



America's
Only All-Chair-Car Transcontinental Streamliner

An Appreciation

On February 22, 1938, Mr. Harland R. Ratcliffe, of The Boston Evening Transcript, left Chicago for Los Angeles as a passenger on the first regular run of El Capitan, Santa Fe's revolutionary new all-chair-car transcontinental economy streamliner. So complete and human was his description of this train and the service it renders, in the Transcript of March 9th, that we sought and obtained the kind permission of Mr. Ratcliffe and The Boston Evening Transcript to adapt it, only slightly shortened, to these pages.

Coast to Coast and return - in 5 days

by
HARLAND R. RATCLIFFE

*A reporter rides El Capitan,
the West's newest economy
streamliner, and discovers that
California has come amazingly
close to the East.*



Santa Fe



El Capitan—"a fascinating experiment in Practical Democracy."

*T*HE *Transcript* man who had gone to Chicago to make the inaugural trip of the streamlined El Capitan sat in the twilight of a Chicago loop movie palace and thrilled to Hollywood's version of "Wells Fargo." First the pony express, then the picturesque stage coaches, lumbering along, up hill and down dale, opening up the West, bringing romance and high adventure to a wild, undeveloped region—making the Santa Fe Trail an adventurous highway known from the mesa-dotted deserts of New Mexico and Arizona to the rock-bound coast of Maine.

On the silvery screen it had taken weeks upon weeks to traverse the more than two thousand mile stretch of dangerous terrain between the great metropolis of the Midwest and the sunny beaches of Los Angeles in South-

ern California, then little more than a frontier village.

Less than an hour after emerging from the darkened theatre, the *Transcript* representative boarded El Capitan. In thirty-nine hours and forty-five minutes he was in Los Angeles. Approximately sixty hours actual train traveling time between the Atlantic and the Pacific, Boston and Los Angeles, Massachusetts and California! Two and a half days en route!

Round Trip in Five Days

Well, that reporter is back home again. And when he returned his friends exclaimed: "But you couldn't have gone to California by train and back in ten days." Oh, but he did—and with two days in Chicago while headed West, two days in Los Angeles (and Hollywood), and eight hours in Chicago on



the home stretch. Travel on one of the Santa Fe's newest streamliners and the round trip from Boston to Los Angeles may be made, in the utmost comfort, in slightly over five days, actual traveling time. Unbelievable? Well, it seems more like a dream after you have done it than it did before.

We left Chicago on El Capitan at 5:45 on a Tuesday evening. Thursday morning, a little after seven, on time to the second, we rolled into the Santa Fe depot in Los Angeles. Two nights and the intervening day, arriving unfatigued and with no more evidence of the so-called grime of travel than a commuter picks up on the way to his office. En route the plains of Kansas, the painted deserts of New Mexico and Arizona, the mountains of Colorado, the orange groves of California. A kaleidoscopic

landscape, hurtling past your window at speeds ranging from the creeping pace made necessary by the steep mountain grades to a hundred miles an hour and more clipped off over a perfectly straight desert right-of-way.

"I should hate to go that fast," you say? Well, you think nothing of it—partly because of the fact that when the fastest speeds are achieved the train is deep in the desert, where you travel for miles without seeing a person or a house, and where the scenery you are admiring is usually miles from the train.

Comfort, Beauty, Luxury

Comfort, beauty and luxury newly conceived for chair car travelers, all have been built into the new El Capitan, with which the Santa Fe offers the world's fastest "all-coach" transcontinental train schedule. These El Capitans



make two round trips each week between Chicago and Los Angeles, operating on a schedule swift as that of the famed Super Chief.

Each El Capitan includes five lightweight, stainless steel cars constructed by the Edward G. Budd Manufacturing Company of Philadelphia. They are powered by Diesel-electric locomotives constructed by the Electro-Motive Corporation of La Grange, Ill.

Each train consists of a baggage-dormitory-chair car; 2 regular chair cars; a lunch counter-diner, and a chair-observation car. The passenger capacity is 192.

