

The Most Luxurious Train in the World



GOLF COLLAGE ITINERARY & JOURNEY

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GOLF COLLAGE ITINERARY

This itinerary is an option for Golfers who wish to experience the Collage journey as it travels through some of the most spectacular scenery in South Africa while enjoying golf at six of the country's top golf courses.

Day 1	GOLFERS and NON GOLFERS
10h00	The Pride Of Africa departs Rovos Rail's Station in Capital Park Guests may freshen up in their suites before joining fellow travellers in the midway Lounge car or Observation carriage at the rear of the train.
13h00	Lunch is served in the dining car/s.
16h20	The train passes through Belfast at 1 970ms.
17h40	The train departs Waterval Boven and travels the spectacular 14km descent through the Drakensberg escarpment arriving in Waterval Onder (1 310ms) at 18h00.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
24h00	The train will arrive at Malelane Station for the overnight stop.

Day 2	GOLFERS
05h45	Tea, coffee, juices, fruit, and pastries will be served in the dining car/s.
06h30	Transfer to the Leopard's Creek Golf Course for a 07h00 tee off (carts available). Please take your passports with you for customs and immigration in South Africa and Swaziland.
12h30	After a light lunch board the vehicles for a 1 ½ hour drive to rejoin the train at Mpaka in Swaziland.
15h00	Arrive at Mkhaya Game Reserve for afternoon game drive. The weather can be very warm, so please ensure you have hats and sun protection. As the evening drive progresses the weather can cool down considerably so please also ensure that you take warm clothing. Rain capes will be available if required.
18h00	Board the train at Quarry Siding for 18h15 departure to Hluhluwe in Zululand. Please return your passports to the train manager who will clear customs & immigration later in the evening on your behalf.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.

Day 2	NON GOLFERS
05h30	An early wake up call for a game drive in the Kruger National Park.
05h45	Tea, coffee, juices, fruit, and pastries will be served in the dining car/s. Please ensure that you are warmly dressed. As the morning drive progresses the weather can warm up considerably, so please also ensure you have hats and sun protection. Rain capes will be available if required.
08h00	The Game Rangers will stop for a short bathroom break. A snack, fruit and juice will be available.
11h00 – 13h00	Brunch will be served in the dining car/s while we travel through Komatipoort.
15h00	Arrive at Mkhaya Reserve for our afternoon game drive. The weather can be very warm, so please ensure you have hats and sun protection. As the evening drive progresses the weather can cool down considerably so please also ensure that you take warm clothing. Rain capes will be available if required.
18h00	Board the train at Quarry Siding for 18h15 departure to Hluhluwe in Zululand.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.

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Day 3	GOLFERS
01h30 05h00 05h15 08h00	The train will arrive at Hluhluwe Station. An early morning wake up call for a game drive in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve. Tea, coffee, juices, fruit and pastries will be served in the dining car/s.
11h00 – 13h00	The Game Rangers will stop for a short bathroom break at Hilltop Camp where tea, coffee and biscuits will be available. Please ensure that you are warmly dressed. As the morning drive progresses the weather can warm up considerably, so please also ensure you have hats and sun protection. Rain capes will be available if required. Brunch will be served in the dining car/s while we travel through the Valley of a Thousand Hills en route to Durban.
12h10	Disembark the train at Empangeni for a 1 hour transfer to Zimbali Country Club . Tee-off at 13h30 (carts available).
17h00 18h00	Transfer to the train in Durban. Alight from train to be taken by coach to dinner in the city.
DAY 3	NON GOLFERS
01h30 05h00 05h15 08h00	The train will arrive at Hluhluwe Station. An early morning wake up call for a game drive in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve. Tea, coffee, juices, fruit and pastries will be served in the dining car/s.
11h00 – 13h00	The Game Rangers will stop for a short bathroom break at Hilltop Camp where tea, coffee and biscuits will be available. Please ensure that you are warmly dressed. As the morning drive progresses the weather can warm up considerably, so please also ensure you have hats and sun protection. Rain capes will be available if required. Brunch will be served in the dining car/s while we travel through the Valley of a Thousand Hills en route to Durban.
18h00	Arrive in Durban. Alight from train to be taken by coach to dinner in the city.

Day 4	GOLFERS
06h00 06h30 07h00 12h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 08h00. The coach departs for Durban Country Club Beachwood Course (walking course). Tee- off at Beachwood. Enjoy an hour's scenic drive through The Valley of a Thousand Hills to join the train in Lions River.
13h00	Enjoy lunch on board the train as we travel towards Kroonstad. Overnight in Kroonstad.
Day 4	NON GOLFERS
06h00 07h00 10h00 – 12h30	Depart Durban en route for Kroonstad. Breakfast is served in the dining car/s. Disembark the train for a visit to the famous Ardmore ceramics gallery including an equestrian display and tea overlooking the river.
13h00 19h30 20h20 00h12	Lunch is served in the dining car/s. Dinner is served in the dining car/s. The train arrives in Bethlehem during dinner. Arrive in Kroonstad for the overnight stop.

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Day 5	GOLFERS
07h00 08h00 09h15 13h30 19h30 00h20	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s. Disembark the train at Theunissen for a 50min transfer to the Bloemfontein. Tee-off at the Bloemfontein Golf Club (carts available). After a light lunch transfer to Krugers Station to rejoin the train at 14h30. Dinner is served in the dining car/s. Arrive in Sheldon for the overnight stop.
Day 5	NON GOLFERS
06h00 07h00 – 09h30 10h00 12h30 19h30 00h20	The train departs Kroonstad en route to Bloemfontein. Breakfast is served in the dining car/s. Arrive in Bloemfontein where guests disembark for a city tour. Return to the train for lunch at 13h00. Dinner is served in the dining car/s. Arrive in Sheldon for the overnight stop.

Day 6	GOLFERS
07h50 09h30 14h30 16h00 19h30 23h15	After breakfast board the vehicle for a 1 hour transfer from Alicedale to Port Elizabeth. Tee off at the Humewood Golf Club in Port Elizabeth (carts available). Rejoin the train in Port Elizabeth. Depart Port Elizabeth for Oudtshoorn. Dinner is served in the dining car/s. Arrive in Willowmore for the overnight stop.
Day 6	NON GOLFERS
07h00 08h45 12h45 16h00 19h30 23h15	Depart Sheldon as breakfast is served in the dining car/s. Arrive Coerney siding and disembark for a game drive in the Addo Elephant Park. Board the train for lunch as the train heads towards Port Elizabeth. Depart Port Elizabeth for Oudtshoorn. Dinner is served in the dining car/s. Arrive in Willowmore for the overnight stop.

Day 7	GOLFERS and NON GOLFERS
07h00 10h00 13h00 16h00 18h30	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s. Arrive in Oudtshoorn for a visit to an ostrich farm. Depart from Oudtshoorn as lunch is served in the dining car/s. Arrive in George for stopover. Rest of the afternoon at leisure. Disembark the train for a short drive to Fancourt Golf Estate for dinner. The train overnights in George.

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Day 8	GOLFERS
05h45 06h15 12h30 13h30 18h30 19h30 24h00	Tea, coffee, juices, fruit, and pastries will be served in the dining car/s. Transfer to the Simola Golf Course in Knysna for a 07h00 tee-off (carts available). Return to the train in George. Lunch is served in the dining car/s as we depart George. The train arrives in Riversdale where we will be stationary until 20h00 (this is a good opportunity to shower). Dinner will be served in the dining car/s as we depart Riversdale. We reach Buffelsjagrivier where the train will overnight.
Day 8	NON GOLFERS
07h00 08h00 11h45 13h30 18h30 19h30 24h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s. Disembark the train in George for the scenic drive to Knysna. Enjoy a ferry ride on the Knysna Lagoon to Featherbed Nature Reserve. NB: Warm clothes and comfortable shoes <i>or</i> A morning at leisure in Knysna with sight seeing and shopping. Board the vehicles for the drive to George. Lunch is served in the dining car/s as we depart George. The train arrives in Riversdale where we will be stationary until 20h00 (this is a good opportunity to shower). Dinner will be served in the dining car/s as we depart Riversdale. We reach Buffelsjagrivier where the train will overnight.

Day 9	GOLFERS and NON GOLFERS
07h00 11h00 12h20 13h00 17h00	Breakfast will be served in the dining car/s. Arrive at Worcester. Disembark to visit the KWV Brandy Cellar. Re-board the train for the final leg to Cape Town. Lunch will be served in the dining car/s. Arrive at Platform 23 Cape Town Station.

**Excursions may be changed according to schedule achieved
Times are approximate and cannot be guaranteed**

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THE GOLF COLLAGE JOURNEY PRETORIA – CAPE TOWN

Early signs of man's first settlement along the banks of the Apies River, in whose two broad and well-sheltered valleys Pretoria is situated, go back at least 350 years. Both Sotho and Ndebele people have dwelt here and in 1825, Mzilikazi, the renegade Zulu chief who deserted Shaka with a number of followers, established a stronghold on the banks of the Apies. The first European traders and the missionary Robert Moffat visited him there. Other Zulus also came to call and stories of his newfound prosperity soon spread. Shaka learnt of Mzilikazi's whereabouts and sent his armies to obtain retribution for his desertion. Mzilikazi warded off the attack but was forced to flee to the Marico district in the Western Transvaal.

