

A fashion advertisement featuring a woman with blonde hair styled in an updo, wearing a headband with pearls and small flowers, dark eye makeup, and dark red lips. She is dressed in a short-sleeved, knee-length leopard-print dress with a ruffled collar. She is sitting on a train, looking down at a black smartphone she is holding in her hands. She is wearing a large, ornate gold bracelet on her left wrist and a ring on her right hand. The background shows the interior of a train car with warm lighting and curtains.

# GIRLONA



ver the past 12 months, I've been on nearly 40 flights – and I don't feel good about it.

The Swedes have a word for this: *flygskam*, which translates literally as 'flight shame'. The environmental impact of air travel has shifted Swedish views over the past few years, with more people committing to low-carbon travel choices. And flight shame has now gone global. Reports say it could halve growth in air travel over the next few years. When you realise a Eurostar trip from London to Paris emits 90% less greenhouse gas than the equivalent flight, and produces less carbon per person than a car journey from central London to Heathrow, it's hard to justify flying such a short distance when there are other ways to travel.

And while it is perhaps easier for Swedes to make these choices with their higher wages and longer holiday allowances, seeing activist

**"Getting the train feels like more of an adventure, whereas flying can be an ordeal"**

Greta Thunberg brave the Atlantic to get from Plymouth to New York makes our choice of plane or train seem straightforward. Lucy, an audio producer, got the train to Palermo in Sicily from London as she's determined to fly less. "It felt like more of an adventure and part of the holiday, whereas I often feel like flying is a bit of an ordeal to endure to experience the holiday," she says. Her advice for others wanting to do the same? "Don't be intimidated, there are so many resources to help you. The website seat61.com has incredible detail on train journeys. Also, stock up on podcasts and overpack your picnic."

As we're all now more aware of our individual impact on the environment, it's becoming a factor in our personal travel choices and in the wider world: *The Guardian* has committed to considering the climate in their travel coverage and there's debate about frequent flier benefits like air miles. What's clear is that it's about travelling smarter. We still want to explore the world, but the way we do it is something we have the power to change.

# TRAIN

**...AND OTHER WAYS TO ESCAPE FLIGHT SHAME**

WORDS: BRE GRAHAM



## EXPLORE EVERY INCH OF HOME SOIL

### CORNWALL

The Cornish coast is so dramatically beautiful, you'll feel so much further away from home. If you're looking for a seaside break, swap your cheap flight for a train. You'll have just as romantic and luxurious a trip in Cornwall as you would overseas.

Stay at stunning clifftop hotel The Scarlet for the restorative sea views and an award-winning spa. If the weather is grey, throw on a jumper and walk along the beach (there's a back gate from the hotel) to the coastal path. Pick your way down the stairs cut into the cliff at Bedruthan Steps, but check tide times first: this beautiful golden beach can only be accessed when the sea is out. Then come back to warm up in your own outdoor hot-tub. The sustainable eco-hotel also boasts a pool overlooking the Atlantic and a restaurant with an ever-changing menu.

**Trains from London to Bodmin Parkway from £90 return.**

**Rooms at The Scarlet from £230 per night; scarlethotel.co.uk**

### KENT

Leave work on time on a Friday and you could be pouring yourself a glass of wine in the cosy

Romney Marsh Retreat in just over an hour and a half. Get the train from London to Rye in East Sussex (the tiny village of Appledore is closer, but getting a taxi is easier from the larger station). Romney Marsh is a local ecosystem rich in both wildlife and history: try and spot the beautiful and rare Sussex Emerald moth, or walk along the shingle at Dungeness and visit filmmaker Derek Jarman's garden at Prospect Cottage, stopping for fish and chips at The Pilot Inn.

The Romney Marsh Retreat is a labour of love from couple Amy and Charlie, who did up their old workshop and transformed it into the ultimate book-lovers' escape. With two bedrooms, a roll-top bath, huge bookshelves and a village pub just a short stroll away, it's an ideal winter retreat.

**Trains from London to Rye from £12 each way. The Romney Marsh Retreat sleeps 2-4 people, from £140 per night; kiphideways.com**

### THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

The train to Aberdeen from any English city is like a holiday in itself, and even if you start in Scotland,



CURL UP WITH A BOOK IN FRONT OF THE FIRE AT THE ROMNEY MARSH RETREAT

you're still on board for the best bit: the extraordinary views and seal-spotting as you travel along the coast. To pass the time, bring some art history books or a pencil and notepad to sketch the scenery, because when you arrive at the hotel, you'll be inspired.

The Fife Arms, an hour and a half's drive from Aberdeen train station, opened earlier this year. Owned by art dealers Manuela and Iwan Wirth, the lobby boasts a Lucian Freud painting, the tearoom has a Picasso and outside

in the courtyard stands a Louise Bourgeois spider. Situated in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park (just around the corner from Balmoral Castle), you can spend the day hiking trails and watching wildlife before a spot of whisky tasting in the art deco bar Elsa's, inspired by Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli.

**Trains from London to Aberdeen from £36 each way. Rooms at The Fife Arms from £250 per night; thefifearms.com**



SOAK UP VIEWS OF THE RUGGED CORNISH COAST AT THE SCARLET HOTEL



# SWAP A SHORT FLIGHT FOR A RAIL ADVENTURE

## TANGIER, MOROCCO

Yes, you read that right – you can travel by train from London to Morocco. This trip is a proper old-school adventure, so take 10 days or so off work. It will take you via Paris and Barcelona – spend a night in each along the way – before the final ferry across the Strait of Gibraltar to North Africa.