Wonderfully Complete

El Capitan is a complete caravan for the cross country rail traveler. Reclining chairs, upholstered in soft sponge rubber and with deeply cushioned seats which

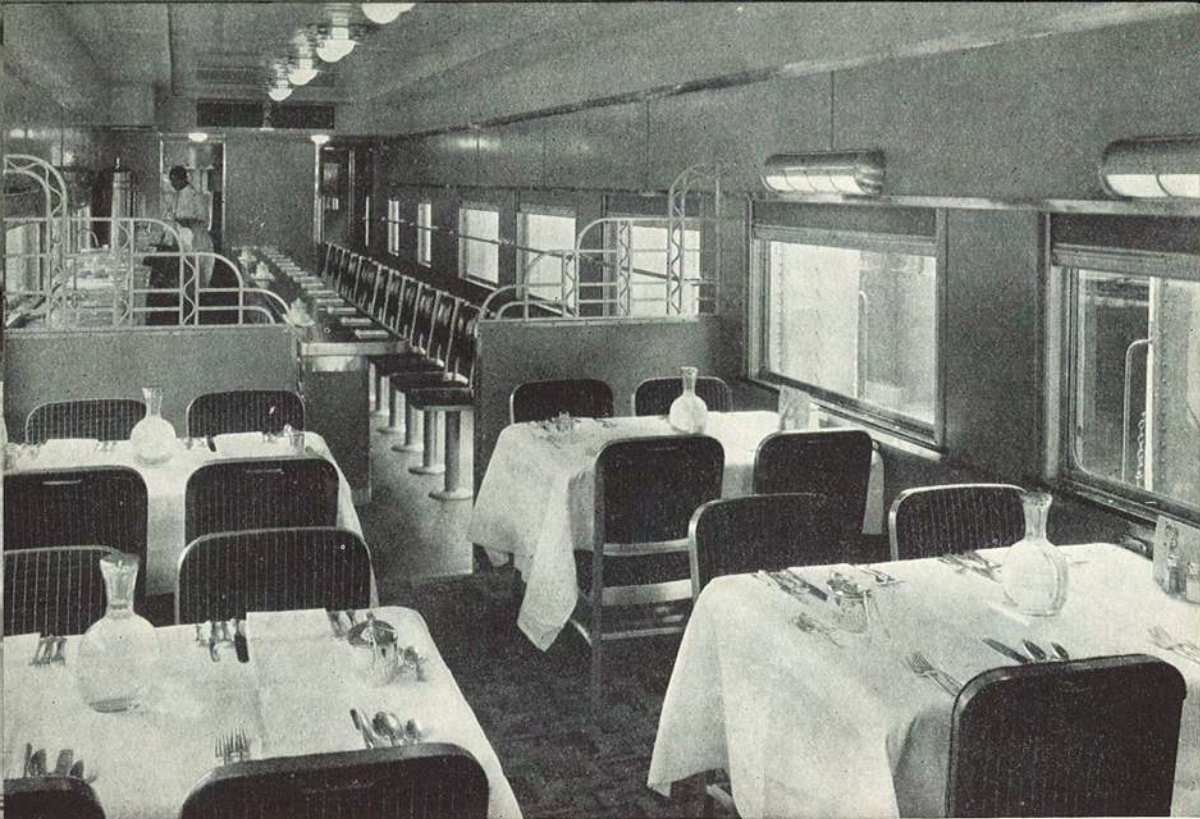
slide forward as the chair reclines, make his journey a comfortable one.

Lounge compartments — commodious as those of a sleeper car, and with every facility for toilet on the journey — provide a roomy place for smoking or just lounging.

In the men's lounge, deep divans and roomy chairs have been installed. Multiple lavatories, dental lavatory, shelves for the shaving kit, even outlets for electric razors, are some of the facilities available for the masculine traveler.

Travel for women, even with small children, is pleasant on this new train. A courier-nurse is on each train, ready to give mothers respite from care of the youngsters, minister to the invalid traveler and in many other ways make the journey pleasant.

The women's lounges are more than



that — they're practically boudoirs on wheels. In each car is a roomy lounge room, complete with large mirrors, divans and chairs, and dressing table. A folding infant's table makes easy the care of the baby. Ample shelves, lavatories — both bowl and dental — even facial tissue is included in the equipment.

Unique is the dining service on the El Capitan. If a formal meal is desired, tables are provided in the combination lunch counter-diner. If it's a snack, the traveler may sit on a stool at the long counter and get service.