In 1837 the Voortrekkers discovered the fertile valleys of the Apies River and set up a number of farms in the area. One of these early settlers was Andries Pretorius, a hero of the battle of Blood River, who established a farm in the valley at the confluence of the Apies and Crocodile rivers. Shortly after his death the Apies valley was chosen as the site for the capital of the newly created Boer republic, the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR). Marthinus Pretorius, son of Andries, selected a site on the farm Elandsport and on 16 November 1855 the new town was named Pretoria in honour of his father.

Pretoria grew up around Church Square, originally the market place and focal point of the Boer community. Several impressive buildings were built around the square such as the Palace of Justice and the old Raadsaal (parliament) of the ZAR. Today Pretoria is the administrative and diplomatic capital of South Africa. The most notable of the city's edifices is the Union Buildings; designed by Sir Herbert Baker and built on Meintjieskop, the hill that dominates the centre of Pretoria. Built on a low hill outside the city is the monolithic Voortrekker Monument. Completed in 1949 to commemorate the Voortrekker's pioneering spirit, it is seen by some as an important memorial to Afrikanerdom and by others as a reminder of apartheid. Its interior frieze is said to be the second longest in the world.

During October and November Pretoria seems to shimmer with a mauve haze of blossoming jacarandas. In 1888 a citizen of Pretoria, J. A. Celliers imported two Jacaranda Mimosifolia trees from Rio de Janeiro. He planted them in the garden of Myrtle Lodge, his home in the suburb of Sunnyside. They still stand in the garden of what is now Sunnyside School. In 1898 James Clarke obtained a contract to grow trees for the government. He ordered seed from Australia and included in the selection was a packet of seeds of the same species Celliers had imported. Clarke planted the seeds in the State nurseries at Groenkloof where they flourished. Today about 70 000 of these beautiful trees line the streets of the city.

Rovos Rail has its private station situated in Capital Park in Pretoria. This was once the bustling hub of steam locomotion in the old Transvaal. Officially opened in 1943, Capital Park, with its locomotive sheds and marshalling yard played a vital roll in the rail network around Pretoria before falling into disuse. Now the home of Rovos Rail, it boasts a small railway museum in addition to its other comprehensive facilities and will, with the addition of semaphore signals and a footbridge, recreate the atmosphere of a fully-fledged railway system. The gracious colonial style railway station serves as the new departure or arrival point for all the train journeys.

When the railway from Pretoria to Lourenço Marques was built in 1894 it passed close to **Witbank** (1 622ms) and a full-scale coal industry developed. This principally mining town is centrally situated in a coal-mining belt where 45% of South Africa's coal is produced. The Witbank coal seams have an average width of 6 metres, are practically horizontal and lie no deeper than 300 metres below the surface. There are 22 mines in the vicinity and the reserves of high quality steam coal found here should last for the next 500 years.

Rohan Vos founded his early business in auto parts here in 1972. His first contact with the world of trains was made in 1986 through a member of staff, Phil Acutt, who approached him to assist in the formation of a steam-preservation group in Witbank. He got more and more involved until he eventually bought and restored four carriages and a steam locomotive, the early beginnings of Rovos Rail.

The Witbank area has a special if unheralded significance for Anglophiles since it was here that a young Winston Churchill, as an escaping British prisoner-of-war, took refuge in a mineshaft in December 1900. He later jumped a freight train on the same line on which the "Pride of Africa" travels and made good his escape to Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) in Mozambique.

At 1 970ms Belfast is the highest train station between the coast and Pretoria. The train passes through Machadodorp at 1 609ms, named after General Machado - the Portuguese engineer responsible for building the Mozambican section of the railway line. The rolling hills of this region are renowned for the genteel yet skilful sport of trout fishing, a pastime popular with executives eager to escape the pressures of city life.

The drop from the escarpment to the Lowveld is negotiated between the quaintly named towns of **Waterval-Boven** (1 471ms) and **Waterval-Onder** (1 310ms). Although only six kilometres apart as the crow flies, the journey by rail covers 14 kilometres of switchbacks and tunnels. Traversing the escarpment was not always easy as when engineers of the Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg Maatschappij (NZASM) built the Eastern line between Pretoria and Lourenço Marques (Maputo), trains were assisted up to the escarpment utilising a ratchet between the rails. With a steep gradient of 1-in-20, it was little wonder that a rack railway system had to be used. The narrow NZASM tunnel and bridge can be seen from the train on the cliff side. The eastern line was completed in 1895 and opened by President Kruger and the Portuguese governor of Mozambique. Exactly 100 years later, to commemorate the centenary, President Mandela and President Chissano of Mozambique travelled along the same route. Waterval-Onder was, from June to August 1900, the temporary capital of Paul Kruger's South African Republic as he sought vainly to withstand the might of the British war machine during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). As the British Army advanced down the line from Pretoria, he retreated and finally crossed the border into Mozambique and went into exile.

When the eastern line was constructed up the Crocodile River Valley in 1892, a station was built on a farm owned by the Nel family. Known as **Nelspruit** (Nel's stream), the station was the natural centre for the fertile reaches of the valley. Farmers recognized the potential for irrigation – good soil, a level valley floor and ample water from the river. Early farmers such as Hugh Hall settled in the area, growing citrus, litchis, mangoes, avocados and nuts. His legacy continues today with the Hall & Sons holdings evident in all aspects of the farming community. The area became the second largest grower of citrus fruits in South Africa after Zebediela and is the home of the Government Research Institute for Citrus and Subtropical Fruits and the Lowveld Botanical Garden. Today Nelspruit (716ms) is a substantial and attractive town settled amidst orange groves and dominated by a cluster of granite domes. Flowering trees shade the streets and in December and January the town seems aflame with the brilliant scarlet of flowers of the Flamboyant or Poinciana Delonix regia tree. The town is an important tourism centre with many visitors stopping en route to the Kruger National Park.

On 26 March 1898, Paul Kruger, president of the ZAR signed a proclamation declaring the area between the Sabie and Crocodile rivers a game reserve and nature sanctuary. The Park is today one of South Africa's premier natural resources visited by thousands of tourists from around the world.

Under its inspired early warden, Colonel Stevenson-Hamilton, the Park was doubled in size and poaching was largely eradicated. The local Shangaan tribesmen named the warden 'Skukuza'

meaning "he who scrapes clean". The park's foremost camp with adjoining airfield is named Skukuza in honour of Stevenson-Hamilton.

The Kruger covers 19 633 square kilometres (1 948 528 hectares) and contains more than 200 species of trees and is home to over 450 bird, 147 mammal, 115 reptile, 50 fish, 33 frog species and a seemingly endless variety of insects. The park has five main botanical divisions. The environment and natural food of each division determine the variety and density of wildlife within its boundaries.

Komatipoort became the depot and construction camp of the Dutch railway building company, NZASM, during the building of the Eastern Line. This frontier village lies 462kms from Pretoria but only 88kms from the sea. The village lies on the South Africa / Mozambique border in the Lebombo Mountain range. Beyond the border, the land falls away rapidly down to a humid, swampy coastal plain where interior rivers make their languid, indirect way to the sea. This area was under water as recently as 100 000 years ago and, with the average annual temperature never falling below 20 C, is a perfect habitat for Africa's greatest killer, the Malaria-carrying Anopheles mosquito.

Before the turn of the century, prospectors searching for gold and semi-precious stones scoured the Lowveld. Barberton to the south and Pilgrim's Rest to the northwest both enjoyed transient gold rushes during the nineteenth century. We now know that the alluvial gold panned in the rivers and streams of the region had been washed down from the largest gold deposit in the world - the Witwatersrand upon which Johannesburg sits.

The Lowveld's association with the South African gold mining industry continues to this day. For more than a century, thousands of Shangaans, and particularly those whose homes are in Mozambique have worked on the mines. The Shangaans or Tsongas populate the entire Mpumalanga region (Lowveld), which includes the Kruger National Park and parts of Mozambique. About 75% of Shangaans live in Mozambique and the remainder in South Africa. Shangaans, who have a reputation as a warm hearted, smiling people with a fine sense of humour, are also employed as trackers and rangers in the area's numerous game parks.

Border formalities take place at Mpaka on the northern border of **Swaziland**. The mountain kingdom of Swaziland has the shortest railway system of any country in southern Africa, except Lesotho, which has only a few kilometres of track. This tiny nation is bordered on three sides by South Africa and to the east by Mozambique, where the border is formed by the rugged Lebombo Mountains. It is a country of mountains and high plateaux. Swaziland is a member of the Commonwealth, and is governed by a strong hereditary monarch. Members of the Nguni people who were making their way southward along the coastal belt settled Swaziland in about 1750. One group settled in the valley of the uSuthu River, the country's main watercourse, while others tried to move south into Zululand, only to run into the Zulus. Calling themselves Swazis after one of their chiefs, the clan thrived in the valley in spite of regular raids by the Zulus. The current Dlamini monarchy stretches back to the mid-18th century to King Ngwane III.

