

*The Most Luxurious Train in the World*



## NAMIBIA ITINERARY & JOURNEY

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ITINERARY

**NAMIBIA PRETORIA TO SWAKOPMUND ITINERARY 2012**

DAY 1	
15h00	The Pride Of Africa departs Rovos Rail's Station in Capital Park.
19h30	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. Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
DAY 2	
07h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 09h45.
09h30	Ten minutes before arriving in Kimberley there is a shallow lake on the right hand side where, on most occasions, there are spectacular flocks of Flamingos.
09h45	Arrive in Kimberley. Guests disembark and proceed by coach/combi for a tour of the city, the "Big Hole "and the Mine Museum.
12h30	Depart Kimberley.
13h00	Lunch is served in the dining car/s.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
<b>Please ensure that the train manager is in possession of your passports before retiring to your suite.</b>	
DAY 3	
02h00	The train arrives in Upington.
06h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car until 08h00.
08h00	Disembark the train for a two hour walking tour of Upington.
<b>Please wear non-slip walking shoes and comfortable clothes. It will be hot so sun tan lotion and hats are strongly recommended</b>	
13h00	Lunch is served in the dining car/s.
13h30	Arrive in Nakop for border formalities.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
23h00	The train arrives in the Holoog siding.
DAY 4	
06h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 08h00.
08h00	Disembark from the train for an excursion to the Fish River Canyon.
<b>Please wear non-slip walking shoes and comfortable clothes for both walking tours. It will be hot so sun tan lotion and hats are strongly recommended</b>	
11h00	After returning to the train we depart Holoog for Keetmanshoop.
13h00	Lunch is served in the dining car/s.
15h00	Disembark the train for a two hour walking tour of Keetmanshoop.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.

## NAMIBIA PRETORIA TO SWAKOPMUND ITINERARY 2012

DAY 5	
07h00 09h00 11h00	<p>Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 09h00.</p> <p>The train arrives in Windhoek. Visit the train museum followed by a city tour.</p> <p>Depart in a light aircraft for a 1 hour flight to Sossusvlei.</p> <p>Enjoy lunch, a desert drive and a bush dinner. Overnight in the lodge.</p> <p><b>Please pack a small overnight bag. Tog bags have been placed in your suite for your convenience. Comfortable clothes and shoes for hot days and cool evenings are essential. Sun tan lotion and hats are strongly recommended.</b></p> <p><b>It can get very cold during the game drives so please take along warm clothing.</b></p>
DAY 6	
06h00 12h00 13h30 19h30	<p>Enjoy a desert excursion with breakfast in the vlei.</p> <p>Depart Sossusvlei for in a light aircraft for a 1 hour flight to Windhoek.</p> <p>Lunch is served in the dining car/s as the train departs Windhoek.</p> <p>Dinner is served in the dining car/s.</p>
DAY 7	
07h00 10h40 12h45  13h00 15h00 19h00	<p>Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 10h00.</p> <p>Arrive in Tsumeb. Disembark for coach transfer to Mokuti Lodge.</p> <p>Arrive at Mokuti Lodge for lunch, an afternoon game drive and overnight stay at the lodge.</p> <p><b>Please pack a small overnight bag. Tog bags have been placed in your suite for your convenience. Comfortable clothes and shoes for hot days and cool evenings are essential. Sun tan lotion and hats are strongly recommended.</b></p> <p><b>It can get very cold during the game drives so please take along warm clothing.</b></p> <p>Lunch is served in the dining area at the lodge.</p> <p>Afternoon game drive.</p> <p>Dinner at the lodge.</p>
DAY 8	
06h00 11h30 13h00	<p>Morning game drive into Etosha Pan.</p> <p>Depart by coach from Mokuti Lodge and rejoin the train in Tsumeb.</p> <p>Lunch is served in the dining car/s while we depart from Tsumeb.</p>
DAY 9	
07h00 12h30	<p>Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 10h00.</p> <p>The train arrives in Swakopmund.</p>

Updated 28 Feb 2011

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

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ITINERARY

**NAMIBIA SWAKOPMUND TO PRETORIA ITINERARY 2012**

DAY 1	
12h00	The Pride of Africa departs from Swakopmund. 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.
19h30	Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
DAY 2	
	<b>Please pack a small overnight bag. Tog bags have been placed in your suite for your convenience. Comfortable clothes and shoes for hot days and cool evenings are essential. Sun tan lotion and hats are strongly recommended.</b>
	<b>It can get very cold during the game drives so please take along warm clothing.</b>
10h40	Arrive in Tsumeb. Disembark for coach transfer to Mokuti Lodge.
12h45	Arrive at Mokuti Lodge for lunch, an afternoon game drive and overnight stay at the lodge.
13h00	Lunch is served in the dining area at the lodge.
15h00	Afternoon game drive.
19h00	Dinner at the lodge.
DAY 3	
06h00	Morning game drive in the Etosha Nature Reserve.
11h30	Depart by coach from Mokuti Lodge and rejoin the train in Tsumeb.
13h00	Lunch is served in the dining car/s while we depart from Tsumeb en route to Windhoek.
DAY 4	
07h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 09h00.
09h00	The train arrives in Windhoek. Visit the train museum followed by a city tour.
11h00	Depart in a light aircraft for a 1 hour flight to Sossusvlei. Enjoy lunch, a desert drive and a bush dinner. Overnight in the lodge.
	<b>Please pack a small overnight bag. Tog bags have been placed in your suite for your convenience. Comfortable clothes and shoes for hot days and cool evenings are essential. Sun tan lotion and hats are strongly recommended.</b>
	<b>It can get very cold during the game drives so please take along warm clothing.</b>

## NAMIBIA SWAKOPMUND TO PRETORIA ITINERARY 2012

DAY 5	
06h00 12h00 13h30 19h30	Enjoy a desert excursion with breakfast in the vlei. Depart Sossusvlei for in a light aircraft for a 1 hour flight to Windhoek. Lunch is served in the dining car/s as the train departs Windhoek. Dinner is served in the dining car/s.
DAY 6	
06h00 08h00 13h00 15h00  19h00 19h30  01h00	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 08h00. Disembark the train for a two hour walking tour of Keetmanshoop. Lunch is served in the dining car/s. Arrive in Holoog. Disembark from the train for an excursion to the Fish River Canyon.  <b>Please wear non-slip walking shoes and comfortable clothes. It will be hot so sun tan lotion and hats are strongly recommended.</b>  After returning to the train we depart Holoog. Dinner is served in dining car/s. <b>Please ensure that the train manager is in possession of your passports before retiring to your suite.</b>  Arrive in Ariumsvlei and Nakop for immigration formalities.
DAY 7	
06h00 08h00  13h00 19h30	Breakfast is served in the dining car until 08h00. Disembark the train for a two hour walking tour of Upington.  <b>Please wear non-slip walking shoes and comfortable clothes. It will be hot so sun tan lotion and hats are strongly recommended</b>  Lunch is served in the dining car/s. Dinner is served in the dining car/s as we head towards Kimberley.
DAY 8	
07h00 12h30 14h30 16h30	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 10h00. Lunch is served in the dining car/s. Arrive in Kimberley. Guests disembark and proceed by coach/combi for a tour of the city, the "Big Hole "and the Mine Museum. Rejoin the train at Kimberley Station. Ten minutes after departing Kimberley there is a shallow lake on the left hand side where, on most occasions, there are spectacular flocks of Flamingos.
DAY 7	
07h00 11h30	Breakfast is served in the dining car/s until 10h00. Arrive at Rovos Rail's Station at Capital Park, Pretoria.

