

17 Day Incredible African Safari With The Blue Train in reverse (Blue Train at start)

## Day 1

You'll depart today for your thrilling African safari.

## Day 2 - Arrive Cape Town

Welcome to South Africa! On arrival in Cape Town, you'll be met at the airport for your transfer to your hotel.

The rest of the day is free for you. Fondly known as the Mother City, Cape Town is the oldest city in South Africa. Its crowning jewel is the stunning Table Mountain National Park but you'll find plenty of excitement elsewhere, with its pristine beaches, buzzing art scene and world-class dining. Relax at your hotel or venture out – perhaps a spot of shopping at the city's renowned shopping destination, V&A Waterfront.

Hotel: President Hotel (or similar)

## Day 3 - Cape Town - Blue Train

Today you'll be taken to Cape Town Station to start your Blue Train journey.

Heralded as one of the most luxurious train journeys in the world, you'll enjoy the old-world charm of rail travel, with modern luxuries and comforts. See the changing landscapes of South Africa – rolling vineyards, untamed savannah grasslands, lush valleys and awe-inspiring mountain ranges. It's approximately 1600km from Pretoria to Cape Town and the journey takes about 27 hours.

Feel free to freshen up in your suite before joining fellow travellers in the lounge car or observation car. The observation car, at the rear end of the train, has windows on three sides to really take in the passing scenery. A formal dinner is served in the dining car. The Blue Train is known for its fine dining in regal surroundings, along with a wide selection of premium South African wines. You'll travel overnight.

Meals: Breakfast, dinner

Hotel: Blue Train – De Luxe Suite

## Day 4 - Blue Train - Kimberley

You'll enjoy breakfast in the dining cars this morning as you traverse the beautiful, diverse South African countryside.

Keep an eye on the scenery as a shallow lake appears where, on most occasions, there are spectacular flocks of lesser flamingos – thousands of them.

When we arrive in the former mining boom town of Kimberley, we'll disembark for a tour of the city, Diamond Mine Museum and the Big Hole. The Big Hole claims to be the world's biggest hole excavated by hand.

We'll depart Kimberley and lunch will be served in the dining car. Enjoy a traditional English high tea in the afternoon on the lounge car.

Again, you'll have dinner served in the dining car and travel overnight.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Hotel: Blue Train – De Luxe Suite

## Day 5 - Blue Train - Pretoria

On arrival in Pretoria, you'll be met and transferred to your hotel. Refresh, relax and spend the day exploring at your own pace. The nation's capital is nicknamed the Jacaranda City due to the large number of bright Jacaranda trees throughout the city, famous for their fragrant purple blooms.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: Court Classique Hotel (or similar)

## **Day 6 - Pretoria - Kruger National Park**

After breakfast, you'll be transferred to Johannesburg Airport for your next adventure, your Kruger safari. On arrival at Nelspruit Airport, you'll be met by a representative of the lodge and transferred to your accommodation.

The rest of the day is free for you. Given your lodge's proximity to the enormous Kruger National Park – home of the illustrious Big Five game animals – your stay will give you a front row seat to where predator and prey meet.

**Optional Tour:** Sunset game drive. Experience this spectacular park as the sun sets. This tour offers a very different experience to your daytime safari; Kruger National Park comes alive with a whole new range of nocturnal animals once the sun starts to set, and your expert guide will help you spot them.

Meals: Breakfast, dinner

Hotel: Maqueda Lodge or Royal Kruger Lodge (or similar)

## **Day 7 - Kruger National Park**

Rise early for your game drive in the renowned Kruger National Park, the largest game reserve in South Africa. The park boasts nearly two million hectares of unfenced African wilderness and delivers an exceptional safari experience.

**Optional Tour:** Sunset game drive. Experience this spectacular park as the sun sets. This tour offers a very different experience to your daytime safari; Kruger National Park comes alive with a whole new range of nocturnal animals once the sun starts to set, and your expert guide will help you spot them.

Meals: Breakfast, dinner

Hotel: Maqueda Lodge or Royal Kruger Lodge (or similar)

## **Day 8 - Kruger National Park**

Relax today in this impressive part of the world. To give you an idea of its vastness, Kruger National Park is about the same size as Israel.

**Optional Tour:** Sunset game drive. Experience this spectacular park as the sun sets. This tour offers a very different experience to your daytime safari; Kruger National Park comes alive with a whole new range of nocturnal animals once the sun starts to set, and your expert guide will help you spot them.

**Optional Tour:** Swaziland day tour. Known for its wilderness reserves and colourful festivals, this landlocked monarchy is an incredible cultural experience and a must-see on any South Africa itinerary. After an early breakfast, we'll visit a Swazi Village to gain insight into the local culture and traditions. The tour includes a typical Swazi lunch, plus dancing and an opportunity to interact with the local community.

**Optional Tour:** Panorama day tour. Rise early for a visit to one of the most scenic regions in South Africa, the Drakensberg. The eastern portion of the Great Escarpment is a breathtaking sight that stretches more than 3,000 metres tall and more than 1,000 kilometres long. Your tour includes a visit to the stunning Blyde River Canyon, the aptly named God's Window and the spectacular geological phenomenon, the Bourke's Luck Potholes.