The first influx of Europeans followed the discovery of gold in the Piggs Peak area in the 1890s. The gold bearing reef turned out to be a scanty one and the enthusiasm that followed the strike was short-lived. Meanwhile, the area had come under the control of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, and later the British, when the Anglo-Boer war was over. Limited self government was granted to King Sobhuza II in 1964 and independence followed in 1968. More recently, in 1993, constitutional reform introduced direct elections to the house of assembly, moving towards a multi-party democracy.

A trader named Bob Rogers set up store in a tent on the banks of the Mzimneni River in 1885. The following year Rogers was bought out by one Albert Bremer, who built a hotel and a store. A town named after him, Bremersdorp, started to grow around the trading centre. In 1890 a British, Boer and Swazi triumvirate was formed to control the increasing European interests in the country, with Bremersdorp as its capital. It was all but destroyed during the Anglo-Boer war when it was first occupied by Lieutenant-colonel Ludwig von Steinacker and his extraordinary 'Steinhacker's Horse' command of the British Army. Then on 23 July 1901 the Ermelo commander of the Transvaal army attacked the town, looted it and set it on fire.

At the end of the war Mbabane replaced Bremersdop as the capital. The town was rebuilt, renamed Manzini after a local chief, and became the main commercial centre of Swaziland.

Mkhaya Game Reserve is Swaziland's refuge for endangered species and the Mkhaya experience leaves visitors captivated by the magnificence of the African bush. This privately owned park lies near the little village of Phuzamoya and encompasses 6 200-hectares. The unique and intimate encounters with endangered species such as black and white rhino, elephant, buffalo, roan and sable antelope, lure visitors back to the reserve again and again. Bird rich riverine forests offer superb bird watching and game drives in open vehicles is reputed to be soul enriching. Deep in the midst of Mkhaya lies Stone Camp, which offers semi-open stone and thatch cottages. A giant sausage tree is the focal point of the camp under which many a campfire story has been shared.

The **Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park** was once the hunting ground of Zulu kings. The sheer beauty of the landscape would justify conservation of the Hluhluwe Game Reserve and its companion, Umfolozi. The Hluhluwe River, named from the Zulu word for the thorny monkey ropes (*Dalbergia armata*) that grow in the riverine forest. The river here is about 85ms above sea level and the hill summits approach 600metres. The entire region has long been a haunt of game. Rich grazing and a variety of habitats made the valleys and slopes attractive to wild creatures.

By the 1890's the vast herds of free-ranging wild animals that had once roamed the whole area of Kwazulu had been largely destroyed by hunters. Only in the valleys of the Hluhluwe and Mfolozi rivers were the wild animals undisturbed, and in 1897 these two areas were proclaimed game reserves. The 96 453-hectare park is home to the world's largest concentration of rhino, boasting close to 1 600 white rhino and 350 black rhino, as well as lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant, wild dog, cheetah, giraffe and scores of antelope species. Bird life is literally prolific.

When the railway line was built along the coastal belt to reach Golela on the Swaziland border, a siding was laid out at Mtubatuba. A large-scale planting of sugar cane in the area, and the construction in 1916 of a crushing mill at nearby Riverview, stimulated development. The name Mtubatuba comes from the chief of the local section of the Zulu nation. He was given the name which means "he who was pummelled out 'on account of the difficulty the midwives experienced at his birth.

There are large plantations of *Eucalyptus Myrtaceae* trees in the area and roads branch off east to Lake St. Lucia and west to the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve and Nongoma.

The St. Lucia Wetland Park is a 260 000-hectare reserve of rivers, lakes, swamps, open savannah, and sand dunes. The park is bordered by the Indian Ocean and includes a long stretch of the shoreline and coral reefs. The reserve is known for its huge population of hippo and many crocodiles along with rhino, elephant, buffalo and many antelope species.

In 1999 the St. Lucia Wetland Park was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site – one of four in South Africa:

Robben Island in 1999

The Cradle of Humankind - The Fossil Hominid Sites of Sterkfontein, Swartkrans, Kromdraai and Environs in 1999.

UKhahlamba/Drakensberg Park 2000.

South of the park lies the Valley of a Thousand Hills and inland lie the Anglo-Boer war Battlefields of Eshowe, Elandslaagte and Dundee amongst others. In the last years of the 19th century, British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism met in a conflict that culminated in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. British imperialists were convinced that the leaders of Afrikaner nationalism posed a threat to imperial interest in South Africa, while the advocates of Afrikaner nationalism feared that British imperialists were intent on destroying Afrikaner independence. On both sides, the conviction grew that there was not enough room for the two ideologies to coexist in South Africa, and each developed a suspicion of the other so deep that it bedevilled any possible diplomatic solution.

Areas northwest of Durban towards Pietermaritzburg, as far as Harrismith, escaped much of the bloody conflict that shaped the early history of Zululand and the northern region of the province.

However, it did see its share of battles in the 1820s when the newly forged Zulu nation, under Shaka, expelled several tribes from this region westwards into and over the Drakensberg. Monuments at Bloukrans and Weenen are reminders that the battles between the early Voortrekkers and Zulu were not confined to the east, uMgungundlovu and the heart of ancient Zululand. The struggle for land knows no east or west, only mountains, rivers, and valleys.

When the guns finally fell silent and the assegais and spears were stored away, the well-watered and fertile valleys of the midlands began to be cultivated. Today this region is prime cattle and dairy country and the landscape one of blue-green meadows bounded by huge timber and wattle plantations.

Stanger is the commercial centre for one of the most extensive sugar-growing regions in the country, which also occupies a pivotal place in the history of the Zulu people. Shaka, the great Zulu warrior-king and founder of the nation, lies buried here. Apart from his two royal kraals named kwaBulawayo ('the place of the persecuted one ') he also built a capital called kwaDukuza ('the place of the lost person ') at the site of present-day Stanger. Although the town is named after the first surveyor-general of Natal, William Stanger, most Zulus still refer to it as Dukuza.

Edmund Morewood was the manager of a cotton estate on the Mdloti River. His overseer, Ephraim Rathbone, planted an experimental patch of sugar cane. The cane grew well, but the company that owned the estate was primarily interested in cotton and was on the verge of bankruptcy. In 1849 Morewood left the company and settled on a farm of his own, named Compensation, lying between the Tongati and Mhlali rivers. He took the sugar cane with him and, although his resources were limited, he was convinced that sugar was the crop for the north coast of Natal. At the end of 1850 Morewood built a crude little mill and early in 1951 he crushed his first crop of cane – the first sugar to be produced in Natal. The tiny railway station still bears the farm's name and is a few minutes drive from the Zimbali Hotel and Golf Resort.

Durban was once South Africa's busiest port. It is still the country's third largest city and principal port for general cargo. Built around a superbly sheltered bay and mile after mile (four in fact) of exquisite beachfront. the bay is the outstanding feature, a vast sweep of water, protected by the Bluff, a low wooded headland. The town is named after Sir Benjamin D'Urban, governor of the Cape Colony from 1842 -1847. The city is the centre of the country's Indian community, most of who are descendants of indentured labourers brought over from India to work on the sugar estates in the 19th century. When their contracts terminated they were given the choice of returning to India or staying on to farm here - most stayed. The city sprawl continues north up the coast, across the Umgeni River, to the resort town of Umhlanga Rocks and inland to the Berea Heights, a range of hills, with wonderful views of the city and surrounds.

Like the Zululand coast to the north, Durban Bay, and surroundings were also submerged 100 million years ago. The waters of the Indian Ocean eventually receded to reveal the bay and its two promontories, the Point to the north and the Bluff to the south. Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama sailed past this bay on Christmas Day 1497 and, to celebrate the occasion, named the region Terra do Natal ('land of the Nativity'). The first white men to walk the beaches, which centuries later would attract thousands of holidaymakers, were survivors of shipwrecks along the coast.

Durban has an English seaside feel about it too. Rickshaws on the Marine parade, superb shark protected beaches, a number of museums and cultural sights, the beautiful Botanical gardens are but a few of the city's many charms.

Durban, contrary to popular belief, is not the capital of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, although the biggest provincial city, and the third largest in South Africa with a population of approximately 3 million (and growing). Pietermaritzburg, 80kms away, is the provincial capital in a relationship similar to that of Sacramento and Los Angeles.

The Voortrekkers had a good eye for town sites. After their defeat of the Zulus at the end of 1838 the trekkers selected farms and settled down to enjoy life in Natal. To serve as capital of their republic they created the town named Pietermaritzburg after their two leaders, Piet Retief and Gert Maritz and built the Church of the Vow to commemorate their victory over the Zulu impis. The site was in a fertile hollow at the foot of a tree-covered escarpment where the midlands of Natal rise 400 metres above the surrounding landscape. The soil was rich and there was ample water for irrigation from the river known as the Msunduzi ('the pusher' from the surging power of its floods).

The British took over **Pietermaritzburg** in 1843 and it became the seat of administration for Natal. The first lieutenant-governor, Martin West, made his home here, and Fort Napier, named after the governor of the Cape, Sir George Napier, was built to house a garrison.

