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Consumer Choice Center's

EUROPEAN RAILWAY STATION INDEX

2026

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ZURICH REIGNS AS THE UNDEFEATED CHAMPION

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Introduction

Railway stations face troubled times. Some prove they can survive, even thrive and prosper, amid difficulty. Such is the case for Zurich Main Station, which has retained its number one spot on the overall list and continues to top the list of the largest stations, defined as those serving more than 100 million individuals a year. It sits at 101 points, despite serving more consumers than ever at 175 million. The current number two, Gare du Nord, surged from 15th place last year, owing to lower waiting times, more punctual trains, and an increase in the number of shops and restaurants available. Formerly in 10th place, Amsterdam Centraal also emerged as the third-best in the rankings and first among the medium-tier venues (comprising entries between 50 and 100 million passengers) on account of lengthier ticket office operating hours, and a larger number of shops and kiosks on offer.

Wrocław Główny continues to set an excellent standard for Eastern Europe, being the number-one smallest station (those with traffic below 50 million passengers) and fourth in the general rankings. Its score has only suffered slightly, from 98.5 in 2025 to 96.5 in 2026, owing to an increase in delayed trains. Bern's score is unchanged at 94.5 points. Yet, as other stations improved, it has dropped from third to fifth overall and now ranks second in the medium category. Similarly, London Bridge's score is still 90 points, but it is now in eighth place. Gare Montparnasse and Saint-Lazare are currently sixth and seventh, respectively. Their fortunes hinge on improved waiting times. Kraków Główny, a new entry on the list, is in ninth place with 89.5 points, the number one new entry in the index, and the second strongest among less populated stations. London St. Pancras International rounds out the general top 10 and shares the podium with Kraków Główny in the "On the Move" category.

Some stations do well in their own niche. Madrid Puerta de Atocha is the fourth-strongest entry among busier venues, with 88.5 points, followed by Roma Termini (87.5 points). Utrecht Centraal is the fifth medium station at 86 points, followed by Stockholm Centralstation in sixth at 83.5 points. Poznań Główny is the fourth-best small station at 86.5 points, joined by Luzern Station in fifth place with 86 points.

Other stations are not so fortunate. Previously fourth place overall and second among the busiest stations, Berlin Central Station is now in the 19th and sixth spots in the two lists. The explanation is that there has been a dramatic increase in wait times and delays. While London Paddington was in 5th place in 2025, it is in 20th place in 2026. Once more, the reason is more delays and a shrinking selection of shops. At the very bottom of the list are Bremen (47 points), Wien Meidling (51.5 points), Dortmund (52 points), Munich East (52.5 points), and

Stuttgart (56 points).

Obviously, Germany's train services continue to suffer. The immediate problem lies in decaying infrastructure. According to the Transport Ministry's [public statements](#), over half the country's 33,500 kilometers of rail tracks are in a mediocre, poor, or deficient state. One-fifth of the entire network requires replacement, while some elements, like signal boxes, are often more than a hundred years old. Despite its deteriorated state, attempts to reform and modernize rail have faced significant setbacks. Stuttgart 21, Deutsche Bahn's largest project to build a new high-speed rail connection and station, has been postponed nine times; originally slated for completion in 2019, it is once [again delayed](#) in 2026 and is now scheduled for 2031.

While not directly attributable to stations, malfunctions and outages caused by this unfit infrastructure are becoming common, leading to delayed trains leading to chaos, and overcrowding. On June 24th 2026, Deutsche Bahn stopped all trains for around two hours due to an [outage](#) in the Global System for Mobile Communications for Railways, GSM-R, the main communication tool between train drivers and traffic control centers. Consumers were left stranded at stations because train operators could no longer communicate with one another via an outdated radio system.

Change may be coming for Deutsche Bahn. The previous CEO, Richard Lutz, [stepped down](#) in October 2025 and was replaced by Evelyn Palla. The company is aiming for a punctuality rate of 69–72% by 2030, rising to 80% by 2035. The German federal government is also promising to allocate [€150 billion](#) of its €500 billion from the Special Fund for Infrastructure and Climate Neutrality to the rail network.

However, more than anything, Deutsche Bahn requires a system of private ownership and competition that provides active information on the circumstances facing consumers and providers via price signals, incentivizes the discovery of problems ahead of time (not reactively), gives the operator a stake in solving these dilemmas quickly in the form of profit and loss, and prevents wasteful spending.

