

# JOURNEY TO VICTORIA FALLS

BY PRIVATE TRAIN

An escorted tour from Pretoria to Victoria Falls  
aboard the Shongololo Express

31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020;  
14<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020 & 4<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> August 2020

NOBLE CALEDONIA

Join us for this spectacular train journey from Pretoria to Victoria Falls which stops along the way to view some remarkable scenery and wonderful locations in South Africa, Swaziland, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In spite of all its regional difficulties, Africa still captures the imagination like no other continent. The beauty and the colours truly need to be seen to be believed and are brought right to the compartment doors of our comfortable rolling hotel, all while enjoying the excellent service for which Rovos Rail is renowned.

Travelling from Pretoria, our first few days aboard take us east through the awe-inspiring landscapes of the Drakensberg Mountains and along the Panorama Route with visits to historic Pilgrim's Rest, Bourke's Luck Potholes and God's Window, one of Blyde River Canyon's most spectacular viewpoints. We continue to Kruger National Park where, for some, the highlight will no doubt be spotting the Big Five (buffalo, elephant, lion, leopard and rhino), but for others it may be seeing the remarkable birdlife or the majestic giraffe that stay longest in memory.

From Kruger we travel to bustling Maputo, the attractive capital of Mozambique and explore the intriguing Kingdom of Swaziland where we can witness the lively and colourful local culture as people go about their everyday life. We will enjoy a game drive in the Kapama Game Reserve before crossing the border to Zimbabwe, a country of astounding natural beauty with extraordinary wildlife. Here we will step back in time at the Great Zimbabwe Monument as well as visit Antelope Park, home to a lion conservation programme and Matopos National Park, the site of Cecil John Rhodes' grave. Our penultimate stop is Hwange National Park, a rich and diverse wildlife sanctuary where animals can be spotted from the train and during our game drive. Finally, a fitting end to our journey is a sunset cruise on the Zambezi River and our stay at the legendary Victoria Falls Hotel with dramatic views of the gorges of the spectacular Victoria Falls.



## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Johannesburg, South Africa.** Fly by scheduled flight.

**Day 2 Pretoria.** Arrive this morning and transfer to the Sheraton Pretoria Hotel for an overnight stay. Enjoy an afternoon and evening at leisure.

**Day 3 Pretoria and Soweto.** This morning we take a tour of Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa and visit the Union Buildings designed by the famous colonial English architect, Sir Herbert Baker. Completed in 1913, it now houses the offices of the President and Ministers and the buildings overlook the city towards the once fortified hills to the south. A grand bronze statue of "Oom Paul (Kruger)", the patriarch president of the ZAR or old Transvaal Republic, surrounded by his Boer fighters, dominates Church Square at the centre of the city. Before leaving the capital behind we visit the Voortrekker Monument which commemorates the Great Trek of the 1830s. Our next stop is Soweto which, comprising one million people, was made famous by the laws of Apartheid. We pass the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital (the largest hospital in the Southern Hemisphere) and also drive past the only street in Africa that once housed two Nobel Peace Laureates – Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. We also visit the Hector Petersen Memorial, named after the first student to lose his life in the 1976 uprising against the Apartheid government. This afternoon we transfer to Rovos Rail station and board our private train, the Shongololo Express and set off on our journey towards Nelspruit. (B, D)

**Day 4 Panorama Route.** Today we take a full day tour of the Panorama Route. In 1873, gold was discovered in the area around the quaint town of Pilgrim's Rest, now a living museum and national monument. The find attracted 1,500 diggers and today many of the restored miners' houses serve as shops. Further along the escarpment we

find the great Blyde River Canyon, a gorge 26 kilometres in length and 800 metres deep, carved into the face of the escarpment. Bourke's Luck Potholes are strange deep cylindrical cavities formed by river erosion and floodwater. From the vantage point of Wonder View we gaze across the sweeping landscape of the Lowveld, where subtle fragrances of the lower region rise to merge with the crisp winds of the Highveld. We rejoin our train and depart for Malelane. (B, D)

**Day 5 Kruger Game Drive.** We spend the day in the world-renowned Kruger National Park which offers a wildlife experience second to none. Its two million hectares are unrivalled in diversity of life forms and the park is a world leader in advanced environmental management techniques. The park is home to an impressive number of species: about 336 trees, 49 fish, 34 amphibians, 114 reptiles, 507 birds and 147 species of mammals. This evening we return to the train and depart for Mozambique. (B, D)

**Day 6 Maputo, Mozambique.** This morning we tour Maputo, the capital of Mozambique and a city of contrasts and an exciting mix of cultures. The city swings along to a beat like no other

