

Rovos Rail The Ultimate Luxury Trek, Cape Town-Dar es Salaam

<https://www.irtsociety.com/journey/ultimate-luxury-trek-rovos-rail-cape-town-dar-es-salaam/>



Overview

The Highlights

- Thirteen nights on board one of world's top luxury trains, with all meals and drinks included
- Two-night stay at a deluxe lodge in [Madikwe Game Reserve](#), with four game drives and all meals included
- Kimberley Diamond Mine and Museum
- Victoria Falls Hotel overnight with plenty of time to explore the Falls
- Zambezi River Sunset Cruise
- Chisimba Falls & Kundalila Falls excursion (depending on your direction)
- Makambako-Kiduna Tanzania rail descent into pass
- Fabulous meals and service on board [Pride of Africa](#)

The Tour

If you do just one high-end rail trip in your life, make it Rovos Rail's Ultimate Luxury Trek, Cape Town to Dar es Salaam. The experience is unforgettable.

This 16-day private rail tour aboard [Rovos Rail's Pride of Africa](#) stretches across South Africa and Botswana, touches Zimbabwe at Victoria Falls, and crosses Zambia to Tanzania.

New for 2026: This journey will be 17 days beginning in 2026 to allow for more time at the Zambia/Tanzania border. Enjoy an additional day on board the train.

Itinerary

Day 1: Cape Town

Depart Cape Town Station aboard Rovos Rail's [Pride of Africa](#) this evening (scheduled for 9:30 am).

Lunch is served in the dining car as the train travels towards Hex River Valley. Disembark at Matjiesfontein for an opportunity to stroll through the historic village. Of special interest is the museum on the platform and a collection of historic cars and railway carriages to the right of the Lord Milner Hotel.

Dinner and overnight on board.

Dress: formal.

Day 2: On board

Breakfast is served in the dining cars.

The train traverses the Karoo, a vast semi-desert region that was once an enormous inland sea. Over millions of years, volcanic matter was ground down and deposited as silt upon the seabed to form what geologists call the Karoo system.

Lunch is served in the dining cars, followed by tea in the lounge and observation cars. Afterwards, head to the open-air deck for some fresh air.

Dinner is served in the dining cars. Dress: Formal

Day 3: Kimberley

Breakfast is served in the dining cars and the train arrives in Kimberley this morning. Capital of the Northern Cape, Kimberley is well known for the discovery of diamonds that led to its establishment in 1871. Enjoy a tour of the Big Hole and Diamond Mine Museum.

Lunch and dinner on board as the train continues to Klerksdorp.

Day 4: Pretoria

Arrive Pretoria and Rovos Rail's private Capital Park station this morning. Enjoy a walking tour of the station and the locomotive workshops (weather permitting) followed by lunch on the platform and a city tour of Pretoria.

Dinner is served in the dining cars this evening.

Day 5: Madikwe Game Reserve

After breakfast, we transfer to a lodge in [Madikwe Game Reserve](#) for a two-night stay. Lunch is served on arrival, followed by an afternoon game drive.

Madikwe is a prime malaria-free Big Five wildlife reserve bordering Botswana. In addition to the Big Five, it is home to more than 300 resident and migrant bird species.

Dinner at the lodge.

Day 6: Madikwe Game Reserve

Enjoy an early morning game drive, evening game drive and/or other activities. All meals and overnight at the lodge. Or, if you'd rather, opt out and make a spa appointment (at additional cost).

Day 7: Madikwe Game Reserve; Botswana

After another early-morning game drive and breakfast, we transfer back to the train at Gaborone in Botswana. Border formalities will take place en route.

Lunch is served in the dining cars as we cross the Tropic of Capricorn and the eastern edge of the Kalahari Basin. Afternoon tea and dinner on board.

Day 8: Zimbabwe

Botswana/Zimbabwe border formalities take place this morning.

Enjoy a full day at leisure on board the train to take in the passing scenery. Travel along one of Africa's longest stretches of straight railway line – 70 miles (114 kilometers) – and along the eastern edge of the Hwange National Park. Lectures will be given by the on-board historian.

Don't miss the lectures! Learn about Cecil Rhodes, about Victoria Falls, David Livingstone and more. When we were on board, the onboard lecturer was a huge hit.

Day 9: Victoria Falls

Arrive Victoria Falls around noon. Walk from the train to the "Grand Imperial Lady," the [Victoria Falls Hotel](#), a short way down the path. The train staff transfers your small luggage. Established in 1904, and recently redecorated, this gracious colonial-style hotel is set in lush tropical gardens.

Lunch is served at "Jungle Junction," named after an early train station there, but now a lovely open-air dining area with delicious, fresh food.