Meals: Breakfast, dinner

Hotel: Maqueda Lodge or Royal Kruger Lodge (or similar)

## **Day 9 - Kruger National Park**

It's worth the early start today, setting out on a game drive at sunrise to see the animals at the start of their day – when they are hungry and most active. The full-day game drive will give you an opportunity to see animals you may have missed previously.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Hotel: Maqueda Lodge or Royal Kruger Lodge (or similar)

## **Day 10 - Kruger National Park - Victoria Falls**

After breakfast, you'll be taken to the airport for your flight to Victoria Falls, the major waterfall on the Zambezi River at the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. On arrival, you'll be met to be transferred to your hotel.

Later in the afternoon, enjoy the spectacular African sunset on a river cruise on the Zambezi River, fondly referred to as the "River of Life".

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: A'Zambezi River Lodge (or similar)

## **Day 11 - Victoria Falls**

We'll enjoy a tour of the spectacular falls today. One of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, it's nothing short of awe-inspiring to witness the thundering power of the waters. At over one kilometre wide and over 100 metres high, this is the largest curtain of water in the world. The locals call it Mosi-ao-Tunya, "the smoke that thunders".

Optional tour: Helicopter flight over the falls. Enjoy this natural wonder from the most incredible vantage point in the air. The flight is about 20 minutes and will get you up close to the majesty of these falls.

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Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: A'Zambezi River Lodge (or similar)

## **Day 12 - Victoria Falls - Chobe National Park - Victoria Falls**

Enjoy a full day Chobe safari. This includes a thrilling safari game drive in the Chobe National Park and a river cruise on the Chobe River.

In special open-air safari vehicles, you'll have a fantastic experience on your first game drive. Chobe National Park is home to Africa's largest elephant population, with about 120 000 of these majestic creatures living around here. You'll have the opportunity to view the abundant elephants and big game animals in their natural habitat, including the famed Big Five – lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant, and Cape buffalo.

The river cruise will give you another vantage point – lookout for hippos, crocodiles and a dazzling array of water birds. Over 460 bird species have been recorded in the park.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: A'Zambezi River Lodge (or similar)

## **Day 13 - Victoria Falls - Cape Town**

After breakfast, you'll be taken to the Victoria Falls Airport for your flight to Cape Town. On arrival, you'll be met for the transfer to your hotel.

**Optional Tour:** Robben Island. Travel to this famous – or infamous, rather – island that served as a holding place for the imprisoned Nelson Mandela. Mandela served 18 of his 27 years in prison here, but Robben Island has also housed a hospital, mental institution, leper colony and

military base during its rich history. Now, it's a World Heritage Site and a museum to explore.

**Optional Tour:** Wine route tram tour. The food and wine heartland of the country, the Cape Winelands region of Franschhoek Valley is where world-famous sauvignon blanc, chardonnay and pinot noir grapes are grown. The fertile soil and Mediterranean climate also mean this region grows some stellar produce, attracting top chefs from far and wide. This tour includes a combination of vintage style railway tram and open-air tram-bus transport, taking you around a seven-stop loop. Hop on and off as you please at each stop, and experience the activities on offer, be it for wine tasting or a delicious lunch.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: President Hotel (or similar)

#### **Day 14 - Cape Town**

After an early breakfast, you'll enjoy a full day tour of the magnificent Cape Peninsula. This is a photographer's dream.

We'll begin with a scenic drive along the Atlantic Coast, passing through Camps Bay and the quaint fishing village of Hout Bay. The tour includes a trip to Cape Point at the southwestern tip of the Cape Peninsula, with the most spectacular views. The Cape Point Nature Reserve comprises thousands of acres of indigenous flora and fauna. Here you can see wildlife like baboons, rhebok, Cape mountain zebra and the elusive eland.

On the way back to your hotel we'll also visit the penguin colony at Boulders Beach (entrance not included). Home to an endangered land-based colony of African penguins, you can see these unique animals in their natural habitat. Walk between the three pristine and sheltered beaches on boardwalks – to protect the penguin nests – which link to the penguin-viewing area. The last stop is at Kirstenbosch National Botanic Gardens, on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, for a short walking tour of these beautiful gardens.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: President Hotel (or similar)

#### **Day 15 - Cape Town**

We'll start the day with a short tour of Afrogem, one of the leading jewellery manufacturers in South Africa. Experience firsthand how smelted gold is transformed and watch the craftsman set gems and semi-precious stones.

Afterwards, enjoy a trip on the cable car to the top of Table Mountain, high above the clouds, for exquisite views of Cape Town. Table Mountain is a Cape Town icon and likely the most photographed landmark in the country. It's no wonder more than 22 million people have taken this trip on the aerial cableway.

When you are ready, make your own way back to the hotel – the rest of the day is yours to relax or explore.

Meals: Breakfast

Hotel: President Hotel (or similar)

#### **Day 16 Cape Town - Home**

Enjoy one last delicious breakfast this morning, before your African adventure comes to an end. Later you will be transferred to the airport to board your flight home.

We hope you've enjoyed this extraordinary journey.

Meals: Breakfast

#### **Day 17 - Home**

Arrive home today with memories to last a lifetime.

# South Africa and Zimbabwe

- Bus
- - - Plane
- · - · - · Train

**1** No. of Nights Stay

