

**Press Release**

**Virgin Trains becomes the first travel company in the world to sell tickets through Amazon Alexa**

* From today, customers with an Amazon Echo device can book Virgin Trains Advance Single tickets via Alexa using the Amazon Pay service
* Anyone called Alexa travelling on Virgin Trains West Coast routes between 3rd May – 15th June 2018 will also receive a free First Class upgrade

**UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00:00:01, THURSDAY 3RD MAY 2018:** In a global first, Virgin Trains today becomes the first travel operator worldwide to sell tickets through Amazon Alexa. With the launch of this innovative collaboration, customers can now book Virgin Trains Advance Single tickets using just their voice, via Alexa-enabled Amazon devices, including Amazon Echo1.

The new functionality enables users to book tickets with Alexa using Amazon Pay in one simple voice-based transaction, making Virgin Trains the first travel company in the world to sell tickets this way. The launch follows the unveiling of the Virgin Trains skill for Amazon Alexa in November last year, which allows customers to enquire about rail information by asking Alexa.

To mark this moment, Virgin Trains on the West Coast is offering free First Class upgrades to any passengers named Alexa travelling on their routes between 3rd May- 15th June 20182.

The skill for Alexa is part of Virgin Trains’ ambition to work in a digital railway and is one of a range of innovations introduced to increase customer satisfaction before and after journeys, as well as on board. This includes industry firsts such as mobile ticketing, automatic compensation for delays3 and free on-demand entertainment app BEAM. The Virgin Trains skill for Amazon Alexa is part of a host of digital projects that will offer Virgin Trains passengers the most innovative and forward-looking customer experience, whilst providing a comfortable and smooth journey from beginning to end.

John Sullivan, Virgin Trains CIOsaid: “We’re very excited to be the first travel company in the world to sell tickets for both Virgin Trains on the East Coast and West Coast through Amazon Alexa; it’s just another example of Virgin Trains leading the way in digital innovation within the rail industry. From finding train times online, to arriving at your destination, we want to make every journey with Virgin Trains amazing, and our collaboration with Amazon is a great example of this commitment to putting the customer first.”

“We’re thrilled to work with Virgin Trains to offer customers a completely new way to buy train tickets,” said Giulio Montemagno, Director, Amazon Pay EU. “With Alexa and Amazon Pay, Virgin Trains customers can now search, select and buy train tickets entirely through voice. This is a first-of-a-kind service that will make it easier than ever to find and book the ticket you want, even when you’re busy doing something else—all you need to do is ask Alexa.”

To celebrate this launch, Facebook fans of Virgin Trains on the West Coast will be in with a chance to bag themselves an Amazon Echo device4. From 3rd to 5th May, Virgin Trains will be sending Alexa to a range of destinations along the West Coast route; fans will be challenged to guess the destination from a series of clues, which will be revealed in three Facebook videos.

Both East Coast and West Coast customers who book train travel via the Virgin Trains skill for Amazon Echo between 3rd May and 23rd May will also be entered into a prize draw to win an all-inclusive Virgin Holiday for four in Antigua5.

Customers can book East and West Coast Advance Single tickets on the Virgin Trains skill for Amazon Alexa. Examples fares include6:

* London – Edinburgh £42
* London – York £29
* London-Birmingham £11
* London-Manchester £27

ENDS

For more information, please contact Chloe Morris at Karmarama: 020 3301 2338 / chloe.morris@karmarama.com

**Notes to Editors**

The Virgin Trains skill for Amazon Echo was created using the SilverRail engine, a market leader in travel technology, to ensure the flow of data into the rail system is consistent and accurate, and the booking reservation is fulfilled.

1Tickets can be purchased on all Virgin Trains West Coast routes and the below Virgin Trains East Coast routes:

* King’s Cross
* Newcastle
* Edinburgh
* York
* Darlington
* Doncaster

2Available on Virgin Trains West Coast routes only. [Terms and conditions apply](https://www.virgintrains.co.uk/terms-conditions)

3Automatic Delay Repay only available on Virgin Trains on the West Coast

4[Terms and conditions apply](https://www.virgintrains.co.uk/terms-conditions)

5[Terms and conditions apply](https://www.virgintrains.co.uk/terms-conditions)

6These are example advance fares, with fares each way between the two destinations and London. Available 12 weeks out.

**About Virgin Trains**

Stagecoach and Virgin are working in partnership to operate the East Coast and West Coast inter-city routes under the Virgin Trains brand. Together, they are on track to revolutionise rail travel across the UK.

The combined network connects some of the nation’s most iconic destinations including Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, York and London.

Virgin Trains is committed to delivering a high speed, high frequency service, offering shorter journey times, more comfortable travel and excellent customer service. Customers consistently rate Virgin Trains as one of the top long-distance rail franchise operators in the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) commissioned by industry watchdog, Transport Focus.

On the East Coast route, £140m is being invested to create a more personalised travel experience. We have already invested £21m to completely revamp our existing fleet and customers can now benefit from 42 additional services (22,000 extra seats) per week between Edinburgh and London. 2018 will see the introduction of completely new Azuma trains being built in the UK by Hitachi.

The West Coast route has a proud record of challenging the status quo - from introducing tilting Pendolino trains, to a pioneering automated delay repay scheme and becoming the first franchised rail operator to offer m-Tickets for all ticket types.

Visit the Virgin Trains Media Room - [http://mediaroom.virgintrains.co.uk](http://mediaroom.virgintrains.co.uk/) - for the latest news, images and videos. Subscribe [here](http://www.mynewsdesk.com/follow/47939) for regular news from Virgin Trains.

Press Office: 0845 000 3333. Company website: [www.virgintrains.co.uk](http://www.virgintrains.co.uk).

**About Amazon Alexa**

Amazon Alexa lives in the cloud and is always getting smarter, delivering new capabilities to your device automatically. The more you use Alexa, the more Alexa adapts to your speech patterns, vocabulary, and preferences, with new features continually being added. Ask Alexa to answer questions, play music, hear the news, get weather and traffic reports, control your smart home, and more.

**About SilverRail**

[SilverRail](http://www.silverrailtech.com/) is delivering the digital infrastructure for a global rail industry.

SilverRail's technology is purpose built for rail. Our product suite spans the full customer experience: journey planning, ground transportation services, inventory management, scheduling, pricing, booking, payment, ticketing, reporting and administration.

* SilverRail handles more than 1 billion online rail searches each year.
* SilverRail distributes tickets for more than 35 providers and carriers.
* SilverRail processes more than 30 million bookings each year.
* SilverRail serves more than 1,500 corporate customers worldwide.

SilverRail was founded in 2009 by Aaron Gowell and Will Phillipson, and has offices in London, Boston, Stockholm and Brisbane.

Expedia Inc, one of the world's leading travel companies, acquired a majority stake in SilverRail in June 2017.