

The Most Luxurious Train in the World



GOLF CONTENTS

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GOLFERS & NON GOLFERS ITINERARY

Day 1	GOLFERS and NON GOLFERS
10h00	Depart Rovos Rail Station, Capital Park in Pretoria. Guests may unpack and freshen up in their suites before meeting fellow passengers in the Lounge or Observation Cars.
13h00	Lunch is served in the dining car/s.
16h50	The train stops for 15 minutes. Thereafter we travel the spectacular 14km descent through the Drakensberg Escarpment arriving in Waterval Onder.
19h30	Depart from Nelspruit. Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
01h00	The train arrives in Phalaborwa where we overnight.

Day 2	GOLFERS
06h00	A continental breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 06h30.
06h45	Transfer to the Hans Merensky Golf Course for a 07h36 tee off (carts available).
13h30	Depart for Phalaborwa Station and rejoin the train.
14h00	Depart Phalaborwa whilst lunch is being served.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
21h00	Depart Komatipoort after border formalities.
00h00	Arrive at Mpaka in Swaziland where we overnight.

Day 2	NON GOLFERS
06h00	A continental breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 06h30. Board the open safari vehicles for a game drive in the Kruger National Park.
06h45	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 provided if required. Tea and bathroom break mid morning at Letaba with an opportunity for craft and curio shopping.
12h00	Depart for Hans Merensky where we join the golfers.
13h30	Depart for Phalaborwa Station and rejoin the train.
14h00	Depart Phalaborwa whilst lunch is being served.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
21h00	Depart Komatipoort after border formalities.
00h00	Arrive at Mpaka in Swaziland where we overnight.

GOLFERS & NON GOLFERS TIMETABLE

Day 3	GOLFERS
06h30	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 08h30.
08h30	Board the coach and depart Mpaka for Royal Swazi Sun Hotel & Golf Course (carts available).
09h30	The coach arrives at the Royal Swazi Golf Course.
10h00	Tee-off at Royal Swazi Golf Club.
15h30	After-golf snacks are served at the Indzaba room.
17h00	The coach departs for Phuzamoya Station arriving at 18h10 where we board the train.
18h30	The train departs for the Golela border post and Hluhluwe.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
02h30	The train arrives at Hluhluwe Station where we overnight.
DAY 3	NON GOLFERS
06h30	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 08h30.
08h30	Board the coach and depart Mpaka for Royal Swazi Sun Hotel & Golf Course.
09h30	After the coach arrives at the Royal Swazi Golf Course we depart for the scenic drive to the Ngwenya Glass Factory.
13h00	Lunch at Guava Galleries where there is an opportunity for craft and curio shopping.
14h30	Depart for Phuzamoya to meet the vehicles from Mkhaya Game Reserve.
15h30	Game drive in Mkhaya Game reserve.
18h00	Return to the train.
18h30	The train departs for the Golela border post and Hluhluwe.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
02h30	The train arrives at Hluhluwe Station where we overnight.

DAY 4	GOLFERS and NON GOLFERS
05h30	An early morning wake up call for a game drive in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve.
05h45	Tea, Coffee, Juices, Fruit, and Pastries will be served in the dining car/s.
06h00	Board the game drive vehicles parked outside the train.
08h30	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 provided if required.
10h30	Return to the train.
11h00	Brunch will be served in the dining car/s en route to Durban.
16h00	High Tea is served in the Lounge and Observation Cars.
17h30	Arrive in Durban.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.

Day 5	GOLFERS
06h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 08h00.
06h30	The coach departs for Durban Country Club Beachwood Course (walking course).
07h30	Tee- off at Beachwood.
12h30	Lunch is served in the Club House.
14h00	Board the coach and return to the train.
15h00	The train departs from Durban.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
23h45	The train arrives in Estcourt where we overnight.
Day 5	NON GOLFERS
06h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 08h30.
09h00	The vehicle departs for a Durban City tour.
12h30	Join the golfers at the Beachwood Golf Club for lunch.
14h00	Board the coach and return to the train.
15h00	The train departs from Durban.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
23h45	The train arrives in Estcourt where we overnight.

