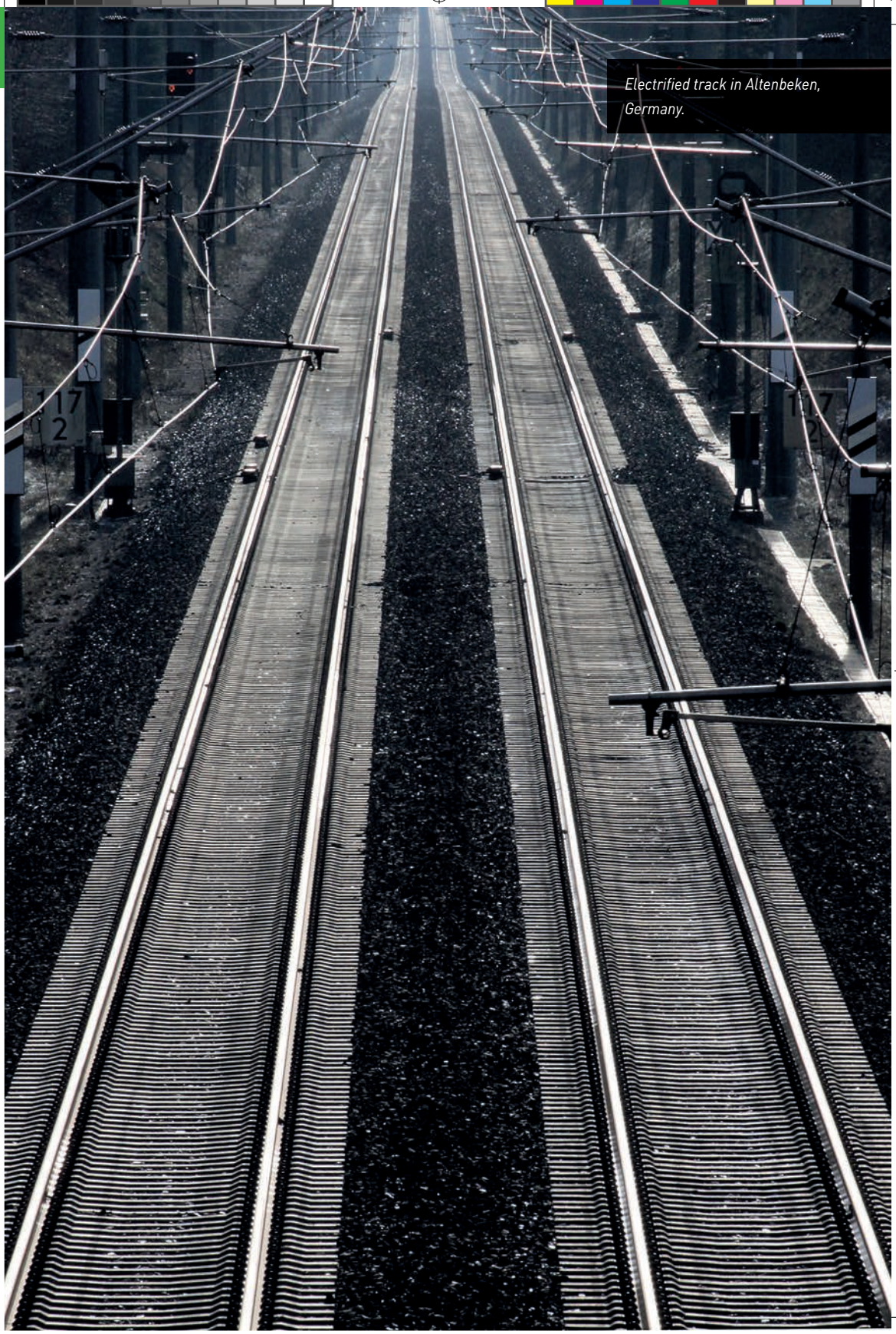
The routes in the book have been chosen either for their scenic merit or because they are notable in other ways. For instance, the Paris–Marseille and Seville–Madrid high-speed lines are included because of the remarkable speed and smoothness of the journey. Others, such as Paris–Moscow, have to be considered 'great' journeys for their romance and history. It is worth nothing at this point, that this is a subjective exercise.



Wood panel detail on the Orient Express.

With such a huge number of routes to choose from, and with limited space, we have focused on regular, scheduled services that appear in national rail timetables (and the European Rail Timetable). In a few instances, other, privately operated, routes have been included; these vary from the five-star luxury of such famous 'cruise trains' as the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express and El Transcantábrico, to small mountain railways such as La Rhune in the French Pyrenees. Heritage railways, however, have not generally been described: selected listings of these, together with railway museums of note, can be found at the end of each 'journeys' chapter, with their locations marked on the relevant maps.

The decision was made to concentrate on the journeys themselves rather than the start and end points of the route. A brief list of essential sights has been included for the major cities where the routes begin or end or through which they pass.



Electrified track in Altenbeken, Germany.



1952 British Rail poster titled 'On Early Shift', depicting a train approaching Greenwood Signal Box, New Barnet.

