



**SHONGOLOLO
EXPRESS**

SOUTHERN CROSS ITINERARY

NORTHBOUND PRETORIA-VICTORIA FALLS • 11 NIGHTS • 2500KM



As of 2024, the Southern Cross will become a Rovos Rail journey. There will be no changes apart from dinner on board being formal.

DAY 1 - PRETORIA & SOWETO	
08:00	Check-in at Rovos Rail Station, Pretoria. Luggage will be stored at the station.
09:00	Full-day tour of Pretoria and Soweto with lunch.
16:00	Transfer to Rovos Rail Station. The train departs for Waterval Boven.
16:30	Tea in the lounge and observation cars.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	Soweto comprises one-million people and was made famous by the Apartheid laws. Pass the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital (the largest hospital in the Southern Hemisphere) and the only street in Africa that once housed two Nobel Peace laureates, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. Visit the Hector Petersen Memorial, named after one of the first students to be killed in the 1976 uprising against the Apartheid government. Spend the afternoon in Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa, visiting the Union Buildings. Designed by the famous colonial English architect, Sir Herbert Baker, and completed in 1913, the Union Buildings house the offices of the President and Ministers. Before leaving the capital behind visit the Voortrekker Monument that commemorates the 'Great Trek' of the 1830s.
DAY 2 - PANORAMA ROUTE	
07:00	Breakfast is served in the dining cars.
09:15	Full-day tour of historical areas Pilgrim's Rest, Bourke's Luck Potholes and Graskop with lunch. The Graskop viewing lift takes visitors 51m down the face of the gorge into the forest below where wooden walkways and suspension bridges meander along a 600m trail through the indigenous forest with an interactive exhibit (<i>lift for own account</i>).
18:45	Return to the train in Nelspruit (140km). Depart for Malelane.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	Pilgrim's Rest is a living museum and declared a National Monument. Gold was discovered in this area in 1873 attracting 1500 prospectors. Today many of the restored miner's houses serve as shops and restaurants. Bourke's Luck Potholes are strange deep cylindrical cavities formed by river erosion and floodwater. Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve has the most spectacular viewpoints overlooking South Africa's Lowveld, so named because it is much lower than the high escarpment along which the Panorama Route runs.
DAY 3 - KRUGER NATIONAL PARK	
05:00	Breakfast is served in the dining cars.
07:00	Full-day game viewing in the Kruger Park with lunch.
18:00	Return to the train. Depart for Mozambique.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	The famous Kruger Park has 2-million hectares of an unrivalled diversity of life forms. It is a world leader in advanced environmental management techniques and home to an impressive number of species, e.g. 336 species of trees, 49 species of fish, 34 species of amphibians, 114 species of reptiles, 507 species of birds and 147 species of mammals including the Big Five.