The first newspaper in Natal, the Natal Witness, was published in Pietermaritzburg in 1846. This was a lively sheet which, in some of its editorial issues, had as its address the Pietermaritzburg gaol, owing to the imprisonment there of the editor for offending the governor.

In 1893 Natal received responsible government and a handsome assembly building was created in Pietermaritzburg to house its parliament. The British administration adorned the city with red brick imperial buildings in the Victorian Gothic style. Many of these buildings still stand and the characteristic atmosphere of Pietermaritzburg is red brick seen through luxuriant green foliage.

Today it is the provincial capital of Natal and the centre for numerous industries. Aluminium is produced here from material mined in Natal. Timber, wattle bark and dairy goods are also produced in the district.

It was on this station platform in 1894 that Mahatma Gandhi, as a young lawyer fresh out from England was thrown out of his 1st class train compartment by a White inspector thus changing the direction of his life, his country and the destinies of Britain and India. It was the reputation he gained fighting for Indian rights in Natal that led him on to fame and immortality later in India. There is a statue of Gandhi in the main street of Pietermaritzburg commemorating the twenty years he lived in South Africa (1894 – 1914).

The Inkatha Freedom Party dominates the provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal, which is most strongly associated in the public mind with Chief Mongosuthu Buthelezi. Buthelezi nearly torpedoed South Africa's first democratic elections in April 1994 by refusing to take part. His ego assuaged, he eventually participated and South Africa avoided what looked to become a civil war between the Zulus and the Xhosa-dominated ANC. (The Xhosas from the Eastern Cape are sworn enemies of the Zulus. Nelson Mandela is a member of the Xhosa royal house. President Mbeki, the incumbent, is also a Xhosa). Buthelezi is in coalition with the ANC and used to hold the post of Minister of Home Affairs in the central government.

To avoid the heavy gradient of the ascent from the coast, the railway line traverses a series of tunnels. This area is famous for three of South Africa's most prestigious private schools, Hilton College and St Anne's (Hilton Road station) and Michaelhouse (Balgowan station). The Howick Falls on the Umgeni River cascade 120ms in a spectacular fall in the small town Howick. It is near here that the South African police captured Nelson Mandela in 1964, which resulted in his trial and sentence to life imprisonment.

The trout fishing in this area is excellent.

A fort was built in 1847 to guard the fording place over the Bushman River – a staging point on the road from Pietermaritzburg to the north. Shopkeepers, blacksmiths and innkeepers were attracted to the area and in 1863 the growing town was named after Thomas Estcourt, an English parliamentarian who had promoted immigration to Natal. Estcourt is a small town, which services the needs of the surrounding cattle farmers. Estcourt meat products (especially bacon & pork sausages) are a household name in South Africa. Nestlé has a factory utilising the dairy products of the area. Built as a defensive point between 1847 and 1874, Fort Durnford, heavily haunted, dominates the height of the town.

The Drakensberg Mountains were first named by the Voortrekkers (Dutch-speaking ancestors of the modern-day Afrikaners) who, when seeing the forbidding, unbroken chain of mountains with their heavily weathered peaks, thought that it reminded them of the spines on the back of

a dragon, hence the name 'Dragon Mountain' or Drakensberg in Afrikaans. The average summit height is 3 200 metres, with the highest being 3 482 metres high. About 200 million years ago a vast outpouring of volcanic magma covered virtually the whole of southern Africa. Glacial movement and water action wore down this basalt in the interior, but on the sides, it eroded more slowly and in the Drakensberg one can see the 1 500 metre thick basalt (the dark rock) resting on top of the red sedimentary sandstone and 'red beds'.

The area around Ladysmith was hotly contested by the British and Boers during the Anglo-Boer War fought between 1899 and 1902. British imperialists were convinced that the leaders of Afrikaner nationalism posed a threat to imperial interests in South Africa, while the advocates of Afrikaner nationalism feared that British imperialists were intent on destroying Afrikaner independence. On both sides the conviction grew that there was not enough room for the two ideologies to coexist in South Africa, and each developed a suspicion of the other so deep that it bedevilled any possible diplomatic solution. In the words of Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner and principal protagonist of the war: 'the future of South Africa is to be either a British dominion or an Afrikaner republic. It cannot be both.' The war broke out on 11 October 1899. The Boers, with the advantage of speed, attacked the lumbering British forces in Natal, invading from Dundee (Battle of Talana) to the northwest.

Shortly before reaching Colenso, the railway line passes the sidings of Frere and Chieveley. On the left of the track at the latter spot is a memorial to Winston Churchill who was captured here on 15 November 1899 while trying to free an armoured train trapped by a Boer ambush. He succeeded in releasing the train only to be left stranded as it pulled away. Two Boers popped out of nowhere and he had to surrender. War memorials of different regiments stud the landscape commemorating the British soldiers who died during the various attempts to relieve Ladysmith in December 1899 and January 1900. Colenso itself was the site of an important battle during 'Black Week' (December 1899). The British guns had raced too far ahead of the infantry and came under devastating Boer fire. The draught horses were shot in harness rendering the guns immobile. After the retreat was sounded, the Boers captured the guns without much difficulty - a serious blow to British morale.

Colenso is named after one of the most interesting figures of Natal history, Archbishop Colenso, still a contentious figure. A brilliant and unconventional mind, who wrote several mathematical textbooks after studying at Cambridge, Colenso was appointed Archbishop of Natal in 1853. He learnt to speak fluent Zulu and, after some years pronounced the subversive doctrine that the Christian faith was not incompatible with African polygamy. This led to his being investigated by the Anglican hierarchy and condemned as a heretic. He was deposed from his bishopric and expelled from the church, whereupon he petitioned the Crown and, on a technical matter, was allowed to continue in office. He took the side of the Zulus against the British in the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879, which did not enamour him to the White colonists. It was of him that the British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli declared: 'The Zulus are a great nation. They defeat our generals. They convert our bishops and they terminate European dynasties.' (The latter, a reference to the last Napoleon being killed by the Zulus).

Shortly before arrival in Ladysmith, the railway line passes Umbulwana, from where, during the Anglo-Boer war, the Boers maintained a bombardment of the besieged British soldiers in Ladysmith. One of the huge Creusot guns which lobbed shells 10kms into the town from here now graces the entrance to the Ladysmith Siege Museum which contains much of interest concerning that period. This small town was named after the wife of the Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner, Sir Harry Smith in the 1840's. She was a young Spanish lady who was rescued from a fate worse than death by her gallant Sir Harry during the British attack on Badajoz, western Spain, during the Napoleonic wars.

Ladysmith was the cockpit of world interest between November 1899 and 28 February 1900 when it was besieged by the Boers. On 30 October 1899, General Sir George White, the 62-year old commander-in-chief of the British forces, having reunited his forces at Ladysmith, now numbering about 11 000 men, decided to launch a complicated 3-prong attack on the Boer positions intending to outflank them to the right of the town. Everything went wrong for the British Colonel. French's troops arrived in position late, which caused Grimwood's right flank to be exposed to withering Boer rifle fire. White, on the basis of incorrect intelligence, which led

him to believe that the Free State Boers were going to attack Ladysmith from the west, ordered a full retreat.

The Boers attacked the retreating British troops from Modder Spruit and when they panicked, chased after them on horseback in a rout costing 1200 British men. The Boers lost 200. The Boers seized the heights around the town and tightened the net. The Siege of Ladysmith began. The day is known as 'Mournful Monday'. Sir George White called for help, which came, but was slow in arriving and gave rise to a series of battles known as Spionkop, Vaalkrantz and Tugela Heights.

This area is known as the 'Natal Battlefields' which includes battlefields from four wars:

The Great Trek (Battle of Blood River)

The Anglo-Zulu War, 1879;

The First Anglo-Boer War, 1880-81;

The Second Anglo-Boer War, 1899 – 1902. People come from all over the world to visit these battlefields, which are still taught in the military academies.

“The Battle of Spionkop, 24 January 1900, must rank as one of the most needless battles in history. A deadly combination of an absentee General Buller and an administrative General Sir Charles Warren conspired to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. The mist covering the mountaintop hid the fact from the British troops that higher mountains surrounded them. When the mist cleared mid-morning, the Boers rained shells down with pinpoint accuracy on the British positions together with deadly sniper fire from their Mausers. Winston Churchill, having rejoined the British forces after his escape from Pretoria, climbed to the front in the company of Mohandas Gandhi, a Red Cross ambulance volunteer: an extraordinary crossing of the lives of two twentieth century leaders in extraordinary surroundings. Col. Thornycroft, in command on the summit, defied Gen. Warren and gave the order to withdraw during the night. The Boers, expecting further British resistance the next day, were on the point of retiring, but discovered that Spionkop was theirs and snatched victory from the jaws of defeat. The Battle was lost, not on the ground, but inside the head of Col. Thornycroft. . .”

