



Women's Travel Club  
Friends • Fun • Travel  
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## **Rovos Rail African Trilogy 2025 Itinerary**

### **Sep 29, 2025 - Oct 18, 2025**

Join the Women's Travel Club as we step back to a by-gone era on a luxury train journey through Southern Africa. Starting in Pretoria, descend the spectacular escarpment to the world-famous Kruger Park for a game drive. Explore the Kingdom of eSwatini followed by a game drive in Hluhluwe wildlife reserve and a tour of Durban and its botanical gardens. Traverse the Valley of a Thousand Hills and the imposing Drakensberg Mountains to visit the 1870s mining village of Kimberley, centre of one of the world's notorious diamond rushes. Continue through the semi-desert region of the Karoo to Upington and the Fish River Canyon, second in size to the Grand Canyon. Cross the untamed beauty of the Kalahari Desert to see the Quiver trees at Garas Park, home to roughly 300 specimens of the Aloe dichotomy. Take a short flight to Sossusvlei for a lodge stay surrounded by the dramatic dunes of the Namib-Naukluft Park. Enjoy desert drives, a bush dinner and breakfast near Deadvlei where camel-thorn trees contrast against the white-clay pan floor. Visit Namibia's lively capital, Windhoek, and a cheetah conservation project before overnighting in the game-rich Etosha National Park. Leave the vast stillness of the Namib Desert for the wild Atlantic coast and journey's end, Walvis Bay.

Since its establishment in 1989, Rovos Rail has earned an international reputation for its truly world-class travel experiences. Step aboard the vintage wood-panelled coaches and sit back as some of the most varied scenery imaginable unfolds beyond the windows. With discreet and friendly service, top cuisine and a selection of South Africa's finest wines,

Rovos Rail harks back to a simpler, more elegant era encompassing the timeless grace and high romance of African exploration.

## September 29 - Pre-Tour Day

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### Pre-night accommodation at Irene Country Lodge

Nellmapius Drive, Irene, Pretoria, South Africa, 0062

Phone: +27 12-6676464

Irene Country Lodge check-in time: 2:00 PM (local time)

## September 30 - Day 1

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### Welcome to Johannesburg, South Africa

Arrive to Johannesburg, South Africa. Johannesburg is one of the most modern and prosperous cities in South Africa and with its easy access it is one of the best locations to start your African Adventure. Our boarding point for the train is in Pretoria, with its plethora of blossoming trees that gave it its nickname, Jacaranda City.

You will be met at the airport and transferred to African Pride Irene Country Lodge. This exquisite hotel is designed to give you an authentic farm experience and a haven of peace and tranquility in the midst of the city. To ensure that everyone has a very relaxing first night in Africa we have arranged for all rooms to be single occupancy.



### Dinner



### Irene Country Lodge

Nellmapius Drive, Irene, Pretoria, South Africa, 0062

Phone: +27 12-6676464

Irene Country Lodge check-in time: 2:00 PM (local time)

## October 1 - Day 2

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### Pretoria – All Aboard

Enjoy breakfast at the lodge and then we will transfer to the Rovos Rail Train Station. Once you are settled into your cabin you will have time to freshen up before lunch. Relax as our journey starts, leaving behind the city and heading to World Famous Kruger National Park.



### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



### Rovos Rail Luxury Train

## October 2 - Day 3

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### Kruger National Park

We have an early start today with a game Drive in Kruger National Park. The famous Kruger Park has 2 million hectares of an unrivalled diversity of life forms. Home to the Big Five and so much more, Kruger truly is an iconic safari destination. We will enjoy Tea and Lunch during our game drive experience and then rejoin the train in Malelane.



### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Rovos Rail Luxury Train



## October 3 - Day 4



### Eswatini

Our journey takes us to eSwatini or known as Swaziland. After breakfast we will disembark at Mpaka and visit Swazi Candles and Mantenga Cultural Village. Lunch today will be at Mantenga Lodge.

The Kingdom of eSwatini (previously known as Swaziland – officially renamed in 2018), is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. It is bordered by Mozambique to its northeast and South Africa to its north, west and south. At no more than 200km (120mi) north to south and 130km (81mi) east to west, eSwatini is one of the smallest countries in Africa. Despite this, its climate and topography are diverse, ranging from a cool and mountainous highveld to a hot and dry lowveld.

