





PALACE TOURS
Travel Like Royalty


PALACE TOURS

Rovos Rail Southern Cross: An 11-Night Luxury Train Journey from Pretoria to Victoria Falls

11 Nights • Luxury Experience

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Overview

Embark on an extraordinary 11-night rail adventure aboard Rovos Rail's Southern Cross, traversing the diverse landscapes and rich cultures of Southern Africa from Pretoria to the majestic Victoria Falls. This meticulously planned journey takes you through South Africa, Eswatini, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, offering a blend of luxurious train travel and immersive off-train excursions.

Your journey begins in Pretoria, South Africa, before heading east into the coal-mining heartland and the historic town of Middelburg. The first full day takes you on the scenic Panorama Route, exploring natural wonders like Pilgrim's Rest, Bourke's Luck Potholes, and the breathtaking Graskop Gorge. A highlight is a game drive through the world-renowned Kruger National Park, home to the iconic Big Five and an impressive array of wildlife.

The train then ventures into Maputo, Mozambique, a city rich with Portuguese and colonial history, followed by a visit to the Kingdom of eSwatini for cultural experiences at Swazi Candles and Mantenga Cultural Village. Wildlife encounters continue with a game drive at Kapama Private Game Reserve and a visit to the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre, dedicated to conservation. As you travel north, you'll cross the Limpopo River valley, entering Zimbabwe to discover the ancient Great Zimbabwe Monument, a testament to a bygone era.

The journey continues with wildlife experiences at Antelope Park and the geological marvels of Matobo National Park, where you'll see bushman caves and the grave of Cecil John Rhodes. A final grand game drive awaits in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe's largest wildlife area, known for its prolific lion population. The expedition culminates at Victoria Falls, one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, where you'll enjoy a walking tour of the falls and a serene sunset cruise on the Zambezi River. This Southern Cross itinerary promises an unforgettable exploration of Southern Africa's natural beauty, history, and vibrant cultures, all from the comfort and elegance of a luxury train.

Images: Courtesy - Rovos Rail

Your Itinerary

DAY 1

PRETORIA / EMALAHLENI / MIDDELBURG

You step onto the polished wood of the Rovos Rail carriage, the anticipation of the journey palpable. The gentle thrum of the engine signals your departure from Pretoria, and the landscape outside your window slowly transforms from urban sprawl to the vast, open spaces of South Africa's highveld. As coal mines give way to rolling hills, you feel the rhythm of the rails begin to soothe your spirit.

Later, as you dress for dinner, the formality feels less like an obligation and more like a celebration. White linen gleams, silver cutlery catches the light, and a South African Pinotage is poured. You share stories with fellow travelers, the day's gentle motion rocking you softly, a quiet promise of the adventures yet to unfold.

DAY 2

PILGRIM'S REST / BOURKE'S LUCK POTHoles / GRASKOP / MALELANE

The crisp morning air on the Panorama Route invigorates you, a stark contrast to the train's interior. You stand at the edge of the Blyde River Canyon, the vastness of the Lowveld stretching before you, and the sheer scale of the landscape humbles you. The deep cylindrical swirls of Bourke's Luck Potholes tell tales of ancient water, a geological artwork sculpted over millennia.

Later, as you descend into the Graskop Gorge, the cool, damp air of the indigenous forest envelops you, the scent of damp earth and verdant growth filling your senses. Dinner on the train feels like a well-deserved reward, the day's vivid impressions settling into your memory as the train glides towards Malelane.

DAY 3

KRUGER NATIONAL PARK / KOMATIPOORT / RESSANO

GARCIA / MAPUTO

The early morning chill of the Kruger National Park bites at your skin, but the excitement is undeniable. You scan the horizon, the golden light of dawn illuminating the bush, and then, a rustle in the grass, a shadow moves. The sight of a majestic lion or a towering elephant in its natural habitat is a moment that stills time, a primal connection to the wild.

