

## INFORMATIONS

**The Pyrénées-Catalanes Regional Natural Park**

Tél. +33 4 68 04 97 60

[www.parc-pyrenees-catalanes.fr](http://www.parc-pyrenees-catalanes.fr)

**Conseil Départemental des Pyrénées-Orientales**

Tél. +33 4 68 85 85 85

[www.ledepartement66.fr](http://www.ledepartement66.fr)

**SNCF train station (Villefranche-de-Conflent)**

Tél. +33 4 68 96 63 62

[www.ter.sncf.com/occitanie](http://www.ter.sncf.com/occitanie)

**SNCF Trains information**

Tél. 36 35

**Occitanie Region - Hôtel de Région Toulouse**

Tel. +33 5 61 33 50 50

**Occitanie Region - Hôtel de Région Montpellier**

Tel. +33 4 67 22 80 00

### Sources and bibliography

L'Encyclopédie du Pays Catalan, Ed. Privat ; Train jaune, les engragés du rail, Joël Mettay et Georges Bartoli,

Ed. Alter ego ; Le train jaune de Cerdagne, Pierre Cazenoves, Ed.

Loubatières ; Le petit train jaune de Cerdagne ou l'histoire d'un canari de montagne, Dr Jacques Churet, Ed.

du Cabri; Des trains pas comme les autres... Petits trains de France

(DVD)



### Background

The Yellow Train is a symbol of the Catalan Country that bears the colours of the region; dark red and gold. It is a veritable rolling museum for rail technology, operating between Villefranche-de-Conflent and Latour-de-Carol, over 63 km and climbing the 1,200 m to Bolquère station, the highest train station in France.

The Yellow Train line was first built in the early 1900s, to connect the mountain plateaus of Catalonia to the rest of the department. The first building work began in 1903 and by 1910, the railroad was completed between Villefranche-de-Conflent and Mont-Louis. The line was finished in 1927 when it reached Latour-de-Carol, and this initial route is still in operation today over very rugged terrain. The construction of this railroad required 650 structures to be built, including 19 tunnels and two remarkable bridges: the Séjourné Viaduct (65 m off the ground) and Gisclard Bridge (80 m over a precipice), so that the Yellow Train could cross over this mountainous terrain.

The Villefranche - Latour-de-Carol line almost disappeared in the 1970s. Its survival is thanks to the railway workers who fought tooth and nail to save the line and managed to convince both the population and local MPs.

### Some technical info

The rolling stock of this train is among the most interesting of all the SNCF's fleet, and it is made up of locomotives and wagons. The locomotives, with 300 HP powered by four engines have forty seats in one single category. They are equipped with dynamic braking, a Westinghouse air brake that can be graduated for application or release, and locking brake. Automatic double coupling systems (LEDUC-LAMBERT system), with added security chains. The trailers are wagons such as the Midi and Nord type, with 44 and 46 seats respectively, and panoramic observation cars with 59 seats. All this rolling stock, except for the observation cars which were built locally, has been modernised on two occasions: the first time, from 1963 to 1966 at the workshops in Marseille where panelling in the colours of Catalonia (red and yellow) was added; the second time was at the workshops in Béziers where a complete overhaul was carried out on the bodywork and driver's cab. A yellow panel with a thin red stripe then replaced the colours of Catalonia, which made more sense for the name of the train, the Little Yellow Train of Cerdanya. To be able to cope with the snow, two snowploughs were added near the engine and a snow-thrower to remove the snow from between the rails. Two STADLER observation locomotives were added to the fleet in 2003, with a recent design.

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### PYRÉNÉES MÉDITERRANÉE EN PAYS CATALAN

Agence de Développement Touristique des Pyrénées-Orientales

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Rolling stock is **powered by** an 850V DC traction current, using a side contact system attached to sandstone support units and equipped with protective guards in the sections that come into contact with passengers. The electricity is produced by the hydraulic plant in the Têt Valley, that was designed with this purpose in mind. The key component is the Bouillouses Dam (at an altitude of 2,000 m) which was completed in 1910, with a capacity of 17,500,000 m<sup>3</sup> for a body of water covering 160 ha. The current is transported by 20,000 volts, powering 7 sub-stations which provide the traction current. These sub-stations are controlled remotely from the head office in Montpellier. They are located in Villefranche, Thuès-les-Bains, Fontpédrouse, Mont-Louis, Font-Romeu, Sainte-Léocadie and Bourg-Madame.

## Operation

The maximum authorised speed is 55 km/hour (the rails are over a hundred years old).

The number of passenger cars used cannot exceed 6.

Operation of the line is managed by a regulator, known as the “Chef de Ligne” (Line Manager), based in Villefranche.

Any crossing or over-taking is only authorised at the stations in Olette, Fontpédrouse, Mont-Louis, Font-Romeu, Saillagouse, Bourg-Madame and at the terminus Latour-de-Carol.

The line runs all year round.

## The Yellow Train, combining tradition and modernity

**Headlines:** The symbolic “Yellow Train” of the Cerdanya line first began to operate on the 18th July 1910, to serve the mountain plateaus of Catalonia. **Today, around 400,000 tourists come here every year.** To add to the old equipment which symbolises the industrial heritage of Catalonia, and to ensure this train will run for longer, the Occitanie Region invested **9 billion euros**, as part of the TER development policy, in two observation locomotives that were delivered in November 2003.

This equipment was designed by the company Stadler (Switzerland) and was built based on an innovative concept of a car with lowered decking, for metric lines. For the new equipment on the Cerdanya line, Stadler’s offer added to the locomotives delivered for the CJ (Chemins de Fer du Jura) on the one hand, and for the FGC (Chemins de Fer de Catalogne) on the other hand. The passenger cars are equipped with **large access platforms** in the lowered section. They are equipped for multifunctional use, with folding seats or clear areas to be able to **cater for disabled persons**, bicycles, pushchairs and skis. For even more comfort, the locomotives have been equipped with air-conditioning and disabled toilets, seats with headrests and armrests. Passengers can admire the **panoramic view** of the landscapes along the Cerdanya line, thanks to the large windows.

In order to meet the needs of passengers during the summer period and to protect the heritage value of this line, the old equipment carries on operating, especially throughout the summer. The new equipment replaces the old equipment during the low season to therefore make it last for longer, and to improve the comfort for locals who use this service in the winter.

Tickets for the Yellow Train are available to purchase from the train station on the day. For groups, bookings can be made: [groupe\\_train\\_jaune@sncf.fr](mailto:groupe_train_jaune@sncf.fr)



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