Britain’s longest train journey to be scrapped after more than a century

The UK’s longest direct train journey is being axed after more than 100 years. CrossCountry said it would cease to operate the route from Aberdeen to Penzance as part of a series of changes set to take effect next month.

The 774-mile route, which takes approximately 13 hours and 20 minutes to complete, passes through 35 stops and offers passengers views of Britain’s diverse landscapes.

Since its launch in 1921, the train departs from Aberdeen at 8.20am, travelling through cities such as York, Bristol, Taunton, and Truro before arriving in Penzance at 9.31pm.

According to the Express, passengers spend nearly two hours stationary during the journey as people get on and off at each stop.

However, as part of its regular timetable updates, CrossCountry has outlined changes planned for 2025. The historic Aberdeen to Penzance route will make its final run on May 16, with the new schedules starting on May 18, reports Cornwall Live.

Those interested in experiencing the last direct journey can purchase single standard class tickets starting from £138.60.

Travel expert Simon Calder, writing for The Independent, said: “As an advocate for rail travel, it’s a touch sad that the longest direct train in the UK is being curtailed – but the number of people who actually travelled the 13-and-a-bit hours from northeast Scotland to southwest England was minuscule.”

Calder acknowledged the disappointment of losing the service

but pointed out the silver lining: “the main line through Cornwall from Plymouth to Penzance will remain well served, and if the CrossCountry core is better served due to the redeployment of rolling stock and staff, that will be a net gain.”

The revised schedule means that the journey will start in Aberdeen and end in Plymouth and take 11 hours and 30 minutes, shortening the route by 80 miles. Passengers will be able to connect with other services to continue their travels into Cornwall.

A CrossCountry spokesperson said: “Amending our Aberdeen to Penzance service from May 2025 will mean a more efficient timetable for our train crews and a more convenient service for our customers, making a day trip from Bristol and the west of England to Penzance more viable.

“The new timetable will also deliver an additional service in each direction between Glasgow and the North East of England towards Birmingham.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Aberdeen to Penzance route was curtailed at Plymouth, with full service only reinstated as recently as May 2023.

With the discontinuation of the Aberdeen to Penzance line, the title of Britain’s longest non-stop journey will now be held by the Caledonian Sleeper, which operates overnight from London Euston to Fort William, taking approximately 12 hours and 45 minutes.