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The Blue Train: Pretoria to Kruger National Park - A 2-Night Return Safari by Rail

2 Nights • Luxury Experience

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Overview

Once a year The Blue Train leaves its Cape route to run a scheduled return safari service from Pretoria to Hoedspruit, the gateway to the Greater Kruger National Park. It is sold only as a return journey, and it is the shortest-supply departure the train operates: in 2027 it runs on a single set of dates, **24 to 26 June 2027**.

Since 1946 **The Blue Train** has been a byword for luxury rail travel in Africa. Its sapphire-blue carriages carry a maximum of 82 guests in fully carpeted, soundproofed suites, each with a private en-suite bathroom, and a butler is on call around the clock. Fine dining, exquisite Cape wines and a standard of service that has made the train a national institution are all included in the fare.

Guests choose between the **De Luxe Suite**, with a full bathroom and shower, and the larger **Luxury Suite**, which offers a deep bath and a private digital entertainment system. Two lounge cars, an observation car with panoramic windows and a Club Car for cards, chess and after-dinner conversation complete the on-board experience. An accessible suite with an easy-entry shower is available in the observation car.

The Blue Train is operated by Transnet Freight Rail. Palace Tours is a registered tour operator for the train and can package the journey with safaris, Cape Town stays, the Winelands and onward travel throughout Southern Africa.

DAY BY DAY

Your Itinerary

DAY 1

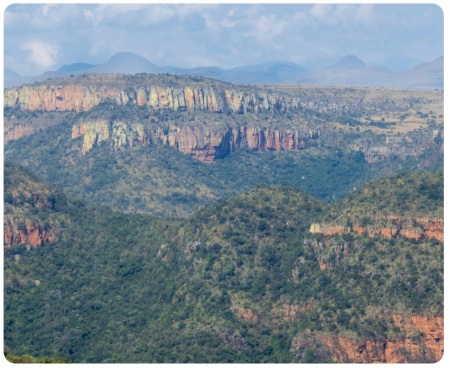
PRETORIA

Registration opens at The Blue Train lounge at Pretoria station for a 13:00 hrs departure. Lunch is served as the train heads east, followed by high tea and a formal dinner in the dining car as the Highveld gives way to the Lowveld escarpment.

DAY 2

HOEDSPRUIT

The train arrives at Hoedspruit at 05:00 hrs, the gateway to the Greater Kruger National Park. A full day of safari follows, with a sunrise game drive in Big Five country, time at a private lodge, and a sunset drive. The day closes with an atmospheric Boma dinner under the stars, with entertainment and traditional dancing, before the train departs Hoedspruit at 22:00 hrs.



DAY 3

PRETORIA

A relaxed morning on board with breakfast and brunch as the train makes its way back across the Highveld, arriving in Pretoria at 18:00 hrs. Palace Tours can extend your stay with further safari, a Johannesburg or Pretoria hotel night, or onward rail travel to Cape Town.

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Tips & Travel Guide

Check-in Information

Register and check in at **The Blue Train Station Lounge, Pretoria Station**. Registration opens at 11:00 and guests are asked to check in at least one hour before departure. Pre-departure beverages and canapes are served in the lounge, and shuttles transport guests to Irene Station from 11:30. Boarding commences at 12:45 and butlers usher guests to their suites for orientation. **Passports are required at check-in.**

Dress Code

The dress code for the duration of this safari journey is **smart casual or safari wear**. Neutral colours are sensible for the game drives, and a warm layer is advisable for the early morning drive, which departs before sunrise.

Dining on Board

All meals and beverages are included. A five-course gourmet lunch is served in the Dining Car after departure, High Tea follows in the Non-Smoking Lounge Car, and dinner is served in two sittings (**18:00-20:00** and **20:30-22:30**). On day two guests take a bush breakfast at an exclusive unfenced location inside the Kruger National Park, and a boma dinner at Nkambeni Safari Camp.

