

South African Trains and Treasures 2010

29 August to 13 September 2010

A Geoff's Trains Tour

South Africa is a beautiful country filled with amazing sights, dramatic history and interesting railways. We have put together a tour that transports you from dramatic game reserves and mile high cities to lush coastal magnificence as we explore some of the best that the sub continent has to offer.

We will visit Cape Town and Johannesburg, travel to the southern tip of Africa, spend a day trying some good wine, sleep in a preserved gold mining town and, of course, visit a game reserve.

Our tours are always a little different, we like to add in a few train rides because we think that this makes a good tour much better. South Africa is a great country in which to do this. Geoff Cooke has assembled a fascinating collection of rail experiences, from a quaint narrow gauge steam train to a stately overnight sleeper train that will transport you from Johannesburg to the coastal city of Cape Town and then on to Port Elizabeth.

An interest in trains is not needed. However, if they are your passion, Geoff will be there to share his considerable knowledge of South Africa's railways with you.

Sit back, relax, enjoy the journey!

Day 1. Sunday. 29 August 2010

The tour will start this morning with a road transfer from Johannesburg to the Kruger National Park. The five hour journey will leave the City Lodge Airport Hotel at 10h30, calling at Johannesburg Airport.

Overnight: Nkambeni Tented Lodge.
Meals included: Breakfast. Dinner.

Day 2. Monday. 30 August 2010.

Early to rise, we enjoy a full day Safari in open vehicles in the Kruger National Park. The world-renowned Kruger Park offers a wildlife experience that ranks with the best in Africa. Established in 1898 this national park of nearly 2 million hectares is home to an impressive number of species: 336 trees, 49 fish, 34 amphibians, 114 reptiles, 507 birds and 147 mammals. Our included lunch will be at a railway themed restaurant on the now disused Selati Railway Station in the heart of the game reserve. Return to the lodge this afternoon to freshen up for an included dinner.

Overnight: Nkambeni Tented Lodge.
Meals included: Breakfast. Lunch. Dinner.

Day 3. Tuesday. 31 August 2010.

Enjoy a second day in the Kruger National Park. Our morning game drive will finish earlier than yesterday with free time before a sunset drive that will include sundowners overlooking the park and a searchlight drive back to the camp looking for elusive nocturnal animals. This will be followed by an included dinner.

Overnight: Nkambeni Tented Lodge.
Meals included: Breakfast. Dinner.

Day 4. Wednesday. 01 September 2010.

We leave Kruger Park this morning and spend the day exploring the scenic Panorama Route. Visit the Blyde River Canyon, Gods Window, Bourkes Luck Potholes, the three Rondavels and at least one scenic waterfall. There will be a lunch stop en-route (for own account). Continue this evening to Pilgrim's Rest, a restored gold mining town with great character and charm. The entire town is a national monument and our hotel has served the residents for well over a century. The bar was originally the church, and the rooms are a delightful mix of South African Victoriana.

Overnight: Royal Hotel, Pilgrim's Rest.
Meals included: Breakfast. Dinner.

Day 5. Thursday. 02 September 2010.

This morning there will be time to explore Pilgrim's Rest before a scenic coach drive to Gold Reef City on the edge of Johannesburg. Gold Reef City used to be a working gold mine, nowadays it is a heritage centre and theme park. Our hotel is located in the historic buildings of the heritage park, surrounded by other restored buildings representative of Johannesburg at the end of the 19th Century. There are a number of railway artefacts to be seen, including steam locomotives and a coach used to carry gold bullion. Adjacent to Gold Reef City is the Apartheid Museum (admission extra) and a large entertainment centre with a casino. Relax at the hotel or enjoy an evening of entertainment at the Casino or one of the two theatres.

Overnight: Gold Reef City Hotel.
Meals included: Breakfast.

Day 6. Friday. 03 September 2010.

After breakfast we will drive to Soweto to see the Hector Pie-

terson Memorial, the site where the student uprisings of 1976 began. Visit the fascinating museum, which is a state of the art multi media centre depicts scenes leading up to the student uprising and the eventual transition to democracy. The huge taxi ranks and markets will give you a real feeling for urban Africa. Continue to Pretoria, South Africa's "Jacaranda City", where history becomes more nument and Paul Kruger's house. After a stop for lunch we will drive to the Lesedi Cultural Village. Experience the origins of today's colourful South African nation with a guided tour of the Zulu, Basotho, Xhosa and Pedi homesteads. The traditional singing and dancing show, held in the boma at the end of the tour, sets the atmosphere for our included meal in the Nyama Choma restaurant, a Pan African Buffet in true African style.