Germany is not alone in this respect. Network Rail, the British public body under the Department of Transport responsible for managing stations, embankments, signals, and tracks, is facing similar difficulties for similar reasons. In the UK, a [90-second power cut](#) at Network Rail's Manchester Operating Center on the 6th of August 2026 caused thousands of passengers to endure delays and cancellations across the West Midlands, affecting distant stations such as Birmingham New Street and London Euston. The outage was a symptom of the

wider disease of centralized vulnerability. After all, Britain's rail network depends on only 12 such operating centers, all run by the same body: Network Rail.

With two separate trains derailed in 24 hours, [one in Essex](#) and [one in Lewes](#), it is becoming increasingly obvious that a single institution cannot shoulder the complexity of millions of consumer interactions in real-time. Nevertheless, the Burnham government is forging ahead with the Passenger Railways Services' Public Ownership Bill and the plans to nationalize train operators. West Midlands Trains (responsible for London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railway) came under public administration in February 2026, followed by Govia Thameslink in May 2026. Chiltern Railways is scheduled to be absorbed by September 2026, followed by Great Western Railway at the end of the year, with other companies next in 2027. Instead of attempting to repeat a tactic that has already failed with the demise of British Rail in 1965, the UK government should deepen competition over infrastructure. It is no wonder that the highest-scoring British entry in the index, London St. Pancras Intl., [welcomed Virgin Trains'](#) announcement to launch a rival service to Eurostar by 2030. Prime Minister Burnham and his Cabinet should follow the blueprint of St. Pancras' success for all of Britain.

While taking these background factors into consideration, we ranked 60 of Europe's busiest railway stations (by passenger volume) to help consumers enjoy the best possible experience on their next trip. We considered several factors, including ticket types, the number of in-station services, accessibility options, free Wi-Fi, national and local railway coverage, and ride-sharing.

Our seventh annual edition of the index builds on our existing analysis, drawing on reports from [national authorities](#), online statistics, [station maps](#), [real-time updates](#), and our own research.

Growing passenger volumes have brought ten additions to the list. London St. Pancras returns to the index after a brief hiatus in 2025. It is joined by Hague Central, Poznań Główny, Kraków Główny, Birmingham New Street, Madrid-Chamartín, Luzern Station, Leiden Centraal, Prague Central Station, and Venice's Santa Lucia. Alongside smaller and larger stations, the index now includes a ranking of medium-sized entries. Results run the gamut from very high to very low scores, regardless of the list, which proves no bias towards a particular type of station.

Please note that numbers like passenger volumes reflect the latest available information at the time of this report (August 2026). We have tried obtaining the information from the relevant operating companies, but have sometimes received no reply.

OVERALL SCORE:

TOP 10 RAILWAY STATIONS FOR PASSENGER CONVENIENCE IN EUROPE

Top 10 overall - European Railway Index 2026					
#	Country	City	Railway Station	Total Score	Rankings
1	Switzerland	Zürich	Zürich Hbf	101	1
2	France	Paris	Gare du Nord	100.5	2
3	Netherlands	Amsterdam	Amsterdam Centraal	98.5	3
4	Poland	Wrocław	Wrocław Główny	96.5	4
5	Switzerland	Bern	Bern Hbf	94.5	5
6	France	Paris	Gare Montparnasse	94.5	5
7	France	Paris	Gare Saint-Lazare	91.5	7
8	United Kingdom	London	London Bridge	90	8
9	Poland	Kraków	Kraków Główny	89.5	9
10	United Kingdom	London	London St. Pancras Intl.	89.5	9

Passenger numbers offer a mixed picture. Some venues have seen a higher influx of travelers. Already one of the busiest stations in Europe, Frankfurt Main has seen a significant increase, going from 164.25 million passengers in 2025 to 182.5 million in 2026. Equally true is that some venues have stagnated in passenger growth: the single largest station in Europe, Gare du Nord, has seen no change from 257 million in 2025. Hannover's station reports the same figure of 94.9 million from 2023 on its website (equivalent to 260,000 passengers a day). Other entries in the index have seen a regression: for instance, London Stratford went from 56.57 million passengers in 2025 to 51.5 million according to the latest estimates.