Later, as the train glides towards Mozambique, the landscape shifts, and new cultures beckon. The border formalities are a gentle reminder of the vast distances covered, the different worlds touched. You reflect on the sheer scale of Africa's wildlife, carrying the images of the savannah deep within you.

DAY 4

MAPUTO / GOBA / MPAKA

The vibrant energy of Maputo washes over you, a symphony of sounds and colors. You walk through streets where Portuguese colonial architecture meets bustling African markets, the scent of spices and sea air filling your nostrils. The city's history unfolds before you, a testament to its diverse influences, making each corner a new discovery.

As the train crosses into eSwatini, the shift in atmosphere is subtle but profound. The landscape begins to undulate, hinting at the mountainous terrain ahead. You settle back into the rhythm of the train, the day's vivid cultural impressions mingling with the anticipation of new experiences in the Kingdom of eSwatini.

DAY 5

MPAKA / SWAZI CANDLES / MANTENGA CULTURAL VILLAGE / KOMATIPOORT / HOEDSPRUIT

In the Kingdom of eSwatini, the warmth of the local welcome is immediate. You watch artisans at Swazi Candles, their hands deftly shaping wax into vibrant creations, and you feel a connection to a craft passed down through generations. The air hums with creativity, a tangible energy that speaks of tradition and community.

At Mantenga Cultural Village, beneath the imposing 'Execution Rock', you step back in time. The sounds of traditional music, the sight of the historic village, transport you to the 1850s. Returning to the train, crossing back into South Africa, you carry with you not just souvenirs, but a deeper understanding of eSwatini's rich heritage.

DAY 6

KAPAMA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE / HOEDSPRUIT / LOUIS TRICHARDT

The crisp morning air of Kapama Private Game Reserve is filled with the calls of awakening wildlife as you embark on a game drive. You witness the raw beauty of the African bush, the thrill of spotting a leopard camouflaged in the trees, or a herd of elephants moving silently through the landscape. This is Africa untamed, right before your eyes.

Visiting the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre, you feel a profound sense of hope, seeing the dedication to protecting Africa's most vulnerable creatures. The 'Africa' themed dinner on the train, with its vibrant colors and flavors, is a perfect end to a day steeped in conservation and the wild heart of the continent.

DAY 7

MUSINA / BEITBRIDGE / LIMPOPO RIVER VALLEY

You wake to the gentle sway of the train, the world outside a blur of green and gold as you pass through the ancient Soutpansberg mountains. With a leisurely breakfast, you settle into the rhythm of the rail, the luxury of uninterrupted time stretching before you. You might find a quiet corner in the observation car, watching the landscape unfold, feeling the true essence of slow travel.

As the train crosses the mighty Limpopo River, a sense of entering a new chapter washes over you. The air feels different, the baobab trees stand like sentinels against the horizon, their ancient forms speaking of timelessness. Dinner feels especially intimate tonight, a shared moment of reflection on the vast distances traversed and the anticipation of Zimbabwe ahead.

DAY 8

GREAT ZIMBABWE MONUMENT / GWERU

Stepping onto the ancient grounds of the Great Zimbabwe Monument, you feel the weight of history. The massive, dry-stone walls rise majestically, telling silent stories of a powerful kingdom that once thrived here. You walk among the ruins, imagining the lives of the Rozwi people, their ingenuity in mining gold and silver, and the complex society they built.

The air here carries echoes of the past, a profound sense of connection to a civilization that predates colonial narratives. Returning to the train, the formal dinner feels like a bridge between ancient history and modern luxury, a moment to digest the day's awe-inspiring discoveries as you travel towards Gweru.

ANTELOPE PARK / BULAWAYO

At Antelope Park, the vastness of the savannah stretches out, filled with the promise of wildlife encounters. You might choose to interact with elephants, feeling the texture of their skin, or take a quiet canoe ride, the water mirroring the endless sky. The park's commitment to lion conservation resonates, a powerful reminder of humanity's role in protecting these magnificent creatures.