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## **The Namibian Journey Pretoria - Swakopmund**

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 Elandspoort, and on 16 November, 1855 the new town was named Pretoria in honour of his father.

**Pretoria** grew up around Church Square, originally the marketplace 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 are 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 at 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 role 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.

**Johannesburg** is the largest city in sub-Saharan Africa. It is on the heights of the Witwatersrand, some 1828 metres above sea level, that the greatest goldfields in history were discovered before the turn of the century. 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. Until recently, the region was known as the PWV, meaning Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging.

Gauteng (pronounced with a guttural G) is the smallest and richest of the nine regions formed in terms of South Africa's Interim Constitution of 27th April, 1994. The name is a Sotho tribal verbal corruption of the Afrikaans word 'goud' which means gold. The gold-bearing main reef was first struck by an itinerant prospector named George Harrison when he stumbled across an outcrop edging above the surface of the land. 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. The gigantic forces of nature were once again responsible for producing the gold metal so precious to the South African economy today. Volcanic rock formed by the embryo earth in its first incarnation was scoured and eroded away over hundreds of millions of years by large bodies of water. Gold was released from the reluctant grip of the igneous rock and it washed southwards to be held for an eternity in a series of fossilised beaches. A great and enormously violent upheaval, perhaps associated with the break-up of the continents, faulted this deeply sedimented beach upwards, allowing it to subside again southwards through an angle of 35 degrees. Eons later, Man arrived to burrow into one of Nature's greatest wonders – an almost inexhaustible supply of gold – a lustrous, highly valued commodity tightly held in vast quantities by the major nations of the world. From their infancy in the early days of 1886, the Witwatersrand gold fields – stretching along a gentle 120 kilometre curve from Benoni to Krugersdorp – 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 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 imposing 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, 4.7km 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. That is one of the ironies of the South African gold mining industry: opening a new mine, with all its high technology infrastructure and deep mining skills, costs billions of Rands, and yet relatively unskilled labour using specially developed, costly equipment is used to mine the ore.

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, Anglo Vaal, JCI and Gold Fields dominate the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and perforce, the South African economy. The harsh reality involved in squeezing gold from grudging ore is reflected in the lack of aesthetic presence in Johannesburg. In a city, which is barely over 100 years old, only four buildings predate 1900.

South Africa owes its state of development to gold. The 600 tons of precious metal 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.

In **Kimberley**, the Pride of Africa enters one of the finest Victorian railway stations in Africa. A product of the railway heyday of the 1870's, the cast iron girders soar over the platforms and recall the intricate patterns of a bygone era. The wraiths of Rhodes, Barnato and Beit mingle on the platform as the train slowly pulls in.

Kimberley is one of South Africa's best-kept secrets. Somewhat off the beaten track, towards the arid northwest of the country, it does not receive the high volume of tourist traffic, which its history and commercial importance would presume. The story of Kimberley is the story of diamonds. The romantic associations of diamonds, De Beers, Cecil John Rhodes and the Cape-to-Cairo railway are all centred on Kimberley. Although diamonds had been discovered near Hopetown in 1867, it was the discovery of a diamond 'pipe' where the Big Hole now yawns, in 1871, which triggered the Diamond Rush. Kimberley's first name was 'New Rush' to distinguish it from the 'old' rush at Colesberg Kopje. The site of the Big Hole was, initially, a small hill, but that soon disappeared before the furious diggings of the diamond prospectors. The prospectors staked out their claims and began digging. Some excavated quicker than others, cloudbursts during the summer thunderstorms washed down detritus from the higher claims into the lower ones. Once the hole was deep enough, water pooled in the base and it became necessary to pump it out. In the midst of this competitive chaos, emerged two men, wildly different in background, education and temperament, but with a similar vision. Barney Barnato and Cecil John Rhodes stamped themselves forcefully upon early Kimberley. Barnato controlled the Kimberley Central Mine, whose diamond pipe lies immediately east of the railway station, and Rhodes controlled the De Beers Mine, where the Big Hole is found. Both agreed that the supply of diamonds to the world market had to be controlled through the formation of a monopoly or cartel, but which one would buy out the other? After intense negotiations, De Beers, with Rhodes as its Chairman, bought out Barnato's holdings in 1888 and promptly made Barnato a Life Governor of the new De Beers Consolidated Diamond Mines. The company, listed on the London and Johannesburg Stock Exchanges until September 2001, still dominates the world's supply of diamonds and the life of Kimberley. Once De Beers took control of the diamond industry, Kimberley, from having been a thrusting town of young male prospectors, became a company town. It settled down to produce its own diamonds and later to sort and cut diamonds from all over the world. Today, the Harry Oppenheimer building is the throbbing nerve-centre of the diamond-sorting business. With the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 and the consolidation of the diamond industry by Rhodes and De Beers in 1888, the tide of wealth ebbed from Kimberley never to return. It remains a charming town, preserved unchanged over the years owing to the presence of De Beers.

De Beers Consolidated Diamond Mines still has its headquarters in Stockdale Street and every year, from New York, Zurich, Hong Kong, Amsterdam and elsewhere, the directors and shareholders of the world's oldest monopoly gather here in a quasi-rural setting for the Annual General Meeting.

The Boers besieged Kimberley, with Rhodes in it, during the South African War (Anglo-Boer War – 1899-1902). The British army under Lord Methuen attempted to relieve the town but suffered two serious reverses at the battles of Modder River (28 November, 1899) and Magersfontein (11 December, 1899). The Black Watch suffered terribly, exposed to the intense heat and unable to advance or retreat under withering Boer Mauser fire. Finally they broke and fled. Kimberley was only relieved two months later after the great cavalry dash across the Karoo led by Sir John French and Col. Douglas Haig.

At the beginning of the siege, the artillery defence of Kimberley consisted only of seven pairs and 2.5 in RMLs. Nobody really knows who first mooted the idea of making a gun in Kimberley which could outrange the Boer artillery, but credit is usually given to George Labram, an American engineer in the town. He had come to South Africa in 1893 to erect a new crusher plant for one of the Kimberley mines, staying on to become Chief Engineer to De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd, the company owning all the Kimberley diamond mines and which was under the chairmanship of Cecil Rhodes. A good mechanical engineer with a fertile brain, Labram not only designed and made 'Long Cecil', for which he is perhaps best remembered, but during the first three weeks of the siege he designed and constructed a plant for the bulk refrigeration of perishable foodstuffs – essential with shade temperatures averaging about 31°C. He had also installed an emergency fresh-water supply system, which became the town's sole supply (apart from one or two wells) for the whole siege, and had given much practical assistance and advice to the Royal Engineers in laying out controlled minefields around the town, and with the design and actual construction of the defences.

Then, as the garrison's artillery had expanded nearly a third of its ammunition by the end of November, Labram turned part of De Beers' workshops over to making shells, charges, and fuses for the 2.5-inch guns. Prior to all this he had perfected a method (still in use) for the extraction of diamonds from the crushed rock of the mines. His greatest triumph perhaps was turning the workshops into a gun factory as well, never before having had anything to do with gun making. This gun was designed and constructed by engineers who had no previous experience of ordnance manufacture, without special plant or arrangements, and on designs adapted from descriptions found in a stray copy of an engineering journal.