Overnight: Gold Reef City Hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast. Dinner.

Day 7. Saturday. 04 September 2010.

We will start this morning at the Germiston Locomotive Depot, where we will board the Reefsteamers train for Magaliesburg. A magnificent steam locomotive will take charge of up to 17 coaches as we steam out of the city into the hills surrounding Magaliesburg. Coffee and a bacon roll will be served and refreshments will be available on board. After an included buffet lunch at the Magaliesburg Hotel, the train will return to Germiston where the Reefsteamers crew will welcome us with a traditional South Africa Braai (Barbecue). There will be an opportunity to tour the depot and see the locomotive being 'put to bed'. Following our dinner in South Africa's largest steam depot, return to our hotel.

Overnight: Gold Reef City Hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast. Lunch.

Day 8. Sunday. 05 September 2010.

Explore Gold Reef City or the Apartheid Museum this morning. After breakfast Geoff will host a short walk around Gold Reef city, ending at the Gold Mine in time for a trip down the original mine shaft (extra cost and subject to conditions). After an early lunch (own account), transfer to Johannesburg's Park Station to join the Premier Classe train bound for Cape Town. The sleeping coaches are well appointed with quality bedding, gowns and toiletries and service is friendly and appropriate for this mainline adventure. The train will leave Johannesburg and roll past the savannah and gold mines of the highveld as you relax and enjoy the sunset. Dinner tonight will be in one of the two dining cars on the train, followed by drinks and entertainment in the lounge.

Overnight: Premier Classe Train in twin or single cabins.

Meals included Breakfast. Dinner.

Day 9. Monday. 06 September 2010.

Awake this morning in the arid Karoo. Enjoy breakfast in the dining car and relax as the train makes its way down the African escarpment to the Cape Flats. The scenery here is dramatically different with vineyards surrounded by high mountains. Table Mountain will come into view before we arrive at Cape Town Station mid afternoon. A coach will transfer us the short distance to our hotel, conveniently located at the V&A waterfront. The waterfront is part working harbour, part shopping and recreational area. There are numerous restaurants and a wealth of other attractions to see in the safe tourist area. Tonight's included dinner will be at a restaurant in the Waterfront.

Overnight: Southern Sun Waterfront Hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast. Lunch. Dinner at a V&A Waterfront Restaurant.

Day 10. Tuesday. 07 September 2010.

This morning we will take a 2 hour tour of the city of Cape Town on an open top bus. Geoff will be available to discuss options for the remainder of the day, when you will be able to use your full day bus ticket to return to any of the attractions en-route. These include the Castle, the Company Gardens, Parliament, Cape Town Cathedral and the lower cable car from where (weather permitting) you can take the cable-car to the top of Table Mountain (own account). Gather this afternoon for an included charter trip on a genuine steam powered launch around Cape Town harbour.

Overnight: Southern Sun Waterfront Hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast.

Day 11. Wednesday. 08 September 2010.

We will tour the Cape Peninsular today. Drive to Hout Bay, an attractive working fishing harbour where we will join a boat trip to a small island inhabited by seals (weather dependent). Continue to the Cape Point Nature Reserve to visit both the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Point. Included is a journey on the Funicular Railway at Cape Point. Lunch will be at Bertha's restaurant overlooking the historic naval base at Simon's Town, once home to Nelson's fleet and now at main base of the South African Navy. After lunch, ride a commuter train on the Simon's Town to Cape Town railway. This electric railway travels dramatically along the False Bay beach under commanding naval defences before it passes between the waters of False Bay and quaint seaside towns before turning inland at Muizenburg to head across the Cape Flats to Cape Town. We will leave the train at Lakeside to join our coach for the drive to the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, located at the base of Table Mountain.

Overnight: Southern Sun Waterfront Hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast. Lunch at Simonstown.

Day 12. Thursday. 09 September 2010.

South Africa is well known for its wines that are produced around Cape Town and today we will visit one of the wine producing regions. Our coach will take us to Paarl for a cellar tour and wine tasting at the KWV Cellars. Continue to Franschhoek (short town visit) and the Boschendal Estate for wine tasting with an included light cheese lunch. This afternoon, visit the attractive university town of Stellenbosch (short town visit) before our third tasting at the Uitkyk Historic Manor House.

Overnight: Southern Sun Waterfront Hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast. Lunch.

Day 13. Friday. 10 September 2010.