Similar to previous editions of the index, these numbers should be taken with a grain of salt. The results may not indicate real-life trends so much as a lack of accurate reporting or a change in methodology. The 2020 [Bundestag report](#) remains the sole source of information for Munich East, Berlin Südkreuz, Berlin Gesundbrunnen, Berlin Ostkreuz, Stuttgart, Hannover, Berlin Friedrichstraße, and Berlin Alexanderplatz. As of the time of this report, SNCF's more granular breakdown of [station passenger traffic](#) is not available for 2026. The FS Italiane group renounced its more [detailed monthly surveys](#), which provided a helpful breakdown of passenger numbers, including estimates of commuters versus tourists, in favor of [general regional maps](#). It is better, then, not to rely on such sweeping statements and to focus instead on identifying other factors that

might be at play in each country and its respective station.

Most worryingly, the performance of German stations has deteriorated further. There are currently no German entries in the overall top ten, none among new stations on the list, and zero among smaller stations. The previous top entry, Berlin Central Station, now sees average wait times of 20 minutes, and 61% of its trains are delayed more than 5 minutes.

A representative example is Berlin Alexanderplatz, Germany's second-highest-ranked station. Alexanderplatz is in 23rd place, and 10th among medium-sized venues, losing ten positions compared to 2025. The reason is once more traceable to high congestion: whereas wait times were nonexistent in the previous edition, Alexanderplatz now averages 5.53 minutes. Where delayed trains were a rare phenomenon before (0.03%, close to a rounding error), Alexanderplatz now sees a mean 27.7% of trips being late. Consumers will not be able to enjoy the 16 shops and 22 restaurants, as Alexanderplatz will undergo a renovation from [the end of 2026 to 2029](#) (adding eight escalators and two elevators and converting the existing light systems to LEDs).

It is not just Berlin Alexanderplatz. No fewer than 15 of the bottom 30 stations, including four of the five lowest-ranked entries in the index, are from Germany. Dortmund had the highest rate of delayed trains in the entire dataset, at a whopping 73.8%. The longest wait times were in Hamburg at a mean of 24.8 minutes. According to Transport Ministry reports, just [60%](#) of the country's long-distance ICE trains arrived on time. Given that the official calculation omits canceled trains or those that end their journeys before reaching their destinations and counts trains as tardy if they are 6 minutes late (more permissive than the standard 5-minute threshold), true punctuality is certainly lower. All signs point towards a systematic problem.

Of course, low wait-time scores are merely one drawback. Looking at the bottom station, Bremen, provides more clues. Just like Essen, Bremen saw its first-class lounge close in October 2025. The stated justification for the closure was the low number of visitors (just [2.9% of all consumers](#) who frequent lounges in Germany) and the desire to concentrate high-quality service in major hubs such as Hamburg and Frankfurt. Far from consumer disinterest, it might be a case of reverse causality. In other words, travelers did not visit the lounge because there were fewer options to begin with, given that the station features just 9 shops and 17 restaurants and has poor coverage of southeastern and central areas in Germany.

The contrast with French stations is stark. Wait times and delays for Gare du Nord in 2025 were 3.77 minutes and 20%, respectively. Today, they are 0.4 minutes,

whereas delays stand at 5%. Additionally, the number of shops increased from 29 in 2025 to 32 in 2026, enough to earn 5 more points and catapult Europe’s busiest station to the second spot in the rankings. Similarly, Gare Montparnasse decreased its wait times from 5.8 minutes in the previous index to 4.8 in the current iteration. Gare de Lyon saw significant improvements in both categories. The previous average of 14.73 minutes spent waiting for a train is now down to 8.3 minutes, while 22% of trains arrive more than 5 minutes late, down from 32% in 2025.

Not all news is good news for France, though. Having pushed past the original 2024 start of the collaboration, Spain’s Renfe canceled its planned expansion through to Gare de Lyon, citing the [hurdle of obtaining certification](#) for its Talgo S-106 Avril trains. Attempts to use [older 100F trains](#) on the route were refused by French authorities, due to concerns that the models were not compatible with the French TVM 430 signaling system. Renfe intended to use the S-106 trains as a workaround, but they, too, were ultimately refused. Consequently, the route from Lyon to Paris remains closed, denying French consumers one convenient connection to Spain. No station should lose opportunities for competition due to excessive red tape.