The railway line now bends to the left and begins its ascent of the Drakensberg Mountains via Van Reenen's Pass 1 840m. The sedimentary strata of the mountain rocks are clearly visible. These mountains were first named by the Voortrekkers (Dutch-speaking ancestors of the modern-day Afrikaners) who, when seeing the forbidding, unbroken chain of mountains with their heavily weathered peaks, thought that it reminded them of the spines on the back of a dragon, hence the name 'Dragon Mountain' or Drakensberg in Afrikaans. The average summit height is 3 200 metres, with the highest being 3 482 metres high. About 200 million years ago a vast outpouring of volcanic magma covered virtually the whole of southern Africa. Glacial movement and water action wore down this basalt in the interior, but on the sides, it eroded more slowly and in the Drakensberg one can see the 1,500 metre thick basalt (the dark rock) resting on top of the red sedimentary sandstone and 'red beds'. In the winter these stunning mountains are draped in snow.

Finally, **Harrismith**, within the Orange Free State province, is reached 102kms from Ladysmith. The line continues on to Bethlehem, 1 790m one of the coldest places in South Africa. Snow falls every winter on the escarpment and, even without snow; it is always close to freezing point at night.

The 'Pride of Africa' has now entered the Free State, capital Bloemfontein, which is one of only two provinces to retain its 1910 boundaries. Indeed, its boundaries originate in 1854 when the independent republic was recognised by the British government. Up until 1949, the Free State was largely an agricultural province and it is still considered to be the granary of South Africa. In that year, however, owing to the vision and risk-taking ability of the late Harry Oppenheimer, (died at 91 years, August 2000) the Free State goldfields were established which are almost a rival to the Witwatersrand, centred on Johannesburg. In addition, oil is manufactured from coal at Sasolburg on the northern boundary with the Vaal River. The Free State, although now with its own African National Congress provincial government, is still the preserve of very conservative farmers.

The train now passes northwest of the independent Kingdom of Lesotho (known as Basutoland until 1966). This mountain kingdom is entirely surrounded by South Africa in a situation not unlike San Marino, Lichtenstein or Andorra in Europe.

It is high, sitting atop the Drakensberg Mountains 3 000m which are covered in snow in winter. Lesotho owes its existence to the vision of Mosheshoe (formally called Moshesh) who, in the period between 1820 and 1870 (his death) welded together the remnants of many African tribes driven into the mountain fastnesses to escape the terror of Shaka's Mfecane (explained above). This period coincided with the Great Trek of the Boer farmers from the eastern Cape (1834 - 1855). Thus, no sooner had he created his own kingdom, than he had to confront the Boers. Moshesh ranks as one of the great diplomats and peacemakers of southern Africa - a rarity in Africa!

First he invited the Paris Evangelical Society to establish a mission in Maseru (hence the station name Marseilles where the railway branches to Maseru), the capital and so was able to propagate his existence to a wider audience. Then, when relations broke down with the Boers, he asked for the protection of 'the great White Queen beyond the seas', Queen Victoria. This was granted in 1868 and so Basutoland became a separate protectorate, not included within the territories of South Africa. King Mosheshoe II died in 1996 and has been succeeded by his son Letsie II who recently married.

In 1882, a mere three years before his heroic death in Khartoum at the hands of the dervishes, General Gordon was appointed to the Basutoland boundary commission where he worked together with an imperialist of a different ilk - Cecil John Rhodes - to delimit the boundary. One of those strange connections in history.

The Pride of Africa now traverses the plains of the south and central Orange Free State in a north-westerly direction. This is the granary of South Africa where, during the growing season for mielies (maize/corn on the cob), one passes through a sea of green stalks extending for hundred of miles and kilometres in all directions.

Kroonstad is named after a horse called Kroon belonging to Adriaan de la Rey. The unfortunate horse drowned in a pothole in a stream on the site of the present town. As a result the stream was named Kroonspruit and the town, which was founded in 1855, was also named after the horse. Kroonstad stands on the banks of the Vals River which is lined with willow trees making it a popular holiday venue. Cattle, sheep, wheat and fruit are farmed in the district.

After switching direction at Kroonstad the train now heads southwards. To the right of the train lie the goldmines of the Free State Goldfields, centred on Welkom. A goldfield at least as rich as the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg) was only discovered in 1946. Some of the most famous names in South African gold mining are to be found here: St Helena, Harmony, Free State Geduld, President Steyn and many others.

After leaving the goldfields behind, the train passes through **Brandfort**, a tiny little town made famous (or notorious) by the presence for some years after 1979 of Winnie Mandela, (at the time, the wife of Nelson Mandela) who was exiled here by the Apartheid government of P.W. Botha.

Bloemfontein is known as the city of roses. It is a small, provincial city with a downbeat charm. It has not been hit by too much prosperity and the positive result has been the preservation of some fine old buildings. It was established in 1846 by Maj. Warden, the British agent north of the Orange River on the site of the spring or fountain from which it derives its name. The British, under the said Sir Harry Smith proclaimed the Orange River Sovereignty over the land between the Orange and Vaal rivers in 1848. The early 1850's coincided with a little-known period of anti-colonialism in Britain. The argument was, 'Why acquire new territories when they are all going to go the same way as the United States, breakaway!' Thus it was, after some agitation by the Free State Boers, that by the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854, the British withdrew and recognised the independence of the republic. A decision which they lived to regret 45 years later. In 1867, diamonds were discovered at Kimberley (then called 'New Rush') on the northern side of the Orange River. The upshot of the dense and complicated politics was that the Free State agreed to give the diamond fields to the Cape

colony in return for a once-off gratuity of £100 000 which was put to good purpose in adorning the city with good buildings and establishing a sound system of government. The Free State was always known as 'the model republic'.

Between 1910 and 1994 Bloemfontein was one of South Africa's three capital cities: Cape Town for Parliament; Pretoria for Administration and Bloemfontein for Judicial. In terms of the new democratic constitution of 1994, Bloemfontein has lost its status as a national capital, but, owing to the great expense of re-housing the Law library and the chief justices of the Appellate division of the Supreme Court in Pretoria, for the time being, Bloemfontein continues to be the judicial capital of South Africa de facto.

The dominant Black tribe resident in the Free State from early times is known as the South Sotho who speak a Bantu language closely associated with North Sotho (north of the Vaal River) and Tswana (west towards the Kalahari, including Botswana). The South Sotho of the Highveld hold an intermediate position geographically between the Nguni-speaking Xhosa and Zulus of the coastal Lowland and the western Tswana. Divided into clans, often mutually antagonistic, the important divide today in the Free State is not tribal, but economic. The Sotho of the north, clustered around the goldfields and synthetic oil plants are a lot wealthier than their agricultural cousins of the southern part. This expresses itself in severe political faction fighting within the provincial legislature, which has resulted in the dissolution of the ANC provincial executive by the Party's central committee. Watch this space!

Leaving Bloemfontein behind, the train now heads almost due south over the southern Free State towards the Orange (or Gariep) River. The landscape is studded with buttes, the elevated remainders of great pluvial events about 100 million years ago. The Free State is known for its dinosaur fossils preserved in the sedimentary sandstone. First you had the laying down of the sandstones in horizontal terraces as the floor of a vast, shallow, inland sea. Then you had the drying up of the waters. Then you had the slow movement of huge glacial sheets across the face of the earth, tearing up and gouging out all softer material and then the process accelerated by the huge volumes of water racing across the plains as the ice sheet melted. This process of glacial advance and retreat repeated several times. Finally you had the modern climate which has been getting progressively drier for the past 2000 years. What you see in the landscape is then the eroded remains of an ancient seabed where the train is actually travelling below seafloor level, and the top of the flat-topped, symmetrical buttes was, once upon a time, the actual floor of the inland sea. What titanic forces have been at work for how many millions of years to erode down these sandstone terraces to their present levels? And the process is still continuing!

We gradually move from the fertile central plains where rains are assured and mielies (maize) are grown towards the southern Free State and the Great Karoo. This word Karoo is a Khoisan (Hottentot) word denoting the arid, flat land which stretches from just 160kms north of Cape Town to the area just south of Bloemfontein. It is reminiscent of the Australian Outback. Sheep take over from crops, the flat, dry land punctuated by the occasional green oasis fed by a wind pump which sucks up the water from some underground aquifer. This is usually the farmer's home. The rains of the east are now shut off by the wall of the Drakensberg Mountains and other more southerly ranges. Human density is low, with sheep outnumbering humans. About four hours out of Bloemfontein, the train passes over the Orange River at Norvalspont, 1 329m. The 11-span bridge, 500m in length, dates from 1890. Prior to the building of the iron span bridge, Norval operated his punt across the river, of which we have photographs. A blockhouse built during the Anglo-Boer war guards the approach to the bridge. Upstream of the little town lies the Gariep Dam (previously known as the H.F.Verwoerd dam). The river is fed by the melting snows of the High Maluti Mountains in Lesotho. The dusty brown colour gave rise to the name Orange River amongst early travellers of the eighteenth century. About forty minutes after crossing into the Western Cape Province, the train arrives at Colesberg, 1 469m.

Set in a lunar landscape of barren rocks, nestling in a sort of crater, **Colesberg**, founded 1829, is blistering hot in the summer and freezing cold in the winter - a true desert environment. But very dry and healthy, having only 42 days of rainfall per year on average. Sheep thrive in this environment. It is named after Sir Lowry Cole, the governor of the Cape from 1828 to 1833. Cole had taken part in the Peninsular campaign under Wellington and was

present at the battle of Salamanca, 1812. Although the highest of High Tories, he nevertheless was concerned with the rights of slaves in Mauritius, where he was governor 1822-28 and the Cape. This brought him into conflict with the slave owners and, in the Cape, that meant the Boers.