DAY 4 - MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE	
07:00	Breakfast is served in the dining cars.
09:00	City tour of Maputo, Mozambique, with lunch.
16:00	Return to the train.
16:30	Tea in the lounge and observation cars.
18:00	After border formalities the train travels to Mpaka in eSwatini.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	Capital of Mozambique, Maputo is a city of contrasts offering an exciting mix of cultures. 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.
DAY 5 - ESWATINI	
07:00	Breakfast is served in the dining cars.
08:30	Disembark at Mpaka. Transfer (±90 min) to Swazi Candles and visit Mantenga Cultural Village with lunch at Mantenga Lodge.
13:45	Return to the train (±75 min). Depart for Hoedspruit.
16:30	Tea in the lounge and observation cars.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	The tiny Kingdom of eSwatini (Swaziland) covers only 17 000km ² , most of which is mountainous. For such a small country, it is surprising that it sustains two capital cities: Mbabane is the administrative capital and Lobamba is the royal and legislative capital. In April 2018, Swaziland changed its name to the Kingdom of eSwatini (meaning "place of the Swazi") and is an absolute monarchy. It is landlocked and borders South Africa and Mozambique. Continue through the Ezulwini Valley to Swazi Candles where guests are invited to interact with the artisans as they make a variety of candles. Woodcarvings, colourful textiles and superb basketwork are also on display. Mantenga Cultural Village, a living museum of old traditions representing a classical Swazi lifestyle during the 1800s. With the traditional artifacts on display, the village illustrates many facets of the ancient Swazi way of life: social, economic and religious. Mantenga Lodge is nestled in the mountains overlooking 'Execution Rock'.
DAY 6 - KAPAMA RESERVE & HOEDSPRUIT ENDANGERED SPECIES CENTRE	
05:00	Continental breakfast is served in the dining cars until 05:30.
05:30	Game drive in Kapama Game Reserve followed by visit to the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre.
12:00	Return to the train for lunch. Depart for Tzaneen and Louis Trichardt.
16:30	Tea in the lounge and observation cars.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	Situated in South Africa's northernmost province of Limpopo, renowned for its prolific and diverse wildlife, Kapama Private Game Reserve is home to over 40 different mammal species including the Big Five, approximately 350 bird species and a myriad smaller species. The Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre is a unique African wildlife facility focusing on conservation and the sustainability of rare, vulnerable and threatened species. Founded on passion, the centre has adopted a holistic approach to its conservation activities such as the educating of surrounding communities, tourism, breeding, rehabilitation and anti-poaching, to name a few.
DAY 7 - LIMPOPO PROVINCE	
07:00	Breakfast is served in the dining cars until 10:00. Day on board the train travelling to Oreti in Zimbabwe. Clear customs and immigration at Beitbridge.
13:00	Lunch is served in the dining cars.
16:30	Tea in the lounge and observation cars.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	Limpopo Province is located in the far north of South Africa and shares borders with three neighbouring countries: Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. For this reason, the province is also known as the gateway to other African countries and also shares provincial borders with Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Northwest. The Limpopo landscape varies from one area to the other from tropical forests, bush and shrubs to semi-desert areas with small trees and bushes and mountains to flat land. Limpopo is divided into five regions, strategically located according to the cultural inhabitants. Capricorn is the central region predominantly occupied by the Bapedi people. Waterberg is the largest region with a majority of Tswana people. Vhembe in the far north is dominated by Vhavenda and Vatsonga. The Mopani region near the Kruger Park is Vatsonga whereas the Sekhukhuni region is dominated by Bapedi and Ndebele. Limpopo is the only province in South Africa with more than two cultural groups staying together in their original habitat in harmony. Other ethnic groups include English and Afrikaans people.
DAY 8 - GREAT ZIMBABWE MONUMENT	
06:00	Breakfast is served in the dining cars.
08:00	Transfer to the Great Zimbabwe Monument for a tour with lunch.
17:00	Return to the train at Oreti Siding. Depart for Somabhula.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	Travel through attractive granite hill country to the Great Zimbabwe Monument, a hugely impressive monument situated on the southeastern edge of the central plateau and the largest precolonial monument south of the Egyptian pyramids. A celebrated achievement of the African people and a place where magical fables such as the story of <i>King Solomon's Mines</i> find their origins 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.