GOLFERS & NON GOLFERS TIMETABLE

Day 6	GOLFERS
05h30	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s.
07h30	The coach departs from Estcourt Station for Champagne Sports Resort (carts available).
08h30	Golfers tee-off.
15h00	After golf snacks are served at the Club.
17h30	The coach departs to rejoin the train at Estcourt.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
20h30	The train departs for Koster.
Day 6	NON GOLFERS
06h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 08h30.
08h00	The vehicles will depart from Estcourt Station for the Battlefields tour. Raymond Heron, our "storyteller extraordinaire" will start his tale at Mt Alice which was the headquarters of General Buller.
11h30	We stop at Spionkop Lodge for refreshments and then onto the top of Spionkop to finish this historic story.
13h00	We return to Spionkop Lodge for lunch. Thereafter we board the vehicles for shopping visits (time permitting) to Ardmore Ceramics, Thokiziwa and the Rug factory.
18h30	Rejoin the train at Estcourt.
20h30	The train departs for Koster.

Day 7	GOLFERS and NON GOLFERS
	Day at leisure on the train. Breakfast, lunch and dinner on board.

Day 8	GOLFERS
06h30	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 09h30.
07h00	Board the coach for the Gary Player (walking course)/Lost City CC (carts only).
08h10	Golfers tee-off on the Gary Player/Lost CityCC
14h00	Lunch at the Club.
15h30	Depart from the Golf Club for a game drive in the Pilanesberg Game Reserve.
18h00	On our return from the game drive we board the coach and return to the train.
20h00	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
20h30	The train departs for Krugersdorp.
23h20	We arrive in Krugersdorp where we overnight.
Day 8	NON GOLFERS
06h30	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 09h30.
10h00	Depart on the coach for a morning at leisure in Sun City.
11h30	Pre-arranged Palace Tour starts from the Welcome Centre.
13h30	Lunch at the Golf Club.
15h30	Depart from the Golf Club for a Game Drive in the Pilanesberg Game Reserve.
18h00	On our return from the Game Drive we board the coach and return to the train.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
20h30	The train departs for Krugersdorp.
23h20	We arrive in Krugersdorp where we overnight.

Day 9	GOLFERS and NON GOLFERS
07h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s as the train departs from Krugersdorp.
10h00	The train arrives at Rovos Rail's Station, Capital Park in Pretoria.

Excursions may be changed according to schedule achieved

Times are approximate and cannot be guaranteed

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THE JOURNEY

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 Zpoorweg Maatschappij (NZAZM) 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 NZAZM 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 granites 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 National Park 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.

Phalaborwa is situated in the picturesque north eastern lowveld. The name "Phalaborwa" is a Sotho word which means "better than the south" and according to tradition originated thus.

An ancient black tribe known as the baPhalaborwa was driven out of their traditional homeland in what is presently Zimbabwe and settled in what is now Bushbuckridge. They had few cattle and were mainly metal workers. With the iron and other metals the tribe excavated and smelted they made assegai heads, axes, hoes, spears, etc. which they traded with neighbouring tribes in order to obtain provisions.

Scouts of the baPhalaborwa trekked northwards and on Loolekop, just outside the present Phalaborwa, discovered enough iron ore to provide for all their need. Consequently the tribe settled in the place where Phalaborwa today stands and called it Phalaborwa because it was better than the south whence they had come.

Today two 'koppies' (hills) in Phalaborwa namely Sealene and Kgpolwe have been declared National monuments and reveal the earliest visible traces of primitive settlements.

Phalaborwa was established in 1958 after the discovery of huge mineral deposits and today supports a thriving mining industry supplying vital minerals to the country. The town boasts one of the world's largest open-cast mines which in itself has become a unique tourist attraction. What makes the mine particularly interesting is that what is now a big hole was once a notable saddle-backed hill called Loolekop.

