

# South Africa Rail Experience

## Shongololo Express - Good Hope Express

### 14 days



*Shongololo Express operates exciting adventure train trips, each traversing great stretches of Southern Africa to let you experience the wonderful topographic, social, historic, floral and wildlife diversity of these distinctive areas - south and west coast - the central and southern regions - and the northern and north-eastern areas of this richly endowed sub-continent.*

*A 14-day journey offering an amazingly comprehensive view of South Africa, incorporating virtually every internationally regarded 'must see' sight. As the train travels the length and breadth of the country, guests can enjoy the great variety of landscapes, shorelines, cultures and lifestyles that the "Rainbow Nation" has to offer.*

**Day 1. Pre-Day Cape Town** - You will be met upon arrival at Cape Town International Airport and transferred to the train. Having a pre-day allows guests to acclimatise and unpack prior to the first day of touring. A pre-night on board will include dinner, bed and breakfast. The train remains stationary at Cape Town station for the night.

**Day 2-3. Cape Town** - Cape Town's nautical heritage, diverse cultural influences and the magnificence of its setting with Table Mountain dominating the skyline make this one of the most vibrant and beautiful cities in the world. *(Please Note: All the activities below will be covered over Days 2 & 3, but as some are weather dependent, the order in which we visit them may vary.)*

**Cape Point** - *We will visit the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, world-renowned for their magnificent setting against the eastern slopes of Table Mountain and for their varied and beautiful displays of Cape flora. We travel next to Hout Bay, where a large fleet of colourful fishing vessels gives this bustling, attractive resort its character, and visit Mariner's Wharf where fresh seafood is a speciality. Built between 1915 and 1922 and recently upgraded, Chapman's Peak Drive is one of the most spectacular sea cliff routes in the world. We wind our way along this scenic road to Simon's Town, a charming coastal town and safe harbour for visiting sailing ships during the winter months when Table Bay can be treacherous. This day will not be complete without a visit to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve which Sir Francis Drake called "the fairest cape in the whole circumference of the earth". The Nature reserve is situated at the southern tip of the peninsula.*

**Cape Town City Tour** - *This exciting city tour commences with an exhilarating cable car ascent of Table Mountain (weather permitting and at guests' own cost). Both the ride and the summit provide breathtaking views over the city and its beaches. Our tour continues with a walk through the Company Gardens and a visit to the Bo-Kaap Museum. Arriving as political refugees and slaves during the 17th century, the Malays made Bo-Kaap their home almost two centuries after emancipation. On our way to the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, we stop at Diamond Works, where we follow a tour of the diamond cutting studio. Guests can choose where amongst the many bistros, bars and restaurants at The V&A Waterfront for lunch (own account). The Waterfront is a vibrant development that has brought new life to the old harbour of the Dutch East India Company in Table Bay. After lunch, we will drive through District 6, an area which by 1900 was home to the largest group of people then referred to as "Malay", "mixed and other" or "coloured". Our tour ends with a visit to the Castle of Good Hope. This pentagonal fortification with stone walls between the bastions of 150m length and 12m height replaced a small clay and timber fort built as a maritime replenishment station for the ships of the Dutch East India Company by Commander Jan van Riebeeck in 1652. The Castle of Good Hope is the oldest surviving building in South Africa.*

**Day 4. Winelands / Overberg Region** - Surrounded by proud mountain ranges, the fertile green valleys of the Cape Winelands enjoy a Mediterranean climate and winter rainfall which produces some of the best wines in the world. The Overberg region to the southeast embraces mountains, valleys and coastal areas and annually welcomes the Southern Right Whale to its waters.

**Historic Heart of the Winelands** - *We travel through the Huguenot Tunnel to Paarl, named after the huge granite dome of rock overlooking the town. From here we drive to the heart of the winelands, to Stellenbosch, the second oldest town in South Africa. After a lunch break (guests' own account) we continue our journey over the Hellshoogte Pass through a landscape of fruit farms, Cape Dutch houses and vineyards. In Franschhoek (literally meaning "French Corner") we visit the Huguenot Memorial, which commemorates the 1688 settlement of the French Huguenots who fled religious persecution in France. In the late afternoon, the drive to Worcester offers splendid views over more picturesque vineyards, plantations and rugged peaks. One wine tasting is included in this excursion*

**Scenic Mountain Passes and Hermanus** - *We travel on the coastal road past Gordon's Bay and Betty's Bay towards Hermanus, once a renowned fish market and whaling station. The whale hunts here were stopped by international treaty in 1935. The WWF includes Hermanus in its list of 12 best whale-viewing sites in the world, but it tops the list when it comes to land based whale watching from the town's natural cliffs. In season between July and November each year whales can be viewed from as little as 5 metres away. In the*

afternoon we travel over the scenic mountain passes of Rooihogte and Floorshogte and via the Overberg towns of Villiersdorp and Botrivier. From here we travel to Worcester. One wine tasting is included in this excursion.

