

5 reasons why a trip through Africa on the romantic Rovos Rail should be on your bucket list

 By Ruth Cooper

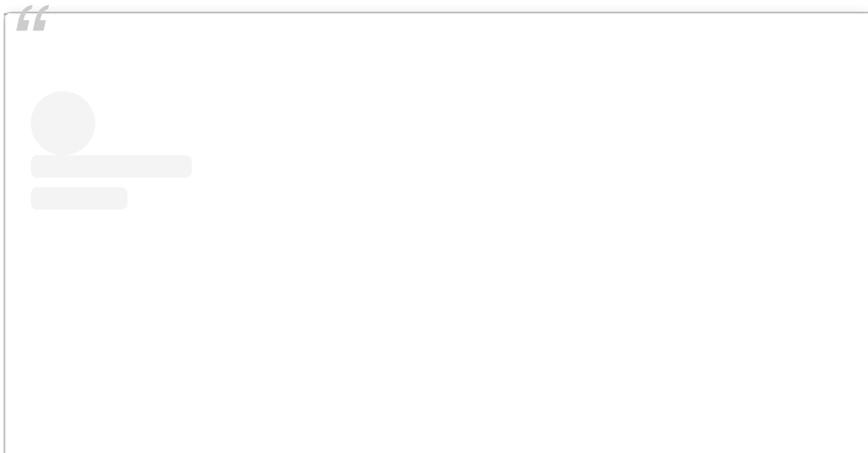
30 May 2019

There is something impossibly romantic about travelling by luxury 'steam' train across the country. The gentle rocking motion, the rhythmic click-clacking of the tracks and flash of diverse scenery seen through open windows from the comfort of your private cabin.

The luxurious family-run Rovos Rail, which celebrated its 30th-anniversary last month, really taps into this romantic nostalgia and, if aiming to travel through Africa at a leisurely pace, it can't be beaten. Imagine martinis in the observation car as you watch the sun set upon dusty plains, luxurious en-suite cabins with an old-timey feel yet with modern amenities, delicious wine-paired four-course meals in a glamorous dining car and day-stops at interesting places along the way.



Disclaimer: the Rovos Rail doesn't run on steam anymore as it's not the most energy efficient or environmentally friendly, but the old steam engine is showcased in action at the Rovos Rail private station at the start of your trip for interest sake and photo ops.





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Toot toot all aboard! 💎💎 Travelling back to Cape Town in style, thanks Shaun!
#rovosrail #rovos #steamtrain #travelreview #luxurytravel #SouthAfrica

A post shared by Ruth Cooper (@remcoopkins) on May 24, 2019 at 5:11am PDT

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Karoo on the 2.5 day trip from Pretoria to Cape Town. Here are my top five reasons why travelling on the Rovos Rail should be on your bucket list:

The food is top class

I mean, I don't know how they do it, judging by the size of the kitchen and access to ingredients, but every meal, which included four courses paired with excellent local wine for lunch and dinner, was outstanding. Expect delightful dishes such as asparagus ravioli, seared ostrich, perfectly-grilled hake, mouth-watering lamb and succulent scallops. For dessert, one can expect a varied cheese plate followed by items such as bright Pavlova and gooey chocolate fondant.



The elegant observation car

At the back of the train, one finds the well-stocked bar and observation car with an inside and outside section. Sipping on a G&T as the wind whipped my hair and the sun gently set in the beautiful Karoo was an absolute highlight. Guests tend to

gather here pre-meal and it's a lovely way to meet and mingle with your fellow passengers.