Established in 1982, Swazi Candles is a manufacturing company based in the beautiful Kingdom of eSwatini in Southern Africa. They create handcrafted, highly decorative animal and geometric shaped candles in hundreds of patterns and colours. The workshop is music-filled and vibrant where guests are invited to interact with the artisans. Swazi Candles is surrounded by other talented crafters, artists and artisans as well as a bustling market and souvenir shops.

The Swazi cultural village at Mantenga is a living museum of old traditions, representing a classical Swazi lifestyle during the 1850s.

After lunch at Mantenga Lodge will we go back aboard our train for the evening as it makes its way to Hluhluwe- Imfolozi Park.



### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



### Rovos Rail Luxury Train

## October 4 - Day 5



### Hluhluwe – Imfolozi Park

An early breakfast today and then we venture to Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park for a game drive. The park is located in KwaZulu-Natal and is proclaimed as the oldest nature reserve in Africa.

The park is home to Africa's big five game: elephant, rhinoceros (black and white), Cape buffalo, lion and leopard and many other species of animals. It is one of the top view spots for Nyala, a type of antelope.

After the game drive we will return to the train for lunch. Then relax as we make our way to Empangeni.



### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



### Rovos Rail Luxury Train

## October 5 - Day 6



### Durban

Welcome to Durban. After breakfast enjoy a tour of Durban, the third largest city in South Africa. Durban enjoys great importance due to its industry and very large port. While in Durban we will visit the Durban Botanical Gardens.

The Durban Botanic Gardens (Est. 1849) is currently Africa's oldest surviving botanic garden and remains a national and local city asset actively contributing to plant conservation and plant-based education. The Durban Botanic Gardens Trust was established in 1993 to support the garden's key strategic areas in biodiversity, culture, education, heritage, horticulture, people and plants, and research.

We will have lunch in Umhlanga and then return to the train. Enjoy the view as our train traverses the Vally of a Thousand Hills. The Valley of a 1000 Hills forms around the majestic valley created by the Mngeni River and its tributaries. A magnificent gorge between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, the Valley of 1 000 Hills is about more than its spectacular greenery and the clear blue of the African sky.



**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



**Rovos Rail Luxury Train**

## October 6 - Day 7



### **Drakensberg Mountains – Leisure on Board**

Have a relaxing day onboard as we traverse the Drakensberg Mountains. The Drakensberg is the name given to the eastern portion of the Great Escarpment, which encloses the central Southern African plateau. The Great Escarpment reaches its greatest elevation in this region – 3 482m (11 424ft). The Drakensberg escarpment stretches for over 1 000km (600mi). The mountains were first named by the Voortrekkers who thought the unbroken chain of heavily weathered peaks reminded them of the spines on a dragon's back, hence the name 'Dragon Mountain' or Drakensberg in Afrikaans.



**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



**Rovos Rail Luxury Train**

## October 7 - Day 8



### **Kimberley Diamond Mine**

Capital of the Northern Caper, Kimberley is well known for the discovery of diamonds that led to its establishment in 1871. Enjoy a tour of Kimberley's Diamond Mine Museum and the Big Hole.

British businessmen Cecil Rhodes and Barney Barnato made their fortunes in Kimberley, and the roots of the De Beers company can also be traced to the early days of the mining town. Kimberley was the first city in the Southern Hemisphere and the second in the world after Philadelphia to integrate electric street lights into its infrastructure on September 2, 1882. The first Stock Exchange in Africa was also built in Kimberley, as early as 1881.

The observation car will be leading the train until after Tea. Travel through the Karoo, a vast semi-desert region that was once an enormous inland sea. Over millions of years, volcanic matter was ground down and deposited as silt upon the seabed to form what geologists call the Karoo system. It's defined by its topography, geology, climate and, above all, its low rainfall, arid air, cloudless skies and extremes of heat and cold. The Karoo also hosted a well-preserved ecosystem hundreds of million years ago, which is now represented by many fossils. The Karoo formed an almost impenetrable barrier to the interior from Cape Town so the early adventurers, explorers, hunters and travellers on their way to the Highveld unanimously denounced it as a frightening place of great heat, great frosts, great floods and great droughts. Today, it is still a place of great heat and frosts and an annual rainfall of between 50 and 250mm, though on some of the mountains it can be 250 to 500mm higher than on the plains. However, underground water is found throughout the Karoo, which can be tapped by boreholes, making permanent settlements and sheep farming possible.