**Day 5. Kimberley and Bloemfontein** - Kimberley is the capital city of the Northern Cape, well known for the Big Hole which resulted from the discovery of diamonds that led to the establishment of the city in 1893. Bloemfontein is the seat of the South African judicial system. At the end of the 19th century it was also the capital of the old Boer republic of The Orange Free State

**Kimberley** After breakfast embark on buses for a drive through the city of Kimberley well known for the discovery of diamonds and as the home of the De Beers Company. Highlights in Kimberley include a visit to the Big Hole Mine Museum, William Humphrey Art Gallery and the Macgregor House War Museum. Guests stop for lunch before they head to Bloemfontein where they join the train en route to Ladysmith.

**Bloemfontein** After breakfast remain onboard the train as it journeys to Bloemfontein. On arrival guests have lunch at the Waterfront (guests' own account) before they embark on buses for the tour of Bloemfontein capital of the Free State province and also known as the Rose City. Highlights include a visit to the Women's Memorial at the Anglo-Boer War Museum which commemorates the 27 000 women and children who died in concentration camps. Naval Hill presents beautiful panoramic views of the city.

**Bloemfontein** After breakfast embark on a 2 hour drive from Kimberley to Bloemfontein. On arrival we tour the Women's Memorial at the Anglo-Boer War Museum, which commemorates the 27 000 women and children who died in concentration camps. The Museum itself is a graphic depiction of the hardship endured by all during the period of conflict. A drive through Bloemfontein, capital of the Free State province and also known as the Rose City, follows. Our lunch stop is at the Loch Logan Waterfront, next to the city's newly renovated stadium, one of the venues for matches during the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Lunch is for guests' own account. In the afternoon we drive up onto Naval Hill which offers unrivalled panoramic views of the city. We end the day at the former State President's residence 'Olivenhuis' which now houses an extensive collection of South African art. The gardens offer a relaxing atmosphere in which to spend a little time before we return to the train.

**Day 6. Midlands / Southern Drakensberg** - Guests now head to the eastern jagged peaks of the Drakensberg, following waterways as they drop and cascade down mountain clefts, and through hidden valleys to the tumbling luscious hills that extend through the Midlands.

**Battlefields** Trace the course of the Anglo Boer War at the Siege Museum and on local battle sites including Spioenkop. Other highlights include Wagon Hill, where both British and Boers suffered heavy losses and whose site was proclaimed a National Monument in 1938. Visitors also gain an insight into the early lives of Winston Churchill and Ghandi.

**Midlands Meander** The famous Midlands Meander in KwaZulu-Natal is a unique mix of more than 160 places to eat, drink, sleep, shop, play and generally enjoy this corner of South Africa. Started many years ago as a voluntary collection of crafters, who wondered if they could attract visitors to leave the beaten track to explore their studios and galleries. Among your stops will be a visit to the Howick Falls as well as beer tasting in a Nottingham Road micro brewery.

**Southern Drakensberg Birding Trail** We travel through the Midlands of KwaZulu Natal and into the foothills of the Drakensberg to Bulwer in the Southern Drakensberg region. We will then do a guided walk in Pursers Bush, an indigenous forest dominated by Yellowwood trees, habitat of the rare Cape Parrot (350 of the 800 left in the world live here). Many different bird species, such as the sakabula, bald Ibis and the grey crown crane can be spotted here. Lunch will be served along the board walk (for guests' own account) in the company of the unofficial mayor and long time resident of Bulwer.

**Drakensberg Hiking Trail** The hike takes place in the Cobham region of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site. Shortly after starting out you will walk through a Mcheche forest, the last of the woody plants as you head towards the tree line. En route your guide will point out flowering plants in season. Make their way along a clear mountain stream to Boundary Rocky, where Captain Allen Gardiner and Wagon Master Dick King had to abandon their mission of finding a direct route through the mountains from Durban to Cape Town. Here you have the opportunity to view bushman rock art and swim in the pools. On the return journey we stop off at the bushman's workshop, where materials were collected and primitive tools were made, and visit Allan's Shelter where mysteriously the paints are on the ceiling, and after a short walk you're back at the reception area having completed a 8.5 kilometer hike.

