

A rail fun way to enjoy fall

Capture the splendor of autumn via one of these train excursions

BY HARRIET EDLESON

When the green of summer turns to the orange, red and yellow of fall, riding the rails is a great way to see the leaves change color.

There are several choices when it comes to leaf-peeping by train. You can journey north through the Hudson Valley to Montreal, west and north to Niagara Falls and Toronto, up the New England countryside or through the Canadian Rockies.

The farther north you travel, the earlier green turns to gold, crimson and brown. Leaves typically begin to change in the third week of September and tend to peak by early to mid-October farther south.

Here are five train trips to try:

■ **Amtrak's Maple Leaf, Adirondack, Vermonter and Ethan Allen Express** journey through New York and New England and into Canada. Trips range from two to 14 hours. All trains travel through the Hudson River Valley except the Vermonter, which traverses the Connecticut countryside to St. Albans, Vt.

The Ethan Allen Express runs from New York City through Saratoga Springs to Rutland, Vt., which is the home of the Norman Rockwell Museum. The Maple Leaf takes in Niagara Falls en route to Toronto, and the Adirondack heads north to Saratoga Springs along the western shoreline of Lake Champlain to Montreal.

All trains leave from Penn Station. www.amtrak.com; 1-800-USA-RAIL.

■ **Great Train Escapes Rail Tours** operates the New England Fall Foliage Express, an eight-day/seven-night tour that carries travelers through all six New England states by rail and motor coach.

Ride the Mount Washington Cog Railway, a steam locomotive that traverses some of the steepest tracks in the U.S.; the Cape Cod Central Railroad, which snakes past sand dunes and cranberry bogs; the Conway Scenic Railroad's Crawford Notch Train, which goes past mountains, brooks and waterfalls, and Amtrak's Vermonter into New Haven.

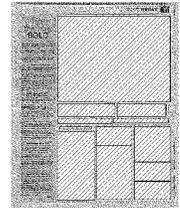
Tours depart from Boston Sept. 29-30 and Oct. 6-7. Lodging is included each night in hotels or inns. 1-888-544-RAIL.

■ **Rocky Mountaineer Vacations** operates the Western Explorer, a seven-night excursion that includes two days aboard a train (the Rocky Mountaineer) plus motor coach travel. The train leaves from Vancouver or Calgary in the neighboring province of Alberta. See wildlife in Jasper, or view Pyramid Falls and the Canadian Rockies' Mount Robson. Take a "snocoach" to see breathtaking views of blue water gushing beneath the Athabasca Glacier. You also see Lake Louise and the resort town of Banff.

Book departures from Sept. 29 to Oct. 10. rockymountaineer.com; 1-877-460-3200.

■ **Grand Luxe Rail Journeys** operates Colorado's Rocky Mountains seven-day route between Denver and San Francisco. Relax in a 1953 dome car with a 360-degree view. See the red cliffs of Glenwood Canyon and Canyonlands National Park from dining and lounge cars. Visit Lake Tahoe, Napa Valley and Salt Lake City. By night, sleep onboard in a private mahogany-and-brass cabin.

Departure dates for fall foliage viewing are Sept. 29 and Oct. 6, 13 and 20. americanorientexpress.com; 1-800-320-4206.



Canadian Pacific Railway operates the Royal Canadian Pacific luxury train trip through the Canadian Rockies. The train travels west from Calgary, stopping in Banff and Lake Louise, and crosses the Continental Divide to the Kicking Horse River Valley. Mahogany-and-walnut-paneled rail cars create a romantic journey through the Rockies as the leaves begin

turning. The train also traverses through the Columbia River Valley to Cranbrook for a private tour of the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel.

Other highlights are visits to the UNESCO World Heritage site, Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump in the foothills of the Rockies, and a family-owned cattle ranch dating back to 1912. cprtours.com; 1-877-665-3044.