Cole's enlightened attitude towards the slaves, which built up to the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire in 1833, made him deeply unpopular amongst the Dutch farmers and was a major contributing factor towards The Great Trek of the Voortrekkers, which began in 1834. The town is distinguished by a magnificent Dutch Reformed Church built in the Cape Georgian style. It's radiant whiteness making a stark and dramatic contrast to the dull, brown rocks against which it is set. Altogether a strange little gem of a town hidden in the arid vastness of the Karoo.

Thirty-two kilometres away stands the stone beacon raised by the Dutch governor van Plettenberg in 1778 to mark the northern boundary of the Cape Colony. Noupoot (old spelling Naauwpoort), meaning 'Narrow Gorge', was the scene of one of General French's cavalry 'drives' during the Anglo-Boer war in an attempt to capture the Boers with their backs to the Orange river. Rosmead is named after the governor of the Cape, Sir Hercules Robinson, later elevated to the peerage as Lord Rosmead, in 1897.

The railway line runs on the western side of the Little Brak River which, at the station of Visrivier, is joined by the Great Fish River which 200 years ago formed the much-disputed boundary between the Cape Colony and independent African chiefs. It was decided, in 1812, during the governorship of Sir John Cradock, to establish a fortified town on the frontier, hence the name **Cradock**. It is sited on a natural sulphur spring and has, as its claim to fame, a replica of St Martins-in-the-Field church, next to South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, London, as the local Dutch Reformed church.

An Anglo-Irishman, Sir John Cradock had a distinguished military career in the British army during the Napoleonic wars. A Major General at 36 years, he helped quell the Irish rebellion of 1798, took part in the expulsion of French troops from Egypt and was appointed commander of the garrison at Madras, India. Unfortunately, in 1806 an uprising of sepoys was blamed on him by Lord William Bentinck, the governor which resulted in both of them being recalled. Cradock was then sent off to fight the French in Portugal and, after having been passed over for the governorship of Gibraltar – which rankled for the rest of his life – in 1811 Sir John was appointed governor of the Cape of Good Hope colony. Being a military man, not a diplomat, Cradock set about re-arranging the defensive lines of the Cape colony along its eastern border, the Great Fish River. He seems to have got along well with the Boer farmers and was accused, by the London missionaries, of taking the farmers' side against the Khoikhoi and the Xhosa tribes. The frontier wars between White cattle-farmers and Black cattle-farmers is still a hotly-contested topic in South African history. Sir John Cradock has left his mark on the land-tenure system of South Africa and on the names of several towns: Clanwilliam (named after his father-in-law, the Duke of Clanwillian); Caledon (named after his predecessor as governor) and Albany (birthplace in New York State of the Landdrost (magistrate) Cuyler)

Twenty-four kilometres from Cradock, amidst magnificent scenery, is to be found the rarest Zebras in the world, the Cape Mountain Zebra. (*Equus zebra zebra*) They are smaller than Burchell's (the Plains zebra) or Grevy's zebras and, in 1937, when the Mountain Zebra National Park was established, there were only 11 remaining in the entire world. Today they still only number a few hundred and are a highly endangered species. It is considered a great privilege to have seen these very rare creatures. The scenery in this park is exotic with a mix of mountains and valleys and typical Karoo vegetation.

At **Cookhouse**, named after a small stone kitchen erected by garrison troops during the frontier wars, we bypass the turnoff to Somerset East on the right. Somerset East is one of many towns established during the governorship of Lord Charles Somerset (governor 1814 - 1825), second son of the Duke of Beaufort and racing friend of the Prince Regent, later George IV. Established to grow fodder for the cavalry horses, it grew into a small town.

Guy Castley, Scientific Services, South African National Parks wrote the following on the **Addo Elephant Park**:

“The expansion of the Addo Elephant National Park (AENP) in the Eastern Cape into a ‘Greater Addo’, a biodiversity and tourism flagship is gaining momentum.

Although the park has been inching its way forward in the land acquisition stakes from the early 1990's it is only recently that there has been a concerted effort to focus on the expansion and consolidation of the diverse landscapes around the AENP and the park has more than doubled in size in the last six years!

The park had its humble beginnings in 1931 when a small parcel of land, only some 2237 ha in size, was set aside to protect the persecuted African elephant population in the region. This remnant elephant population has since grown from only 11 to 346 (at last count) and has gained worldwide recognition!

Fortuitously, the very dense evergreen thicket vegetation characteristic of the region and saviour of the elephants has in fact been the precursor to further conservation developments in the region. It is through the outstanding combined efforts of SANParks and private donor agencies such as the Humane Society of the United States, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Leslie Hill Succulent Trust, and the Rhino Elephant Foundation, and now the South African government that the park has expanded to its present size of over 125 000 ha.

Plans to expand the park received a significant boost when academics from the Terrestrial Ecology Research Unit (TERU) at the University of Port Elizabeth drafted an award-winning proposal outlining the opportunities that could possibly be created through an expansion initiative.

The expansion focuses on the unsurpassed ecological diversity of the region as one of the overriding conservation worthy attributes that would incorporate five of South Africa's seven terrestrial biomes, or major vegetation units, thanks mainly due to the climatic and altitudinal variability characteristic of this region as well as its proximity to the coast.

Ultimately the greater park would encompass habitats ranging from semi-arid Karoo areas, across fynbos covered slopes which merge with impenetrable thickets and montane forests extending into rolling coastal grasslands and majestic coastal forests in addition to a marine protected area.

However, it is not only the environmental diversity that makes an impact in the region. The park also has numerous archaeological and historical sites, dating back to the Early Stone Age, such as Melkhout Cave in the Zuurberg Mountains where artefacts dating back 15 000 years before present have been excavated. Numerous San paintings can also be found in the Zuurberg Mountains that were also the staging grounds for a number of conflicts during the Anglo-Boer War.

The greater park will include further archaeological and historical sites once realised such as Khoi/San settlements in the Alexandria dunes and the offshore St Croix and Bird islands. Bartholomew Dias erected a wooden padrao on St Croix in 1488 and the island was also used as a whaling station in the 19th century. Numerous shipwrecks lie scattered beneath the waves, victims of the island reefs.

Expansion plans for the park are focused around the establishment of a 372 000 ha terrestrial zone in addition to a 120 000 ha marine reserve which would include the Bird and St Croix Island groups in Algoa Bay. These plans would see Addo becoming the third largest conservation area in South Africa after the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and Kruger National Park.

The expansion includes opportunities not only for core conservation areas managed by the SANParks but also makes provision for private contractual areas within the planning boundary.

Driving the expansion are efforts to conserve representative examples of the varied landscapes and their associated biodiversity patterns and processes, while simultaneously promoting sustainable development and eco-tourism in the region.

Since SANParks relocated a scientific team to Port Elizabeth to deal with the expansion a great deal has happened. An initial grant was received from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) via the World Bank that has facilitated the completion of a number of scientific and socio-economic studies. The focus of these studies, which are nearing completion, has been the compilation of a detailed conservation plan that integrates the biological patterns and processes in both the terrestrial and marine environments as well as a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

However, this is merely the first phase and SANParks have submitted a further proposal to the GEF for additional development funding to actually implement the recommendations stemming from the preliminary studies.

Critical to the expansion of Addo is the identification of key areas within a greater planning domain, loosely related to the proposed 'Greater Addo' boundary, which would conserve the unique features of the area.

The dynamic conservation plan developed by the consultants for the region will allow SANParks to make informed decisions around which area should be prioritised for such conservation efforts.

It is the vision of the SANParks that a critical core conservation area will be established that would be in excess of 250 000 ha and would be able to support viable free ranging populations of the 'Big 5' tourist draw cards (only lion still need to be reintroduced).

However, the park will offer much more than just the lure of the 'Big 5' in a malaria free environment. With the proposed inclusion of a marine protected area species such as the southern right whale and great white shark are guaranteed ultimately making the park a 'Big 7' destination! Furthermore, with the emphasis on the conservation of biodiversity, a complete wildlife experience is possible across a series of landscapes unrivalled in beauty, all within a single conservation area.

At the moment the bulk of tourism activities are restricted to the main elephant camp which is only some 13 500 ha. Unfortunately with the elephant population increasing at an average rate of over 6% each year there isn't enough space and SAN Parks is constantly on the lookout for new areas to increase the area for these mega herbivores. But the elephants aren't the only species doing well at Addo with 39 black rhino, over 300 disease free buffalo, almost 200 eland as well as red hartebeest and 600 kudu, not to mention the myriad of birds, invertebrates and smaller animals.

The recent release of two Kruger National Park elephant bulls into the Addo elephant population hopes to address the genetic irregularities created by the small founder population and compounded by the genetic phenomenon known as genetic drift. Furthermore with close to 3 elephant/km approach by firstly relocating a number of family groups to the new Nyati concession area in the southern slopes of the Zuurberg Mountains and secondly by linking the current area with the new sections to the south. But in establishing these new areas SANParks must remain very much aware of not depleting the tourism product. Hence developments will be done in a block approach, linking the separate blocks in time.