You've got plenty of time for a hike, a nap, or just gazing at the miracle before you, as your hotel is situated just a few minutes' walk from the Falls.

Enjoy a sunset cruise on the Zambezi River. Keep your eyes open for hippos. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. (Optional steam dinner train excursion, see "More" section below.)

Day 10: Victoria Falls

Day at leisure. Optional activities include tour of the Falls, round of golf, helicopter tour of the Falls, more. (These are optional and require US\$ cash.)

Re-board the train and depart late afternoon, crossing the famous Victoria Falls Bridge. Complete border formalities for entry to Zambia, followed by dinner on board.

Day 11: On board

After breakfast, the train travels across the Kafue Railway Bridge – a 1565-foot (477-meter) long steel girder truss bridge of 13 spans each at 108 feet (33 meters) supported on concrete piers.

Lectures offered in the morning and afternoon. A special African-themed dinner on board this

evening as the train passes Zambia's capital, Lusaka.

As you travel through Zambia, you will notice many small villages of circular thatched huts. When the children hear the train, they dash to wave, thrilled to greet the visitors. It is a delight to wave back at them.

Day 12: On board

Day at leisure as the train travels the Tazara railway line, an engineering tour de force and one of Africa's best-kept secrets as it passes through remote territory. All meals on board, with lectures offered.

We love these all-train days. Shall we attend a lecture? What about sipping a drink on the rear, outdoor deck? Or, shall we just hang out in our beautiful cabin with all the windows open?

Wherever you perch in this luxurious train, look for villages, animals, Baobab trees.

Day 13: Arrive Tanzania

Disembark in Kasama for an excursion to Chisimba Falls. This is of course not as fantastic as Victoria Falls, but still magical. There's a path for travelers of all walking abilities to admire this national park. The Rovos staff sets up a bar for refreshments.

Afternoon arrival at Zambian/Tanzanian border control. Breakfast, lunch and dinner on board.

Day 14: On board

Enjoy your day at leisure on board as the train passes Baobab forests and descends the Rift Valley towards the jungled Udzungwa Mountains.

Day 15: Makambako

Arrive Makambako and enjoy a stroll through the town (time permitting). Descend spectacular pass to Mlimba. Much of the day, descend over gorges and through tunnels. It's a spectacular day of railroading through rugged terrain.

Day 16: Nyerere National Park

The train descends into the highlands and traverses the fertile lands of Tanzania towards Nyerere National Park. We'll have an afternoon game drive in Nyerere National Park, largest in Africa (time permitting). Dinner on board as we travel towards Gwata.

Day 17: Dar es Salaam

Travel east toward the coast to Dar es Salaam. Breakfast on board before morning arrival (scheduled for 11 a.m.).

Please note: Due to rough track and delays, the train can arrive late into Dar es Salaam. It is best

to schedule an overnight in Dar es Salaam before flying out.

Reverse itinerary

Day 1: Dar es Salaam

Board Rovos Rail's [Pride of Africa](#) (12 p.m. departure) in Dar es Salaam. The train first travels along the Tazara line. Settle into your private cabin and enjoy lunch in the dining cars while traveling through the fertile lands of Tanzania toward Nyerere.

Day 2: Nyerere National Park

Game drive in Nyerere National Park (*time permitting*). Descend into the Udzungwa Mountains and Rift Valley en route to Mlimba.

Day 3: Makambako

Late morning the train ascends the escarpment negotiating the hills and valleys with dramatic tunnels, switchbacks and viaducts. Guests may enjoy a stroll through the town of Makambako (*time permitting*). Enjoy the forests of Baobab trees while lunching on board; dinner is served en route to Mbeya and Tunduma.

Day 4: On board

Enjoy your day at leisure on board the train as it travels the Tazara railway line. Border formalities take place as you enter Zambia.

Tonight, enjoy a special "Africa" themed dinner in the dining cars.

Day 5: Kundalila Falls

Enjoy a morning or afternoon lecture. Disembark for an excursion to Kundalila Falls. Set high on the Muchinga Escarpment, the Kaombe River falls over a cumulative 30m and eventually over a lip about 70m in thin veils to a deep, natural swimming pool. Guests may take a moderate but steep hiking trail to the base of the falls for an amazing picturesque view.

Return to train and enjoy lunch and diner in the dining cars.

Day 6: On board

Day at leisure on the train, with lectures in the morning and afternoon in the lounge car. The train passes through Zambia's capital, Lusaka. Time permitting, an excursion will take place here.

Dinner and overnight on board.

Day 7: On board

The train crosses the Kafue railway bridge – a 477-meter (1,565 feet) long steel girder truss bridge of 13 spans each at 33 meters (108 feet), supported on concrete piers. Lectures by the on-board historian as the train travels toward Zimbabwe.