Enjoy a morning at leisure in Cape Town before transferring to the station for our second Premier Classe train journey, this time to the Indian Ocean coastal city of Port Elizabeth. Prepare for a lazy, scenic journey that meanders through the small villages, farms and craggy mountains of the Little Karoo before rolling down to the spectacular bays of the Garden Route. Dinner will once more be in the dining car.

Overnight: Premier Classe Train in twin or single cabins.

Meals included Breakfast. Dinner.

Day 14. Saturday. 11 September 2010.

Our Premier Classe journey will end at Port Elizabeth this afternoon. Transfer to our hotel close to Humewood Beach and the Indian Ocean.

Overnight: Kelway Hotel. Port Elizabeth.

Meals included Breakfast. Lunch. Dinner.

Day 15. Sunday. 12 September 2010.

After breakfast we will drive to the Humewood Road Narrow Gauge railway station to join the famous Apple Express steam train. This morning the train will take us as far as Lourie Station in the Langkloof. Our included lunch will be at Lourie before we make our leisurely way back to Humewood Road.

Overnight: Kelway Hotel. Port Elizabeth.

Meals included Breakfast. Lunch. Dinner.

Day 16. Monday. 13 September 2010.

Your tour ends after breakfast today.

Note:

Airport transfers are not included, but can be arranged.

Spend an extra day at Port Elizabeth to relax at the end of our tour. The city offers excellent beaches and shopping. A tour to the nearby Addo Elephant Reserve is also possible.

Prices

Starting in Johannesburg on 29 August and ending in Port Elizabeth on 13 September 2010

£2,195 per person sharing a twin or double room.

£328 single room supplement.

Prices may change due to foreign currency fluctuations.

For the pre-tour night in Johannesburg on 28 August

City Lodge Hotel

£38 per person bed and breakfast sharing a twin or double room.

£20 single room supplement.

For the extra post - tour night in Port Elizabeth on 13 September

Addo Elephant Park

£97 per person for a full day tour, including lunch. Minimum 2 participants.

Kelway Hotel

£56 per person bed and breakfast sharing a twin or double room.

£44 single room supplement.

The tour includes

All train journeys as described in the programme. Please note that train times are always subject to change.

Accommodation on all nights according to the program, in double rooms with private facilities or single rooms with a supplement. Hotels will be to a minimum three star standard with en-suite facilities. All hotels are subject to change for another of equal or higher standard.

Meals as advertised in the programme.

Transfers, train and bus journeys, visits according to the program including entry-fees except where these are shown as excluded in the programme.

The services of Geoff Cooke as tour manager and local guides.

Porterage between train, coach and hotel lobby.

The tour does NOT include

Flights.

Personal expenditure (telephone calls, laundry, drinks, gifts, etc),

Tips and gratuities.

Visa and airport departure fees.

Immigration rules

All participants need a passport which is still valid at least 6 months after the travel date and needs to have at least 3 free pages, preferably facing each other. Please check the immigration rules for your nationality to avoid surprises.

Climate and Clothes: It is Spring in the southern hemisphere: at night it can be cool, during the day temperatures rise to around 20 degrees. It may rain, but you should enjoy a blue sky with scattered clouds. A warm pullover, long trousers and long sleeve shirt will protect you against cool nights and insects. A hat and sun-block will protect you against the African sun. There may be a small risk of Malaria in Mpumalanga and Kruger, precautions are advised.

Tour Manager: Geoff Cooke.

Bookings: Bookings are now being taken.

Minimum number to confirm the tour: 20.

Maximum number on the tour: 40.

This tour will run primarily for tourists and couples who enjoy train rides

Participants should be able to walk some distance without assistance.

Hotels will offer reasonable en-suite facilities and will be to three or four star standards.

The tour includes a number of features that will be of interest to railfans.

Please contact us if you are unsure if this tour will be suitable for you.

Arrive early and relax

If you would like to start your holiday refreshed after a good night's sleep, we recommend that you fly to Johannesburg at least one day early.

Geoff Cooke, your Tour Manager, will spend at least one pre-tour night at the City Lodge Hotel near Johannesburg Airport and we will be happy to make a reservation for you as well.

The City Lodge is a modern hotel that offers a convenient transfer service from the Airport. Prices are listed on these pages.

Flying home

If you need to book a flight from Port Elizabeth back to Johannesburg, it may be worth taking a look at Kulula Air. Owned by Comair, the BA franchisee, this South African budget airline offers cheaper fares and a light hearted approach.

To book

Please phone Geoff Cooke on +44 (0)1562 632000 if you have a query, or if you would like to book the tour.

A booking form can be found on our website at
www.geoffs-trains.com

Or email Geoff at
geoff@geoffs-trains.com

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