The Off-Train Excursion: Kruger National Park

The train arrives at Numbi Station at 05:00. Guests transfer through Numbi Gate in open safari vehicles for a sunrise game drive led by professional guides, followed by a bush breakfast at an exclusive unfenced location inside the park. A sunset drive takes place on the Nkambeni concession - roughly 11,400 hectares between the Numbi and Phabeni gates - and the day closes with a boma dinner at Nkambeni Safari Camp including an interactive cultural performance. The train departs Numbi at 22:00.

Luggage

All luggage is security-scanned before boarding. Suite storage is limited, so pack an overnight bag for the journey; additional luggage is carried in the Luggage Car, limited to **50 kg per guest**. Each suite has a lock-up safe for valuables.

Smoking and the Club Car

Smoking is permitted only in the **Club Car**, where post-dinner drinks, cognacs and Cuban cigars are served. Children are not permitted in the Club Car. The Lounge Car is non-smoking.

Children on Board

Children aged 5 and under travel free of charge when sharing their parents' suite, to a maximum of two children per suite. The train cannot accommodate an additional bed, mattress or cot, so children share their parents' bed; where that is impractical we recommend booking a second suite at the child rate. Children aged 6 to 11 pay 50 percent of the adult rate and occupy a separate suite; children of 12 and over pay the full adult rate. Ages are counted as at the date of boarding.

Before You Travel

Dietary requirements must be confirmed at the time your booking is confirmed - last-minute requests may not be met.

on departure and arrival days, as train schedules can shift. No pets, firearms or flammable goods may be carried.

DATES & PRICING

Departure Dates & Rates

DEPARTURE DATE	CLASS / CABIN	SINGLE	DOUBLE (PP)
Jun 24, 2027	Luxury Suite	**$155,962**	**$103,975**
	De Luxe Suite	**$124,785**	**$83,190**

Rates shown in South African Rand (ZAR). Approximate USD equivalents available upon request.

Rates shown are per person. Single rate applies to single occupancy; Double rate applies per person in double occupancy.

🏷️ **Look for Coupons and Special Rates on our website.**

Visit https://www.palacetours.com/tour/blue-train-pretoria-kruger-national-park for the latest information.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Terms & Conditions

A deposit of 10 percent is payable to confirm an individual reservation, with the balance due 60 days before departure. Reservations for The Blue Train open on 2 January each year for the following year. Cancellation charges apply: 10 percent of the fare 60 days or more before departure, and 50 percent within 60 days. Rates are published by the operator in South African Rand and are subject to change until a booking is paid in full. Please contact us for the current price in US Dollars.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the check-in procedure?

Register at The Blue Train Station Lounge at Pretoria Station, with shuttles to Irene Station from 11:30. Guests are requested to check in at least one hour before departure, and passports are required. Pre-departure refreshments are served in the lounge, and once on board your butler will show you to your suite and run through its features.

What is the dress code?

Smart casual or safari wear for the duration of the journey. Neutral colours suit the game drives and a warm layer is advisable for the pre-sunrise drive.

What is included in the fare?

Everything on board: your suite, all meals, all beverages including a selection of Cape wines, spirits and champagne, 24-hour butler service, the scheduled off-train excursion, and all taxes and service charges. Excluded are airfares, travel insurance, visas, purchases from the on-board boutique and anything before or after the rail journey - all of which Palace Tours can arrange.

What happens on the off-train excursion?

The fare includes a full day of safari: a sunrise game drive through Numbi Gate with professional guides, a bush breakfast at an exclusive unfenced location inside the Kruger National Park, a sunset drive on the 11,400-hectare Nkambeni concession, and a boma dinner with an interactive cultural performance at Nkambeni Safari Camp.

Are children allowed on board?

Yes. Children aged 5 and under travel free when sharing their parents' suite, to a maximum of two per suite. The train cannot add a bed, mattress or cot, so children share their parents' bed; where that is impractical we recommend a second suite at the child rate. Children aged 6 to 11 pay 50 percent of the adult rate and occupy their own suite, and children of 12 and over pay the full adult fare. Ages are counted as at the date of boarding. Children are not permitted in the Club Car, and alcohol is not served to anyone under 18.