A magazine or a candy bar to nibble between meals? Just wander up to the forward car and make your purchase from the news stand built in there.

If it is the conductor you're looking for, to inquire the schedule or discuss travel problems, you'll find him at his

desk in this same car, where he has a regular "office."

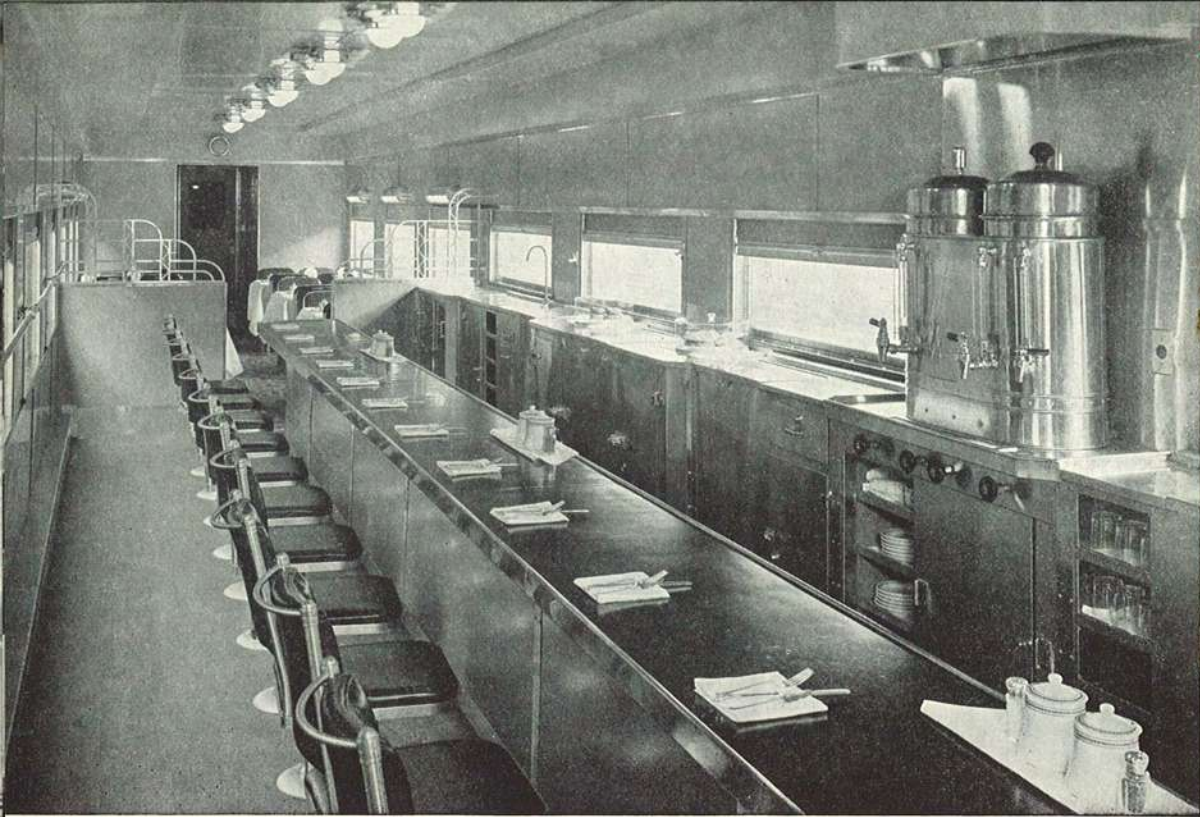
Let's Inspect the Train

Suppose we take an inspection tour through this newest cross country streamliner.

First you'll notice it is the same gleaming, super-strong stainless steel construction which the Budd Company built into the first Super Chief and the many other cars furnished the Santa Fe. This steel, with a tensile strength four times that of ordinary steel, enables the Budd engineers to build cars lighter, but with tremendous strength. Their gleaming brilliance will never fade.

Baggage-Dormitory-Chair Car

The imposing designation of this forward car means everything it says. First, there is a baggage compartment where trunks, extra bags and other baggage



not needed on the trip may be checked. Here, too, is the big pillow locker from which every passenger may have one served up for the asking. Those large rooms built into the center of the car are the crew quarters. Adjoining these rooms is the news stand—its stock complete with magazines, newspapers, tidbits or trip mementos.