Tangier has always been one of the most interesting food cities in the world. The cuisine has influences from both Spain and France, but is distinctly Moroccan. Drink fresh fig juice and order all the seafood at Populaire Saveur de Poisson, then check in to Dar Nour guesthouse. From the roof, watch the sunset and look out over the sea at how far you've come.  
**Trains from London to Tangier, via Paris and Barcelona, from £160 each way. Rooms at Dar Nour from £66 per night; [darnour.com](http://darnour.com)**

## HELSINKI, FINLAND

Take the train through mainland Europe for an eco-friendly route to the Nordic countries. Two trains

and a ferry and you can be in Helsinki, one of the most forward-thinking, coolest cities in the world, with Finland pledging to be carbon neutral by 2035. Spend a morning at the new Amos Rex art gallery, explore the Design District or seek out the best salmon soup. The one thing you can't miss? Löyly Sauna.

Saunas are an intrinsic part of Finnish wellness culture. Set on the edge of the Baltic Sea, Löyly is stunning, eco-friendly and will leave you feeling fresh after your train journey. Stay at the nearby Hotel St George, a minimalist's dream where quotes from literary gems are placed on your pillow.

**Trains from London to Helsinki, via Hamburg and Stockholm, from £180 each way. Rooms at Hotel St George from £197 per night; [stgeorgehelsinki.com](http://stgeorgehelsinki.com)**

## AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

By the time you've factored in check-in, security and everyone's inevitable airport Boots shopping spree, Eurostar's three-and-a-half-



HELSINKI'S HOTEL ST GEORGE DOES MINIMALISM WITH FLAIR

hour direct service to Amsterdam from London St Pancras will be faster than a 45-minute flight. This route also results in 80% less carbon per passenger than a flight, with the new high-speed rail service transporting the equivalent load of eight flights per day, 50 flights per week and 2,600 flights per year.

The city is a great alternative to Paris for a grown-up and glamorous weekend away. Stay at the Conservatorium, just across

the street from the Van Gogh Museum. It recently received the Green Globe sustainability certification and is home to the best spa in the Netherlands. It's a short walk to Koffiehuis De Hoek, where the hardest choice of your trip will be made: which topping to have on your Dutch pancakes.

**Trains from London to Amsterdam from £35 each way. Rooms at the Conservatorium from £340 per night; [conservatoriumhotel.com](http://conservatoriumhotel.com)**

## ONLY GO LONG-HAUL ONCE EVERY FIVE YEARS

### BRAZIL

Home to the Amazon rainforest, toucans, sloths, and caipirinha cocktails, Brazil is a holiday unlike any other. In just under 12 hours you can be in Rio de Janeiro, and with a new route from budget-friendly Norwegian Air, it's easier on the wallet than ever. Brazil's delicate ecosystems are already suffering, so it's important to travel around the country with as little impact on the environment as possible.

Travel Local is an agency that helps you explore Brazil without

having a negative impact on local communities. Their 'Brazil by Women' trip is run by female-led organisations and helps to fund their work. On it, you'll learn a lot about the people and culture of the Amazon, as well as exploring the cities of Salvador and Rio. It's generally a 20-day trip but it can be customised depending on your interests.

**Flights from London to Rio de Janeiro from £540 return. Brazil by Women trip from £3,690 for 20 days; [travellocal.com](http://travellocal.com)**



### MIAMI

Visit Miami and you'll get several holiday destinations in one. Grab Cuban breakfast pastries at Islas Canarias Restaurant and Bakery in Little Havana; take in the hip shops and Caribbean culture in Little Haiti; walk Ocean Drive and admire the art deco architecture and mammoth margaritas, and join South Beach's LGBTQ+ crowd.

At the moment, though, the best thing to see in Miami is the booming art scene in Wynwood, just 20 minutes from the beach. Among cool restaurants in old warehouses – like the amazing Mandolin – you'll find galleries housing some of America's best modern art. It's huge, so take some time to explore, and stop off for a slice of key lime pie before heading back to the Miami Beach Edition hotel to watch the sunset.

**Flights from London to Miami from £300 return. Rooms at Miami Beach Edition from £360 per night; [editionhotels.com](http://editionhotels.com)**

### AUCKLAND

New Zealand is just about the furthest country you can travel

to from the UK, and therefore the almost 25-hour flight has a big impact on the Earth. Trips like this are costly on both the environment and your wallet, so start planning and saving early to make your trip count.

You can hike the otherworldly Tongariro Crossing and see volcanoes and luminous blue sulphur pools, or check out the country's world-leading sustainable fashion scene – get bold frills at Maggie Marilyn and graphic unisex tees at Kowtow.

The old docklands area in downtown Auckland is being transformed with 'eco-architecture' and in early 2020 the greenest hotel in the country, The Hotel Britomart, is set to open. Surrounded by boutiques like sustainable lingerie brand Lonely and restaurants showing off local produce, the hotel stands on the waterfront looking out over the harbour. Yes, Auckland is far away, but it's so worth it once you're there. **Flights from London to Auckland from £700 return. The Hotel Britomart is due to open in early 2020; [britomart.org](http://britomart.org)**