The wealth of minerals in the area is attributed to a series of volcanic eruptions 2 000 million years ago. The cone of the eruption has long since vanished, but the pipe, an astonishing geological feature measuring 19 square kilometres, is still intact and is filled to an unknown depth with minerals such as phosphates, copper ironium, vermiculite, mica and gold.

The copper deposits at Phalaborwa were as attractive to the early inhabitants of the area as they are to the modern miner, judging from the ample evidence of ancient mining and smelting activities.

Through the perseverance and far-sightedness of men such as Dr. Hans Merensky, Foskor today excavates and produces the cheapest phosphate concentrate in the world, while Phalaborwa Mining Company today supplies all the copper needs of South Africa from the second biggest open cast mine in the world.

Phalaborwa borders on the western boundary of the Kruger National Park and the Phalaborwa Gate is open for tourists the whole year round.

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 degrees 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 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 Bremersdorp 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, population 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 **Champagne Sports Resort** is close to Winterton, which is the 'capital' of central Drakensberg. Hugh Baiocchi, a well-known South African golfer who may still be found playing on the American Senior circuit, designed the course eleven years ago. It is a parkland golf course surrounded by stunning mountains, which, in the winter, are draped in snow.

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 Ghandi, 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. . "

Glencoe is very close to Dundee, which is the site of the first battle, Talana, of the Anglo-Boer war, in October 1899. Dundee is the centre of the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) coalfields. Beginning in 1862, exports continue to this day via the port of Richards Bay just south of St Lucia Wetland Park. An estimated 2 700 million tons of shallow coalfields lie in northern Kwa Zulu Natal. Newcastle, named after the Duke of Newcastle, was founded on the iron Industry, but, with worldwide competition, the furnaces have been shut down.

About 30kms after Newcastle, a high mountain looms into view, Majuba Hill (Amajuba) which is 2 146m high. This is the site of the decisive battle which, on Sunday 27 February 1881, ended the first Anglo-Boer war with the defeat of the British army by the Transvaal Boers. The 554 British Redcoats had climbed Amajuba and held a strong position on the summit. But the determined assault of the 3,500 Boers under Generals Joubert and Smit overcame British resistance. 95 British soldiers were killed (almost all through the head) including General Sir George Pomeroy Colley, for the death of 1 Boer. This was the last battle fought by the British army in red uniforms (redcoats). They immediately switched to Khaki. Gladstone offered peace and independence to the Transvaal, which was finalised by the Pretoria (1881) and London (1883) Conventions. The first Anglo-Boer War ended after less than 3 months.

Charlestown marks the old border post between the British colony of Natal and the independent republic of the Transvaal pre-1899. Standerton's claim to fame is that it was, for many years, the parliamentary constituency of General Smuts, South African Prime Minister, 1919-1924 and 1939 – 1948. General Smuts was a great South African, a great imperial statesman and a great world leader. He first posited the idea of a League of Nations in 1917, which caught the imagination of President Woodrow Wilson. Smuts, it was, who wrote the preamble to the United Nations Charter in 1946 at San Francisco. He lost power to the National party of Apartheid in 1948 and lost the Standerton seat as well. The small village of Balfour derives its name from it being the place where, in 1906, the British ex-Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour, made a speech on the station platform. Heidelberg was established in 1862 twenty-four years before Johannesburg was invented. It was a main crossroad between Natal, the Orange Free State, the Cape and the Transvaal. It is situated close to the Suikerbosrand (Sugar Bush Ridge), 1 903 metres above sea level and a wildlife reserve famous for birds. It was here, in 1895, that the rails were joined connecting the Transvaal and Natal railway systems. The old station building, fully restored, now houses an important transport museum, especially old motorcars and motorbikes.

Now the train reaches the Goldfields of **Johannesburg** arriving slightly to the east at the major railway junction of Germiston. It is the site of the Simmer & Jack gold mine discovered in May 1887, within 9 months of gold being found in Johannesburg. The town of Germiston was laid out around the mine.

