



The guide Transport hotels

Your abode to nowhere

David Whitley has the solution for travellers who reckon the journey is half the fun.

When most of us travel, we can't wait to get to the destination. The train, plane or boat that gets us there is a means to an end.

But not everyone subscribes to this theory and enterprising hoteliers are discovering a market for people who want to stay in converted forms of transportation.

It's possible to stay in renovated rail carriages, permanently moored houseboats and retro caravans in many locations, yet there are also plenty of quirky options for those who want the feeling of being on the move while staying perfectly still.

Old warhorse

Cruise Hotel, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
 Due to open later this year, the Cruise Hotel is the latest incarnation of the SS Rotterdam. The old warhorse is one of the most successful cruise ships of all time, putting in a sterling 41 years of service before being retired in 2000.

It has had a refit and taken up a permanent mooring on Rotterdam's waterfront.

It's not a radical revamp and the rooms are still essentially cabins – imagine signing up for a cruise but without the ship actually moving anywhere. The cabins are decked out in one of three cruise-style themes: the Manhattan and Bahamas themes pay homage to former ports of call, while the Original cabins hark back to what the SS Rotterdam once was.

Details From €95 (\$186) a night for an inside cabin to €250 a night for the Royal Suite. See hotels.nl/rotterdam/cruisehotel.

Escape artistry

Capsule Hotel, currently Den Haag, the Netherlands (although they have a habit of moving around)

The most ridiculous of the Dutch transport options is the Capsule Hotel.

The "rooms" were originally designed as escape pods for oil rig workers but have been turned into rather strange and cramped accommodation.

Guests can relive the end sequence from *The Spy Who Loved Me*, hold their noses as they use the chemical toilet and attempt to work out why the hell the artist owner has seen fit to deck out the ridiculous orange contraptions with mirrorballs and fairy lights.

Details From €50 to €150 a night depending on

the level of luxury required. See capsulehotel.info.

Icebreaker

The Alexander Henry, Marine Museum of the Great Lakes, on Lake Ontario, Canada
 Slightly more comfortable is the Alexander Henry, a former icebreaker used on North America's Great Lakes.

It doesn't pretend to be luxury accommodation but it's comfortable enough and has an engaging old-time feel.

Guests sleep in the cabins and are served breakfast in the officers' mess.

Due to weather conditions, the Alexander Henry is closed for the Canadian winter.

Details Rates start at SC\$78.75 (\$94) a cabin and include breakfast and entry to the museum. See marmuseum.ca/alexhenry.html.

Boeing kitsch

Jumbo Hostel, Stockholm, Sweden

Hotelier Oscar Dios thinks he has come up with a solution to that age-old conundrum: What to do with a decommissioned Boeing 747?

Dios has bought one, gutted it and converted it into what is unquestionably the world's strangest hostel. It's parked outside Stockholm's Arlanda Airport and the interior has been given a kitschy, 1970s-style makeover.

The cockpit, naturally, has been dubbed the penthouse suite and is the only ensuite option on board. Guests are invited to go for a walk on the wings or, if feeling romantically inclined, get married on them.

TRV

Details Dorm beds cost SEK350 (\$62) a night; the cockpit suite costs SEK3300. Prices include breakfast and free Wi-Fi. See jumbohostel.com.

Geek alert

De Soto holiday cabin, De Soto, Wisconsin, US

Railroad geekery in the US is prolific and partially accounts for the trend of turning cabooses (brake vans or guard vans) into motels. The interiors are stripped and transformed into homely cabins.

The bright red one in country Wisconsin, which dates back to 1954, has a kitchen, fireplace, barbecue, full-size bath and a hot tub. There are bunk beds or a double futon and it can easily accommodate a family of four.



Details It's \$US150 (\$227) a night or \$US750 a week for a caboose. See holiday-rentals.co.uk/p119732.

All aboard

Railholiday, Cornwall, Britain

There's a growing number of British takes on the caboose motel. It's possible to stay in train carriages in Yorkshire, Sussex and Shropshire. But the most interesting options are in

Cornwall. Railholiday offers stays in a 1957 compartment coach, a 19th-century luggage van and one of only three Great Western Railway travelling post offices ever made.

The three accommodation options are spread across the county and each sits next to a picturesque little station.

The company is also working on six other restorations.

Details Deals start at £195 (\$416) for four nights in the Old Luggage Van. See railholiday.co.uk.

Chop chopper

Winvian, Litchfield Hills, Connecticut, US

This country resort offers just about every conceivable form of wacky accommodation, from treehouses to caves but the most awesome is the US Coast Guard helicopter that has been turned into a "cottage".

It's not as cramped as you might expect – this is a big beast and some of the amenities are in

the surrounding hangar rather than in the chopper itself.

Details Eye-wateringly expensive. Expect to pay \$US1700 (\$2570) a night. Meals and drinks are included. See winvian.com.

Trains, planes and boats

Woodlyn Park, Waitomo, North Island, New Zealand

Why offer one when you can offer three?

Woodlyn Park has a train, a boat and a plane as accommodation.

The train is a 1950s rail car converted to sleep six – although two will be sleeping on a pull-out couch. There are three rooms and the train is surrounded by farmland and animals.

The boat (or the Waitanic, as the owners insist on calling it) had a previous life as an anti-submarine patrol in World War II and has been converted into four motel units.

Trumping the lot is the Plane Motel.

It's a 1950s Bristol Freighter and was allegedly one of the last Allied planes to leave Vietnam during the war.

It still has its camouflage paint and has been divided into two units.

Both the cockpit and tail unit can sleep four but be warned, both involve a fair bit of clambering up ladders.

Details It's \$NZ150 (\$120) a couple a night on the train; from \$NZ185 a couple a night on the Waitanic; and \$NZ150 a double on the Bristol Freighter. See woodlynpark.co.nz.



Tickets please ... (clockwise from top) the Jumbo Hostel in Sweden; Cornwall's Travelling Post Office; inside the surprisingly roomy US Coast Guard chopper in Wisconsin