**Day 7. Durban** - We recommend that you opt for an excursion today, as the train will go into the yard.

**Durban City Tour** - Durban is South Africa's third largest city and enjoys great importance due to its industry and extensive sea port. Thanks to the subtropical climate and the long stretches of beautiful beaches, large numbers of "uplanders" retreat to Durban in winter. An orientation tour of the city will allow you to see a good mix of old and new, African, Orient and the West. We will drive along the Golden Mile promenade with its many hotels and restaurants. A visit to the Victoria Market will also be included. At the end of the morning we will drop you at either the Botanical Gardens or at uShaka Marine World, Africa's largest marine theme park, at either of which you can have lunch and spend the afternoon (all entrances and lunch for your own account). Pick up will be at a pre arranged time later in the afternoon.

**Durban Spiritual Tour** - Guests depart for Mariannahill where they will be given a guided tour of the monastery and where they will be able to enjoy some time in this beautiful, tranquil setting. This is followed by a visit to the Hari Krishna "Temple of Understanding", before returning to Durban for lunch (guests' own account). We visit Phoenix, the spiritual settlement established by Mahatma Gandhi, before returning again to Durban, the centre of Indian culture in South Africa, with its vast array of Hindu, Sufi and Muslim temples. You will see the Juma Masjid, the largest mosque in South Africa, whose twin minarets are a striking city feature, as well as the most opulent Hindu structure in the Southern Hemisphere - the Kendra Hindu Temple and Community Centre.

**Umhlanga Rocks Beach Day** - Spend a day on the beach, or, if you choose, we could take you shopping in the late afternoon at the nearby Gateway Shopping Centre, before returning to pick up the beach-goers and return to the train after a laid-back day in the sun.

**Day 8 & 9. Zululand - Zulu Cultural Experience and iSimangaliso Wetland Park - St Lucia** - In the morning guests will enjoy a guided tour of a Zulu cultural village, followed by the St Lucia Wetlands, declared a World Heritage Site. In the afternoon we will take a cruise on the St Lucia Estuary, looking for hippos, crocodiles, and a large variety of water birds. **Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park** - An early departure to the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve will get us into the park to experience wildlife magic. The park lies in the heart of Zululand where ancient trails lead through the thorn veld and along the mighty rivers of Africa's oldest established wilderness area. Once the exclusive royal hunting ground of King Shaka, it is a tapestry of natural and cultural history. The park is a treasure store of species including lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo, wildebeest, zebra, giraffe, kudu, bushbuck, cheetah, hyena and many others. Over 300 bird species have been recorded here. Game drives will be conducted in our vehicles.

**Day 10. Swaziland** - The tiny Kingdom of Swaziland covers only 17 000 square kilometres, making it the second smallest country in Africa.

**Swaziland** - This tour in Swaziland will introduce you to everyday life in Africa's smallest kingdom. After the passport formalities at Mpaka station, guests will embark on buses which will take them through Manzini where they will experience the Swazi market, a hive of activity displaying a wide variety of skillfully crafted woodcarvings, colourful textiles and superb basketwork, for which Swazis are renowned. After the market visit we head to the Ezulwini Valley to visit the colorful candle craft market Swazi Candles. Guests will then take a drive passing the Ludzidzini royal residence to the Swazi National Museum with its exhibits of King Sobhuza. Guests stop for lunch at Mantenga Lodge (guests' own account). After lunch we drive through the capital city Mbabane to the famous glassworks of Ngwenya. Following a drive in through the Komati River Valley with its panoramic views to Jeppes Reef border post, we exit Swaziland back into South Africa.

**Day 11. Kruger National Park** - The Kruger National Park straddles the province of Mpumalanga, which means "Land of the Rising Sun". It is a province of extraordinary natural beauty.

**Kruger National Park** - The world-renowned Kruger National Park offers a wildlife experience second to none. Its 2 million hectares are unrivalled in diversity of life forms and the park is a world leader in advanced environmental management techniques. The park is home to an impressive number of species including 336 species of trees, 49 species of fish, 34 species of amphibians, 114 species of reptiles, 507 species of birds and 147 species of mammals. Game drives will be conducted in our air-conditioned vehicles. (Full day. Departure time depends on the season, as gates open and close with sunrise and sunset.

**Day 12. Panorama Route or Kruger National Park**

**Panorama Route** - In 1873 gold was discovered in the area around the quaint town of Pilgrim's Rest, now a living museum and National Monument. The discovery attracted 1500 diggers and today, many of the restored miners houses serve as shops. Further along the escarpment we find the great Blyde River Canyon, a gorge 26 km in length and 800 m deep, carved from the face of the escarpment. The Three Rondavels, three huge rock spirals rising out of the far wall of the canyon and resembling African huts present an unforgettable sight. Bourke's Luck Potholes are strange deep cylindrical cavities formed by river erosion and floodwater. From the vantage point of God's Window we gaze across the sweeping landscape of the Lowveld, where subtle fragrances of the lower region rise to merge with the crisp winds of the Highveld.