Prior to 1886, maps of the area where Johannesburg now stands depicted only a series of bush-covered ridges from which flowed a few small streams. When gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, a vibrant tent town grew rapidly into a frontier city and then into a dynamic commercial and financial centre, now the capital of the Gauteng region, the third-largest city in Africa after Cairo and Lagos and the engine room of the sub-equatorial African economy. The province of Gauteng (pronounced with a guttural G) is the smallest and richest of the nine regions formed in terms of South Africa's Constitution of 27th April 1994. The name is a Sotho corruption of the Afrikaans word 'goud' which means gold. Literally 'the place of gold'.

The gold-bearing Main Reef was first struck by an itinerant Australian prospector named George Harrison, when he stumbled across an outcrop edging above the surface of the land in August 1886. His "Discoverers Claim" can be viewed in a park four kilometres west of the city centre where sandy quartz 'conglomerate' which trapped the fine gold dust around 2 700 million years ago is still clearly visible.

In Pre-Cambrian times, 2 700 – 2 400 million years ago, the area of the Witwatersrand (goldfields) was underwater. A vast inland sea, not unlike Lake Superior or Lake Victoria, covered the pre-existing, sharp-faced, volcanic rock scouring and eroding away the peaks and crevasses and releasing microscopic traces of gold into the water. Over three hundred million years these traces of gold became sedimented on the floor of the ancient sea or trapped for an eternity in a series of fossilised beaches. At the end of the period of formation, the lake dried up and a cubic area of 120kms East-West x 280kms North-South x 8kms deep existed, all bearing gold.

Then, about 2 000 million years ago, a meteorite, having the entire universe to slam into, selected this very spot to land! With enormous violence the meteorite slammed into the centre of the extinct lake, breaking the gold-bearing reef in half and faulting it down at an angle of 35 degrees southwards (the Vredefort Dome). The outer edge was, correspondingly tilted upwards, and this became the outcrop, which was discovered in 1886 where Johannesburg now stands.

From their infancy in the early days of 1886, the Witwatersrand goldfields - stretching along a gentle 120kms curve from Benoni to Krugersdorp via Johannesburg - proved themselves unique. The amount of gold in the ore was and still remains low, but the total reservoir of gold-bearing ore appears to be limitless. These two factors have determined the profile of the gold mining industry in South Africa. No single person can manage the industry - unlike the diamond industry which gave rise to great tycoons like Rhodes and Barnato - and only a mining house, consisting of several large shareholders, could raise the capital needed to successfully mine and process the enormous quantities of ore from which small quantities of gold are finally extracted.

The mine dumps of Gauteng, many of which are disappearing as they are reprocessed using advanced technology to capture small quantities of gold which escaped in the less refined methods of past years, are testimony to the scale of mining operations carried out over the years. The deepest mines in the world 3.7kms below the surface of the earth are found in South Africa. Mining houses usually control many mines in order to reduce financial risk and to benefit from economies of scale. The milling of the ore is only half the equation. The other half is the extraction of the ore in harsh conditions many kilometres underground, using cheap labour provided by great numbers of able-bodied men from throughout Southern Africa and specially Mozambique. Yet despite their size, the mining houses act as the entrepreneurs, identifying new prospects, carrying out exhaustive feasibility studies and keeping the country's economy buoyant as they extract gold from the earth. Names like Anglo American, AngloVaal, JCI and Gold Fields dominate the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and perforce, the South African economy.

The harsh realities involved in squeezing gold from the grudging ore are reflected in the lack of aesthetic presence in Johannesburg. In a city which is just over 100 years old, only four buildings predate 1900. And yet the vibrancy of the city is immediately apparent. It is robust and unpretentious; a mixture of tribal swirl and technological innovation in a region whose very name reflects the nature of its wealth – Gauteng, the place of gold. South Africa owes its state of development to gold. The 600 tons of 24-carat gold produced every year by the mining houses has paved the way, directly or indirectly, for the industrialisation and modernisation of a traditional African society. Today, with a new and democratic government in place, South Africa has taken up its rightful role as the powerhouse of the African continent.

