Rovos Rail

https://www.irtsociety.com/train/rovos-rail-pride-of-africa/



Overview

Rovos Rail offers an old-world elegance and luxury to a degree that was never equaled in the 1920s. The coaches have been painstakingly rebuilt with fine teak paneling, traditional furnishings and period décor. Many seasoned IRT Society travelers consider it their favorite train.

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Celebrated not only for its old-world charm, the train is rightfully proud of its stellar dining, amazing South African wine list and friendly on-board service. In short, the entire experience consistently meets the highest luxury standards.

More News: IRT's Rachel Hardy and Angela Walker visited South Africa, where they inspected Rovos Rail, among other luxury travel partners. Read part one of their report on the train, here for part two.

Inside Track: We always enjoy visits by Rovos Rail's Alicia Taljaard. On her latest visit, she confessed to having a favorite trip. It's not what you might think. Read it here.

Accommodations

There are three types of accommodation, among the most spacious in the industry. The train accommodates a maximum of 72 passengers.

All cabins are equipped with a writing surface and, for valuables, a personal safe, as well as USB ports for charging devices. In the en-suite bathrooms, original fittings combine with the modern technology of hot showers, hair dryers and shaver plugs.

All compartments have a plethora of windows, perfect for admiring the African countryside.

Pullman Gold Suites

At 76 square feet, the Pullman Gold Suites are the most “Spartan” — although updates in 2020 have made these cabins significantly more comfortable. Split twin beds (or one double bed) convert to sofa seats during the day. These have full en-suite bathroom, as well as a fold-up writing desk.

Deluxe Suites

For years, these were Rovos Rail’s "standard" cabins, but they are huge and beautifully appointed, in comparison with other luxury trains. There are three to each train carriage. Deluxe Suites have either side-by-side twin beds or large double-size bed and en-suite toilet, sink and shower. These Suites also have a small lounge area with writing desk and two chairs. They measure about 108 square feet.

Royal Suites

Royal Suites take up half a train car and measure about 172 square feet. The bed can either be a king or side-by-side twin beds. Special features include en-suite bathroom with Victorian bathtub and shower, and a separate, private lounge with desk and two armchairs. (Until the *Maharajas’ Express* in India came on line, they were the largest train suites in the world.)
NOTE: Royal Suites are not on all departures of this train.

Dining

Depending on the total number of passengers, there will be one or two dining cars, each seating 42 guests in tables of two and four.

The Victorian-era dining cars feature meal after meal of incredible perfection. All on-board meals and drinks are included in the price of the tour. If one highlight of your vacation is fine food and wines, with service to match, this is the journey for you. Jackets and ties for gentlemen and

dressy outfits for ladies are expected at the dinner hour on the train.

Fresh local ingredients and traditional dishes such as game are frequently on the menu. Every morning, a made-to-order breakfast is served in the diner. Lunch and dinner are multi-course affairs on lovely china, silver and linen. South African wines are served.

Lounges

The observation car, at the end of the train, has a bar and sitting area as well as an open-air "patio" in the back for wind-in-the-face viewing. It is a favorite spot on the train, and something just about all IRT travelers mention enjoying immensely.

Please note that due to the constraints of the Dar es Salaam railway station, the observation car will be at the front of the train for the first four days of The Ultimate Trek: Dar es Salaam to Cape Town journey.

There is also a separate lounge where lectures are given on longer journeys; it has comfy sofas, armchairs and a small gift shop. These lounges are nonsmoking; there is a separate, fully enclosed Club area where smoking is allowed. All drinks are included on board.

IRT Insights

Afternoon tea in the observation car is lovely - a wonderful opportunity to get to know your fellow guests and watch the scenery float by.

Off-train alcohol is not included in the price of the tour. For programs in Africa's winter, which would be around July, it's good to note that although rooms are heated, hallways are not. Our single travelers say Pullman Gold class is fine––but our IRT couples report that it's a bit tight a fit for two people on a long trip.

Just about all IRT travelers rave about the food, the service and the fun on board. As H. Grabill of Ohio and Kentucky, put it, he waited decades "to put that in the bucket list…I just appreciated the people a lot. I hated to get off that train, I'll tell you. Some way, some how, I'm going to go back."