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**Day 13. Pretoria / Johannesburg / Soweto** - Gauteng is the economic powerhouse of the southern African region and home to South Africa's capital, Pretoria as well as Johannesburg. The name of the province is a Sotho word meaning "Place of Gold", which is very suitable since much of the wealth of Gauteng derives from this precious metal.

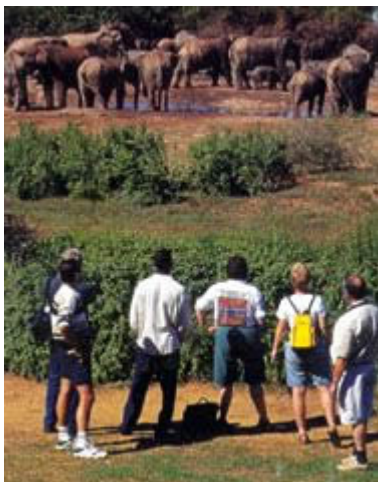
**Pretoria and Soweto** - We will spend the morning in Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa. We visit the Union Buildings designed by the famous colonial English architect, Sir Herbert Baker and completed in 1913 and which now house the offices of the President and his ministers. The buildings overlook the city towards the once fortified hills to the south. A grand bronze statue of Oom Paul (Kruger), the patriarch president of the ZAR or old Transvaal Republic, surrounded by his Boer fighters, dominates Church Square, at the centre of the city. Before leaving the capital behind, we visit the Voortrekker Monument which commemorates the Great Trek of the 1830s. In the afternoon we travel to Soweto to visit the Hector Petersen Memorial, named after the first student to lose his life in the 1976 uprising against the Apartheid government.

**Johannesburg and Soweto** - Our day starts at Constitution Hill in Braamfontein in the centre of Johannesburg. This is the new home of the Constitutional Court and the site of Johannesburg's notorious Old Fort Prison Complex, where many of South Africa's leading political activists were detained. We then head onto the Newtown precinct to visit Museum Africa previously known as the market of Johannesburg. This is all part of the history of the "City of Gold". This is followed by a lunch break (guests' own account) in the suburb of Rosebank, where you can experience the multi-cultural Rainbow Nation in a modern, ethnocentric setting. Rosebank showcases a mix of first and third world cultures and arts and crafts from all over the African continent. In the afternoon, we travel to Soweto to experience the heartbeat of this township, comprising one million people and made famous by the laws of Apartheid. We pass the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, the largest hospital in the southern hemisphere and also drive past the only street in Africa that once housed two Nobel Peace Laureates - Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. We visit the Hector Petersen Memorial, named after the first student to lose his life in the 1976 uprising against the Apartheid government.

**Day 14. Transfer Day** - Guests transferring to an hotel will be taken during the morning. Guests who are flying from O R Tambo International Airport later may take optional tours within the Johannesburg area.

## DEPARTURES 2012

Southbound: 31 January 2012 / 24 April 2012 / 05 June 2012 / 23 October 2012  
Northbound: 19 February 2012 / 13 May 2012 / 24 June 2012 / 11 November 2012



### Typical Shongololo on-board Menu

#### Entrée

Green papaya filled with morogo spinach and lentils, blended with a peanut sauce and topped with melted cheese.

#### Salad

Three-bean salad using African dinawa beans.

#### Main course

Grilled prime cut of Ostrich steak served with Madagascar green peppercorn sauce and madumbe potatoes.

#### Desert

Cape brandy and nut tart or fruit of the season.

#### Recommended Wine

Fleur du Cap - Merlot.

**PRICE:** Exchange rates differ from time to time. For the most up-to-date prices of this holiday idea please call Curtis at Travel Guild @ (905) 760-9229 or 1-800-268-4284 e-mail: [curtis@travelguild.com](mailto:curtis@travelguild.com)

**PRICE INCLUDES:** 13 nights accommodation and travelling on the train, round trip airport transfers, meals as indicated by **BLD**, all off-rail activities as indicated in itinerary.

Optional Specialized Activities are not included and are to be paid locally.

**PRICE EXCLUDES:** Airfares (national / international), lunches, beverages, laundry, gratuities, purchases of a personal nature, optional specialized activities, visas where applicable, travel insurance and transfers between the train and hotels (if passengers are staying at a hotel post tour).

**Please Note:** As Shongololo Express uses the National Railway facilities of Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland, the possibility exists that trains could be delayed, stopped or rerouted at any time – daily activities could therefore be shortened, altered or cancelled.

*Shongololo Express does not accept any responsibility for any changes to the daily program. However the company will always endeavour to complete the daily programs to the best of its ability.*

Please call Curtis at Travel Guild Inc. for more information  
Phone: (905) 760-9229 1-800-268-4284 E-mail: [curtis@travelguild.com](mailto:curtis@travelguild.com)