One of the goals of the expansion of Addo is the creation of an ecologically and economically sustainable form of land use. Unlike pastoralism and other short-term non-sustainable developments and land uses such as irrigation and industrial development, an expanded park will offer development opportunities based solely on eco-tourism with benefits from these initiatives accruing not only to SANParks but also to communities and the private sector. "

Port Elizabeth is the third largest port and fifth largest city in southern Africa. It was founded in 1799 when Fort Frederick was built by the British on a site overlooking Algoa Bay. The garrison made up the first population of the future city. The fort, named after Frederick, Duke of York, has been proclaimed a national monument. It was under the protection of the fort that the 1820 settlers from Britain were landed, and it was in that year that Sir Rufane Donkin, acting governor of the Cape, named Port Elizabeth after his wife who had died of fever in India two years previously.

The 1820 settlers thrived on trade in sheep, ostrich feathers, ivory and Kimberley diamonds. A windy place, set at the western tip of Algoa Bay, is the furthest point east reached by Bartolomeu Dias in 1488 before beginning his return journey to Portugal. A short distance out of Port Elizabeth lies Uitenhage, the 'Detroit' of South Africa.

Our journey continues southwards to Klipplaat and thence turns rightwards and progresses south-westwards, through the Groot Swartberg range of mountains, towards Oudtshoorn, world capital of the Ostrich! It is believed to be named after one of the directors of the Dutch East India Company, and later governor of the Cape, Baron van Reede van Oudtshoorn who lived at the Cape during the eighteenth century, and who died at sea. During the heyday of the Victorian ostrich feather boom, which lasted up until 1914, the ostrich was being hunted to the verge of extinction. And then, in the 1870s, experiments were undertaken in the Oudtshoorn area to domesticate the largest flightless bird in Nature.

The result was the growth of the ostrich industry. The feathers were plucked, baled and sent to Port Elizabeth where they were auctioned in the Feathermarket Hall, prior to export to Europe and North America. The farmers waxed fat and prosperous on this trade and built opulent houses termed Ostrich Palaces by the less charitable. Ostriches thrive in dry, sandy conditions and Oudtshoorn is an ideal habitat. The Male ostrich has the larger, jet-black plumes while the female, for reasons of daylight camouflage, has the shorter, dull grey-brown plumes used in feather dusters. The ostrich egg, equivalent to 24 hens' eggs, makes for a substantial meal! The skin of the ostrich makes for most desirable leather, mostly tanned in Italy, while the meat is largely cholesterol-free. All ladies are agreed that their eyelashes are to die for! The ostrich, which has a small brain, but large eyes, 'thinks with its eyes' so to speak. They are notorious for snatching any bright, shiny object such as, spectacles, jewellery, watches, beer tins etc. from their unsuspecting owners. Another good reason for not getting too close to the ostrich is the vicious kick, which, if properly aimed, can kill a man. A tour will be made to an ostrich farm for a closer look at these fascinating birds.

Twenty kilometres north of Oudtshoorn are the Kango Caves; an impressive system of limestone caves stretching 3kms underground first discovered in 1780. The Grand Hall is 107 metres long with stalactites and stalagmites in abundance.

Upon our return to the train, we will continue through impressive mountain scenery, over the Outeniqua Mountains to George, almost on the coast. George, founded in 1811, is named after King George III, king of England and must have provided some small compensation for the loss of Georgetown in America! The train will rest here overnight, while an excursion to Knysna and surrounding area is undertaken.

Dominated by the mountain peaks of George and Cradock, **George** is situated on a level plain just 8kms from Victoria Bay beach, but at an altitude of 226m above sea level. It sits astride The Garden Route between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth which is an intermediate zone between the dry western and the wet eastern zones of the South Africa, as well as being a narrow coastal strip sandwiched between the sea and the mountains. It is the only part of South Africa to enjoy an 'English climate' where hops grow easily. George has a museum dedicated to timber, because this was, in previous centuries, the heartland of a great primeval forest which stretched unbroken from inland of Cape Agulhas to beyond Port Elizabeth, a distance of 300 kms. The huge, slow-growing Yellowwood and Stinkwood trees were cut down to build ox-wagons and to burn for charcoal. In 1936 the cutting down of all trees in the town of George was banned for 200 years in a last ditch effort to preserve something for posterity. George has the oldest Catholic Church in South Africa; a big Dutch Reformed Church and a very beautiful, albeit small, Anglican cathedral. Designed by Sophy Gray, wife of the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Robert Gray, in 1850, it is modelled on the Norman church at Littlemore in Oxfordshire. Sophy Grey was an architect of talent, who designed several churches throughout her husband's diocese.

An excursion will take place to Knysna, one of the prettiest lagoons in the world. The Knysna Forest is the last remnant of the great primeval forest, which grew here. The dark and dense undergrowth is the habitat of the Knysna elephants, a small, secretive band of a once great herd regularly shot by all passing dignitaries to the Cape. Shy and rarely seen, they are huge. They are interesting insofar as they are believed to be members of the grassland or bush elephant species *loxodonta africana*, while having adapted and learnt some of the behaviour associated with the forest-dwelling sub-species of the West African and equatorial forest elephant, *Loxodonta africana cyclotis*.

Knysna is located on the eastern side of the lagoon, hidden from the sea by The Heads, a most intimidating entry point for any mariner. The very first ship that attempted entry, the Emu, in 1817, hit a rock and sank - the first of many. Even today, Lloyds of London refuses to insure ships against entry through the Knysna Heads. Oysters abound in the calm lagoon, as do 200 species of fish and a very rare seahorse. George Bernard Shaw, the celebrated Irish playwright stayed here in 1932 to write a play. The name George Rex is immortalised in Knysna with many strange, but untrue, stories associated with his name. He was believed to be an illegitimate son of George III and Hannah Lightfoot. He was, in fact, a wealthy and well-connected naval officer who arrived at the Cape in 1797 and decided to stay. He made Knysna his home and fathered a great progeny who, still today, are not shy of claiming ancestry to George Rex. On the western side of the lagoon is the beautiful estate of Belvidere with its fine Georgian residence built on a section of Rex's property. But, more famous than the house, is the tiny little Anglican church of Holy Trinity, designed in Norman style by Sophy Gray (1855). A picturesque, miniature gem set in a charming setting, the Belvidere church is known throughout South Africa.

Thirty kilometres beyond Knysna is South Africa's equivalent of Nice, Cannes or Monte Carlo, Plettenberg Bay. From a sleepy little beach resort, it has become the most fashionable seaside resort in South Africa. Great gin palaces rise above the cliffs to proclaim the wealth of their newly arrived owners, making up for in size what they lack in taste.

Upon returning to the train at George, our journey continues westwards along the Garden Route. The sea is visible in glimpses from the train window. About one-and-a-half hours later the train passes through the station of Hartenbos from where a railway spur continues down to the town of Mossel Bay. Mossel Bay has grown mightily over the past twenty years as a result of the political decision made by ex-President PW Botha to develop an offshore gas industry to help South Africa overcome sanctions against the Apartheid government. It is the site where Bartholomeu Dias, the very first Portuguese navigator to pass off the Cape coast in 1488, landed to take on fresh water. He named it Aguada de Sao Bras. After continuing along the coast for some distance, and landing near modern-day Port Elizabeth, his crew prevailed upon him to turn back. It was to take another ten years before Vasco da Gama reached this spot on his fateful journey to India. Close to the spring where Dias took on water is the Dias Museum which has a full scale replica of Dias' Caravela. This little 300-ton vessel was built in 1987 in Lisbon and sailed to the Cape in that year in a re-enactment of the event, 500 years later. The museum was built, minus a wall on the seaside. At high tide, one day, the caravel was sailed into the museum, the tide went out, the wall was built in and there it stands as one of the most unusual and imaginative museums in the country.

The train continues on its way between sea and mountains stopping overnight in the vicinity of **Swellendam**. Established by the Dutch Governor Hendrik Swellengrebel and named after him and his wife (nee Helena ten Damme) in 1743, it has too a fine collection of Cape Dutch houses, whitewashed, thatch-roofed, with sash windows. The Drostdy (Old Magistrate's Court) is today a distinguished museum of the Dutch period (1652 - 1806). Behind it is Mayville, similar in style, making for a complex of good buildings. As in the case of Graaff-Reinet, the fractious Dutch burgers decided that they had had enough of the corruption and weakening financial support of the Dutch East India Company (declared bankrupt in 1794) and proclaimed the Republic of Swellendam in 1795, just prior to the arrival of the British fleet. This illustrates so well, the propensity for individualistic political action still so much a part of the modern Afrikaner.

It is in this area that the transition is now made from wheat and corn to grapes. Bonnievale, Ashton and Robertson are well known wine producing areas nestling against the Langeberg range of mountains. At Robertson, a cut line, due south will take you, as the crow flies, about 80kms to Cape Agulhas, the southernmost tip of the African continent. Although Cape Point at the tip of the Cape of Good Hope peninsula, 150kms westwards certainly looks more dramatic and is believed by millions worldwide to be the tip of Africa, this is not so. Cape Agulhas (The Cape of Needles in Portuguese) is 180kms further south than Cape Point.

