

**Table 6.3** Comparison of Train and Air Travel Times between Key European Cities

	By Rail	By Air
London to Edinburgh	4 hr	1 hr 15 min
Paris to Marseilles	4 hr 15 min	1 hr 20 min
Madrid to Seville	3 hr 30 min	55 min
Hamburg to Munich	6 hr	1 hr 15 min
Rome to Milan	4 hr	1 hr 5 min

One of the most exciting developments in rail transportation was the inauguration of high-speed passenger rail service between London, England, and Paris, France. The Eurostar, which travels through the channel tunnel or “Chunnel,” allows passengers to make the entire trip in just less than two hours at speed of close to 200 mph, cutting the time in half when compared with ferry crossings.

Passenger rail service in Europe has been further enhanced through expansion of the [Eurailpass](#). A number of European countries—Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland—introduced the first Eurailpass in 1959. Finland, Greece, and Ireland were added later. With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, the pass became valid throughout the entire German Republic as well as the Czech Republic and Hungary. Trains have become so significant in Europe that they move more than 40 times more passengers every day than in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

The Eurailpass is used as a marketing tool to attract international visitors from outside the European community because it is available only to non-European tourists. Pass holders are allowed unlimited travel for varying periods of time throughout Western Europe, with the exception of Great Britain. Recognizing the importance of rail travel to their total tourism package, individual countries such as Great Britain (BritRail pass), Germany (German Railpass), Switzerland (Swiss Pass), Spain (Spain Railpass), and Greece (Greek Railpass) are providing similar services.

Most countries consider passenger rail transportation to be of vital national importance and continue to retain government control. Therefore, information on operating results (other than ridership) and the financial condition of most passenger railroads is not available. This may all change in the future as a trend toward private ownership and reduced subsidies has emerged in European countries, especially Great Britain and Germany. Managers there find themselves venturing into unfamiliar territory, requiring marketing skills to maintain and increase ridership and financial skills to attract the necessary capital to maintain and improve service quality while controlling costs.

## Scenic Railroads

In addition to the ready availability of passenger rail service for basic transportation in most developed countries, there are several specialty trains with particular appeal to tourists. The Orient Express is without a doubt the most famous of all luxurious or scenic trains. With its magnificently restored cars, it runs from London, England, to Istanbul, Turkey. Another classic train, the Blue Train, can be found traveling between Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa. With its gold-tinted windows and fine dining, the Blue Train is also renowned for its mystique and romanticism. China’s Sky Train carries passengers across the Tibetan Plateau from Xining, China, to Lhasa, Tibet, using three locomotives to cross the 16,640 foot Tangula Pass.<sup>7</sup> Other trains such as the Copper Canyon in Mexico, the Palace on Wheels in India, and the