Much like in previous years, Swiss stations set the standard. If the worry for other jurisdictions is how late trains are, Swiss railways are setting records for punctuality, registering at [94.1%](#), the highest in the Swiss Federal Railway’s recorded history. Zurich sees wait times of 1.2 minutes, and a mere 4% of trains are delayed. As in 2025, the lack of a lounge, poor regional connections to the southeastern areas of Switzerland, and a relatively limited ticket selection (fewer generous offers for students and groups of three or more) are among the few drawbacks of Switzerland’s largest rail hub. Bern saw an insignificant increase in wait times from virtually 0 to 0.5, and delays went from 2% to 1.8%. No station is perfect, (none achieved the maximum possible score), yet Swiss stations routinely come closest.

On the Move (Top 5 New Stations in the Index)					
#	Country	City	Railway Station	Total Score	Rankings
1	Poland	Kraków	Kraków Główny	89.5	1
2	United Kingdom	London	London St. Pancras International	89.5	1
3	Poland	Poznań	Poznań Główny	86.5	3
4	Switzerland	Luzern	Luzern Hbf	86	4
5	Netherlands	Leiden	Leiden Centraal	77	5

Kraków Główny continues a proud rail tradition that traces back to the 19th century. The first train station by the very same name [opened in 1847](#), connecting Kraków and Myślowice. Today's hub was constructed in 2012 and [completed in 2014](#), replacing the historic station, now a museum. The new venue benefits from all the amenities one expects from a top hub, comprising 11 platforms with lifts and escalators, accessible ramps and toilets, integrated bus and tram services, written and verbal station announcements, app integration, free wi-fi, ride-hailing options, and a first-class lounge. Similar to last year's number one new entry, Wrocław Główny, Kraków's main station is fully integrated with the [Galeria Krakowska](#) shopping center, which significantly boosts its high score for shops and restaurants.

Moreover, it boasts good coverage thanks to its privileged location in the Malopolska region, with direct routes to Warsaw, Zakopane, Łódź, Gdańsk, Katowice, and many other Polish cities, as well as foreign cities such as Berlin, Munich, Vienna, and Prague. As such, it benefits from the competition of railway operators such as PKP Intercity, Polregio, and Deutsche Bahn. By contrast, the main drawbacks of Kraków Główny are the moderately long waiting times (9.2 minutes) and delays (28% of trains are over 5 minutes late). The explanation lies in the ongoing modernization of [5,600 kilometers](#) of railway track, which has temporarily reduced track capacity and imposed speed restrictions, affecting passenger schedules and station crowding. Nevertheless, given that the plan foresees an additional [4,700 kilometers](#) of new track, the modernization ultimately promises to transform Polish rail into one of the most modern rail networks in Europe.

The joint number one in this ranking, London St. Pancras International, was originally built in 1868 to provide the [Midland Railway](#) with direct routes to London from Bedford and help compete with (then) North Western and Great Northern Railways. Today, it is owned by the private company [London St. Pancras Highspeed](#) and managed by Network Rail under a 30-year concession (expiring in 2040) with the UK government. The station is equipped with state-of-the-art amenities, comprising a Eurostar first-class lounge, free Wi-Fi, and a phone app provided by Highspeed, a generous ticket office schedule (05:45 to 23:15, Monday to Friday), verbal and written in-station information, and accessibility features. The station features a good selection of 35 shops and 28 restaurants, aided by the presence of King's Cross station close by.

Being the only high-speed rail terminal in Britain, St. Pancras has excellent connections to mainland Europe and [good coverage](#) of Britain's East Midlands, the Southeast, and cross-country city commutes. Besides Eurostar and Virgin Rail, companies such as Southeastern Trains, East Midlands Railway, and Govia Thameslink Railway all operate from St. Pancras. One drawback is that, despite

low average wait times of only 2.76 minutes, the station still experiences long average delays, with 25% of its trains more than 5 minutes late. The explanation for the delay lies in a [90-second power outage](#) at Network Rail's Manchester operating center, which temporarily brought trains to a halt across England on the 6th of August 2026; it is a stark reminder that having a single operator in charge makes the rail system more vulnerable to single failures.

