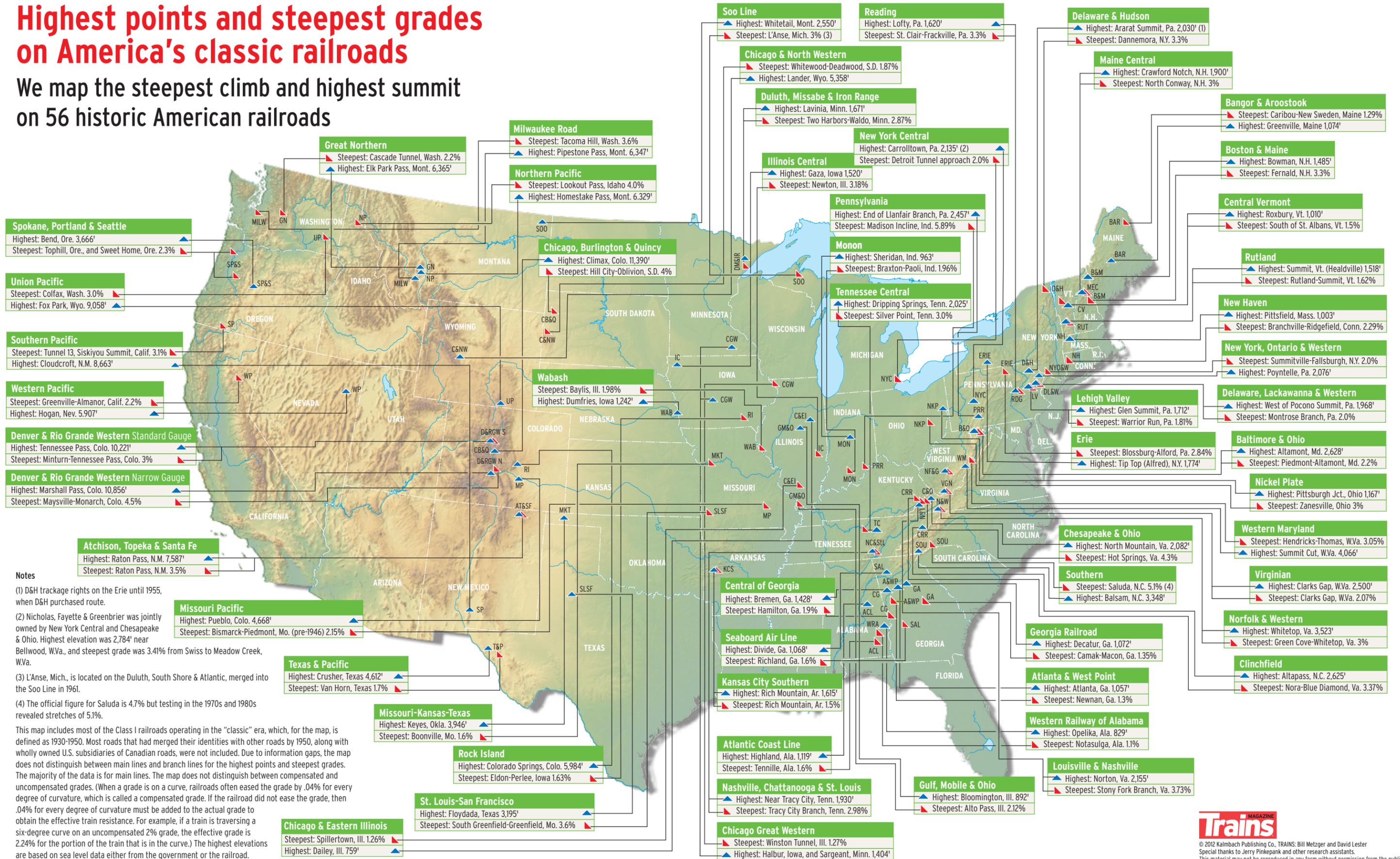


# Highest points and steepest grades on America's classic railroads

We map the steepest climb and highest summit on 56 historic American railroads



**Notes**

- (1) D&H trackage rights on the Erie until 1955, when D&H purchased route.
- (2) Nicholas, Fayette & Greenbrier was jointly owned by New York Central and Chesapeake & Ohio. Highest elevation was 2,784' near Bellwood, W.Va., and steepest grade was 3.41% from Swiss to Meadow Creek, W.Va.
- (3) L'Anse, Mich., is located on the Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic, merged into the Soo Line in 1961.
- (4) The official figure for Saluda is 4.7% but testing in the 1970s and 1980s revealed stretches of 5.1%.

This map includes most of the Class I railroads operating in the "classic" era, which, for the map, is defined as 1930-1950. Most roads that had merged their identities with other roads by 1950, along with wholly owned U.S. subsidiaries of Canadian roads, were not included. Due to information gaps, the map does not distinguish between main lines and branch lines for the highest points and steepest grades. The majority of the data is for main lines. The map does not distinguish between compensated and uncompensated grades. (When a grade is on a curve, railroads often eased the grade by .04% for every degree of curvature, which is called a compensated grade. If the railroad did not ease the grade, then .04% for every degree of curvature must be added to the actual grade to obtain the effective train resistance. For example, if a train is traversing a six-degree curve on an uncompensated 2% grade, the effective grade is 2.24% for the portion of the train that is in the curve.) The highest elevations are based on sea level data either from the government or the railroad.