Its construction, from the day that designs were fashioned, took 24 days and on Friday, 19 January, 1900, the gun, nicknamed 'Long Cecil' in honour of Cecil Rhodes, was taken for testing and calibration to one of the three emplacements already prepared for it. Rhodes, who had taken a great interest in the gun and its manufacture, was present, along with a number of local dignitaries and senior officers of the garrison. He invited Lt-Col Chamier, as the senior Gunner, to fire the first round. The story goes that Chamier refused on the grounds that, as a member of the Royal Regiment, he was permitted to fire only such guns as had been officially approved by the War Office and that 'Long Cecil' definitely did not fall within this category! Rhodes, so the story continues, then told Chamier to remove himself to a safe distance and sent his pony and trap to fetch Mrs Pickering, wife of the Secretary to the De Beers Company. On her arrival, Rhodes handed her the end of the firing lanyard, inviting her to pull it. This she duly did, with some trepidation, and fired the first round from 'Long Cecil' – of this latter part of the story there is no doubt. The round landed and burst in the middle of a hitherto safe and quiet Boer laager at the Intermediate Pumping Station some 7 200 metres away, causing considerable alarm and dismay according to Boer letters written at the time, some of which were later intercepted by the British.

'Long Cecil' fired 225 shells against the Boers at an average range of 5 000 yards. Its activity forced the Boers to send for a 'Long Tom'. Ironically, Mr Labram was killed by one of the first shells that this 'Long Tom' fired into Kimberley. 'Long Cecil' can still be seen in Kimberley, where it stands in memory of those who defended the town during the siege. It was placed on the Honoured Dead Siege Memorial where it stands to this day.

In the Museum of Artillery in the Rotunda at Woolwich there is a good scale model of the gun, made; it is believed, by Mr Harry Beer who was one of the artisans employed in making the original gun during the siege.

In terms of scale and size the Kimberley Mine Museum can lay claim to being one of the most impressive museums in South Africa. It encompasses the whole area of the Big Hole and utilises many of the original corrugated iron mine buildings used by the first miners. It tells the story of the diamond industry as no other. It should be remembered that before the discovery of diamonds in the Northern Cape in 1867, diamonds came, almost exclusively from India and Ceylon. Their source and origins were shrouded in mystery and legend being believed to be the congealed tears of a Hindu goddess. In that sense, the Kimberley Mine Museum is of world-historic importance because it shows how the diamond industry was transformed, mechanised and industrialised in the late 19th century. And together with diamonds went the men who found them, colourful, thrusting personalities who lived hard and played hard.

The railway coach commissioned for De Beers from the Pullman Company, Chicago, shows clearly the plush comfort and the well-stocked cellars with which the directors travelled.

The 'Big Hole' started off life as a small hill, was flattened, and is now an enormous hole from where millions of tons of diamondiferous 'blue-ground' Kimberlite ore has been removed. The diamonds were made about 53 million years ago, about 200 kilometres inside the earth, under conditions of unimaginable heat and pressure. Carbon was metamorphosed into diamond, the hardest substance known to Man. Literally, thousands of claims were pegged as would-be miners from all corners of the world sought to make their fortunes. Millions of tons of ore were removed as the diggers continued their search hundreds of metres below ground level.

Typically, volcanic activity goes hand in hand with the increasing weight of water in a lake or sea. The floor of the Karoo Sea sagged under the weight of the water, broke the earth's crust and allowed magma to well up from the depths, creating a volcanic pipe or 'throat'. This process is still continuing in central Africa where volcanic activity of the Ruwenzori Mountains in Uganda is a function of the weight of water in the Rift Valley lakes.

Covering the south-western reaches of South Africa's interior plateau is the **Great Karoo**, a high (1 220m) and dry region that takes its name from a Khoi word meaning 'land of great thirst'. Scientists use the name Karoo to describe the geological base for the interior plateau covering two-thirds of southern Africa. Between 150 and 250 million years ago vast sediments were laid down in a series of three distinct layers. The Dwyka Series, a layer about 900 metres thick consisting of rocks encased in a matrix of mudstone and moraine and believed to be debris of a previous ice age. After its deposition came a period of climatic change when much of the earth was covered in forests, thick swamps, huge lakes and densely vegetated wetlands. From this steamy world of mud, jungles and water the Ecca Series, a 3 000 metre thick layer of shale and sandstone, was formed. Locked into rocks of this series is a wealth of fossils ranging from small reptiles to huge tree stumps, some still upright. Above this is the Beaufort Series, a layer of sedimentary deposition about 5 600 metres thick that created the face of the Karoo as we know it today.

Over time igneous material from the centre of the earth forced its way through vertical and horizontal cracks in the Karoo's sedimentary depositions, forming dolerite dykes (vertical) and dolerite sills (horizontal). As the soft sedimentary rocks weathered away, the harder or more resistant dolerite dykes and sills remained forming the flat topped or 'table' mountains and bell-like buttes that characterise the Karoo.

The vast herds of Springbok of 150 years ago have been replaced by sheep, one of the few animals able to survive on the low-lying scrub that is the common vegetation of the Karoo. Springbok *Antidorcas Marsupialis* once migrated across the Karoo in herds of up to 40 000, a sight viewed by David Livingstone. He wrote at the time: *"It is probable that, notwithstanding the continual destruction by firearms, they will continue long to hold their place."* How wrong he was. Today, it is rare to see a Springbok in the wild beyond the confines of a game farm or reserve.

David Livingstone, the first serious observer to walk across the African continent from Luanda in the west to the mouth of the mighty Zambezi on the eastern seabed, was the first explorer to note this phenomenon. He drew an interesting cross-section of Africa in his first book 'Missionary Travels and Adventures in South-eastern Africa'.

Sheep farming has become the main economic activity of the area, often on large farms of many thousand of acres. The dryness of the land is deceptive as water is relatively plentiful deep underground. To bring water to the surface farmers use windmills and the turning sails and stark outlines of these structures have become synonymous with the Karoo skyline.

The small town of **De Aar**, the 'vein', takes its name from an underground watercourse. Among the town's prominent citizens was authoress Olive Schreiner, who lived here from 1907 to 1913. De Aar is a major railway junction and the lines from the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape, Gauteng and Namibia meet here. The crack trains, such as the Blue Train, Trans Karoo and the Orange Express used to stop here to change crews.

With 110 kilometres of railway tracks, the railway junction of De Aar is the second largest junction in South Africa. It is the switching point for the railway systems to Namibia and the northern, southern and Eastern Cape lines.

Here, in the spring, every August/September, the veldt is covered from horizon to horizon with wild flowers, which bloom for only three weeks, spread their seed and die. Tourists come from all over the world to this wild part of the country to see, amongst others, the Namaqualand daisies. This vast dry land is geographically part of the Kalahari semi-desert, which extends from the Karoo dry lands of the Cape to northern Botswana and eastern Namibia. The occasional oasis, the Orange River and the Okavango Swamps, punctuates the dryness.

Sir Thomas Upington, attorney general of the Cape, was the man principally responsible for liquidating the business activities of the Orange River pirates and capturing their leader, Klaas Lucas. When the desperadoes were finally chased away in 1884, the town was founded on the banks of the Orange River and named **Upington** in honour of Sir Thomas. The railway reaches the town by means of a bridge 1067 metres long, the second longest bridge in South Africa.