As you return to the train, heading towards Bulawayo, the day's experiences settle into a profound appreciation for Africa's wildlife. The formal dinner, with its elegant setting, provides a moment for quiet contemplation, the gentle sway of the train a constant companion.

MATOBO NATIONAL PARK / KENNEDY

The stark, dramatic landscape of Matobo National Park feels ancient, almost otherworldly. You walk among the balancing granite boulders, their smooth surfaces weathered by time, and imagine the bushmen who once sought shelter in these very caves, leaving behind their stories in intricate rock art. The air is still, carrying only the whisper of the wind through the rocks.

Standing at Cecil John Rhodes' grave, high on the 'hill of benevolent spirits', you gaze out at the expansive view, a moment of profound reflection on history and power. Back on the train, the formal dinner provides a comforting contrast, a space to process the day's powerful encounters with nature and history.

HWANGE NATIONAL PARK / GWAAI-DETE / THOMPSON'S JUNCTION

The early morning game drive in Hwange National Park is a final, thrilling immersion into the wild. The vastness of the park, the scent of the dry bush, and the possibility of encountering a pride of lions create an exhilarating atmosphere. You feel the raw power of the ecosystem, a profound connection to the circle of life unfolding before your eyes.

Later, as the train glides along the impossibly straight railway line, the landscape stretches endlessly, a meditative journey. The '1920s' themed dinner is a playful farewell, a chance to celebrate the incredible journey and the indelible memories made, as the train carries you towards the grand finale.

VICTORIA FALLS

The thundering roar of Victoria Falls greets you, a primal sound that resonates deep within your chest. As you approach the Falls, the spray rises like smoke, a 'smoke that thunders' indeed, cooling your skin and dampening your clothes. The sheer power of the Zambezi River plunging into the chasm is a spectacle that transcends mere sight; it's an experience that overwhelms the senses.

Later, on a sunset cruise on the Zambezi, the water is calm, reflecting the fiery sky. You sip a drink, watching elephants drink at the river's edge, a serene counterpoint to the earlier drama of the Falls. As the sun dips below the horizon, painting the sky in vibrant hues, you reflect on the incredible journey, a profound sense of awe and gratitude for Africa's wonders.

Tips & Travel Guide

Check-in Information

Please check-in a minimum of one hour before departure. If Rovos Rail Station in Pretoria is your starting point and you wish to do a station tour, it is suggested to arrive two hours before departure to join a tour of the Rovos Rail Station and museum. Passports and relevant visas are required at check-in. No vouchers are needed. Luggage will be tagged and placed in your suite, where a full itinerary pack awaits. The Pretoria Rovos Rail Station is located at 1 Transnet Avenue, Capital Park, Pretoria, South Africa. Other check-in locations include: Cape Town Rovos Rail Lounge, Durban Station Lounge, Victoria Falls Hotel and Station, Walvis Bay Station, Hotel Terminus (Lobito), Lobito Central Station, Serena Hotel (Dar es Salaam), and Tazara Station (Dar es Salaam).

Dining Schedule

Meals on board are served in one sitting only in the dining cars. Breakfast is served from **07:00-10:00**, Lunch at **13:00**, Tea at **16:30**, and Dinner at **19:30**. All meals are served at these times unless otherwise stated in the itinerary. A gong heralds lunch and dinner. Bar service is available from approximately **07:00-01:00** daily. Rovos Rail caters for food allergies if a detailed request has been made at the time of reservation; otherwise, chefs will endeavour to prepare suitable meals with available ingredients. Strict religious observance meals cannot be guaranteed.

Dress Code

For days on board, the dress code is smart casual, combining neat, conventional, yet relatively informal clothing. Dinner on board requires formal attire: a collar and tie are mandatory for gentlemen (a jacket is optional), and ladies are encouraged to wear cocktail/evening dresses or suits. The Southern Cross journey includes themed evenings where guests can dress up accordingly or opt for smart casual: one 'AFRICA' evening and one '1920s' evening. For off-train excursions and game drives, comfortable walking shoes, sun lotion, hats, and warm clothing are recommended. Rain capes are available.