Individual reclining chairs are provided in this first car for thirty-two passengers. Here, too, is the conductor's office. Toilet rooms for both men and women are at the rear of this car.

Beautiful Interiors

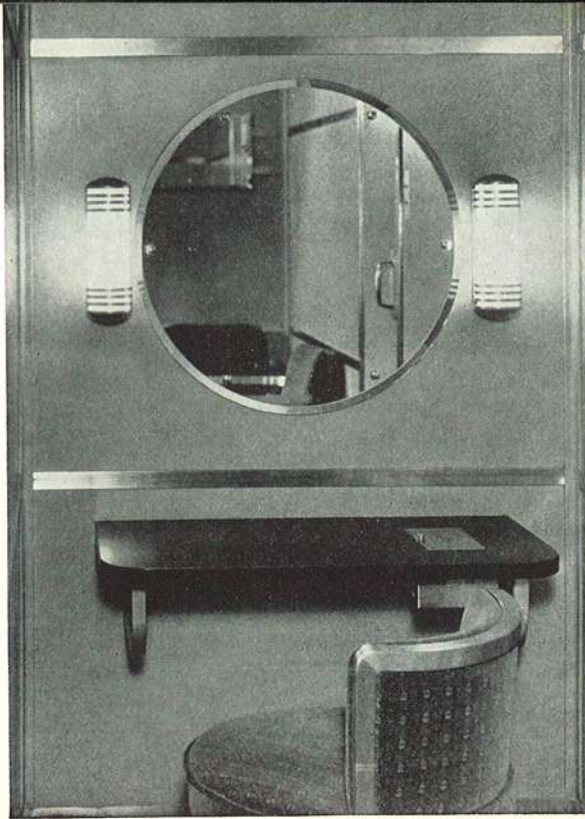
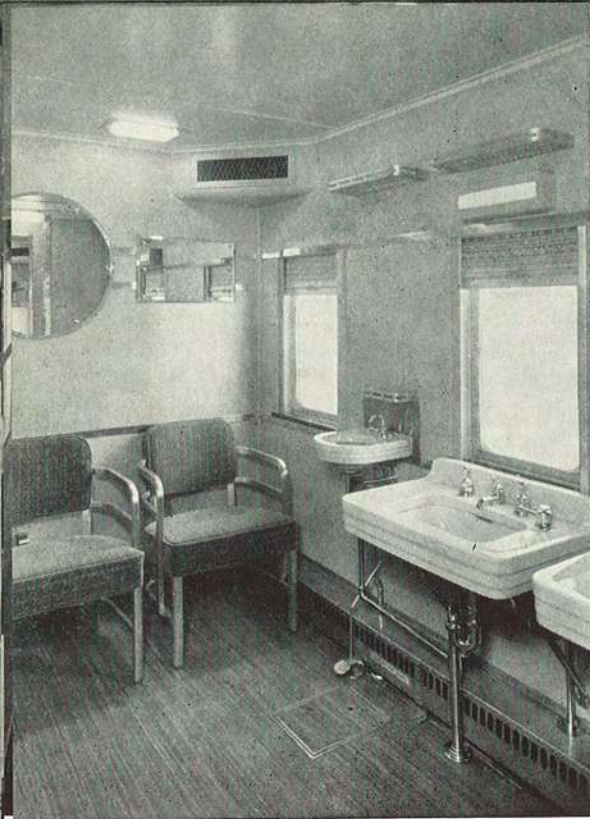
Let's pause here for a moment to consider how carefully the designers of this train have worked out details of comfort, color and arrangement. Soft, warm tones, varied in each car, relieve all monotony of the traveler's surroundings.

Old rose combined with lake red; buff and tans; stainless steel and chrome trim; olive and grey greens, orchid and composing shades have been used so skillfully here that you find new interest wherever you glance. The side walls of all cars in the El Capitan trains have wood veneered side walls and carpeted floors—an exception in chair cars. Rich, deep upholstering covers chairs and lounge seats, makes the view through the low broad-vision windows even more pleasant.