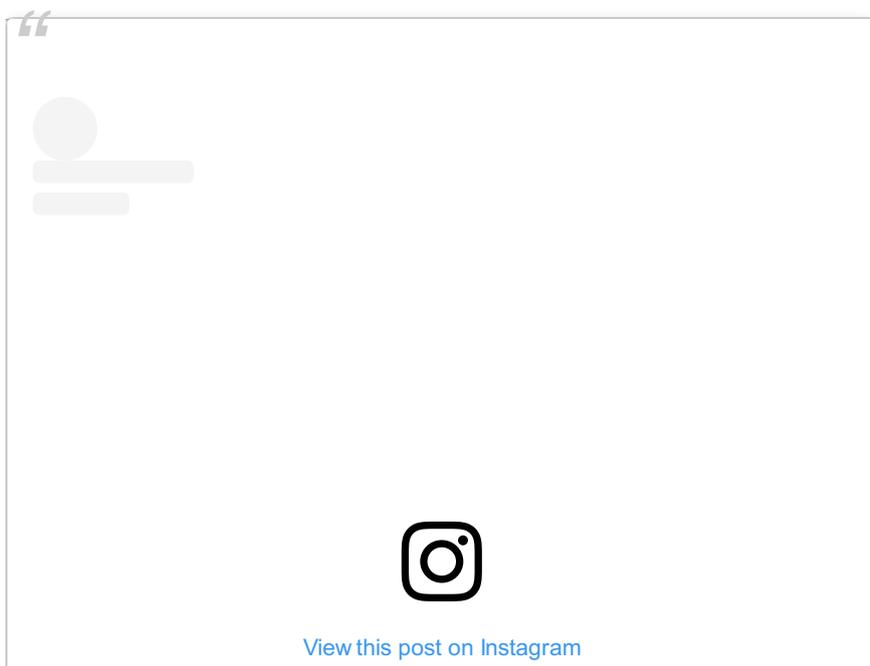


The excuse to suit up

I absolutely loved that there was a dress code for dinners, shirt and tie for men and smart dress and heels for women. So often fashion on these type of trips can be a sea of khaki and K-Way so it was really nice to see passengers make an effort and get all dolled and suited up.

The stops along the way

As luxurious and comfortable as the train is, sometimes you need to disembark and stretch your legs. On the Pretoria to Cape Town trip scheduled stops happen in Kimberley and Matjiesfontein. A guided tour is offered at the Kimberley Big Hole and Diamond Museum and passengers have a few hours to explore the quaint and teeny tiny Matjiesfontein at their leisure. A 5km walk to Matjiesfontein is also offered for guests feeling up for it. Another highlight of the trip for me was that early morning walk through the dusty and still Karoo.





Touring the charming Matjiesfontein. #Matjiesfontein #rovosrail #rovos
#SouthAfrica #travelsouthafrica

A post shared by Ruth Cooper (@remcoopkins) on May 26, 2019 at 2:04am PDT



The price is all inclusive

Okay, so even a two-day trip requires some disposable income but when you take into account that the price is inclusive of everything, barring gratuity, this becomes more reasonable. Basically, your transport, accommodation, meals, drinks and activity stops along the way are sorted. Rovos Rail is also running certain specials for its 30th, a two-for-one winter special and 30% off trips are on offer. View all the special packages [here](#).

To note:

This is Africa so things do not always go to plan, train lines can be stolen, power cuts happen and sometimes schedules change. However, the staff will always go out of their way to come up with alternate plans and solutions. My advice: just sit back, relax and go with the flow. TIA baby!

It's noisy, very noisy...sometimes. Gentle click-clacking is nice, the ear-piercing screeching of the brakes as you try to get some shut-eye, not so much. Ear plugs are recommended and supplied as well as a good few glasses of wine before bed. ;)



Phones are frowned upon anywhere outside of your cabin and staff have every right to politely ask you to stop checking your Insta feed at lunch and dinner. Using your phone to take pics is fine, of course, but as refreshingly found, the lack of digital distraction at dinner times was most welcomed.

Rovos Rail offers eight trips around Southern Africa. Journeys range from 48 hours to 15 days with the newest route, Trail of Two Oceans, departing for its maiden voyage in July this year from Dar es Salaam to Lobito in Angola. A sixth train set is in production with completion aimed for December 2019.

For more info or to make a booking go to www.rovos.com

**Ruth Cooper was a guest of Rovos Rail.*

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

Ruth is the production manager at Bizcommunity. ruth@bizcommunity.com

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