

Culinary Rail Journey Through South Africa

All Aboard! Vintage Rails & Vineyards – Journey of Discovery from Pretoria, the Cape Wine Lands and thrilling Cape Town

New AFS small group South Africa June 25 - July 4, 2025

CHECK AVAILABILITY

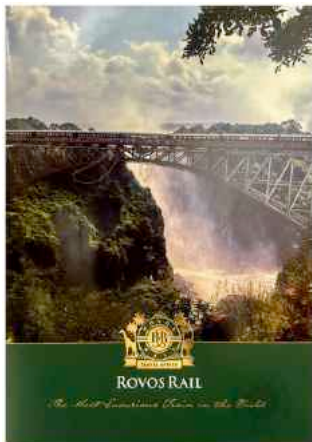


All aboard! Join us as we ride the rails in **5-star luxury experience** across South Africa for a journey that harkens back to the Golden Age of rail travel. I think it's one of our most unique AFS escapes ever. Our all-new African expedition is a next-level experience, traversing stunning wild landscapes while enjoying the romance of timeless elegance aboard a vintage train known for world-class culinary offerings. Old-world glamour meets curiosity as our route explores some of the lost iconic locations of South Africa's interior. Then it's on to the incomparable Cape Winelands to indulge ourselves further amid verdant vineyards where we taste exquisite wines and prized dishes.



This 8-day panoramic journey gives a perfect illustration of South Africa, “a world in one country.” From Pretoria, we travel through the grasslands of the rich Highveld to the haunting barrenness of the Great Karoo. Our route includes historic villages where time stands still, Hex River Valley and a visit to Matjiesfontein, an authentically preserved Victorian village founded in 1890. Another stop is Kimberley to visit the famous diamond mine museum and the world's largest man-made excavation, The Big Hole. We trundle on through spectacular mountain range ranges and tunnels to the scenic Winelands of the Cape, all in the spirit of a bygone era.

Come channel the Orient Express Africa style with our exclusive tribe of just 22 AFSers. You'll be



spoiled by your dedicated butler, who is available at all times with breakfast made to order. Lunch and dinners are 4-course meals with the finest wines. We start in Johannesburg for a rest, but our real journey begins in lovely Pretoria onboard **Rovos Rail, voted one of the most luxurious trains in the world!** Our journey's end is in glorious Cape Town, the “Mother City, cradled by breathtaking Table Mountain. And there's so much more fun to be had along the way!

Want the most unique way to explore the Winelands? Our AFS group will hop in sidecars and be chauffeured in vintage motorbikes through the famous vineyards of Stellenbosch and Franschhoek. We visit the talented “Pigcasso” – at an art farm sanctuary like no other, then on to Babylonstoren, the oldest Cape

Dutch farm, voted as among the top 10 gardens of the world.

The highlight is **Vergenoegd Wine Estate**, a haven to awaken your senses. It's my favorite place to stay in all of South Africa and I can't wait to return. This Dutch Homestead, dating back to 1773, has been producing the finest wines for over three centuries. You'll love this award-winning estate where history, heritage, and harmony converge, a beautiful property surrounded by the ocean, birdsong, and endless vineyards. The joy bomb here are the ducks. Each day, we can waddle along with their iconic Indian runner ducks, which play a vital role in pest control in their sustainable farming. Our first-class estate has 3 restaurants under the direction of renowned chef Bertus Basson, a luxury spa, elegant accommodations in Vineyard suites and of course, wine tastings.

We wrap it all up with an opportunity to visit Cheetah Outreach for an educational tour with rescued cheetahs. We end with time in the adventure capital of Cape Town with cable cars up famous Table Mountain, city tour, a unique Township dinner show you'll never forget and a gazillion options to play in this fabulous city

Air is easy from the USA. June is winter and the best time to explore these stunning regions for your perfect summer escape. Come along as we ride the rails to a South African Adventure and culinary experience like no other!



Having just returned from an extraordinary site inspection of our upcoming **August 2025 Culinary Rail Journey to Africa's Cape Winelands**, I'm still enchanted by the seamless blend of vintage luxury and modern adventure that awaits our guests. Stepping aboard the Rovos Rail was truly like entering a time capsule of elegance – the meticulously restored wood-paneled dining cars and observation decks set the stage for what would become an unforgettable journey through South Africa's most spectacular landscapes.

What struck me most during my inspection was the attention to detail in every experience we've curated. At Vergenoegd L w Wine Estate, I witnessed their famous Indian Runner ducks in action – a fascinating example of sustainable farming where these charming workers naturally protect the vineyards from pests. The estate itself, dating back to 1773, perfectly captures the heritage of Cape Dutch architecture while offering modern luxury in its boutique accommodations. But perhaps the most Instagram-worthy moment came during our vintage motorcycle sidecar adventure through Stellenbosch's stunning wine country. Suited up in retro leather jackets, goggles, and bandanas, we carved through mountain passes and vineyard-lined roads with two adorable canine companions joining our convoy. The experience culminated in Cape Town, where the majesty of Table Mountain meets the vibrant Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, and where our visit to the Cheetah Outreach program provided both education and incredible photo opportunities. This carefully crafted journey delivers the perfect balance of luxury rail travel, culinary excellence, and uniquely African adventures that will create memories to last a lifetime. - Suzy Davis

Step aboard into a world of timeless elegance. These snapshots I captured are just a glimpse of what awaits you on our extraordinary South African journey aboard the legendary Rovos Rail and more. From the gleaming wood-paneled corridors to the breathtaking landscapes that unfold outside your window, every moment promises

to be unforgettable.