Throughout each car this same plan has been followed. In the lounges, lavatories are of soft colored enamels, wall colors are fresh and inviting and chairs and lounges are deep, comfortable and rich in color.

Lunch Counter-Diner

Longest of the El Capitan cars is the



lunch counter-diner — over 83 feet. Like other Budd-built cars, its interior is over nine feet wide. Unusual is the arrangement for diners. A long counter provides seat space for fourteen. Large stools are available for the counter customers, with a rail over which to hook the heels. Snacks and lunches come fast here.

From the large, stainless steel kitchen of this diner come the creations of Fred Harvey chefs, both for counter service and for the table section. Set off in the rear of the dining car is a formal table section with six tables. Twenty-four passengers are served here.

Next come two cars devoted entirely to double chairs. Each of these cars seats 52 passengers. Color schemes and decorative treatment again have been varied in these cars to avoid any sam-

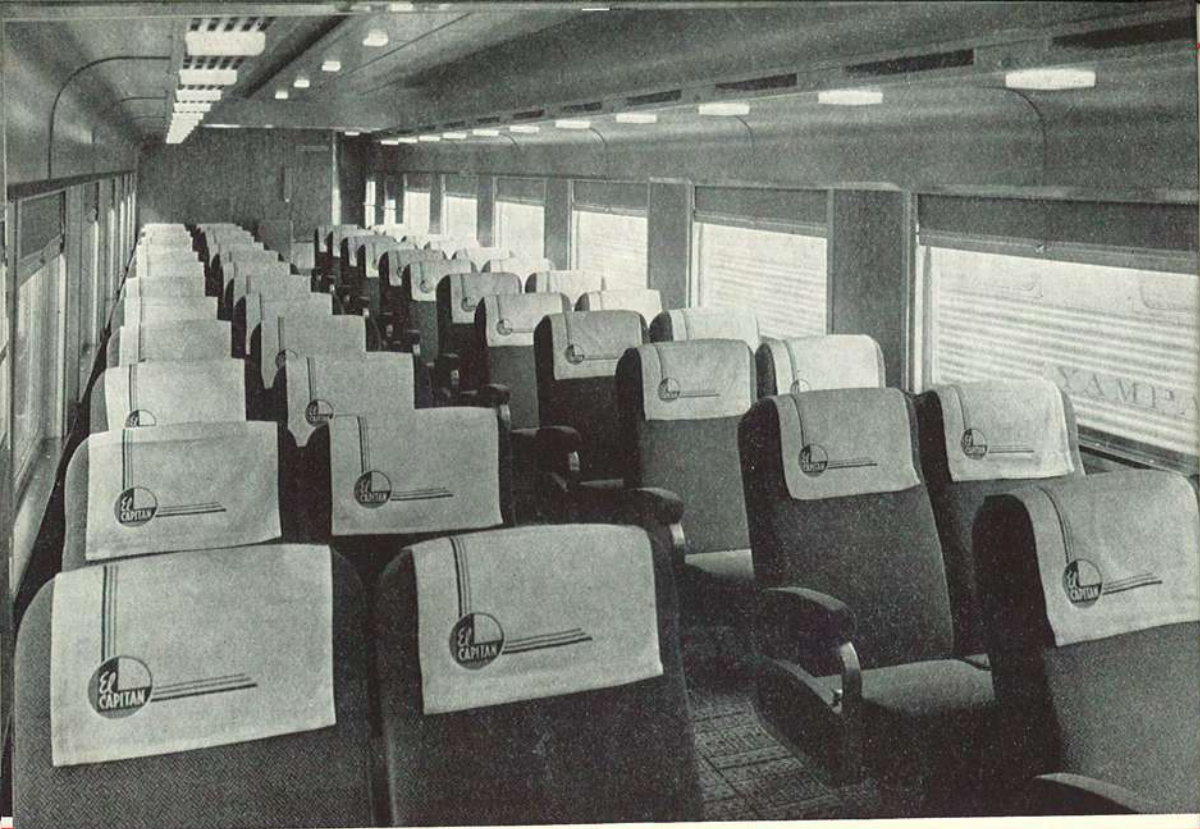
blance of sameness or monotony.