It is a gentle, level plain which simply disappears into the sea and continues out, underwater, for another 200kms in a marine phenomenon known as The Agulhas Shelf, shallow and rich in fish, before it drops precipitately down into the abyss of the deep ocean. This area is extremely dangerous for shipping owing to its relatively shallow depth and the lack of high mountains on land to identify it to mariners out at sea. Hundreds of ships, over five hundred years, have been shipwrecked along this inhospitable coastline. On 16 April 1686 a Portuguese vessel, Nossa Senhora do Milagros struck a rock and foundered just west of Cape Agulhas. It was carrying the Siamese ambassadors to the court of Louis XIV with their considerable entourage of slaves and retainers. They were forced to cut off their gold buttons to barter with the Khoikhoi (Hottentots) for some animal skins. Instead of moving inland and then walking on flat land to the Cape, they followed the rugged coastline. Several died and some were rescued in a state of severe malnutrition by a rescue party sent out by Simon van der Stel, the Governor.

More than a month later, a Dutch party arrived at the wreck to claim it as a prize for the Dutch East India Company and found a slave still guarding the possession of his long gone master. A curious tale of loyalty and survival.

Just before arrival at Worcester, the 'Pride of Africa' will stop at the **KWV** siding for a tour of the brandy distillery operated by the KWV. Established in 1917, under war conditions of no shipping to Europe and a domestic glut of wine, the Ko-operatiewe Wijnbouwers Vereeniging or KWV as it is always called, was, up until the mid 1990s, the sole exporter of South African wine. All wine farmers had to be members, and to supply a minimum quantity annually to the co-operative. The co-op marketed South African wines abroad, particularly in England. Gradually the world of wine changed. The effect of sanctions in the 1980's made it difficult to sell South African wines abroad. The quality of KWV 'export quality wine' left something to be desired in a lot of sophisticated palates. South African winegrowers became more quality driven and wished to do their own marketing. Serious competition from Australia, California, Chile and even Israel made inroads into the previous secure market for South African wine in Britain. Finally, the government revoked the KWV monopoly, and it now has to work a lot harder to survive in the modern world.

The journey from **Worcester** to Cape Town travels through a beautiful landscape of Cape Fold Mountains and vineyards, now russet-red in their autumn garb. The story of South African wine begins shortly after 1652 when the Dutch governor, Jan van Riebeeck realised that a Mediterranean climate was better suited to making wine than it was to brewing beer. The first wine was pressed in 1657 and was, according to van Riebeeck's diary, virtually undrinkable! There was room for improvement! In 1688, the French Huguenots (French Protestants) fleeing persecution in France, were given refuge at the Cape. Although mostly townsmen and artisans, their knowledge of wine was superior to that of the Dutch. Simon van der Stel, one of the most important governors established his own wine estate at Constantia, which still produces wine. In the nineteenth century, Constantia wine - a sweet variety - was drunk by Napoleon on St Helena, Louis Philippe, king of France (1830 - 1848), Lord Palmerston and Bismarck. Cape wine was always in demand as being preferable to maggot-infested water on the ships sailing between Europe and India. However, in the 1850's the industry went into serious decline. Firstly Gladstone, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, revoked the preferential tariffs granted to Cape wines entering Britain, thus placing them at a disadvantage to French and Portuguese wines. Secondly, an invisible microbe, the phyloxera, quietly started attacking the deep roots of the vine stocks until, one fine day, the vines simply keeled over. The phyloxera killed the wine industry. The Cloetes were forced to sell Groot Constantia to the Cape colonial government in order to stave off bankruptcy (1880). Only the arrival of New World cultivars from California in the 1890s rescued the Cape wine industry. This then led to increased supply and finally glut during the First World War, which resulted in the formation the KWV. Although there still remains a rough edge to most Cape wines, we are working on improvement all the

time. Price is usually a strong indicator of quality and there are some wines which may even confuse a Tastevin. The wines served on Rovos Rail are all from Cape cellars and have been carefully selected from the best on offer.

The railway continues westwards through dramatic mountain scenery. Goudini has a hot mineral spring spa resort. Tulbagh Road is the station for Tulbagh, an historic wine town, devastated by an earthquake in 1969, but since lovingly restored by the Rupert family.

At Gouda the train loops to the left and begins its descent to Wellington through the Drakenstein Mountains. Named after the Dutch Director of the Dutch East India Company, the Baron van Rheeede tot Drakenstein, Lord of Mydrecht who visited the Cape in the seventeenth century. The road pass, which pre-dates the railway, is known as Bain's Kloof Pass considered a tour de force of nineteenth century road building. Thomas Geddes Bain was a road engineer of talent and built a number of key passes over the difficult Cape Mountains. Bain's Kloof Pass is considered haunted by the ghosts of Hottentots. Wellington, founded in 1840, has the oldest railway station in South Africa dating from 1862 when the first railway line was completed between Cape Town and Wellington. Wellington is famous for its dried fruit industry.

Paarl is a large and important agricultural town 62kms from Cape Town. Located on the Berg River and dominated by the bald round mountains of Paarl Rock, Britannia Rock and Gordon's Rock it got its name because, after rain, the Paarl rock glistens in the sun like a pearl.

Paarl is where the Afrikaans language officially began in 1875 when the first Afrikaans text newspaper, Die Patriot was published. Previously, although Afrikaans was a spoken language, uncharitably referred to as 'kitchen Dutch', High Dutch was the written medium. It took from 1875 until 1925 to have Afrikaans established constitutionally as the other official language of South Africa. The Afrikaans Taal (language) monument with its spires looms high above Paarl in commemoration of its special position in the history of the Afrikaans language.

Slowly losing altitude, the train moves ever onward to **Cape Town**, internationally known for the majestic beauty of Table Mountain. It is called the "Mother City" of South Africa being the site of the first European landings and settlement in Southern Africa after 1652. The subtle interplay of sea and mountain which characterises the Cape of Good Hope moved intrepid explorer Sir Francis Drake in 1580 to call it "the fairest Cape in all the circumferences of the globe." A description with which most visitors agree.

It is here, beneath the 1 086 metre high (3287 feet) sandstone face of Table Mountain, that the Dutch East India Company set up a refreshment station in 1652 to re-victual the ships en-route to and from the spice islands of the East Indies (Indonesia and Malaya). The arrival of the first Europeans at the foot of Africa met with little resistance from the Cape's only human inhabitants, the yellow-skinned Khoikhoi (old name: Hottentots). These last descendants of Mankind's Stone Age childhood were innocent onlookers who by 1713 had been all but decimated by the Great Smallpox Epidemic. With the resulting labour shortage, the Dutch East India Company imported slaves from the islands of Java and Sumatra, misnamed 'Malay'. Their descendants, together with Madagascan and Mozambican slaves, now number 3, 5 million who speak either English or Afrikaans as a mother tongue. About forty percent are Muslim, the rest are Christian. The governing party of the Western Cape is not ANC, it is Democratic Alliance. However, most of the officeholders are members of the Cape Coloured community. The Coloured people of the Cape give the place an offshore, non-African feel with some hint of Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Java, rather than that of Africa.

Now, at the end of this African Collage journey, where you have seen the best that South Africa has to offer and been exposed to a wide range of scenery and people, it is hoped that you carry happy memories of your stay on Rovos Rail and that you will, one day, return to visit other, equally interesting areas of South Africa.

Thank you for travelling with us and looking forward to hosting you again in the not too distant future

THE MAP



DISTANCES

0	Pretoria Capital Park			Journey Begins
25	Panpoort	●	25	
61	Witbank	●	86	
184	Waterval Boven	●	270	
81	Nelspruit	●	351	
59	Malelane	●	410	Kruger Park Reserve
49	Komatipoort	●	459	
123	Mpaka	●	582	
21	Quarry Siding	●	603	Mkhaya Game Reserve
105	Golela	●	708	
102	Hluhluwe	●	810	Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve
108	Empangeni	●	918	
177	Durban	●	1095	Evening Excursion
104	Pietermaritzburg	●	1199	
179	Ladysmith	●	1378	
198	Bethlehem	●	1576	
131	Kroonstad	●	1707	
110	Theunissen	●	1817	
106	Bloemfontein	●	1923	City Tour
142	Springfontein	●	2065	
147	Noupoort	●	2212	
262	Ripon	●	2474	
90	Coerney	●	2564	Addo Elephant Park
63	Port Elizabeth	●	2627	
297	Willowmore	●	2924	
148	Oudtshoorn	●	3072	Highgate Ostrich Farm
74	George	●	3146	Lagoon Cruise/Shopping/Dinner
64	Voorbaai	●	3210	
88	Riversdale	●	3298	
96	Buffelsjagrivier	●	3394	
68	Ashton	●	3462	
67	KWV Siding	●	3529	KWV Brandy Museum
7	Worcester	●	3536	
176	Cape Town	●	3712 kms	

Updated 14 Jan 2011 – please check with Querida Venter for updates/itinerary changes
querida@rovos.co.za or tel: +27 – 12 – 315 8534