Electricity & Connectivity

The train is equipped with 220V AC 50Hz 3-point round-pronged wall plugs and 110V/220V 2-pin plugs for shavers and chargers. USB ports are available in each suite. International adaptors are available. A generator supplies power, but certain breaks are necessary for servicing. In keeping with the spirit of train travel, there is no radio, television, or WiFi on board. Mobile phones, laptops, and other devices that may disturb passengers are confined to the privacy of your suites. WiFi is available at Rovos Rail lounges in Cape Town and Pretoria, and at most off-train accommodation (though not guaranteed).

Climate & Weather

Mornings on game drives/excursions can be cool, warming up considerably by afternoon, which then cools down. Warm clothing, comfortable shoes, hats, and sun protection are advised. Rain capes are available. Temperature ranges vary significantly by month and region. For example, Pretoria experiences average minimums of 4°C in July/August and maximums of 30°C in Jan/Feb. Victoria Falls ranges from 7°C min in July/August to 29°C max in Jan/Feb.

Onboard Amenities

South African biodegradable and/or recyclable products are provided, including all-natural soap, shampoo, hand and body wash, hand and body lotion, and insect repellent spray (for journeys over four days). Chemical-free lip balm, bamboo tissues, reusable bamboo rounds, bamboo ear buds, bamboo natural-bristle toothbrushes, natural toothpaste tablets, and compostable shower caps are also available. Plug-in hairdryers are available. A limited laundry service (10 items/day) with a 48-hour turnaround is offered. Dressing gowns and slippers are provided for each guest. A small gift shop on the train sells South African-made items.

Medical Information

All guests are responsible for ensuring they are capable of undertaking tours and activities. Malaria precautions are recommended for areas like Kruger Park, Eswatini, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. Recommended immunisations (not required) include Hepatitis A+B, Polio, Tetanus, Cholera (low risk). A Yellow Fever/Medical Exemption Certificate is essential if traveling to/from DRC and Angola. Consult your clinic or doctor. Rovos Rail trains are equipped with a standard medical kit, oxygen, automated external defibrillator, and a wheelchair. All management are First Aid Level 3 trained, and general staff Level 1. For medical emergencies, evacuation can be arranged (own account).

Luggage

Luggage can be stored under the bed or on a rack above the door in your suite. No luggage restrictions on board, but two large suitcases are not recommended. For plane transfers, a soft bag with a 15kg weight restriction is recommended.


Currency

In South Africa, Rands (ZAR) are accepted. Outside South Africa, Rands are accepted in Namibia and Eswatini. US Dollars are accepted in Zimbabwe, Tanzania (Dar es Salaam only), DRC, and Angola. Cash is highly recommended. US Dollars printed before 2017 or worn notes will not be accepted. Low denominations are recommended for shopping/gratuities, while larger denominations are better for exchanging money to local currency.

Departure Dates & Rates

DEPARTURE DATE	CLASS / CABIN	SINGLE	DOUBLE (PP)
Aug 13, 2026	Royal Suite	\$313,000	\$313,000
	Deluxe Suite	\$235,000	\$235,000
	Pullman Suite	\$165,000	\$165,000
Sep 3, 2026	Royal Suite	\$313,000	\$313,000
	Deluxe Suite	\$235,000	\$235,000
	Pullman Suite	\$165,000	\$165,000
Nov 19, 2026	Royal Suite	\$313,000	\$313,000
	Deluxe Suite	\$235,000	\$235,000
	Pullman Suite	\$165,000	\$165,000

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/rovos-rail-southern-cross-pretoria-victoria-falls> for the latest information.