Rustenburg is the third oldest town in the 'Old Transvaal'. It grew as the church and administrative centre for a rich farming area producing citrus and other fruit, cattle, tobacco, groundnuts, sunflower seeds, maize and wheat.

Historians venture two explanations of the origin of the name: The one group alleges the town was named after the Rustenburg estate at Wynberg in the Cape, while the other group maintains the name originated from expectations harboured by the Boers for quiet and peace for the region. For a while Rustenburg was even the capital of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek, before the seat moved to Pretoria.

Boekenhoutfontein Farm, northwest of Rustenburg, was a home of President Paul Kruger. Of its original 500 hectares, 32 are maintained as a museum. On the grounds are an 1841 cottage, the Kruger homestead built in 1870 and a house built for his son Pieter in 1892. The two biggest platinum mines in the world are situated within 14kms of the town, while more platinum mines are being developed on a large scale. Other minerals such as chrome, palladium, nickel and copper are also mined. There are large granite quarries 19kms from the town.

In the centre of a volcanic valley surrounded by the dun slopes of the Pilanesberg Mountains, a wilderness wonderland rises from the dust. Shimmering in the African sun, the fantastic **Sun City Resort** could be mistaken for a mirage. In reality, it's a vision realized through a multi-million-dollar investment and one man's unshakable faith in the religion of tourism – South African hotel prodigy Sol Kerzner.

The dream began with a middle of nowhere luxury hotel in the sun. It soon evolved to include a second sumptuous hotel, the Cascades, with a tropical garden, a flamingo lake lapping the edge of the building, rushing waterfalls and a Sky Train which whisks visitors between destinations within the resort.

Then Sol Kerzner's imagination looped the loop in a defiant free fall and he built his ultimate fantasy - the 'recreation' of a Lost City which, legend has it, was inhabited by gentle people of an ancient civilisation. The Lost City has as its centre a 'palace' of impossible opulence guarded by towering elephants lining an immense bridge; it is ringed with man-made lakes stocked with rare birds and fish, pools, forests and a tropical beach with perfect surfing waves - electrically generated. Lit with the glow of a million candles, the Palace is decorated with Renaissance frescoes, hand-carved furniture, mosaic-inlaid floors and towering columns of false tusks and palm fronds.

Today the Sun City Resort Complex is one of the world's largest adult entertainment centres, a luxury theme park for grown-up kids. And when the day's play is over, there are beds for more than 2 000 guests.

Out of doors, two championship golf courses - one with crocodiles at the 13th hole - are bordered by the Pilanesberg National Park (containing the 'Big Five') where a vigorous conservation programme has resulted in more than 300 rhinos numbered among the 10 000 animals in the reserve. The 55 000-hectare park is the third biggest game reserve in Southern Africa.

We hope you enjoyed this great golfing safari through South Africa and look forward to hosting you again in the not too distant future.

Updated 19 April 2010 – please check with Querida Venter for updates/itinerary changes
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DISTANCE CHARTS

0	Pretoria/Capital Park		
25	Panpoort	25	
86	Witbank	111	
159	Waterval Onder	270	
81	Nelspruit	351	
56	Kaapmuiden	407	
213	Phalaborwa	620	Phalaborwa Golf Club
213	Kaapmuiden	833	
52	Komatipoort	885	
123	Mpaka	1008	Royal Swazi Golf/Ngwenya Glass
126	Golela	1134	Swaziland Border
102	Hluhluwe	1236	Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve
108	Empangeni	1344	
177	Durban	1521	Beachwood Golf
104	Pietermaritzburg	1625	
179	Ladysmith	1804	Champagne Sports Resort & Golf/Spionkop
264	Standerton	2068	
157	Germiston	2225	
56	Pretoria	2281	
112	Rustenberg	2393	
54	Sun City	2447	
18	Sun City/Heysteke	2465	Gary Player Country Club
72	Rustenberg	2537	
114	Pretoria/Capital Park	2651	

THE MAP

