

Slow travel by train – its back

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Slow travel by train - its back. A number of

years ago I when I was doing my doctorate I was allowed go one foreign conference. The one I wanted attend was in Barcelona and I decided to go by train, not wanting to fly. In those days the high speed line from Paris was under construction. In fact I was staying at a hotel above the station which was severely disrupted due to the work. So I decided to go by sleeper. (I had travelled a lot by sleeper in the past, both in the UK, trans-Siberian to China, in China and in Malaysia/Thailand amongst other places.) In those days SNCF and Spanish Railways ran a joint sleeper service. The trip was not without its problems due to a problem with excessive heating on the trains - both ways (I was in exactly the same compartment physically). Nevertheless sleepers seemed to me to offer a good compromise method of long distance travel - after at night most people want to sleep most of the time - so its effectively dead time. However, even at the time it was clear that the European train companies were shutting down their sleeper services. There have been some exceptions since then. Honourable mention goes to Eurostar who do an overnight ski train to the French Alps. With the rise of XR and Greta Thunberg its clear that slow travel by train is back. Imagine my delight when I heard over the last few weeks that after DB closed their sleepers Austrian Railways have taken over some of their routes even buying some German stock and are starting to reopen a variety of routes around Europe. It looks like slow travel by train is back see seat61.com for details. Neil

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