How much luggage can I bring?

Additional luggage is carried in the Luggage Car, limited to 50 kg per guest. Suite storage is limited, so pack an overnight bag for the journey itself. All luggage is security-scanned before boarding, and each suite has a lock-up safe for valuables.

Is smoking permitted on board?

Only in the Club Car, which is the designated smoking area and where cognacs and Cuban cigars are served after dinner. The Lounge Car is non-smoking, and children are not permitted in the Club Car.

Can special diets be accommodated?

> Yes, but dietary requirements must be confirmed at the time your booking is confirmed. Last-minute requests may not be met, and the train does not provide meals for infants.

What deposit is required and when is the balance due?

> For individual bookings made six months or more before travel, a 10 percent deposit is payable within 21 days of confirmation, with the balance due 60 days before departure. Bookings made within 60 days of travel require payment in full within 48 hours. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable.

What is the cancellation policy?

> Cancellations 60 days or more before departure incur a fee of 10 percent of the fare for individual bookings (25 percent for groups). Within 60 days the fee is 50 percent. Once a ticket is purchased a reservation may be changed within 90 days without a cancellation fee, though if rates have risen the difference is payable. Cancellation fees attract 15 percent VAT.

When do reservations open?

> Reservations for The Blue Train open on 2 January each year for the following year. The Pretoria to Kruger safari runs on only one set of dates a year, so it is worth reserving early.

Do I need a passport or visa?

> A valid passport is required and is checked at boarding. Guests must comply with South African government travel regulations in force at the time. Visa requirements depend on your nationality - ask us and we will confirm for your passport.

Should I book a flight for the same day I arrive?

> No. The Blue Train specifically advises against same-day air travel on departure and arrival days. Schedules can shift for reasons beyond the operator's control and arrival times are not guaranteed. We will happily arrange a hotel night either side.

Is the train suitable for guests with limited mobility?

> An accessible suite with an easy-entry shower is located in the observation car. Please tell us your requirements at the time of enquiry so we can confirm availability with the operator for your date.

Are pets allowed?

> No. Pets are not permitted on The Blue Train.

When does The Blue Train run from Pretoria to Kruger National Park?

> This safari journey runs only once a year, and in 2027 there is a single set of dates: 24 to 26 June 2027. It is sold only as a return trip from Pretoria to Hoedspruit, the gateway to the Greater Kruger National Park, and back, which makes it the shortest-supply departure the train operates. We recommend securing a suite early.

What is the schedule of the Blue Train Kruger safari journey?

> The train leaves Pretoria at 13:00 on day 1 and arrives at Hoedspruit at 05:00 on day 2. That day includes a sunrise game drive in Big Five country, time at a private lodge, a sunset drive and a Boma dinner under the stars with traditional dancing, before the train departs Hoedspruit at 22:00. You arrive back in Pretoria at 18:00 on day 3.

What is the difference between the De Luxe Suite and the Luxury Suite on The Blue Train?

> Both are carpeted, soundproofed suites with a private en-suite bathroom and 24-hour butler service. The De Luxe Suite has a full bathroom with shower, while the larger Luxury Suite adds a deep bath and a private digital entertainment system. Fares for this journey start from US$5,125 per person sharing, and the exact fare for each suite is shown on this page.

Can I travel alone on the Blue Train Kruger safari?

> Yes. Solo travellers can book a suite for single occupancy, with fares starting from US$7,687. The exact single fare for each suite category is shown on this page, and a travel specialist can confirm availability for your preferred suite.

How do I ask a question or book The Blue Train Pretoria to Kruger journey?

> The departure listed on this page can be booked directly online. If you would like help adding hotel nights in Pretoria or Johannesburg, a longer safari or onward travel to Cape Town, email travel@palacetours.com, call 786-408-0610, or message us on WhatsApp at https://wa.me/17864080610, where a travel specialist or our AI assistant will answer.

Ready to Book Your Journey?

Contact Palace Tours for personalized rates and departure dates

travel@palacetours.com | 786-408-0610

www.palacetours.com

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