

Indian Historical Trains – Popular Attraction

Mountain railways built recently may not be very fascinating considering the current technology. However, mountain railways that are over 100 years old are engineering marvels that are definitely worth seeing.



Three mountain railways in India that are over a century old are the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, the Nilgiri Mountain Railway, and the Kalka Shimla Railway.

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

This mountain railway which is popularly known as the "toy train" because it is relatively small in size was finished in 1881 and is 88 km long. The train is still powered by steam and it runs from Siliguri to Darjeeling. Between the two towns the train passes through eleven stations. One of those stations is Ghoom which happens to be at an altitude of 2258 m and is the second highest railway station in the world.

The route offers the passengers spectacular views which include a breathtaking view of green valleys as well as an amazing waterfall.

The Nilgiri Mountain Railway

This railway is much smaller than the Darjeeling railway as it is 45.88 km long. The railway links Mettupalaiyam and Udagamandalam.



It has three distinct sections. The first section is a 7 km stretch through Tamil Nadu's central plain from Mettupalaiyam to Kallar, the second section consists of a tropical jungle which is uninhabited. This second section is the most interesting as it consists of 208 curves and has 13 tunnels.

The final stretch of 18 km goes through Nilgiris which is a forest predominantly filled with eucalyptus and acacia trees before finally coming to a stop in Udagamandalam.

The Kalka Shimla Railway

This is a narrow railway that was built in 1903 and runs for 96 km from Kalka to Shimla. It has 103 tunnels and 864 bridges. Out of the 103 tunnels, the longest tunnel is the Barog tunnel which is 1144 m long.

Of all the three railways, this one has the greatest history including a story about a British engineer who committed suicide after he was unable to successfully create a tunnel in the mountain.



The three mountain railways have been there for over a century and are financially supported by the high number of tourists that use them every day. They offer scenic views of the hills and are one of those adventures that you will remember for a lifetime. If you are heading to India then try one of the three railways.

Three tips to keep in mind before traveling by rail in India: The railways are not always open over the year and this is mostly due to the weather. During winter or in the rainy season, the mountain railways remain closed for safety reasons. It is therefore advised that you consult your tour operator about the best times to visit the country.

The trains have several stops on the way and you could choose to either make a stop on any one of the small stations and linger around or you may choose to just enjoy the journey without making any stops. Although there are no problems in getting to the station, it is important that you make prior arrangements to ensure that you are on time for the train and that you do not miss the train.

The best part about these three mountain railways is the fact they are not one of those common tourist sites that you only get to see, they are one of the few attractions that you actually get to experience. So if you're tired of the ordinary tourist sites and are looking for something unconventional, the mountain railways in India are definitely something that you should consider trying.

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