

South African Rail Safari: Special Extended Cape Town-Pretoria Journey

<https://www.irtsociety.com/journey/south-african-rail-safari/>



Overview

The Highlights

- Vintage Steam Train Charter from Cape Town across the majestic Sir Lowry's Pass to Elgin Market
- Wine cellar visit and tasting in legendary Stellenbosch, Western Cape
- Private Jet flight between Cape Town and Victoria Falls
- Helicopter Flight (Flight of Angels) over Victoria Falls
- Dinner Sunset and Safari Cruise on the Zambezi River
- An evening of fine dining on the iconic Victoria Falls Steam Train
- 3 game drives included in Hwange and Kruger National Parks
- Panoramic drive through Drakensberg Mountains
- Fully guided tour of the Rovos Capital Park Station in Pretoria
- All meals (with the exception of one lunch in Cape Town), portorage, transfers, and gratuities included
- Experienced Golden Eagle Tour Management team
- 3 nights at 5-star Cape Grace Hotel in Cape Town
- 2 nights at 5-star Victoria Falls Hotel
- 2 nights at 5-star Pretoria Sheraton Hotel
- 7 nights on board private luxury [Rovos Rail](#) train

The Tour

Two of our favorite luxury train partners — Golden Eagle Luxury Trains and Rovos Rail — team up to bring you this South African Rail Safari, an exciting one-off rail journey in October 2022 that offers an intimate exploration of two countries — South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The South African Rail Safari begins in Cape Town before traveling by private jet to the majestic Victoria Falls. Then meander back through Zimbabwe and South Africa on the luxurious [Rovos Rail Pride of Africa](#) train before ending in Pretoria.

From the cosmopolitan beaches of Cape Town, to the thundering roar of Victoria Falls, from Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe's largest national park and one of the last great elephant sanctuaries on earth, to Kruger National Park, and the stunning Drakensburg Mountains in South

Africa, this trip promises to be a feast for the senses.

And of course, the highlight: seven nights aboard the incomparable *Rovos Rail* luxury train, with all-ensuite cabins, expert staff, and fine dining. Journey also includes nights in top hotels: the [Cape Grace Hotel in Cape Town](#), the Victoria Falls Hotel, and the Pretoria Sheraton Hotel.

IRT Report: IRT's Angela Walker and Rachel Hardy loved their time on Rovos Rail's *Pride of Africa*. [Click here for part one of their report on the train](#), [here for part two](#).

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Cape Town

Upon your arrival in Cape Town, you will be met and transferred to the five-star waterfront hotel, Cape Grace Hotel, for a three-night stay. Situated on a private quay between Cape Town's bustling V&A Waterfront and the tranquil yacht marina, Cape Grace is your very own relaxing sanctuary of tradition, sophistication and contemporary comfort.

This evening we enjoy a Welcome Dinner in the hotel, here you can meet your fellow travelers ahead of this highly anticipated journey through southern Africa.

Day 2: Cape Town

Our team of travel experts will be offering a fantastic array of tour options during your time in Cape Town - ensuring the most authentic and exciting experience.

We travel by road along the coast to Simonstown with its naval base before continuing to the nearby Penguin Colony at Boulders Beach in False Bay, which is home to a colony of some 3,000 delightful African penguins. We then travel onto Cape Point, where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet. Cape Point is a spectacular sight with towering stone cliffs, breathtaking bays, beaches and rolling green hills and valleys.

During our time in Cape Town, there will also be an opportunity to visit a winery in Stellenbosch for wine tasting. The well-renowned town, in Western Cape's Coastal Region, is steeped in wine producing history and is home to the country's best-known wine estates.

The best views of Cape Town are seen from the top of Table Mountain. We will take you on the cableway which takes you to the summit in under 5 minutes and the cable car's rotating floor ensure that all visitors get an unsurpassed 360 degree aerial view of the city.

Day 3: Cape Town

Rolling hills gently tumble into breath-taking mountain landscapes as we enjoy a special steam

charter from Cape Town over the Sir Lowry's Pass to Elgin Railway Market (lunch not included today).

The journey departs from Harbour Bridge Platform and meanders through Cape Town and its surrounds until reaching the majestic Sir Lowry's Pass. Arriving at the foot of the pass, the train embarks on an epic climb up one of the steepest railway lines in South Africa. Cresting the peak, the train snakes its way into the lush Elgin Valley before arriving at the Elgin Market.