The deep, soft upholstered chairs recline individually. There is plenty of room in which to stretch and be comfortable, or to swing the pair to any of the revolving positions. Spacing has been arranged in all cars to give every passenger plenty of room in which to travel.

The Courier-Nurse

The courier-nurse makes her headquarters in the forward car of this pair, with a watchful eye on all her passengers, adjusting a shade here, a pillow there, so that the journey may be most pleasant.

In construction and arrangement, the rear car of El Capitan is quite similar to the two chair cars ahead of it, except for the smoothly rounded rear, where built-in lounge chairs and table have



been added.

Of fifty-six passenger capacity, this car has still different color and decorative treatment. Mountain brown, burnt yellow, burnt orange, shades of green, light sand, beige, and ebony have been combined with stainless steel and chrome for the decorations.

In the pier panels, figured teak has been used to give a rich natural wood touch. Wherever stationary seats have been required in the ends of all the cars, they have been set so that two pairs face, and provision has been made for installation of tables, for bridge or for writing.

Of Stainless Steel

The entire structure of these cars is of stainless steel, the tensile strength of which ranges as high as 150,000 pounds per square inch. Through use of the

exclusive "Shotweld" process, the car structure is welded into an integral mass of tremendous strength, yet light in weight.

With lowered center of gravity, delicate springing, side sway stabilizers and with many other improved mechanical features, these cars are the most modern achievement of rail car designers.

Air conditioned throughout, the stainless steel cars are insulated against heat, cold and noise. Into the roof and walls is packed insulating material. The floor, laid in the same manner as the corrugated roof, over cross members, has cork strips first placed in the grooves, then a one-inch layer of cork tile set in mastic before the pad and floor covering is installed, thus shutting out virtually all operating noises.

Windows are double glazed, with an



outer pane of one-fourth inch glass set in a dust-proof frame, with inner glass of quarter-inch "shatter-proof" type.

The train's water supply is carried in tanks beneath the cars, where also are housed the generators and batteries. All cars are equipped with roller bearings. Air for the conditioning system is taken in through roof intakes, filtered and conditioned and then fed uniformly through the car from a ceiling duct running the entire length of the car. Heating is of the "vapor" type, with radiation produced by radiators of finned copper tubing.

By a mechanical arrangement, the steps in each car fold into the body when the trap door is lowered, forming an unbroken exterior line. When the trap door is raised, the steps drop to mounting height.

Saving Dollars and Days

There seems to be very little about the interior of this gay little wind-splitter that Mr. Ratcliffe's roving reportorial eye overlooked. We'll have to turn to other unique features of El Capitan, if we are to add anything to his pleasantly informative story.

Someone has called El Capitan "A fascinating experiment in Practical Democracy." That is because it is America's first and only regular all-chair-car transcontinental train. Because, though it is beautiful and ultra-modern, and as swift as the finest of the de luxe streamliners, it was designed and built entirely for the joy and convenience of the economically-minded. Because all who use El Capitan receive exactly the same service, pay the same fare between any two given points—and that the very

lowest existing coach fare—plus a small extra fare that amounts to but \$5 between Chicago and California, and less for shorter distances.

For instance, the total one-way fare, between Chicago and Los Angeles, is only \$44.50; round-trip fare, only \$75!

So El Capitan saves dollars. But that isn't all. It saves time, as well—those hours, even days, so precious to everyman's vacation, in so many emergencies. Imagine leaving Chicago one evening, reaching a New Mexico dude ranch the next afternoon; leaving Los Angeles one afternoon and reaching Kansas City the next night! Chicago to Los Angeles, or return, 2,227 miles, in only 39¾ hours!

