

TravelWatch - *ISLE OF MAN*

Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers

www.travelwatch-isleofman.org

Passenger Information – UK Rail Fares

SIMPLER FARES: UK rail fares were “simplified” under three headings during 2008.

- **ANYTIME** fares – which are fully flexible – buy anytime, travel anytime of day. **Anytime Single** or **Anytime Day Return** are valid only on the date shown on the ticket. **Anytime Return** tickets must be used on the specified day outward and the return must be made within one calendar month. Break of journey allowed.
- **OFF PEAK** fares – buy anytime – travel off-peak. Single and Day Return tickets are available for travel on the date shown on the ticket Return tickets must be used within one calendar month. Time of travel restrictions apply but will vary from route to route - enquire when you book. The cheaper the fare, the more restrictions are likely to apply. The cheapest tickets in this category are referred to as **SUPER OFF-PEAK**.
- **ADVANCE** fares – buy in advance for travel on specified longer distance trains – single tickets only, so for a return you need to buy two singles. Fares are subject to availability – tickets are normally released to book up to 3 months in advance and the earlier you book the better your chance to obtain the lowest fares.

Railcard Holders can benefit from 1/3 off most types of tickets, and in some cases may have a wider choice of trains on which OFF PEAK fares will be available. Full details of Railcards, which are available for 16-25, Family and Friends, Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons, can be found on www.railcard.co.uk through which Railcards may be purchased on-line. Railcards can also be purchased in person from the Ferry Travel Shop at the Sea Terminal in Douglas.

HOW CAN THE CHEAPEST FARES BE OBTAINED?

- The **cheapest fares** are usually the ones with the least availability and the most restrictions – so booking early (but not more than 3 months ahead) is usually a good idea. Tickets bought on the day will always be the most expensive.
- **Sail and Rail** combined boat/train tickets are usually good value, especially if used in conjunction with a Railcard. These can be purchased on-line (see below), at most main UK stations or in person at the Ferry Travel Shop in the Sea Terminal. For further details see: www.steam-packet.com/SteamPacket/Sail-and-Rail/
- For UK rail-only tickets, buying **two singles** may be sometimes be cheaper than buying a return e.g booking 10 weeks ahead the lowest single fare available (with a railcard) between Heysham Port and Falkirk High was £9.50 whereas the lowest return (on the same trains) was £31.40. Booking closer to the date of travel the return fare may turn out to be the best option. It is also worth looking at 1st class single fares which occasionally work out the cheapest option if all the lowest standard class fares have been sold.
- The cheapest **ADVANCE** fares are often only available on direct services, so if your journey involves changing trains, it is worth checking whether a cheap ticket may be available on the main-line section of your route and then buy separate tickets for the local journeys at each end.

WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO BUY UK RAIL TICKETS?

- If you live in the Isle of Man buying tickets on the internet is often the best option, although you can obtain Sail-and-Rail tickets in person through the Ferry Travel Shop. In the UK you also have the option of buying tickets at main stations in advance or on the day of travel.
- Most of the UK Train Operating Companies e.g www.virgintrains.co.uk and www.londonmidland.com provide internet booking facilities all UK train services. The main on-line ticket agency is www.thetrainline.com who will charge you for delivery and use of a credit card.

This information is believed to be correct at the time of publication (March 2009) but is provided without guarantee. Intending passengers are advised to check details with the operators concerned.