Streamliners Across America visually presents the major named Streamliner train routes in context with the geography of the United States. What part of the Rockies did the California Zephyr go through? How did the routes of the legendary 20th Century Ltd and Broadway Ltd differ?

Every train route (layer) in this PDF can be turned on/off so that you can see where each named train went. Some routes used the same sections of track, so in order to see a complete route, others must be turned off (case in point: the New England States route is partially covered with the 20th Century Ltd route, as are many of the Western routes).

The routes may not be “inch perfect,” but show the general routes as they were used from the late 30s to the early 50s. All the train route schedule information came from the Streamliner Schedules website (link in the credit box). The actual routes were devised from the schedules and Peter Maiken's marvouls book, “Night Trains.” The drumheads (normally seen on the end car) came from Tomar Industries (both linked in the credit box). It's the named routes that are the stars here—showing the railroad companies involved would’ve added too much complexity and that info is available on Streamliner Schedules. The Route boxes show the train name, the start and end cities, and the total mileage. Named trains that follow near identical routes are not shown (City of New Orleans is shown, but not the Panama Limited, for example). Short distance routes are also not shown (all route >450 miles, except the "400").

The base map was carefully constructed from screen grabs of Google Maps and stitched together. Its 48” x 26” size makes it a bit unwieldy for home printing, but ensures a level a detail not possible on a smaller map. Zoom in all you want!

With a different software package, each route would only show those cities that the Streamliner would pass through and do that by clicking on the Train Name in the Routes box. But this is just a simple layered PDF file, made for maximum portability from OS to OS. You can even turn the “cities” and “borders” off to show a clean map. I'm not a train expert, just a retired graphic designer who believes that visual information is quicker to absorb than dry text.

Hopefully this simplified Streamliners Across America map will afford both the knowledgeable fan and those with just a passing interest an accurate glimpse into the workings of the great Streamliner routes in American history. Who wouldn't want to take the 20th Century Ltd and Super Chief combo across this great country? Or take one of the northern train routes that ended in Seattle. Why you could take the Silver Meteor to Jacksonville, hop on the Gulf Wind to New Orleans and from there take the exquisite Sunset Ltd to Los Angeles. The combinations (including some that were never really possible) are there for you to try out.

Navigation is easy: Ctrl(Cmd)/+ zooms in; Ctrl(Cmd)/- zooms out; Ctrl(Cmd)/0 resizes to window; hand moves you about. Simple.

So, turn off this layer and start exploring. All aboard!

Change Log: 2.1 adjusted City of Los Angeles and City of St Louis, corrected Gulf Wind and Crescent to pass through Flomaton, Alabama