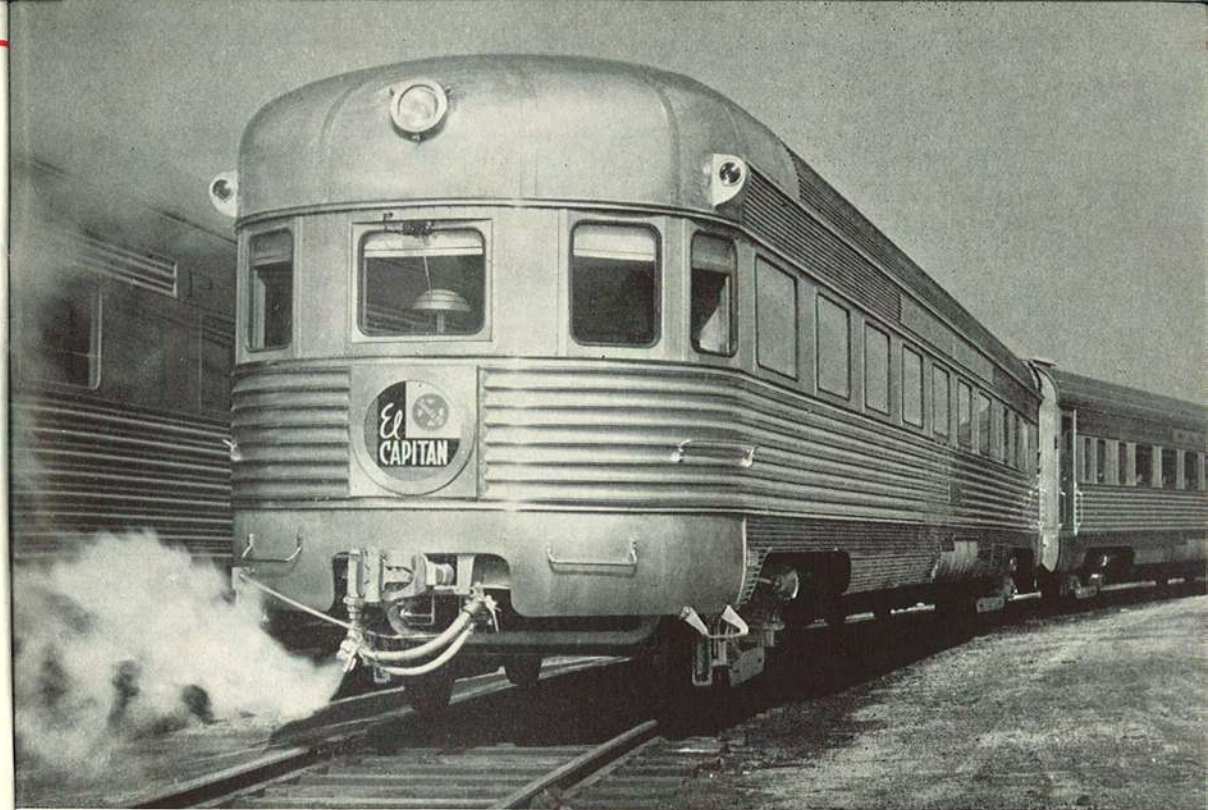
Why, using El Capitan, you can live on the Atlantic Seaboard and yet spend nearly twelve full days in California out of the usual two-weeks' vacation!

Santa Fe presents El Capitan—for economy travel's greatest thrill. Let your ticket agent fit this gaily modern little speedster into your western itinerary.

El Capitan and The Scout

El Capitan joins another already famous Santa Fe transcontinental economy train, The Scout. El Capitan, swift as the swiftest, and for chair-car passengers only, makes two round trips each week. The no-extra-fare Scout, on the other hand, is a daily train, fast as the ordinary limited, and for both Pullman-tourist and chair-car travelers. In one or the other, according to your desires, you will find the utmost in travel values, for your western travel dollars.

H. J. Gallahue
Passenger Traffic Manager,
Santa Fe System Lines



For economy travel's greatest thrill—Santa Fe's El Capitan!

