

# Day-trippers get back on track for bank holiday weekend

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Train travellers will be packing their buckets and spades and getting back on track this weekend as new figures show ticket sales to seaside destinations for the bank holiday weekend have surpassed pre-pandemic levels.

Data from the rail industry shows that ticket sales to seaside destinations have more than doubled compared to last year's August bank holiday (up by 117%) and have even surpassed the same pre-pandemic weekend in 2019 (up by 17%). With people making the most of the Great British summer, this marks the first week where leisure travel has surpassed pre-pandemic levels in many locations across the country. Leisure travel nationally has risen to 97% of pre-pandemic levels since 'Freedom Day' on 19 July – driven particularly by short distance trips.

Struggling seaside businesses will feel the benefit as day trippers by train splurge on gifts, ice creams, fish & chips and even hotels this bank holiday. According to research by WPI Economics, carried out on behalf of the Rail Delivery Group, train passengers travelling to seaside destinations for leisure spend on average £116 per trip. This includes an average £40 on food and drink, £31 on accommodation, £23 on shopping, £13 on other travel and £10 on entertainment and culture. This adds to £46bn spending associated with all

leisure travel by rail in Great Britain.

Young people are particularly keen to get back on board for leisure trips. Total sales of railcards, which give people a third off most leisure fares, are up 6.5% compared to 2019, driven by sales of 26-30 and 16-25 railcards – beating industry expectations. Journeys with the 26-30 railcard have increased to 300k a week (up 43k journeys since the beginning of June) and journeys with the 16-25 railcard are up to 1.03m journeys a week (up 49k journeys since the beginning of June).

While leisure journeys are recovering quickly, commuting and business journeys by rail are still well below pre-pandemic levels. Overall, rail industry revenue is just 59% of that seen in 2019. To encourage more people to take the train, last week the rail industry launched its biggest national marketing campaign in a generation, under the strapline ‘Let’s get back on track’. Rail companies have also worked with government to introduce new Flexi Season tickets to provide value to returning commuters dividing their time between home and the office.

Rail companies are ensuring bank holiday revellers can travel with confidence by continuing extra cleaning, providing information about busy services and providing ventilation that refreshes the air in carriages every six to nine minutes. Passengers are encouraged to check before they travel and can use National Rail’s Alert Me by Messenger service to receive personalised information about their journey, including alternative routes if their chosen service is disrupted or predicted to be busy, at [nationalrail.co.uk](https://nationalrail.co.uk).

Jacqueline Starr, Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group, said: “At the end of every train line are livelihoods and businesses that will depend on rail to be the difference they need to recover, so as we look forward to a bumper bank holiday weekend, leisure passengers can feel good that they’re supporting a fair, clean recovery while they’re beating the bank holiday traffic jams.

“We’re asking customers to sign up for personal alerts about their journey through National Rail on Messenger so that they can make the most of their day off.”

VisitBritain Deputy CEO Patricia Yates said: “We are delighted to see people traveling to and enjoying our coastal regions and it’s fantastic to see so many headed out and about to enjoy the best of the Great British Summer for this Bank Holiday Weekend.

“With the convenience, ease and sustainability of domestic rail travel, this boost will have a positive impact on our coastal regions, boosting economic growth and spreading the benefits of tourism across Britain.”

The vast majority of Britain’s rail network (over 95%) will be open for business as usual this bank holiday as Network Rail’s engineering work has been planned to minimise disruption to passengers with very few lines, stations and destinations impacted by their £90m investment programme to deliver a better and more reliable train service for passengers in future.

*Photo credit: Rail Delivery Group*