



Shongololo Express

An African Odyssey



Shongololo Express at Muizenberg



On-board buffet



Lounge car

Imagine being able to link together the major sights of southern Africa in an itinerary that enabled you to stay in the same place each night, never having to unpack or repack. That is the basic concept of the Shongololo Express. Travelling on board your train through the night you wake up each morning in a new place with new things to explore. There is a feeling of excitement as you watch the minibuses being driven off their flatbed carriages attached to the train, before setting off on your day's excursion.

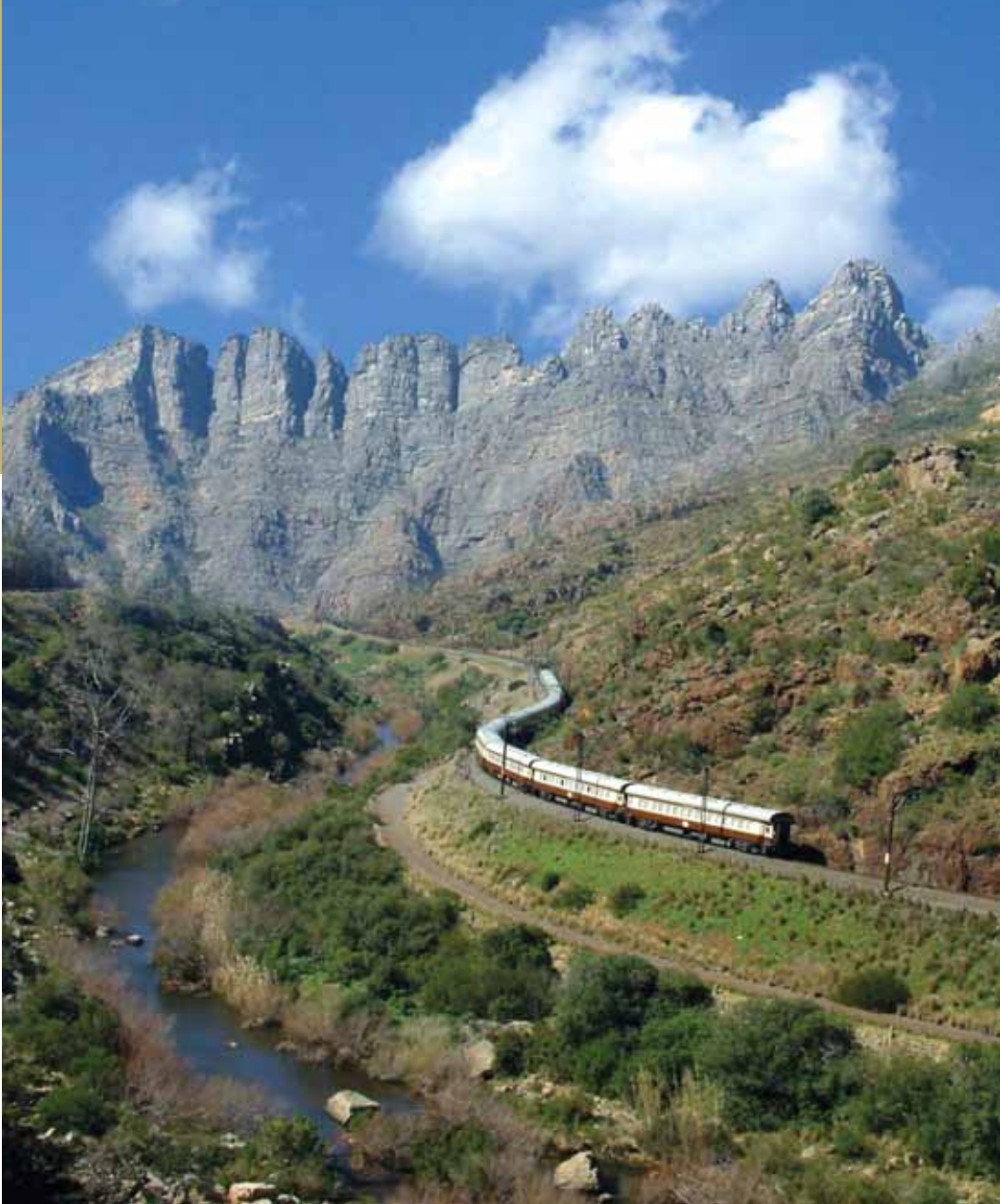
Accommodation on board is fairly simple - standard Ivory cabins are just less than two metres long and just over two metres wide, with a berth either side of a narrow aisle and a washbasin against the wall. Showers and toilets are at the end of each carriage and are shared. However, it is definitely a step up from the overnight sleeper trains found in much of the world: bedding and towels are provided and the cabins are serviced every day. In addition, the journeys are normally a lot of fun as you are with a group of like-minded people, and the lounge and bar carriages are lively places to be in the evening as everyone gathers to chat, talk about what they've seen and done, and to get to know each other better.

The core of the Shongololo schedule is three journeys, each lasting sixteen days, all of which either start or finish in South Africa. My personal favourite is the Dune Express: it is such a journey

of contrasts, from the developed, European city of Cape Town and the nearby Winelands, to the remote, undeveloped natural beauty of the Fish River Canyon and Sossusvlei in Namibia. However, the other journeys are equally rewarding- the Southern Cross, covering Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique, Swaziland, and South Africa, and the Good Hope, traversing South Africa and covering just about every sight of any significance.

For me, the major appeal of the Shongololo is the romance of rail travel - I am a sucker for the rhythm of the wheels clacking over the sleepers, and the chance to lie in my bed and watch the world go past through my window. For other people it is the sheer range of destinations compiled into one itinerary, without the need to change hotels or take any flights. Another big plus point is the value for money: the autumn departures of the Good Hope cost £1,390 per person for the journey, including five off-train excursions, airport transfers, breakfasts and dinners. Depending on the cost of international flights, it means a journey of over two weeks can end up costing around £2,000 per person, which is fantastically good value.

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Shongololo Express in a mountain pass



Itinerary outlines

These itineraries run to set schedules

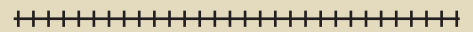
The Southern Cross Adventure



The journey crosses six southern African countries in sixteen days and offers experiences as diverse as the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, the game viewing in Chobe and Kruger National Parks, and the majestic splendour of the Victoria Falls.

Victoria Falls–Chobe National Park–Livingstone–Hwange National Park–Great Zimbabwe–Soutspansberg–Kruger National Park–Maputo–Swaziland–Johannesburg

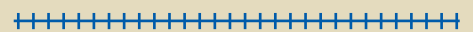
The Good Hope Adventure



This follows a classic South Africa itinerary, taking in the Cape Region, the Garden Route, KwaZulu-Natal, Swaziland and the Kruger. It really is hugely comprehensive, and covers most of the sights anyone would want to see in South Africa.

Cape Town–Wineland–Garden Route–Klein Karoo–Drakensberg–Durban–St Lucia–Hluhluwe Umfolozi Park–Swaziland–Kruger National Park–Johannesburg

The Dune Adventure



Explore the beautiful country of Namibia. As well as a land of amazing natural beauty, with the dramatic Fish River Canyon and the towering dunes of Sossusvlei, there is also abundant and remarkable wildlife in amazing settings, such as the seal colony at Cape Cross, or the rhinos and big cats on the shimmering salt flats in the Etosha National Park. Namibia contrasts with the verdant landscapes encountered near Cape Town.

Cape Town–Fish River Canyon–Sossusvlei–Walvis Bay–Cape Cross seal colony–Etosha National Park–Windhoek

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