The third runner-up in the list is another Polish entry, Poznań Główny. Its profile is strikingly similar to its sister station in Krakow. It offers all the expected amenities and services, except for a first-class lounge. It, too, is integrated into a larger retail complex, the [Avenida Poznan](#) shopping center, which offers the station no fewer than 138 shops and kiosks, along with 27 restaurants. Part of the Greater Poland Voivodeship in the west-central part of the country, the station enjoys good internal connections (Warsaw, Wrocław, Gdańsk, and Szczecin) and external connections (Germany, Czechia). Poznan is just as affected by the planned track modernization as Krakow, with waiting times stretching to 7.3 minutes and approximately 29% of trains delayed. What lowers its ranking is its very limited ticket office schedule: Polregio kiosks are only available between 06:30 and 18:00, putting consumers who are unable or uncomfortable purchasing online tickets at a disadvantage.

Rounding off the list are Luzern in fourth place and Leiden in fifth. Luzern reflects Swiss punctuality, with virtually zero minutes spent waiting for the next train and a negligible percentage of delayed trips. Its major drawbacks are poorer connections to some regions in Switzerland (particularly western destinations), a more modest selection of 48 shops and 19 restaurants, and no lounge. Similarly, passengers at Leiden Central only have 0.5 minutes to wait, and just 3.7% of trains arrive late. However, the selection of 15 shops and 11 restaurants is lower than in Luzern, connections are poor for northeastern areas, and there is a lack of competition in train options, given that NS exerts a monopoly over services at the station.

IMPLICATIONS AND BENEFITS FOR CONSUMERS

There are several upsides to choosing one of the top five stations for arrival or departure, such as less time spent waiting for trains, more convenient operating hours for ticket booths, more ticket packages to choose from, more accessible entrances, platforms, and restrooms for people with disabilities, more shops, kiosks, restaurants, and first-class lounges, quicker connections to and from the station, and better national coverage.

- The top 5 selections in the larger overall ranking offer the best experience all around
- Newcomers, large, medium, and small stations all contain some of the best entries on the list
- Northern and Central venues continue to dominate the upper bounds of the list, compared to Southern entries
- Consumers' frustrations with rail are reflected in high delays and waiting times
- Scores improved for ticket options, suggesting further progress in service accessibility for consumers of various ages and social backgrounds
- British scores declined due to the lack of competition caused by rail nationalization

Research note: We strive to improve the quality of this index's underlying data each year and to further refine its methodology. We sometimes encountered contradictory information and indicators measured differently across stations. For instance, French authorities count a train delay as anything later than 5 minutes, whereas British observers tend to label any train arriving after its scheduled time as late. Some stations have up-to-date information; others just have data from previous years. Directly estimating railway network coverage is imperfect. We ask the index readers to acknowledge the difficulties in working with heterogeneous data and caution users to be aware of the underlying complications.

Furthermore, what makes a railway station "good" for each individual can have a distinct qualitative element. Please remember, then, that our assessments are strictly quantitative and non-normative. We are not passing moral judgment on a station's goodness and badness or downplaying personal experiences by ranking one station lower. We are simply highlighting measurable conclusions based on the data available at the time of this index.

Overall rankings (Top 60) - European Railway Index 2026					
#	Country	City	Railway Station	Total Score	Rankings
1	Switzerland	Zürich	Zürich Hbf	101	1
2	France	Paris	Gare du Nord	100.5	2
3	Netherlands	Amsterdam	Amsterdam Centraal	98.5	3
4	Poland	Wroclaw	Wroclaw Główny	96.5	4
5	Switzerland	Bern	Bern Hbf	94.5	5
6	France	Paris	Gare Montparnasse	94.5	5
7	France	Paris	Gare Saint-Lazare	91.5	7