EL CAPITAN

| WESTBOUND | | NO. 21 | TWICE W'KLY | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------|------|
| <i>Central Standard Time</i> | | | | |
| Lv Chicago | A.T. & S.F. | 5.45 PM | Tues. | Sat. |
| Ar Kansas City | " | 12.42 AM | Wed. | Sun. |
| <i>Mountain Standard Time</i> | | | | |
| Lv Kansas City | A.T. & S.F. | 12.47 AM | Wed. | Sun. |
| Ar Newton | " | 3.35 AM | " | " |
| Ar Dodge City | " | 5.50 AM | " | " |
| <i>Mountain Standard Time</i> | | | | |
| Lv Dodge City | A.T. & S.F. | 4.53 AM | " | " |
| Ar La Junta | " | 7.37 AM | " | " |
| Ar Raton | " | 10.05 AM | " | " |
| Ar Las Vegas | " | 12.03 PM | " | " |
| Ar Albuquerque | " | 3.00 PM | " | " |
| Lv Albuquerque | " | 3.05 PM | " | " |
| Ar Gallup | " | 5.45 PM | " | " |
| Ar Winslow | " | 7.37 PM | " | " |
| <i>Pacific Standard Time</i> | | | | |
| Ar Needles | A.T. & S.F. | 12.38 AM | Thurs. | Mon. |
| Ar Barstow | " | 4.00 AM | " | " |
| Ar San Bernardino | " | 5.58 AM | " | " |
| Ar Pasadena | " | 7.05 AM | " | " |
| Ar Los Angeles | " | 7.30 AM | " | " |
| <i>Pacific Standard Time</i> | | | | |
| Lv Los Angeles | A.T. & S.F. | 7.40 AM | Thurs. | Mon. |
| Ar San Diego | " | 10.10 AM | " | " |
| Connecting Trains | | | | |
| <i>Pacific Standard Time</i> | | | | |
| Lv La Junta | A.T. & S.F. | 7.50 AM | Wed. | Sun. |
| Ar Pueblo | " | 9.25 AM | " | " |
| Ar Colorado Springs | " | 10.40 AM | " | " |
| Ar Denver | " | 12.50 PM | " | " |
| <i>Pacific Standard Time</i> | | | | |
| Lv Barstow | A.T. & S.F. | 8.35 AM | Thurs. | Mon. |
| Ar Bakersfield | " | 12.15 PM | " | " |
| Ar Oakland (40th & San Pablo) .. | " | 8.50 PM | " | " |
| Ar San Francisco | " | 9.15 PM | " | " |

| EASTBOUND | | NO. 22 | TWICE W'KLY | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------|--------|
| <i>Pacific Standard Time</i> | | | | |
| Lv San Diego | A.T. & S.F. | 10.50 AM | Tues. | Fri. |
| Ar Los Angeles | " | 1.20 PM | " | " |
| Lv Los Angeles | A.T. & S.F. | 1.30 PM | Tues. | Fri. |
| Lv Pasadena | " | 1.55 PM | " | " |
| Lv San Bernardino | " | 3.05 PM | " | " |
| Lv Barstow | " | 4.47 PM | " | " |
| Lv Needles | " | 7.38 PM | " | " |
| <i>Mountain Standard Time</i> | | | | |
| Lv Winslow | A.T. & S.F. | 3.03 AM | Wed. | Sat. |
| Lv Gallup | " | 4.57 AM | " | " |
| Ar Albuquerque | " | 7.30 AM | " | " |
| Lv Albuquerque | " | 7.35 AM | " | " |
| Lv Las Vegas | " | 10.22 AM | " | " |
| Lv Raton | " | 12.27 PM | " | " |
| Lv La Junta | " | 2.50 PM | " | " |
| Ar Dodge City | " | 5.25 PM | " | " |
| <i>Central Standard Time</i> | | | | |
| Lv Dodge City | A.T. & S.F. | 6.28 PM | " | " |
| Lv Newton | " | 8.35 PM | " | " |
| Ar Kansas City | " | 11.30 PM | " | " |
| Lv Kansas City | A.T. & S.F. | 11.37 PM | Wed. | Sat. |
| Ar Chicago | " | 7.15 AM | Thurs. | Sun. |
| Connecting Trains | | | | |
| Lv Denver | A.T. & S.F. | 8.00 AM | Wed. | Sat. |
| Lv Colorado Springs | " | 10.05 AM | " | " |
| Lv Pueblo | " | 11.05 AM | " | " |
| Ar La Junta | " | 12.35 PM | " | " |
| Lv San Francisco | A.T. & S.F. | 11.00 PM | Mon. | Thurs. |
| Lv Oakland (40th & San Pablo) .. | " | 11.40 PM | " | " |
| Lv Bakersfield | " | 8.15 AM | Tues. | Fri. |
| Ar Barstow | " | 12.05 PM | " | " |

● Extra fare, Chicago - Los Angeles, \$5. Smaller extra fare to or between intermediate points.