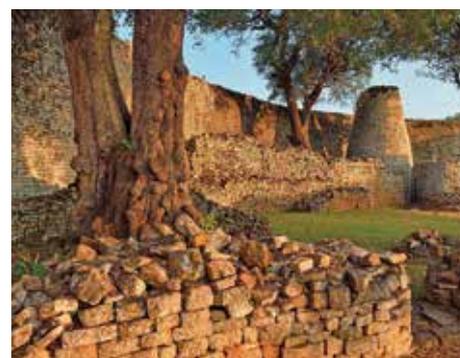
in Africa offering true African hospitality. Its architecture is a blend of African, Portuguese and early Colonial traditions with old Catholic churches side-by-side with mosques, fortresses, Victorian mansions and other buildings from a bygone era. After border formalities the train heads for Mpaka in Swaziland. (B, L, D)

**Day 7 Kingdom of Swaziland.** Today we tour the tiny Kingdom of Swaziland which covers only 17,000 square kilometres making it the second smallest country in Africa. Travel to Manzini enjoying amazing views of the Ezulwini Valley and the Komati River en route. This excursion into Swaziland will introduce you to everyday life in Africa's smallest kingdom. We visit Swazi Candles and Mantenga Cultural Village. With the traditional artifacts on display, the village illustrates many facets of the ancient Swazi way of life; social, economic and religious. (B, D)

**Day 8 Kapama Game Reserve, South Africa.** This morning we take a game drive in Kapama Game Reserve which is situated in South Africa's northernmost province of Limpopo and renowned for its prolific and diverse wildlife. Kapama Private Game Reserve is home to over 40 different



Leopard, Hwange National Park



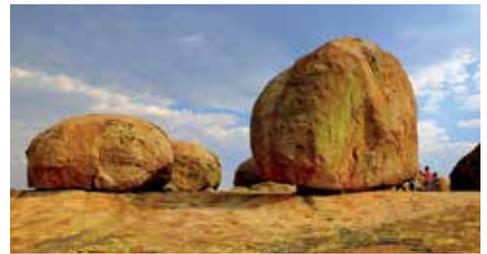
Great Zimbabwe Monument



Lion, Kruger National Park



Lilac-breasted Roller, Kruger national park



Balancing Rocks, Matobo Hills National Park

mammal species, including the Big Five and approximately 350 bird species and a myriad smaller species can also be seen here in their natural environment. We then visit the Wild Dog and Cheetah Project – the centre was established in South Africa in 1971 with a mission to ensure the long-term survival of the cheetah, African Wild Dog and other wild animals in general. We return to the train for lunch and depart for Tzaneen and our overnight stop at Louis Trichardt. **(B, L, D)**

**Day 9 Day On Board.** Relax on board today as we travel to Rutenga in Zimbabwe. We clear customs and immigration at Beitbridge. **(B, L, D)**

**Day 10 Great Zimbabwe Monument, Zimbabwe.** Today we tour the Great Zimbabwe Monument, a hugely impressive monument situated on the south-eastern edge of the central plateau. It is the largest pre-colonial monument south of the Egyptian pyramids and is a celebrated achievement of the African people. Magical fables such as the story of King Solomon's Mines find their origins here amongst the ruins of an ancient city built by the Rozwi people. Discover how these ancient people lived and mined gold and silver which were ultimately taken out of Africa by Arabic and Portuguese traders. Following our tour we travel through attractive granite hill country to Rutenga and rejoin the train in Bannockburn. **(B, L, D)**

**Day 11 Antelope Park.** Set in over 3,000 acres of open savannah grassland, Antelope Park is a unique game reserve and the Park is also home to ALERT's Lion Conservation Programme. Included will be a unique 'Lion Feeding' experience and, standing just metres from the fence line, we can watch in awe as several fully-grown male lions charge towards their meal and tussle for the prime pieces. An adrenaline-filled activity, the lion feeds not only give a once-in-a-lifetime experience but also constitute a vital part of the research into the lions' characters and dominance behaviour. Other optional activities

include canoeing, game drives, horseback game viewing, elephant-back riding and a bird-watching cruise. Alternatively, you may wish to relax by the swimming pool overlooking the lake. In the late afternoon we return to the train and depart for Bulawayo. **(B, D)**

**Day 12 Matopos National Park.** This morning we embark on a full day tour of Matopos National Park. "Matopos" means 'bald headed ones' and aptly describes the dramatic hills and granite rocks of this area. A highlight will be the visit to the burial place of Cecil John Rhodes, who gave Zimbabwe its previous name of Rhodesia. Afterwards, we will visit one of the more accessible bushman caves, of which there are many hidden amongst the hills. We return to the train and depart for Kennedy. **(B, L, D)**

**Day 13 Hwange Game Reserve.** Covering 1,462,000 hectares, Hwange is roughly the same size as Belgium and we spend a full day game viewing in the reserve with a picnic stop for lunch. Situated in the northwest corner of Zimbabwe, Hwange National Park is the nation's largest wildlife area and contains a variety of animals and bird species but is most well-known for its prolific lion population. We return to the train in the evening and depart for Thompson's Junction. **(B, L, D)**