**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**



## Rovos Rail Luxury Train

### October 8 - Day 9

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#### Upington – Arrive Namibia

Today we travel into Upington on the Orange River. Just after lunch we will cross the border into Namibia. Upington is a town founded in 1873 and located in the Northern Cape province of South Africa on the banks of the Orange River. The town was originally called Olijvenhoutsdrift ('Olive wood drift') due to the abundance of olive wood trees in the area but later renamed after Sir Thomas Upington, Attorney-General and then Prime Minister of the Cape.

It originated as a mission station established in 1871 and run by Reverend Christiaan Schröder. The mission station now houses the town museum, known as the Kalahari Orange Museum. The museum is also the home of a donkey statue, which recognises the enormous contribution that this animal made to the development of the region during the pioneering days of the 19th century. Upington is the closest centre to the Augrabies Falls and the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. The landscape is very arid but the soil is fertile and crops such as fruit are grown in irrigated fields. The area is best known for its export-quality grapes, raisins and wines, which are cultivated on the rich flood plains of the Orange River.



#### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Rovos Rail Luxury Train

### October 9 - Day 10

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#### Fish River Canyon & Garas Park

After breakfast today will be explore the Fish River Canyon. The Fish River rises in the centre of the country before flowing south into the Orange River on Namibia's border with South Africa. It has formed the great Fish River Canyon – the largest canyon in the southern hemisphere and probably only second to Arizona's Grand Canyon in terms of size. The vast rocky landscape breaks up into a series of spectacular cliffs. Its size is impressive: 161km long, up to 27km wide and almost 550m at its deepest.

After lunch on the train we continue along the Southern reaches of the Kalahari Basin on our way to Garas Park. The quiver tree or *Aloidendron dichotomum* is probably the best-known aloe found in South Africa and Namibia. This distinctive tree aloe has smooth branches, which are covered with a thin layer of whitish powder that helps to reflect away the hot sun's rays. The bark on the trunk forms beautiful golden-brown scales but be aware that the edges of these scales are razor sharp. The crown is often densely rounded as a result of the repeatedly forked branches, hence the species name *dichotoma* meaning 'forked'. The blue-green leaves are borne on terminal rosettes but in juvenile plants the leaves are ranked in vertical rows.



#### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Rovos Rail Luxury Train

### October 10 - Day 11

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#### Sossusvlei

After breakfast we will depart for our overnight excursion to Sossusvlei. Tog bags have been placed in your cabin to pack for the overnight trip. We will travel by light aircraft on our one hour flight to Sossusvlei.

Sossusvlei is a salt and clay pan surrounded by high red dunes located in the southern part of the Namib Desert in the Namib-Naukluft National Park of Namibia. Vlei is the Afrikaans word for "marsh" while "sossus" is Nama for "no return" or "dead-end". Sossusvlei owes this name to the fact that it is an endorheic drainage basin (a drainage basin without outflows) for the ephemeral Tsauchab River.



### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



### Sossusvlei Lodge

On C27 / D826 (at the Entrance to the Namib Naukluft Park)  
Sesriem, Namibia

Phone: +27 63 293 636

Sossusvlei Lodge check-in time: 2:00 PM (local time)

## October 11 - Day 12



### Sossusvlei & Windhoek

Wake up early to tea and coffee at the lodge. Then depart on a desert drive with breakfast in the vlei. The dunes of the Namib Desert were created by sand carried by the wind from the coast of Namibia. The sand here is over five million years old and is red in colour due to its iron-oxide content. As the light changes during the day so does the appearance of the dunes' characteristic colour allowing for interesting photographs at any time.

The wind in the Sossusvlei area blows from all directions causing the sand to form a star shape with multiple arms, hence the name "star dunes".

Return to the lodge to freshen up and use the facilities before our one hour flight to Windhoek. Enjoy lunch and then we will visit the Transport Museum. The Trans-Namib Museum is located in historical Windhoek railway station building. The museum was officially opened on 1 July 1993. The exhibition consists wide range of railway equipment, maps and related items date back to German colonial times and South African administration. Outside of the museum you can see old locomotives including the first diesel locomotive in the country, one of the first machinery used in the country where first railway lines were built.



### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



### Rovos Rail Luxury Train

## October 12 - Day 13



### Cheetah Conservation Project

Enjoy a relaxing breakfast and lunch on the train. After lunch we will visit the Cheetah Conservation Project. Founded in Namibia in 1990, the Cheetah Conservation Fund is dedicated to saving Cheetah in the wild.