Among the first pioneers were Oom Japie Lutz and the missionary Christiaan Schroder who, in 1890, erected a pump on the banks of the river and started a pontoon ferry.

The town is the centre for considerable industry in the production of lucerne, sultanas, raisins, dried fruits, cotton, peas, karakul sheep, goats and cattle – as well as a thriving wine industry.

Lower down the Orange River about an hour's drive away, lies the **Augrabies Falls**, christened 'the place of great noise' by the original Khoikhoi residents. These falls drop 256 metres in three cascades revealing a sharp gash in the granite. At the base lies a deep, dark pool containing, it is believed, a fortune in diamonds washed down over the millennia. In common with the Zambezi River and Loch Ness, this pool is believed to be home to a giant

water serpent - probably a fanciful account of shoals of giant barbel, which grow up to 2 metres in length. Only one person is known to have survived having fallen over the waterfall into the main pool. On 10 October 1981 a 20-year old lad, Hugo Truter slipped into the water and was carried over the falls – and lived to tell the tale!

**Namibia**, with a population of about 1.6 million people is two-thirds the size of South Africa which has a population of 40 million. The reason is lack of water. It is an exceptionally dry country with 50% of the total population living within a 100 kilometre strip along the Kunene River on the border with Angola. That means that only 800 000 people are thinly spread over a vast area.

The abiding characteristic of Namibia is desert. The **Kalahari** semi-desert in the east is shared with South Africa and Botswana. It gradually becomes drier as one moves westwards until, along the coast, the Namib Desert is found. This is a true desert like the Sahara. Because of the relentless winds and rough surf along the coast, the sand dunes have piled up to 275 metres high, 75 metres higher than those in the Empty Quarter of Arabia, and considered the highest in the world. For no small reason is the coastline called The Skeleton Coast. Many are the shipwrecks, which have occurred along this coast beginning with that of Diogo Cão, the very first Portuguese to reach this coastline in 1485 who, after raising a Padrão at Cape Cross, paid with his life for having extended Europe's knowledge of Africa. The original of his cross may be seen in the Oceanographical Museum in Berlin.

For centuries South West Africa, as it was called until 1990, was the hideout for recluses and people on the run, particularly Bushmen and Hottentots who attempted to escape from contact with Whites in the Cape. Jonker Afrikaner, a Nama chief, established Windhoek in 1840 and named it after his birthplace in the Cape. The dominant tribe of Namibia is the Owambo living in the far north along the border with Angola. In the rest of the country are found the Damaras, living in the central area; the remnants of the Hereros, originally the master race of Namibia but who were chased to the verge of extinction after the Herero War of 1907; the Namas, a Khoikhoi/Hottentot group and the San/Bushmen.

In 1886 the wealthy German industrialist, Johan Keetman, provided funds for a mission station to serve the Nama Khoikhoi in the southern portion, of what was then, South West Africa. It was built on the banks of the Swartmoder (black mud) River, which is usually a dry watercourse, but occasionally short, violent floods occur when freak rainstorms deluge the watershed. The mission was named **Keetmanshoop** (the hope of Keetman) and in a region that was marked by local conflict, raids, rustling and bloody vendettas the small mission town managed to flourish. A substantial stone church built in 1895 dominates the town. Keetmanshoop retains much of its original German atmosphere. Many of the buildings were designed in the German colonial style with thick walls and ceilings to fend off the tremendous heat.

After the Germans annexed South West Africa in 1884 a garrison was stationed here, first in a small fort and later in a castle-like building which now houses a police station and government offices. The environment of Keetmanshoop is harsh to the eye and relentlessly hot, but provides excellent grazing for karakul sheep, and the production of karakul skins is the principle industry. In 1908 the railway from Lüderitz on the coast to Keetmanshoop was completed. The railway station was built by the Germans and still exists as a fine example of their colonial style of architecture.

To the right of the little town of Grünau, a short distance away, can be found the **Fish River Canyon**, second only to the Grand Canyon in Arizona in geological importance. Eroded over many millennia, the canyon is the second largest natural gorge in Africa with dimensions of 161 kilometres long, 549 metres deep and in some places 27 kilometres wide. It requires some feat of the imagination to contemplate the volumes of water during the fluvial age, which must have rushed down this valley to gouge out such a huge cut in the land. The temperature on the floor of the canyon in high summer can reach 50° Centigrade.

Because the river flows intermittently, there is always water in certain pools, except in very dry years. The pools contain small and largemouth yellowfish, sharp tooth catfish and are also frequented by the water monitor or leguan. Baboon, rock dassie, ground squirrel and klipspringer are often seen in the canyon, while the presence of leopard and mountain zebra is indicated by tracks left at waterholes.

The 80km Fish River Canyon trail is regarded by seasoned hikers as one of Southern Africa's major challenges. The trail leads from the northernmost viewpoint and ends at the Ai-Ais hot mineral springs, which is a Spa resort in its own right. The hike takes 5 days, and only upon proof of medical fitness, are hikers allowed to descend into the floor of the canyon.

A group known as the Basters (half breeds) originate from some 30 different European trek farmers who, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, found refuge in the wild country on the southern side of the Orange River. These men, an unruly lot, married Khoikhoi girls and their children stayed together, forming their own clan.

In 1868 about 90 Baster families moved northwards to a wooded area in the central part of South West Africa. At this place, known as Goregaruas (the place where the zebras drink) a mission station named Rehoboth had been established, but had been abandoned in 1864. The Basters had far better luck and the small village Rehoboth, flourished among the trees with a tall church watching over it. They consider themselves a semi-independent state within Namibia.

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Jonker Afrikaner, the Khoikhoi Chieftan renamed it Winterhoek after the farm in the Cape where he was born. The Germans arrived on 18 October 1890 and named it Windhoek (windy corner) when Major Kurt von Francois took possession of the area on behalf of the German government. He built Francois Fort with a commanding view and this romantic little stronghold is now a museum. In 1902 a narrow-gauge railway was built connecting Windhoek with Swakopmund on the coast.

The city lies in a glen formed by one of the upper headwaters of the Swakop River. The glen, in a setting of high, rocky hills, is well covered with grass and trees – mainly species of *Acacia*. Built on the undulating floor and sides of the glen, the city has a variety of levels with good viewing sites.

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**Sossusvlei** (sometimes written **Sossus Vlei**) is a salt and clay pan surrounded by high red dunes, located in the southern part of the Namib Desert, in the Namib-Naukluft National Park of Namibia. The name "Sossusvlei" is often used in an extended meaning to refer to the surrounding area (including other neighbouring *vleis* such as Dead Vlei and other high dunes), which is one of the major visitor attractions of Namibia.

The name "Sossusvlei" is of mixed origin, and roughly means "dead end marsh". "Vlei" is the Afrikaans word for "marsh", while "sossus" is Nama for "no return" or "dead end". Sossusvlei owes this name to the fact that it is an endorheic drainage basin (i.e., a drainage basin without outflows) for the ephemeral Tsauchab River.