**Day 14 Victoria Falls.** This morning we arrive at Victoria Falls Station and walk across to the luxurious Victoria Falls Hotel, popularly known as 'the grand old lady of the falls' and a splendid base for our overnight stay. From here we take a walking tour of the town and Victoria Falls. Forming the largest single curtain of falling water on earth (on average the curtain is 92 metres deep), the Victoria Falls' 500 metre plume of spray can be seen from as far as 70 kilometres away. The sound of the water can also be heard from kilometres away and up close this muted 'thunder' becomes a roar. In full flood, over 550 million litres of water per minute cascade over the

brink. The vast width of the Falls, extending 1708 metres, allow for many safe vantage points from where you will be able to get different views of the roiling water as it crashes into the gorge and whose constant spray maintains the rain forest. The forest is an attraction on its own with many of the trees marked to help identification. These include fig, mahogany, date palm, milkwood and ebony. The bird life is prolific and species that may be seen include the colourful sunbird and large trumpeter hornbill. Late this afternoon we take a sunset cruise on the Zambezi River. **(B)**

**Day 15 Victoria Falls to London.** Transfer to Victoria Falls airport for our indirect flight to London.

**Day 16 London.** Arrive this morning.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Category	Price
Gold Cabin	£6995
Emerald Cabin	£8795
Gold Cabin for sole use	£9995

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Economy class scheduled air travel • Overnight accommodation at the Sheraton Pretoria Hotel in a Classic Room • 11 nights aboard the Shongololo Express • Overnight at the Victoria Falls Hotel in a Standard Room • Meals as listed (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner) • Excursions • Entrance fees • Local guides • Onboard train manager • Transfers • Airport taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, visas, gratuities, meals not listed, drinks, optional activities at Antelope Park.

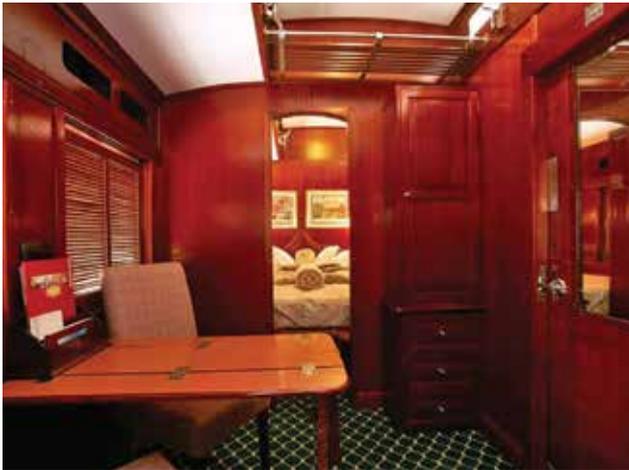
**Please note** that any delays to the train schedule may affect the timing and running of excursions.



Observation Car



Gold Cabin



Emerald Cabin



Lounge Car

# THE SHONGOLOLO EXPRESS

The Shongololo Express, as a rolling hotel, offers sleeping compartments in two categories, two air-conditioned dining cars, a bar car and an observation car. The tempting three course dinners are served in a single sitting. The bar car, open around the clock, is ideal for relaxing over a freshly tapped beer or a glass of South African wine and is a popular spot for reading. Complimentary tea and coffee are available on board at all times.

All of the sleeping compartments offer a private shower and toilet, adjustable air conditioning, 220/230 V sockets, a small safe, towels and clothes hangers. The beds are made up daily by your train attendants. There is no formal dress code on your private train during the day. Dinner on board is smart casual. A laundry service is available during the entire trip (at cost). Large pieces of luggage can be stowed beneath the berths or on the upper luggage racks. However, since space on board is limited, we do recommend taking soft-sided luggage rather than hard-side cases.

## Your Accommodation

**Gold Cabins:** The compartments (approximately seven square metres) are equipped with two individual berths next to each other, or a double

berth and a compact wardrobe. A hairdryer and small toiletries are also provided. Still water is provided daily in your compartment. There are a total of twenty four Gold Cabins.

**Emerald Cabins:** The Emerald sleeping compartments (approximately ten square metres) are equipped with two single berths or a double berth and a compact wardrobe. Each compartment in this category also has a small seating area. A hairdryer and small toiletries are also provided. Still water is provided daily in your compartment. There are a total of 14 Emerald Cabins.

## Your Dining

Meals are served in a single sitting in the charming Victorian atmosphere of the dining

cars and are complemented by a selection of South African wines (not included). There is an accent on fresh, local ingredients and traditional dishes.



Dining Car



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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.  
Cover image: Victoria Falls