8	United Kingdom	London	London Bridge	90	8
9	Poland	Kraków	Kraków Główny	89.5	9
10	United Kingdom	London	London St. Pancras Intl.	89.5	9
11	Spain	Madrid	Madrid Puerta de Atocha-Almudena Grandes	88.5	11
12	Italy	Rome	Roma Termini	87.5	12
13	Poland	Poznań	Poznan Główny	86.5	13
14	Switzerland	Luzern	Luzern Hbf	86	14
15	Netherlands	Utrecht	Utrecht Centraal	86	14
16	Sweden	Stockholm	Stockholms Centralstation	83.5	16
17	Netherlands	Rotterdam	Rotterdam Central Station	83.5	16
18	United Kingdom	London	London Victoria	82	18
19	Germany	Berlin	Berlin Hbf	82	18
20	United Kingdom	London	London Paddington	81.5	20
21	United Kingdom	London	London Liverpool Street	78.5	21
22	France	Lyon	Lyon Part Dieu	78.5	21
23	Germany	Berlin	Berlin Alexanderplatz	78	23
24	Italy	Naples	Napoli Centrale	78	24
25	Netherlands	Leiden	Leiden Centraal	77	25
26	Netherlands	Hague	Hague Central	76	26
27	Germany	Köln	Köln Hbf	76	26
28	Germany	Leipzig	Leipzig Hbf	75	28
29	Austria	Vienna	Wien Hauptbahnhof	74.5	29
30	France	Paris	Gare de Lyon	74.5	30
31	United Kingdom	London	London Waterloo	74	31
32	United Kingdom	Birmingham	Birmingham New Street	72.5	32
33	Norway	Oslo	Oslo sentralstasjon	71.5	33
34	Germany	Berlin	Berlin Ostkreuz	71	34
35	Germany	Hannover	Hannover Hbf	70	35
36	Spain	Madrid	Madrid Chamartin	69.5	36

37	Germany	Berlin	Berlin Friedrich- straße	69	37
38	Czech Republic	Prague	Prague Central Station	68.5	38
39	United Kingdom	Lon- don-Strat- ford	Stratford Station	68	39
40	Italy	Venice	Venezia Santa Lucia	67.5	40
41	Italy	Florence	Firenze Santa Maria Novella	67.5	40
42	Germany	Hamburg	Hamburg Hbf	66.5	42
43	Germany	Frankfurt	Frankfurt Main Hbf	66	43
44	Germany	Düsseldorf	Düsseldorf Hbf	66	43
45	Germany	Nürnberg	Nürnberg Hbf	65.5	45
46	Denmark	Copenha- gen	Københavns Hov- edbanegård	65.5	45
47	Finland	Helsinki	Helsinki Central Station	65.5	45
48	Italy	Milan	Milano Centrale	63.5	48
49	Germany	Berlin	Berlin Südkreuz	62	49
50	Germany	Munich	München Hbf	61	50
51	Italy	Bologna	Bologna Centrale	60.5	51
52	Italy	Roma	Roma Tiburtina	60	52
53	Italy	Torino	Torino Porta Nuova	59.5	53
54	Germany	Berlin	Berlin Gesundbrun- nen	57	54
55	Germany	Essen	Essen Hbf	57	55
56	Germany	Stuttgart	Stuttgart Hbf	56	56
57	Germany	Munich	Munich East Sta- tion	52.5	57
58	Germany	Dortmund	Dortmund Hbf	52	58
59	Austria	Vienna	Wien Meidling	51.5	59
60	Germany	Bremen	Bremen Hbf	47	60

Top 10 Smaller Stations (≤ 50 million passengers)					
#	Country	City	Railway Station	Total Score	Rankings
1	Poland	Wroclaw	Wroclaw Główny	96.5	1
2	Poland	Kraków	Kraków Główny	89.5	2
3	United Kingdom	London	London St. Pancras Intl.	89.5	3
4	Poland	Poznań	Poznan Główny	86.5	4
5	Switzerland	Luzern	Luzern Hbf	86	5
6	Netherlands	Rotterdam	Rotterdam Central Station	83.5	6
7	France	Lyon	Lyon Part Dieu	78.5	7
8	Italy	Naples	Napoli Centrale	78	8
9	Netherlands	Leiden	Leiden Centraal	77	9
10	Netherlands	Hague	Hague Central	76	10

METHODOLOGY

1. Passenger volumes (millions)

We use passenger numbers for the latest available years (2020 to 2026) to determine Europe's sixty busiest train stations. The figures indicate the explosive (re)growth of the railway industry in recent years. In addition, the numbers highlight challenges in reporting over time, as some stations have benefited from meticulous statistical breakdowns while others have remained unchanged since 2020.

This section is purely descriptive and does not award any points.

Some commentators have questioned the use of passenger numbers to select train stations for the index. They claim that by doing so, we are mixing up different types of stations for the same purpose. Aren't we just lumping giants like Gare du Nord and Roma Termini with small regional hubs?

However, the distinction breaks down when we consider using a high passenger-number threshold in the index. After all, the list's cut-off point is 28 million passengers per station (slightly adjusted down from last year to reflect ten newer entries in the list). Even the "smaller" inclusions in our tally still represent the experience of tens of millions of travelers.