Day 8: Victoria Falls

Arrive at Livingstone for Zambian border formalities; then cross the bridge for Zimbabwean border formalities. Arrive at the incomparable Victoria Falls. Disembark and walk across to the famed [Victoria Falls Hotel](#). Enjoy a welcome address and lunch at Jungle Junction. This evening, relax aboard a sunset cruise on the Zambezi River. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Day 9: Victoria Falls

Day at leisure at Victoria Falls with optional activities (tour of Falls, helicopter over Falls, elephant-back safari, walk with lions, whitewater rafting, bungee-jumping, golf, etc.). Breakfast and lunch at the hotel. Reboard for dinner on board as the train heads toward Bulawayo.

Day 10: On board

Enjoy a day at leisure on board. Border formalities at Plumtree, Zimbabwe take place. Admire the picturesque views as the train crosses the Tropic of Capricorn and the eastern edge of the Kalahari Basin. Lectures will be given by the on-board historian.

Day 11: Madikwe Game Reserve

Disembark at Gaborone and transfer to [Madikwe Reserve](#) for a two-night stay at a deluxe game lodge. Border formalities will take place en route. Lunch is served upon arrival at the lodge. Afternoon tea and game drive. Dinner/overnight at lodge.

Day 12: Madikwe Game Reserve

Enjoy an early morning, afternoon game drive and other guest activities. Overnight at the lodge.

Day 13: Madikwe Game Reserve

Early morning game drive followed by breakfast. Depart the lodge and transfer to the train at Zeerust. The train traverses the Magaliesberg Mountains – a range of low hills stretching 120 kilometers (75 miles) due east-west from Pretoria to Rustenberg. Dinner and overnight on board.

Day 14: Pretoria

Breakfast served while traveling north through the goldfields. Arrive at Rovos Rail's private station in Pretoria. Disembark for city tour. Lunch on the platform and a walking tour of the Rovos station and locomotive workshops (weather permitting). Afternoon departure; travel south towards Kimberley.

Day 15: Kimberley

The train arrives in Kimberley. Passengers visit the Big Hole and the Diamond Mine Museum. Proceed overnight through the Karoo via Beaufort West to Matjiesfontein.

Day 16: Matjiesfontein

Enjoy a stroll through the historic village of Matjiesfontein. In the afternoon, the train reaches Touws River in the Hex River Valley before descending \pm 2400 feet (750m) down the face of the escarpment. There are four tunnels on the pass, the longest at 8 miles (13.5 kilometers) long. Lunch is served in the dining cars. The train climbs down the face of the escarpment through the Hex River Valley and the town of Worcester. The broad valley hosts hundreds of grape-producing farms.

Enjoy one last dinner in the dining car. Dress: 1920s theme or smart casual.

Day 17: Cape Town

After another delicious breakfast, arrive in Cape Town Station at approximately 3 p.m.

Dates & Prices

2026 Dates

January 9 - January 25

January 28 - February 13

July 2 - July 18

July 21 - August 6

September 6 - September 22

October 6 - October 22

October 25 - November 10

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Pullman Gold	\$16,500	\$24,000	25%
Deluxe	\$21,800	\$31,500	25%
Royal Suite	\$28,600	\$57,200	25%

Journeys will be 17 days beginning in 2026.

Tour priced in US Dollar (USD). View approximate exchange rates.

All prices are per person.

2027 Dates

February 27 - March 15
July 3 - July 19
July 22 - August 7
September 9 - September 25
October 9 - October 25
October 28 - November 13

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Pullman Gold	\$18,200	\$26,400	25%
Deluxe	\$24,000	\$34,700	25%
Royal Suite	\$31,500	\$63,000	25%

Journeys will be 17 days beginning in 2026.
Tour priced in US Dollar (USD). View approximate exchange rates.
All prices are per person.

More

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

The track is very rough, especially in Zambia and Tanzania. This contributes to delays and can mean missed or truncated outings off the train.

Medical/evacuation insurance is required for this journey. Several visas, 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, Tanzania 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
- Hop over to the island of Zanzibar and relax at a beach resort
- Go on safari in Tanzania, with game drives in the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater
- Add the [Blue Train](#) from Pretoria to Cape Town for an additional luxury train experience

[Read More](#)

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.

In Victoria Falls, there are several options on your free day which are additional cost: some require cash payments. IRT travelers recommend the flight sightseeing over Victoria Falls.

Royal Livingstone Dinner Train: Optional excursion available on steam-hauled, dinner train across border from Victoria Falls Hotel in Zambia. [More info](#).

Inside Track: 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](#).