Their holistic conservation strategy is the key to success in saving the cheetah and its ecosystem. They work to develop best practices that benefit the entire ecosystem upon which the cheetah depends and also address the concerns for wildlife populations and the human communities that share the landscape.



### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Rovos Rail Luxury Train

### October 13 - Day 14

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#### Etosha National Park

After breakfast we will transfer to the overnight lodge in Etosha National Park. Pack a small over night bag. This after we will embark on a game drive in the park. Etosha gets its name from the Etosha Pan, a large salt pan forming part of the Kalahari Basin. Etosha means "Great White Place".

Etosha was proclaimed a game reserve in 1907 by the Governor of German South West Africa. The park offers great game viewing and is home to hundreds of species of mammals, birds and reptiles including several threatened and endangered species.



#### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



#### Mokuti Etosha

P.O. Box 403, Tsumeb, Farm 91, Kleinbegin C38, Von Lindequist Gate, Etosha, Namibia

Phone: +264 67 229 084

Mokuti Etosha check-in time: 2:00 PM (local time)

### October 14 - Day 15

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#### Etosha National Park

Enjoy an early morning game drive in Etosha before returning to the lodge for brunch. After brunch we will return to the train and continue towards the Atlantic Ocean. Dinner onboard tonight will have a 1920s dress theme.



#### Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



#### Rovos Rail Luxury Train

### October 15 - Day 16

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#### Walvis Bay

Relax on board as we traverse the Namib Desert on our way to our final stop, Walvis Bay. It is time to say good-bye to this beautiful destination and new friends. Transfer to the airport for your flight onwards.



#### Breakfast

### October 16 - Post-Tour Day 1

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#### Swakopmund Post Tour

2 nights (October 16-18, 2025)



Extend your stay in Namibia with a 2 night post tour in the captivating destination of Swakopmund, nestled on the western coast of Namibia. Its allure lies in the juxtaposition of the arid Namib Desert meeting the cool Atlantic Ocean, creating a landscape that is both surreal and breathtaking. Adventure enthusiasts will find a playground of dunes awaiting them, with the iconic Sossusvlei and Deadvlei just a scenic drive away. Swakopmund itself offers a delightful mix of German colonial architecture, vibrant markets, and a plethora of outdoor activities.

Over the course of our two-night stay, we have curated a captivating itinerary to ensure a blend of excitement, exploration, and unforgettable moments. We will start with a catamaran dolphin cruise, where the rhythmic waves of the ocean will serve as a backdrop to the playful dance of these marine creatures. Following this aquatic escapade, we'll gear up for a heart-pounding adventure with a 3-hour quad bike experience over the majestic dunes, each one offering a unique vista of the expansive Namib Desert. The thrill of navigating the undulating sands will undoubtedly leave an indelible mark on our memories. As the sun sets on our day of exhilarating activities, we will culminate our experience with a magical dinner set against the backdrop of the desert's serene beauty. The starlit sky and the tranquil ambiance will create the perfect setting for an indulgent culinary affair, making our stay in this Namibian haven truly exceptional.

Inclusions:

- 2 Night stay at Strand Hotel Swakopmund
- Breakfast daily, 2 dinners
- All transfers
- Catamaran Dolphin Cruise
- 3 Hour quad bike experience over the dunes
- Desert dinner

## October 17 - Post-Tour Day 2



### Swakopmund Post Tour

2 nights (October 16-18, 2025)

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Inclusions:

- 2 Night stay at Strand Hotel Swakopmund
- Breakfast daily, 2 dinners
- All transfers
- Catamaran Dolphin Cruise
- 3 Hour quad bike experience over the dunes
- Desert dinner

## October 18 - Post-Tour Day 3



### Swakopmund Post Tour

2 nights (October 16-18, 2025)

Extend your stay in Namibia with a 2 night post tour in the captivating destination of Swakopmund, nestled on the western coast of Namibia. Its allure lies in the juxtaposition of the arid Namib Desert meeting the cool Atlantic Ocean, creating a landscape that is both surreal and breathtaking. Adventure enthusiasts will find a playground of dunes awaiting them, with the iconic Sossusvlei and Deadvlei just a scenic drive away. Swakopmund itself offers a delightful mix of German colonial architecture, vibrant markets, and a plethora of outdoor activities.

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