For instance, Bremen Main Station saw 43.8 million passengers per year, higher

than the most frequented hub in Poland, Krakow Główny (30.76 million).

We address other pertinent issues raised regarding the types of stations (whether they are commuter- or tourism-focused and what the difference might entail) in the Shops, Restaurants, and Lounges categories below.

2. Operating hours (ticket offices)

This category nets a railway station a maximum of 9 points. Having offices open most of the day allows consumers to purchase the tickets they need when they need them. A physical booth is essential for those less accustomed to using apps. This is why we feature the schedules of SNCF, Deutsche Bahn, Trenitalia, or Renfe ticket offices, not simply their information desks.

Open 6 am – 6 pm = 3 points

Open 6 pm – 6 am = 6 points (0.5 points for every extra hour from 6 pm onward)

Uneven hours (like 19:30 and 22:45) are rounded up; railways receive the full 0.5 points for the hour. In cases where ticket offices operate at different intervals, symmetrical openings will still receive the initial marks. For instance, if the ticket office opens at 7 a.m. and closes at 3 p.m., it will receive the full 3 points.

When ticket offices had different schedules, we rated the dominant option as the one open the longest hours: if one option most passengers use is open until 8 p.m. and another until 9 p.m., we chose to award points based on the 9 p.m. option.

3. Type of tickets

This category can earn a station up to 6 points. More ticket options mean more special offers and discounts that are convenient and affordable to more consumers.

Student tickets = 1 point

Elderly tickets starting at 60 years of age = 1 point; if the offer starts > 60 years = 0.5 points

Children up to six years = 1 point; if the offer runs for children < 6 years only = 0.5 points

Group offers = 1 point; if group option requires > 3 people = 0.5 points

Additional packages for military personnel = 1 point
Ticket options for individuals with disabilities = 1 point

4. Wait times

This category nets a railway venue a maximum of 10 points. Short waiting times minimize frustration and ensure a smoother journey.

≤ 5 minutes = 10 points

≤ 10 minutes = 5 points

> 10 minutes = 0 points

Numbers represent averages from websites such as [Zugfinder](#) and [On Time Trains](#) across several observations. In the rare cases where such numbers were unavailable, we used the averages provided by rail authorities in each country instead.

5. Delayed trains

A station can earn up to 15 points in this category. A train is generally considered late if it does not arrive within 5 minutes of its schedule. We decided to retain the results in decimals to ensure ease of grading.

$\leq 10\%$ = 15 points

$> 10\%$ but $\leq 20\%$ = 10 points

$> 20\%$ but $< 40\%$ = 5 points

$\geq 40\%$ = 0 points

The numbers represent averages based on several observations from websites like [Zugfinder](#) and [On Time Trains](#). In the rare cases where such numbers were unavailable, we used the averages provided by rail authorities in each country instead.

Critics argued against including delays as a category since delays are not caused by train stations but by handling train traffic or other unrelated reasons (accidents, wilful sabotage, and seasonal conditions). However, even if the same company is in charge of both aspects, delays affect the entire station supply chain. A high percentage of late trains leads to overcrowding, which

negatively impacts train station services. Ticket offices, apps, and Wi-Fi are often overwhelmed by requests for alternative routes and fares. Shops, restaurants, and lounges struggle to cater to the sudden influx of travelers. Consequently, delays have widespread effects independent of higher waiting times and the obstructions' point of origin, thus requiring a category of its own to capture the consumer experience accurately.

6. In-station information

This category can net a railway hub 5 points in total.

Information screens and verbal announcements make it easier for consumers to navigate their way to their platform. Having both is especially important for people with disabilities.

Both written and verbal information is present = 5 points

Partial (only one of the categories is present, or station coverage is known to be incomplete) = 3 points

7. Elevators/Escalators

This category can earn a railway station up to 10 points. The presence of both escalators and elevators allows passengers to transition more easily to the platforms.

Both escalators and elevators are available = 10 points

Either escalators or elevators available only = 5 points

8. Wheelchair and restroom accessibility

This category nets a maximum of 5 points. Traveling can be tricky, even under ideal conditions. But it can be impossible for a person in a wheelchair with no access ramps to the building, no way to travel around the station without assistance, or no restroom facilities adapted to their needs. Having as many of these services as possible is crucial for many consumers.