The Sossusvlei area belongs to a wider region of southern Namib with homogeneous features (about 32.000 km<sup>2</sup>) extending between rivers Koichab and Kuiseb. This area is characterized by high sand dunes of vivid pink-to-orange color, a consequence of a high percentage of iron in the sand and consequent oxydation processes. The oldest dunes are those of a more intense reddish color. These dunes are among the highest in the world; many of them are above 200ms, the highest being the one nicknamed Big Daddy, about 380ms high.

The highest and more stable dunes are partially covered with a relatively rich vegetation, which is mainly watered by a number of underground and ephemeral rivers that seasonally flood the pans, creating marshes that are locally known as *vlei*; when dry, these pans look almost white in color, due to the high concentration of salt. Another relevant source of water for Sossusvlei is the humidity brought by the daily morning fogs that enter the desert from the Atlantic Ocean.

Fauna in the Sossusvlei area is relatively rich. It mostly comprises small animals that can survive with little water, including a number of arthropods, small reptiles and small mammals such as rodents or jackals); bigger animals include antelopes (mainly oryxes and springboks) and ostriches. During the flood season, several migrant bird species appear along the marshes and rivers. Much of the Sossusvlei and Namib fauna is endemic and highly adapted to the specific features of the Namib. Most notably, fog beetles such as the Namib Desert Beetle have developed a technique for collecting water from early morning fogs through the bumps in their back.

The best time to view Sossusvlei is close to sunrise and sunset; the colours are strong and constantly changing, allowing for wonderful photographic opportunities. The midday heat is intense and best spent in the shade while sunset also offers excellent photo opportunities at Sossusvlei.

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The **Etosha National Park**, consisting of 22 270 square kilometres of saline desert, savannah and woodlands, is one of the largest parks in Africa. Its definitive feature is the Etosha Pan, a vast, shallow depression of approximately 5 000 square kilometres. For the greater part of the year the pan is a place of mirages. Its dry, flat, salt encrusted surface shimmers in the heat with a strange effect of the wild animals seemingly floating in dream-like pools. Seeing vast herds of game against this eerie backdrop makes the Etosha game-viewing experience unique.

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Of the 114 mammal species found in the park, several are rare and endangered, such as black rhino and black-faced impala. Due to the timeous translocation of black rhino from Kaokoland to the safety of the park in the 1970s, Etosha's current population of approximately 300 animals represents one of the few growing populations in the world. Other large animals represented in the park are blue wildebeest, mountain and plains zebra, giraffe, hyena, lion, cheetah and leopard.

A unique characteristic of Etosha is the short tusks of the elephants. This is caused by some deficiency in the soil, which does not promote healthy growth of tusks. The beneficial effect is that elephants are not so heavily poached.

About 340 bird species occur in the park, of which approximately one third are migratory, including the European bee-eater and several species of waders. Etosha is one of the most important breeding grounds of Greater and Lesser flamingos in the Southern African region. During a good rainy season, millions of these birds congregate in the pan to breed. Ten of Etosha's 35 raptor species are migratory. Most commonly seen are Lappetfaced and Whitebacked vultures, and less frequently Cape, Egyptian, Palmnut and Hooded vultures. There are eight species of owls, including the Pearlspotted and Whitefaced, and four species of nightjars.

Etosha's vegetation varies from dwarf shrub savannah and grasslands, which occur around the pan, to thorn-bush and woodland savannah throughout the park. Eighty per cent of all Etosha's trees are the Mopane trees. For the greater part of the year, Etosha's animals are dependent on about 30 springs and waterholes.

The triangle of **Otavi, Tsumeb and Grootfontein**, is one of the most prosperous areas of Namibia, rich both in minerals and agriculture. Geologists will find it particularly fascinating with its interesting underground caverns, such as the Gaub caves, Aigamos caves and Uiseb caves as well as the famous Tsumeb mine. To the west, Hereroland and Bushmanland extend from the agricultural plains of the central plateau into the Kalahari Desert, adjacent to Botswana. Distinctly different in landscape and people from the Namib, these arid areas are sparsely populated and difficult to reach. They offer a fascinating wilderness experience for those who come well prepared.

Otavi founded by the Germans carries the name of the "Otavi Minen Und Eisenbahn Gesellschaft" which was the principal developer of the tin mines at Uis and the copper mine at Tsumeb before 1914. They also constructed the narrow gauge railway between Outji and Tsumeb. Quite a number of stations in Namibia have positioned old steam locos from German and South African times right next to the station buildings; for example Keetmanshoop and Outji.

Between Usakos and Swakopmund on a clear day – brooding on the horizon – can sometimes be seen the huge mountain of the Spitzkoppe (pointed head) which has an altitude 1 829ms (almost double the height of Table Mountain). Further to the North West in the Brandberg range extensive rock paintings are to be found, of which the most famous is the "White Lady".

While Etosha is the main attraction in the north of Namibia, the region south of it has much of interest. Large farms dominate these well-watered highlands, and many have forsaken cattle in favour of game, to become guest farms that welcome tourists. Omaruru is a green and picturesque town aside the (usually dry) river of the same name, in a gently hilly area, and in light of this many of the farms around it have successfully turned to tourism. The town's main attraction is Franke Tower: a monument to Captain Victor Franke who is said to have heroically relieved the garrison here, after the Herero besieged them in 1904. The achievement earned him Germany's highest military honour and this monument – built by grateful German settlers in 1908.

**Swakopmund** is a beautifully preserved typical Hansa town built by the Germans. Here the Baltic meets the desert. Established by the Germans in 1892 as an alternative port to the British-owned port of Walvis Bay, a jetty was built out to sea to allow the ships to transfer their goods. Planned to be 640 metres long, it had reached 262 metres when war broke out in 1914 and there it still stands. Although the sea is inviting to look at, the temperature of the Benguela current, racing up from Antarctica is approximately 13° Centigrade. Evaporation is virtually nil and so only 18 mm of rain per year falls, on average.

The original German railway station is particularly fine, built in 1901, but has now been turned into a hotel and casino. Often mistaken by visitors for a hotel is the Swakopmund Jail, which resembles a Bavarian villa with its ornamented exterior. To some extent the town is personified by the small but solid steam engine positioned on the left of the road when approaching the coastal town from the interior. Known as Martin Luther, the engine was an attempt to transport goods more efficiently than by customary ox wagon. The 'steam-ox' was imported from Germany in 1896, but unfortunately the project was doomed to failure as the steam tractor constantly became bogged down in the sand and required far too much water to operate.

**Thank you for travelling with us and we look forward to hosting you again in the not too distant future.**

## THE MAP



Updated 28 Feb 2011 – please check with Querida Venter for updates/itinerary changes  
querida@rovos.co.za or tel: +27 – 12 – 315 8039

## THE DISTANCE CHART

	<b>Capital Park Pretoria</b>	
7	Centurion	7
45	Germiston	52
20	Johannesburg	65
14	Roodepoort	79
13	Krugersdorp	92
107	Potchefstroom	199
47	Klerksdorp	246
64	Leeudoring	310
79	Bloemhof	389
53	Christiana	442
40	Warrenton	482
71	Kimberley	553
123	Oranjerivier	676
112	De Aar	788
417	Upington	1205
138	Nakop/Ariumsvlei	1343
173	Grunau	1516
63	Holoog	1579
132	Keetmanshoop	1711
401	Rehoboth	2112
97	Windhoek	2209
15	Otjihajavara	2224
180	Kranzberg	2404
204	Otjiwarongo	2608
191	Tsumeb	2799
369	Kranzberg	3168
161	<b>Swakopmund</b>	3329 kms

*The Most Luxurious Train in the World*



## **The Namibian Journey Swakopmund - Pretoria**

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Although the South African army occupied South West Africa in July 1915 and remained there until 1990, Windhoek still retains important evidence of the German connection. The Tintenpalast is still the main administrative building with the German Lutheran Church the finest in the city. Further evidence of German architecture can be seen in the surrounding hills where homesick Prussian aristocrats built three typical schlossen before 1914.