Terms & Conditions

Payment Terms

25% of total tour cost due at the time of booking. 75% balance due no later than 65 days prior to tour departure date. All reservations are subject to availability and will be confirmed upon receipt of the required deposit. A provisional booking will be held for 14 days, after which the 25% deposit is due.

Cancellation Fees

Timeframe Before Departure	Cancellation Fee
More than 95 days	10% of total tour price
95–66 days	25% of total tour price
65–36 days	50% of total tour price
35 days or less / failure to travel	100% of total tour price (no refund)

A 5% Administrative Fee will be charged by Palace Tours on any applicable refunds. All cancellation fees apply to the full tour price before any discounts or coupons. Cancellation insurance is compulsory as these fees will not be waived. All cancellation requests must be submitted in writing.

Change of Date / Name / Occupancy

Changes may be requested up to 125 days prior to departure and are subject to availability and supplier approval. No changes will be permitted within 65 days prior to departure. Any request within this period will be treated as a cancellation and subject to the applicable cancellation fees. All changes may incur additional costs, which will be advised prior to confirmation. No changes will be processed without written authorization and payment of any applicable fees.

Payment Methods

Payments may be made via bank transfer or credit card. All payments must reference the booking number and be supported by proof of payment. Refunds, when applicable, will be processed to the original form of payment. Any exchange rate fluctuations or bank charges are the responsibility of the client.

What's Included

- Accommodation on board
- All meals on board
- All beverages on board
- Room service
- Limited laundry
- Excursions with a qualified guide (where applicable)
- Entrance fees as per itinerary
- Government tax
- Flights to/from Coocoulei

- Off-train accommodation (Sossusvlei and Etosha) including meals, water, tea/coffee, and breakfast juices

What's Not Included

- All off-train beverages (excluding water, tea/coffee, and breakfast juices at lodges)
- International sparkling wine
- Gratuities
- Personal expenses
- Visas
- Travel insurance
- Pre- and post-tour transfers, accommodation, and flights

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is strongly recommended and is required to cover cancellation fees, medical emergencies, and unforeseen circumstances. Clients are responsible for securing their own insurance coverage and should travel with a copy of their policy including the insurance company name, policy number, and 24-hour medical emergency telephone number.

Passports & Visas

Valid passports and any required visas are the sole responsibility of the client and must be obtained prior to departure. Passports must have at least five blank visa pages and must be valid for at least six months from the return-home date. This tour passes through South Africa and Namibia; please confirm visa requirements for your nationality well in advance.

Health & Medical

Guests are solely responsible for ensuring they are capable of undertaking the tours and activities. Please inform us at the time of booking if you have any medical conditions, physical disabilities, or allergies. Anti-malarial precautions are recommended for certain areas visited on this itinerary, including Etosha National Park. Please consult your clinic or doctor for the latest medical advice prior to travel.

General Conditions

All services are provided subject to availability and supplier terms and conditions. Schedules, routing, and excursions are subject to change and cannot be guaranteed. Times are approximate and excursion arrangements may be altered due to operational, weather, or other factors beyond our control. The operator is not liable for loss, damage, injury, delays, or unforeseen events beyond its control. Participation in tours and related activities is voluntary and at the client's own risk.

Guest Indemnity

Although certain limited insurances have been arranged, the operator and its agents, servants, or employees shall not be liable for any loss or damage to passengers' luggage or effects. The passenger waives any claim against the operator, its servants, agents, employees, or subcontractors for any injury and/or loss of any nature whatsoever (including consequential loss) arising directly or indirectly from any aspect of the tour, including any form of transport used. This waiver binds the passenger's executors, heirs, trustees, and dependants. The passenger accepts all services and facilities voluntarily, with full knowledge that they may expose them to injury, danger, or loss.

Important Note

All timeframes are based on the local time of the destination. To allow sufficient processing time, clients must submit payment or cancellation requests with a minimum 5-day advance margin prior to the applicable deadlines.

Ready to Book Your Journey?

Contact Palace Tours for personalized rates and departure dates

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