DAY 9 - ANTELOPE PARK	
06:00	Breakfast is served in the dining cars.
08:00	Depart for a full day at Antelope Park with lunch. <i>Optional extras include canoeing, game drives, horseback game viewing, elephant interaction, bird-watching cruises and so on (see price list).</i>
16:00	Return to the train. Depart for Bulawayo.
16:30	Tea in the lounge and observation cars.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	Set in over 3000 acres of open savannah grassland, Antelope Park is a unique game reserve and a haven of tranquillity welcoming guests and volunteer eco-tourists alike. It is home to the world-famous African Lion and Environmental Research Trust (ALERT) lion rehabilitation programme, which is a multiphase lion conservation initiative. It is Africa's first genuine programme working to ethically re-introduce the offspring of captive-bred African lions back into the wild.
DAY 10 - MATOBO NATIONAL PARK	
07:00	Breakfast is served in the dining cars.
09:00	Full-day tour of Matobo National Park with lunch. Visit the grave of Cecil John Rhodes as well as bushmen caves with rock art.
16:00	Return to the train. Depart for Dete.
16:30	Tea in the lounge and observation cars.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	Matobo (or Matopos), meaning 'bald heads', was the name chosen for the area by the Ndebele King, Mzilikazi. He is buried in the Matobo hills just a short distance from the park. It is an apt description of the dramatic hills and granite rocks of this area. The park is also the site of Cecil John Rhodes' grave at the summit of Malindidzimu – 'hill of benevolent spirits'. He referred to this hill as having a view of the world. His grave is carved out of solid granite and surrounded by a natural amphitheatre of boulders. A visit can be made to one of the more accessible bushman caves, of which there are many hidden amongst the hills.
DAY 11 - HWANGE NATIONAL PARK	
05:00	Breakfast is served in the dining cars.
06:30	Full-day game viewing in Hwange National Park with a packed lunch.
16:00	Return to the train.
16:30	Tea in the lounge and observation cars.
19:00	Depart for Thompson's Junction.
19:30	Dinner is served in the dining cars.
	Situated in the northwest corner of Zimbabwe, Hwange National Park covers 1 462 000 hectares making it the nation's largest wildlife area. It contains a variety of animals and bird species but is well-known for its prolific lion population.
DAY 12 - VICTORIA FALLS	
07:00	Breakfast is served in the dining cars until 09:30.
10:00	Arrive Victoria Falls Station. Check out of train and walk across to Victoria Falls Hotel (<i>luggage can be stored on the train</i>).
11:00	Meet for a walking tour of the village and the falls with lunch.
16:00	Meet at the hotel for a sunset cruise on the Zambezi River.
18:30	Transfer back to Victoria Falls Hotel. Tour ends.
	The little station of Victoria Falls was first reached by railway in June 1904. Old colonial buildings, bougainvillea and palm trees against the backdrop of the Victoria Falls Hotel form a charming oasis of soft sweetness after the rugged dryness of the landscape. The Victoria Falls is one of nature's great revelations on a par with the Grand Canyon, Mount Everest and an erupting volcano. It is believed that there have existed no less than seven different Victoria Falls over the past two million years. These cascades correspond to the lower gorges of the Zambezi. The present falls is wearing from Devil's Cataract northwards, eroding the softer material behind the present basalt base of the falls. When eventually all the soft matter has been removed, the Victoria Falls will move back, a fresh gorge will yawn and where the falls are now will become a new site for tourists. Although just over a mile long (1.7km), the falls are broken up by various small islands, including Livingstone Island. At their deepest, the falls are 108m deep at Rainbow Falls.

Please dress accordingly for game drives/excursions: mornings can be cool then warm up considerably; afternoons can be warm then cool down considerably. Warm clothing, comfortable shoes, hats and sun protection are advised (season dependent). Rain capes are available.

Excursions may be changed according to schedule achieved. Times are approximate and cannot be guaranteed. Please check with the Train Manager or reservations@shongololo.com for any updates/changes to the itinerary. In your cabin you will find the Journeys magazine that features articles of interest related to the route.

We strongly discourage giving any form of handout to children while travelling. This action may have detrimental consequences to local communities. If you would like to give responsibly, we support many local charities and would be happy to assist.

INCLUDED: Accommodation; all meals; all beverages on board; excursions with a qualified guide (where applicable); entrance fees as per itinerary; limited laundry; government tax. **EXCLUDED:** All beverages off the train; international sparkling wine; gratuities; personal expenses; visas; travel insurance; pre- and post-tour accommodation, flights and transfers.

MEALS ON BOARD (unless adjusted) Breakfast 07:00-10:00 • Lunch 13:00 • Tea 16:30 • Dinner 19:30