A group known as the Basters (half breeds) originate from some 30 different European trek farmers who, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, found refuge in the wild country on the southern side of the Orange River. These men, an unruly lot, married Khoikhoi girls and their children stayed together, forming their own clan.

In 1868 about 90 Baster families moved northwards to a wooded area in the central part of South West Africa. At this place, known as Goregaruas (the place where the zebras drink) a mission station named Rehoboth had been established, but had been abandoned in 1864. The Basters had far better luck and the small village Rehoboth, flourished among the trees with a tall church watching over it. They consider themselves a semi-independent state within Namibia.

To the right of the little town of Grünau, a short distance away, can be found the **Fish River Canyon**, second only to the Grand Canyon in Arizona in geological importance. Eroded over many millennia, the canyon is the second largest natural gorge in Africa with dimensions of 161 kilometres long, 549 metres deep and in some places 27 kilometres wide. It requires some feat of the imagination to contemplate the volumes of water during the fluvial age, which must have rushed down this valley to gouge out such a huge cut in the land. The temperature on the floor of the canyon in high summer can reach 50° Centigrade.

Because the river flows intermittently, there is always water in certain pools, except in very dry years. The pools contain small and largemouth yellowfish, sharp tooth catfish and are also frequented by the water monitor or leguan. Baboon, rock dassie, ground squirrel and klipspringer are often seen in the canyon, while the presence of leopard and mountain zebra is indicated by tracks left at waterholes.

The 80km Fish River Canyon trail is regarded by seasoned hikers as one of Southern Africa's major challenges. The trail leads from the northernmost viewpoint and ends at the Ai-Ais hot mineral springs, which is a Spa resort in its own right. The hike takes 5 days, and only upon proof of medical fitness, are hikers allowed to descend into the floor of the canyon.

In 1886 the wealthy German industrialist, Johan Keetman, provided funds for a mission station to serve the Nama Khoikhoi in the southern portion, of what was then, South West Africa. It was built on the banks of the Swartmoder (black mud) River, which is usually a dry watercourse, but occasionally short, violent floods occur when freak rainstorms deluge the watershed. The mission was named Keetmanshoop (the hope of Keetman) and in a region that was marked by local conflict, raids, rustling and bloody vendettas the small mission town managed to flourish. A substantial stone church built in 1895 dominates the town. Keetmanshoop retains much of its original German atmosphere. Many of the buildings were

designed in the German colonial style with thick walls and ceilings to fend off the tremendous heat.

After the Germans annexed South West Africa in 1884 a garrison was stationed here, first in a small fort and later in a castle-like building which now houses a police station and government offices. The environment of Keetmanshoop is harsh to the eye and relentlessly hot, but provides excellent grazing for karakul sheep, and the production of karakul skins is the principle industry. In 1908 the railway from Lüderitz on the coast to Keetmanshoop was completed. The railway station was built by the Germans and still exists as a fine example of their colonial style of architecture.

For centuries South West Africa, as it was called until 1990, was the hideout for recluses and people on the run, particularly Bushmen and Hottentots who attempted to escape from contact with Whites in the Cape. Jonker Afrikaner, a Nama chief, established Windhoek in 1840 and named it after his birthplace in the Cape. The dominant tribe of Namibia is the Owambo living in the far north along the border with Angola. In the rest of the country are found the Damaras, living in the central area; the remnants of the Hereros, originally the master race of Namibia but who were chased to the verge of extinction after the Herero War of 1907; the Namas, a Khoikhoi/Hottentot group and the San/Bushmen.

**Namibia**, with a population of about 1.6 million people is two-thirds the size of South Africa which has a population of 40 million. The reason is lack of water. It is an exceptionally dry country with 50% of the total population living within a 100 kilometre strip along the Kunene River on the border with Angola. That means that only 800 000 people are thinly spread over a vast area.

The abiding characteristic of Namibia is desert. The Kalahari semi-desert in the east is shared with South Africa and Botswana. It gradually becomes drier as one moves westwards until, along the coast, the Namib Desert is found. This is a true desert like the Sahara. Because of the relentless winds and rough surf along the coast, the sand dunes have piled up to 275 metres high, 75 metres higher than those in the Empty Quarter of Arabia, and considered the highest in the world. For no small reason is the coastline called The Skeleton Coast.

Many are the shipwrecks, which have occurred along this coast beginning with that of Diogo Cão, the very first Portuguese to reach this coastline in 1485 who, after raising a Padrão at Cape Cross, paid with his life for having extended Europe's knowledge of Africa. The original of his cross may be seen in the Oceanographical Museum in Berlin.

Lower down the Orange River about an hour's drive away, lies the Augrabies Falls, christened 'the place of great noise' by the original Khoikhoi residents. These falls drop 256 metres in three cascades revealing a sharp gash in the granite. At the base lies a deep, dark pool containing, it is believed, a fortune in diamonds washed down over the millennia. In common with the Zambezi River and Loch Ness, this pool is believed to be home to a giant water serpent - probably a fanciful account of shoals of giant barbel, which grow up to 2 metres in length. Only one person is known to have survived having fallen over the waterfall into the main pool. On 10 October 1981 a 20-year old lad, Hugo Truter slipped into the water and was carried over the falls – and lived to tell the tale!

Sir Thomas Upington, attorney general of the Cape, was the man principally responsible for liquidating the business activities of the Orange River pirates and capturing their leader, Klaas Lucas. When the desperadoes were finally chased away in 1884, the town was founded on the banks of the Orange River and named **Upington** in honour of Sir Thomas. The railway reaches the town by means of a bridge 1067 metres long, the second longest bridge in South Africa. Among the first pioneers were Oom Japie Lutz and the missionary Christiaan Schroder who, in 1890, erected a pump on the banks of the river and started a pontoon ferry. The town is the centre for considerable industry in the production of lucerne, sultanas, raisins, dried fruits, cotton, peas, karakul sheep, goats and cattle – as well as a thriving wine industry.

The small town of **De Aar**, the 'vein', takes its name from an underground watercourse. Among the town's prominent citizens was authoress Olive Schreiner, who lived here from 1907 to 1913. De Aar is a major railway junction and the lines from the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape, Gauteng and Namibia meet here. The crack trains, such as the Blue Train, Trans Karoo and the Orange Express used to stop here to change crews.

With 110 kilometres of railway tracks, the railway junction of De Aar is the second largest junction in South Africa. It is the switching point for the railway systems to Namibia and the northern, southern and eastern Cape lines.

Here, in the spring, every August/September, the veldt is covered from horizon to horizon with wild flowers, which bloom for only three weeks, spread their seed and die. Tourists come from all over the world to this wild part of the country to see, amongst others, the Namaqualand daisies. This vast dry land is geographically part of the Kalahari semi-desert, which extends from the Karoo dry lands of the Cape to northern Botswana and eastern Namibia. The occasional oasis, the Orange River and the Okavango Swamps, punctuates the dryness.