The market is situated within an old apple warehouse converted into a bustling Art Deco market boasting local food and craft vendors, live music and is the gateway to the beautiful Elgin Valley.

Day 4: Cape Town-Victoria Falls

We begin our morning in style, traveling by private charter flight from Cape Town to Victoria Falls. Enjoy an indulgent two-night stay at Zimbabwe's grandest and oldest luxury hotel, the Victoria Falls Hotel. Known as the 'Grand Old Lady of the Falls', this iconic Hotel is a member of the Leading Hotels of the World.

Situated in the Victoria Falls National Park - a World Heritage Site - the Hotel is just a 10-minute from the falls via its very own private pathway.

In the evening, we will toast to this "Voyage of a Lifetime with" a Zambezi Dinner Cruise. As the burning African sun melts into the golden haze of the evening vista, drift along the glistening waters of the Zambezi River, and delight at the magical safari views. Take in these wonderful panoramas whilst enjoying fresh Zambezi-style cuisine.

Day 5: Victoria Falls

Victoria Falls, known as the 'Smoke that Thunders' is one of the world's natural wonders and the largest curtain of water in the world. October is low water season but even so 50,000 gallons per second are cascading over the falls from the Zambezi River.

Today we have the opportunity to take a helicopter flight over the falls on a 'Flight of the Angels'. Our pilot will fly left and right-hand circuits over the Victoria Falls in both directions, giving you the best viewing, photographic and filming opportunities. A trip up the Zambezi River and back over the Zambezi National Park completes the flight. This is a truly exhilarating experience above one of the world's most spectacular waterfalls.

In the evening we join the dinner train that runs to the Victoria Falls Bridge. A trip on the steam train during your stay at Victoria Falls will take you back to a bygone era. This luxurious steam train will travel to the Victoria Falls Bridge and then out to the Jafuta Siding, serving light snacks, followed by a gourmet meal and drinks. Once on the bridge you will be invited to step off the train and onto the Victoria Falls Bridge. From here you will be able to watch the sun set behind the Victoria Falls before you make your way back to the station.

Day 6: Board Rovos Rail

This morning we have free time so maybe enjoy the many facilities of the hotel or take a walk from the hotel down to the 'smoke that thunders' for a final close up view of Victoria Falls before we depart.

Late afternoon we board our Rovos Rail private charter. Settle into your well-appointed en-suite cabin and enjoy the hospitable and welcoming atmosphere of the Bar Lounge Car before experiencing our first dinner in the elegant Restaurant Car as we travel south towards Thomson Junction.

Day 7: Hwange National Park

Hwange National Park, one of the world's last great Elephant sanctuaries, is the largest national park in Zimbabwe. After breakfast we take a game drive in the park.

There is much more to Hwange than the elephants, a great diversity of mammals and birds fill this sensational park with life. The different habitats of the park from wide open grasslands to thick forest provide opportunities to see a great range of game on drives. While elephants are prevalent on all drives in Hwange it is not uncommon to come across good herds of buffalo or healthy prides of lions.

We re-join our train for lunch as we head south towards Bulawayo. Spend a relaxing afternoon in the train's open-air Observation Car watching the ever-changing Zimbabwean landscape.

Tonight we enjoy another sumptuous dinner on board our private train.

Day 8: Matopos National Park

Matopos (Matobo), meaning 'bald heads', was the name chosen for the area by the Ndebele King, Mzilikazi. He is buried in Matopos Hills just a short distance from the park. It is an apt description of the dramatic hills and granite rock formations of this area.

The park is also the site of British Imperialist Cecil John Rhodes' grave at the summit of Malindidzimu (Hill of Benevolent Spirits). Rhodes 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.

We will also make a visit to one of the more accessible bushman caves, of which there are many hidden amongst the hills.

A late lunch on board as we depart Bulawayo and head towards the border with South Africa.

Day 9: On Board Rovos Rail

A leisurely day on board our *Rovos Rail* private charter as we cross the border into South Africa and run through Tzaneen and Hoedspruit on our way to Hazyview and the gateway for the Kruger National Park.