Both wheelchair and restroom accessibility = 5 points

Only one option present = 3 points

9. Shops/Kiosks

This category can earn a station up to 15 points. Numbers reflect the shops currently available in each facility.

≥ 50 shops = 15 points

≥ 30 shops = 10 points

≥ 15 shops = 5 points

< 15 shops = 0 points

An objection we have received is that the database should exclude amenities like shops, restaurants, and lounges from the assessment. The argument rests on two types of stations corresponding to two different groups of consumers they are meant to serve. There are tourist destinations, and then there are commuter-focused stations. The former hubs serve more as leisure attractions for visitors, designed to entertain passers-by and newcomers with a range of amenities. By contrast, commuter-focused stations deliberately omit such features – regular travelers are only interested in getting to work or school on time and would rather not have to deal with a slew of shops along the way.

One reply is that stations include a mix of commuters and tourists. Even in tourist hotspots like Roma Termini, [37% to 44%](#) of passengers in 2024 were regular commuters (the proportion varied month to month throughout January to May). Conversely, though designed with commuters in mind, Berlin Gesundbrunnen is located near a series of the city's attractions, including the Berlin Wall Memorial.

Apart from the demographics involved, though, studies suggest that consumers of all types do their station shopping for a mix of reasons. One analysis of [Utrecht Central Station](#) revealed that 93.2% of respondents shopped at the hub. While most preferred food and beverages (58.7%), a significant minority (41.3%) were looking for convenience, leisure, or other types of products. Moreover, consumers shopped out of immediate necessity, long-term planning, and pleasure. Commuters do not just want to grab a meal on the way to work, but also want to save time, reduce stress, and enjoy doing their shopping at the station.

Finally, and relatedly, any study must consider reverse causality – the supply of stores may simply have fallen behind the growing demand.

10. Restaurants/Takeaway

This category awards a station up to 15 points. Similar reasons apply to restaurants - having something to eat at a restaurant or on the go can make the difference between an enjoyable and a frustrating journey. More options increase positive passenger experience.

≥ 30 restaurants = 15 points

≥ 20 restaurants = 10 points

≥ 10 restaurants = 5 points

< 10 restaurants = 0 points

11. Lounges

Railway hubs can get the top score of 5 points for having more than one business lounge, meaning more passengers can relax and benefit from premium service on their trip. The same considerations for shops and restaurants apply to lounges.

> 1 business lounge = 5 points

1 business lounge = 3 points

0 business lounges = 0 points

12. Smartphone application

Smartphone apps allow consumers to easily search for information or buy tickets online. If an app covers that station, the station receives 2 points.

13. Free Wi-Fi

Sometimes, consumers need to look up their routes online while traveling, or simply want to communicate with friends and family on their commute. A free WiFi service comes in handy for this service. The station receives 3 points if free Wi-Fi is available.

14. Connections to/from the local railway and national coverage

This category awards a railway station up to 8 points – 3 base points and 5 bonus points. Traveling is all the more stressful without quick routes to and from the

station.

≥ 2 means of transportation (bus, tram, metro) = 3 points

While the first part of the category measures local coverage, bonus points were awarded based on geographical proximity as a rough proxy for coverage. We attempted to operationalize the variable using maps and distances from the station to the north, south, east, and west. We acknowledge that this measure is imperfect. Suppose a station and its railway network are close to the 12 northwestern sector, yet the southwestern or western corners are not covered. In that case, the method might still register the station as having good coverage, even though actual coverage to the southwest and west is poor. We assessed each situation to compensate for this downside, and 15 marked coverage as “poor” or “good” by comparing it across railway hubs.

Good coverage = 5 extra points

15. Competition – more than one railway company at the station

This category is worth 5 points. Only one railway company for that station leaves consumers with no choice for train fares. Subsidiaries are also counted as part of that railway company.

> 1 railway company = 5 points

1 railway company = 0 points

16. Ride Hailing

In line with our [Sharing Economy Index 2025](#), we define ride-hailing as hiring a private driver and vehicle through a general platform. This platform is a network that companies provide which connects consumers who want to reach an agreed-upon destination with willing drivers. Unlike car sharing, the vehicle is not rented out to a client-driver for extended periods. Unlike carpooling, only one consumer uses the service. If consumers can use apps like Uber, Bolt, and Lyft to travel to and from the station, the venue receives an extra 5 points.

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