David Livingstone, the first serious observer to walk across the African continent from Luanda in the west to the mouth of the mighty Zambezi on the eastern seabed, was the first explorer to note this phenomenon. He drew an interesting cross-section of Africa in his first book 'Missionary Travels and Adventures in South-eastern Africa'.

Sheep farming has become the main economic activity of the area, often on large farms of many thousand of acres. The dryness of the land is deceptive as water is relatively plentiful deep underground. To bring water to the surface farmers use windmills and the turning sails and stark outlines of these structures have become synonymous with the Karoo skyline.

The vast herds of Springbok of 150 years ago have been replaced by sheep, one of the few animals able to survive on the low-lying scrub that is the common vegetation of the Karoo. Springbok *Antidorcas Marsupialis* once migrated across the Karoo in herds of up to 40 000, a sight viewed by David Livingstone. He wrote at the time: "It is probable that, notwithstanding the continual destruction by firearms, they will continue long to hold their place." How wrong he was. Today, it is rare to see a Springbok in the wild beyond the confines of a game farm or reserve.

Covering the south-western reaches of South Africa's interior plateau is the **Great Karoo**, a high (1 220m) and dry region that takes its name from a Khoi word meaning 'land of great thirst'. Scientists use the name Karoo to describe the geological base for the interior plateau covering two-thirds of southern Africa. Between 150 and 250 million years ago vast sediments were laid down in a series of three distinct layers. The Dwyka Series, a layer about 900 metres thick consisting of rocks encased in a matrix of mudstone and moraine and believed to be debris of a previous ice age. After its deposition came a period of climatic change when much of the earth was covered in forests, thick swamps, huge lakes and densely vegetated wetlands. From this steamy world of mud, jungles and water the Ecca Series, a 3 000 metre thick layer of shale and sandstone, was formed. Locked into rocks of this series is a wealth of fossils ranging from small reptiles to huge tree stumps, some still upright. Above this is the Beaufort Series, a layer of sedimentary deposition about 5 600 metres thick that created the face of the Karoo as we know it today. Over time igneous material from the centre of the earth forced its way through vertical and horizontal cracks in the Karoo's sedimentary depositions, forming dolerite dykes (vertical) and dolerite sills (horizontal). As the soft sedimentary rocks weathered away, the harder or more resistant dolerite dykes and sills remained forming the flat topped or 'table' mountains and bell-like buttes that characterise the Karoo.

Typically, volcanic activity goes hand in hand with the increasing weight of water in a lake or sea. The floor of the Karoo Sea sagged under the weight of the water, broke the earth's crust and allowed magma to well up from the depths, creating a volcanic pipe or 'throat'. This process is still continuing in central Africa where volcanic activity of the Ruwenzori Mountains in Uganda is a function of the weight of water in the Rift Valley lakes.

In Kimberley, the Pride of Africa enters one of the finest Victorian railway stations in Africa. A product of the railway heyday of the 1870's, the cast iron girders soar over the platforms and recall the intricate patterns of a bygone era. The wraiths of Rhodes, Barnato and Beit mingle on the platform as the train slowly pulls in.

**Kimberley** is one of South Africa's best-kept secrets. Somewhat off the beaten track, towards the arid northwest of the country, it does not receive the high volume of tourist traffic, which its history and commercial importance would presume. The story of Kimberley is the story of diamonds. The romantic associations of diamonds, De Beers, Cecil John Rhodes and the Cape-to-Cairo railway are all centred on Kimberley. Although diamonds had been discovered near Hopetown in 1867, it was the discovery of a diamond 'pipe' where the Big Hole now yawns, in 1871, which triggered the Diamond Rush. Kimberley's first name was 'New Rush' to distinguish it from the 'old' rush at Colesberg Kopje. The site of the Big Hole was, initially, a small hill, but that soon disappeared before the furious diggings of the diamond prospectors. The prospectors staked out their claims and began digging. Some excavated quicker than others, cloudbursts during the summer thunderstorms washed down detritus from the higher claims into the lower ones. Once the hole was deep enough, water pooled in the base and it became necessary to pump it out. In the midst of this competitive chaos, emerged two men, wildly different in background, education and temperament, but with a similar vision. Barney Barnato and Cecil John Rhodes stamped themselves forcefully upon early Kimberley. Barnato controlled the Kimberley Central Mine, whose diamond pipe lies immediately east of the railway station, and Rhodes controlled the De Beers Mine, where the Big Hole is found. Both agreed that the supply of diamonds to the world market had to be controlled through the formation of a monopoly or cartel, but which one would buy out the other? After intense negotiations, De Beers, with Rhodes as its Chairman, bought out Barnato's holdings in 1888 and promptly made Barnato a Life Governor of the new De Beers Consolidated Diamond Mines. The company, listed on the London and Johannesburg Stock Exchanges until September 2001, still dominates the world's supply of diamonds and the life of Kimberley.

Once De Beers took control of the diamond industry, Kimberley, from having been a thrusting town of young male prospectors, became a company town. It settled down to produce its own diamonds and later to sort and cut diamonds from all over the world. Today, the Harry Oppenheimer building is the throbbing nerve-centre of the diamond-sorting business.

With the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 and the consolidation of the diamond industry by Rhodes and De Beers in 1888, the tide of wealth ebbed from Kimberley never to return. It remains a charming town, preserved unchanged over the years owing to the presence of De Beers.

De Beers Consolidated Diamond Mines still has its headquarters in Stockdale Street and every year, from New York, Zurich, Hong Kong, Amsterdam and elsewhere, the directors and shareholders of the world's oldest monopoly gather here in a quasi-rural setting for the Annual General Meeting.

The Boers besieged Kimberley, with Rhodes in it, during the South African War (Anglo-Boer War – 1899-1902). The British army under Lord Methuen attempted to relieve the town but suffered two serious reverses at the battles of Modder River (28 November, 1899) and Magersfontein (11 December, 1899). The Black Watch suffered terribly, exposed to the intense heat and unable to advance or retreat under withering Boer Mauser fire. Finally they broke and fled. Kimberley was only relieved two months later after the great cavalry dash across the Karoo led by Sir John French and Col. Douglas Haig.

At the beginning of the siege, the artillery defence of Kimberley consisted only of seven pairs and 2.5 in RMLs. Nobody really knows who first mooted the idea of making a gun in Kimberley which could outrange the Boer artillery, but credit is usually given to George Labram, an American engineer in the town. He had come to South Africa in 1893 to erect a new crusher plant for one of the Kimberley mines, staying on to become Chief Engineer to De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd, the company owning all the Kimberley diamond mines and which was under the chairmanship of Cecil Rhodes. A good mechanical engineer with a fertile brain, Labram not only designed and made 'Long Cecil', for which he is perhaps best remembered, but during the first three weeks of the siege he designed and constructed a plant for the bulk refrigeration of perishable foodstuffs – essential with shade temperatures averaging about 31°C. He had also installed an emergency fresh-water supply system, which became the town's sole supply (apart from one or two wells) for the whole siege, and had given much practical assistance and advice to the Royal Engineers in laying out controlled minefields

around the town, and with the design and actual construction of the defences.