A great opportunity to spend time in the Observation Car with its open-air balcony or enjoying a cocktail in the Bar Lounge Car.

Day 10: Kruger National Park

Steeped in legend and history, the iconic Kruger National Park in South Africa is one of the world's most spectacular nature reserves. We will spend the whole day here with both early morning and evening game drives. It promises to be one of the most spectacular days of our journey.

One of Africa's biggest game reserves, Kruger is home not only to the Big Five, but hundreds of other mammals and birds, too. For wildlife, Kruger National Park is pretty much unparalleled. Not only that, rolling savannah and distant mountains make for the safari setting of dreams.

After a busy and ultimately rewarding day we will return to the train which has relocated to Malelane in time for dinner as we head towards Nelspruit for an overnight stop.

Day 11: Drakensberg Mountains

Today we enjoy a full day scenic coach tour from Nelspruit along the 'Panorama Route' which follows the edge of the Drakensberg Mountain escarpment to 'God's Window' which offers a unique vantage point of the surrounding area. It stands at an altitude of 6,000 feet and extends northwards over the Blyde River Canyon. It offers magnificent views of canyons, rock formations, waterfalls, as well as the Kruger National Park situated below.

We also visit the Graskop Gorge Lift Company and take the viewing lift which takes visitors 51 metres down the face of the gorge into the indigenous forest below where wooden walkways and suspension bridges meander along a 600 metre trail. Interactive exhibits and interpretation boards enable visitors to explore the diverse life that thrives under the dense canopy of trees.

Late afternoon we return to the train with dinner on board.

Day 12: Dullstroom

Today we arrive in Dullstroom, an unspoilt and charming local village about 20 miles north of Belfast. The town features the highest railway station in South Africa at 6,814 feet (2,077 meters) above sea level. We spend a relaxing morning here before re-joining the train for lunch and continuing our journey to Pretoria.

Day 13: Pretoria

In the morning, we arrive at the Rovos Capital Park Station, Pretoria — a real treat for rail enthusiasts. After lunch, enjoy an exclusive tour of the station and workshops. Additionally, we will have the opportunity to explore the game that Rovos keep on their Capital Park site.

In the late afternoon, we will be transferred for a two-night stay at the ideally situated Pretoria Sheraton Hotel. Located opposite The Union Buildings and perfectly placed in the centre of the city, this exquisitely appointed, five-star hotel is the ideal central point to explore this bustling city. Elegantly designed with marble flooring and chic furnishings throughout, the Pretoria Sheraton Hotel is befitting even the most demanding traveller.

Day 14: Pretoria

Today we will spend the day exploring Pretoria, 'the Jacaranda City', famed for its elegant architecture, historical sites and luscious leafy streets, bursting with a beautiful purple haze when the jacaranda trees are in full bloom (typically late September - November).

On our tour we will visit the fascinating Voortrekker Monument, an awe-inspiring granite structure built to honor the early pioneers, Church Square and The Union Buildings, which form the official seat of the South African government and the offices of the President of South Africa.

In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner will be held in the hotel.

Day 15: Depart Pretoria

Following breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport in Johannesburg to begin your journey home. Airport transfers from the hotel in Pretoria are included for all guests.

Dates & Prices

2022 Dates

October 12 - October 26

ACCOMMODATION	Double	Single	Deposit
Pullman Gold	\$17,995	\$26,995	\$1,500
Deluxe	\$22,495	\$37,595	\$2,500
Royal Suite	\$39,995	On Request	\$5,000

All prices are per person.

More

Please note that this trip is not for everybody; this is an adventure experience.

The track can be rough.

Medical/evacuation insurance is required for this journey. Yellow fever inoculation and malaria prevention may be required and/or recommended. Note: entry into South Africa requires passport with two blank passport visa pages facing each other. Passport should have seven months' validity beyond travel dates.

Pre and Post-Tours available:

Extend your journey in Cape Town, Pretoria and beyond. We can customize pre- or post-tour extensions based on your specific interests, such as:

- Discover Cape Town and its surroundings, with full-day excursions to the Cape Winelands and Cape Peninsula
- Add a luxury private safari in Botswana or East Africa.

We work with the best hotels, lodges, tour and safari operators in the region. [Contact us](#) for more information about adding on to your *Rovos Rail* journey.