

The Blue Train

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Overview

This train has suspended all services in order to work on upgrades. It will most likely not be in service until 2024. Contact us for an alternative luxury rail option!

The Blue Train is one of the world's great luxury trains, running 994 miles between Pretoria and Cape Town.

The train, operated by the state-run Spoornet, is gorgeous in every detail, from the golden brown of the walls, to the upholstered closets to the "B" logo just about everywhere. Butlers can be called any time from your in-room phone.

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The unfolding journey is shown on a TV screen in the club car and on one of the TV channels in guest suites. Service is professional and experienced.

The train boasts many famous passengers, including Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Margaret Thatcher. When Owen Hardy rode *The Blue Train* in 1998, he raved about the chef. He and Eleanor were delighted to meet the chef in person years later. She is still making her "chocolate pot" dessert beloved by Mandela and many others.

The three-day journey between Pretoria and Cape Town includes a stop in Kimberley to visit the Big Hole Diamond Mine & Museum.

Additional Itinerary: *The Blue Train* makes several round trips annually between Pretoria and Numbi, located in South Africa's Kruger National Park and famous for its elephant-back safaris. Let the Society of IRT plan your [Blue Train + Safari experience](#).

Latest News: Read owners [Owen and Eleanor Hardys' blog](#) about their *Blue Train* adventure.

Accommodations

There are two train sets; one can take up to 82 passengers, the other accommodates 54. The train is air-conditioned. For cold weather, additional heating is provided under the marble tiles of most bathrooms. All suites offer complimentary WiFi.

DeLuxe Suites

Each DeLuxe car has four DeLuxe Suites each. Each suites is 8 square meters (86 square feet). Some have twin side-by-side beds and en-suite bathroom with shower, sink and toilet. There are also a limited number of double-bedded suites which feature a $\frac{3}{4}$ -sized bath tub with handheld shower in the en-suite bathroom. (If you'd like a DeLuxe suite with double bed and tub, please let us know at time of booking.)

Luxury Suites

Each train has two Luxury carriages, each with three Luxury Suites. These suites are 10.25 square meters (110 square feet) and feature side-by-side twin beds or double bed, as well as bathroom with shower, sink toilet and bathtub.

Dining

Meals are served in the 42-seat diner in two seatings and include delicious African and continental cuisine. Dining and service are gracious. Meals are multi-course and tasty. The wine list is outstanding. *The Blue Train* now includes all alcoholic beverages throughout your journey both in the bar and in the dining room. Breakfast or dinner can be served either in your compartment or in the dining car. Snacks and drinks can be served in your compartment at any time.

The Blue Train can accommodate vegetarian, Halaal, Kosher or other special dietary requirements, which should be specified when you make your reservation.

Lounges

Each *Blue Train* set has two classic lounges in sumptuous shades of brown. The Club Car, usually located behind the engine, has comfy seats and a bar, and is the only public area where smoking, including cigars, is allowed. The Lounge Car is near the middle of the train, with large windows, bar and afternoon tea served daily.

Most departures will also have an Observation Car at the end of the train. There's no better way to enjoy a drink or tea and cakes as you gaze out the gigantic rear window.

IRT Insights

You can call your butler any time of day or night from your in-room phone. A major plus of the journey is the train staff itself — professional and experienced. The two engineers who are always on board the train love to talk to passengers about the train. A camera mounted on the front of both trains gives guests a driver's-eye-view of the scenery ahead. The unfolding journey is shown on a TV screen in the club car and on one of the TV channels available in guest suites.