Then, as the garrison's artillery had expanded nearly a third of its ammunition by the end of November, Labram turned part of De Beers' workshops over to making shells, charges, and fuses for the 2.5-inch guns. Prior to all this he had perfected a method (still in use) for the extraction of diamonds from the crushed rock of the mines. His greatest triumph perhaps was turning the workshops into a gun factory as well, never before having had anything to do with gun making. This gun was designed and constructed by engineers who had no previous experience of ordnance manufacture, without special plant or arrangements, and on designs adapted from descriptions found in a stray copy of an engineering journal.

Its construction, from the day that designs were fashioned, took 24 days and on Friday, 19 January, 1900, the gun, nicknamed 'Long Cecil' in honour of Cecil Rhodes, was taken for testing and calibration to one of the three emplacements already prepared for it. Rhodes, who had taken a great interest in the gun and its manufacture, was present, along with a number of local dignitaries and senior officers of the garrison. He invited Lt-Col Chamier, as the senior Gunner, to fire the first round. The story goes that Chamier refused on the grounds that, as a member of the Royal Regiment, he was permitted to fire only such guns as had been officially approved by the War Office and that 'Long Cecil' definitely did not fall within this category! Rhodes, so the story continues, then told Chamier to remove himself to a safe distance and sent his pony and trap to fetch Mrs Pickering, wife of the Secretary to the De Beers Company. On her arrival, Rhodes handed her the end of the firing lanyard, inviting her to pull it. This she duly did, with some trepidation, and fired the first round from 'Long Cecil' – of this latter part of the story there is no doubt. The round landed and burst in the middle of a hitherto safe and quiet Boer laager at the Intermediate Pumping Station some 7 200 metres away, causing considerable alarm and dismay according to Boer letters written at the time, some of which were later intercepted by the British.

'Long Cecil' fired 225 shells against the Boers at an average range of 5 000 yards. Its activity forced the Boers to send for a 'Long Tom'. Ironically, Mr Labram was killed by one of the first shells that this 'Long Tom' fired into Kimberley. 'Long Cecil' can still be seen in Kimberley, where it stands in memory of those who defended the town during the siege. It was placed on the Honoured Dead Siege Memorial where it stands to this day. In the Museum of Artillery in the Rotunda at Woolwich there is a good scale model of the gun, made; it is believed, by Mr Harry Beer who was one of the artisans employed in making the original gun during the siege.

In terms of scale and size the Kimberley Mine Museum can lay claim to being one of the most impressive museums in South Africa. It encompasses the whole area of the Big Hole and utilises many of the original corrugated iron mine buildings used by the first miners. It tells the story of the diamond industry as no other. It should be remembered that before the discovery of diamonds in the Northern Cape in 1867, diamonds came, almost exclusively from India and Ceylon. Their source and origins were shrouded in mystery and legend being believed to be the congealed tears of a Hindu goddess. In that sense, the Kimberley Mine Museum is of world-historic importance because it shows how the diamond industry was transformed, mechanised and industrialised in the late 19th century. And together with diamonds went the men who found them, colourful, thrusting personalities who lived hard and played hard. The railway coach

commissioned for De Beers from the Pullman Company, Chicago, shows clearly the plush comfort and the well-stocked cellars with which the directors travelled.

The 'Big Hole' started off life as a small hill, was flattened, and is now an enormous hole from where millions of tons of diamondiferous 'blue-ground' Kimberlite ore has been removed. The diamonds were made about 53 million years ago, about 200 kilometres inside the earth, under conditions of unimaginable heat and pressure. Carbon was metamorphosed into diamond, the hardest substance known to Man. Literally, thousands of claims were pegged as would-be miners from all corners of the world sought to make their fortunes. Millions of tons of ore were removed as the diggers continued their search hundreds of metres below ground level.

Typically, volcanic activity goes hand in hand with the increasing weight of water in a lake or sea. The floor of the Karoo Sea sagged under the weight of the water, broke the earth's crust and allowed magma to well up from the depths, creating a volcanic pipe or 'throat'. This process is still continuing in central Africa where volcanic activity of the Ruwenzori Mountains in Uganda is a function of the weight of water in the Rift Valley lakes.

**Gauteng** (pronounced with a guttural G) is the smallest and richest of the nine regions formed in terms of South Africa's Interim Constitution of 27th April, 1994. The name is a Sotho tribal verbal corruption of the Afrikaans word 'goud' which means gold. The gold-bearing main reef was first struck by an itinerant prospector named George Harrison when he stumbled across an outcrop edging above the surface of the land. 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. The gigantic forces of nature were once again responsible for producing the gold metal so precious to the South African economy today. Volcanic rock formed by the embryo earth in its first incarnation was scoured and eroded away over hundreds of millions of years by large bodies of water. Gold was released from the reluctant grip of the igneous rock and it washed southwards to be held for an eternity in a series of fossilised beaches. A great and enormously violent upheaval, perhaps associated with the break-up of the continents, faulted this deeply sedimented beach upwards, allowing it to subside again southwards through an angle of 35 degrees. Eons later, Man arrived to burrow into one of Nature's greatest wonders – an almost inexhaustible supply of gold – a lustrous, highly valued commodity tightly held in vast quantities by the major nations of the world. From their infancy in the early days of 1886, the Witwatersrand gold fields – stretching along a gentle 120 kilometre curve from Benoni to Krugersdorp – 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 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 imposing 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, 4.7km 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. That is one of the ironies of the South African gold mining industry: opening a new mine, with all its high technology infrastructure and deep mining skills, costs billions of Rands, and yet relatively unskilled labour using specially developed, costly equipment is used to mine the ore. 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, Anglo Vaal, JCI and Gold Fields dominate the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and perforce, the South African economy. The harsh reality involved in squeezing gold from grudging ore is reflected in the lack of aesthetic presence in Johannesburg. In a city, which is barely over 100 years old, only four buildings predate 1900.

South Africa owes its state of development to gold. The 600 tons of precious metal 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.

**Johannesburg** is the largest city in sub-Saharan Africa. It is on the heights of the Witwatersrand, some 1828 metres above sea level, that the greatest goldfields in history were discovered before the turn of the century. 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. Until recently, the region was known as the PWV, meaning Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging.

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 Elandspoort, and on 16 November, 1855 the new town was named Pretoria in honour of his father.

**Pretoria** grew up around Church Square, originally the marketplace 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 cities edifices are 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 at 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 role 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.

**Thank you for travelling with us and we look forward to hosting you again in the not too distant future.**

**THE MAP**



Updated 28 Feb 2011 – please check with Querida Venter for updates/itinerary changes  
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## THE DISTANCE CHART

	<b>Swakopmund</b>	
161	Kranzberg	161
369	Tsumeb	530
191	Otjiwarongo	721
204	Kranzberg	925
180	Otjihavara	1105
15	Windhoek	1120
97	Rehoboth	1217
401	Keetmanshoop	1618
132	Holoog	1750
63	Grunau	1813
173	Nakop/Ariumsvlei	1986
138	Upington	2124
417	De Aar	2541
112	Oranjerivier	2653
123	Kimberley	2776
71	Warrenton	2847
40	Christiana	2887
53	Bloemhof	2940
79	Leeudoring	3019
64	Klerksdorp	3083
47	Potchefstroom	3130
107	Krugersdorp	3237
13	Roodepoort	3250
14	Johannesburg	3264
13	Germiston	3277
45	Centurion	3322
7	<b>Capital Park Pretoria</b>	3329 kms