A handful of fortunate travelers can still join us on this once-in-a-lifetime adventure. Imagine yourself here, sipping a perfectly crafted sundowner as the African sunset paints the sky in brilliant oranges and purples, or sharing stories with fellow passengers in the observation car as the countryside rolls by. Don't just dream about it – make it your reality. Reach out today to secure your place on this remarkable journey through one of the world's most captivating destinations.



- Cape Town
- Journey through the Cape Winelands
- Kimberley Diamond Mine Museum & Big Hole Tour
- Pretoria
- Traverse the Karoo
- Matjiesfontein visit



[CHECK AVAILABILITY](#)

CHECK AVAILABILITY

Our Glorious AFS Itinerary

[Tap for a printable PDF Itinerary](#)

June 25 – Fly USA overnight to Johannesburg.

Air is easy round trip to JNB. Details coming and trip tips. **You may have visited South Africa before, but not in such a Style!**

26 June – Welcome to South Africa, a world in one country!

Welcome to Jo-Burg! South Africa itself is one of the most culturally and geographically diverse places on earth; South Africa, fondly known by locals as the 'Rainbow Nation,' boasts 11 official languages, and its inhabitants are influenced by a fascinating mix of cultures.

We suggest staying at Sunrock Guest House – our tried and tested home from home little guesthouse where you will be welcomed like family. Those electing to stay at other places need to stay within 8 km proximity of the airport and advise their hotel location so we can arrange collection on Day 1 of the trip. Should the Sunrock be full, don't fret, there are hundreds of places to stay in and around the Jo'burg airport. Simple Google JNB HOTELS FREE SHUTTLE. Please note pick up times will be from 7am onwards.

Overnight: [Sunrock Guesthouse](#) (1 night)



Sunrock Guesthouse is a charming and welcoming accommodation located in Kempton Park, South Africa, just a short drive from Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport. The guesthouse offers comfortable rooms, a lush garden, and a sparkling swimming pool for guests to enjoy. With a warm and friendly atmosphere, Sunrock Guesthouse provides a convenient and relaxing stay for travelers passing through or exploring the vibrant city of Johannesburg. The guesthouse also offers airport shuttle services, making it a convenient choice for those in need of a place to stay near the airport.

27 June - All Aboard! Rovos Rail!

B L D

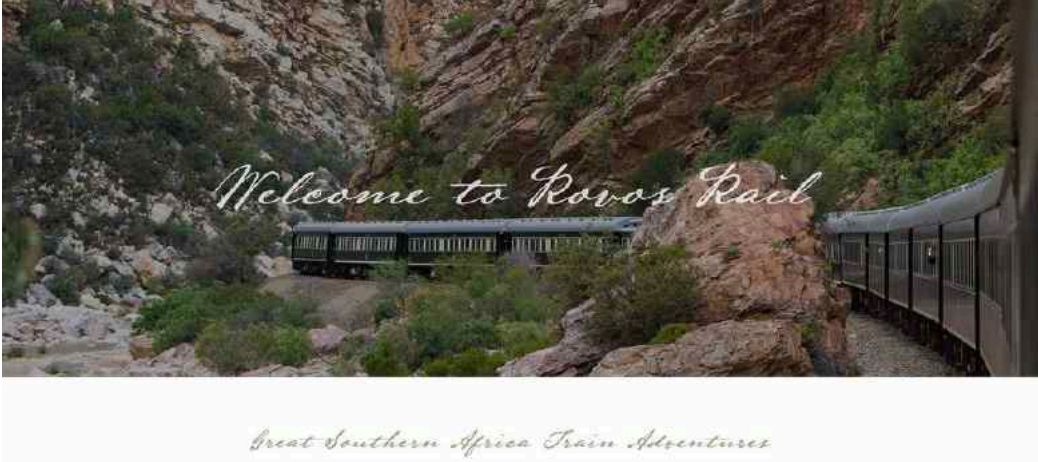
LAND BEGINS - This morning, we'll take about an hour drive north to Pretoria's Rovos Rail Capitol Park Station where the magnificent and completely refurbished **Rovos Rail** awaits. We'll arrive early to enjoy the onsite museum before we settle in for three days on one of the most luxurious trains in the world. Our iron horse chariot pulls out around 10am. We head out through the goldfields of the Witwatersrand and the broad grassland plains of the Highveld. We may want to freshen up in our suite before joining fellow travelers in the lounge and observation cars to enjoy the stunning scenery. Only 36 suites onboard and it is a privilege to have one! The staff encourages a digital detox to connect with your fellow guests. Explore the vintage wood-paneled dining cars, lounge cars, observation car and gift shop.

Lunch will be served at 1pm in the dining cars, then we spend the afternoon watching the ever-changing landscapes of South Africa's interior pass us by. Today is a day of enjoying the luxury of our train and the amazing terrain. At 4:30, we'll be served High Tea.

Dinner is **a formal affair** (dressy attire, more details later) as we continue our way to Klerksdorp.

Overnight: Aboard [Rovos Rail](#) – (2 nights)

Overnight: Aboard [Rovos Rail](#) (5 nights)



Rovos Rail is a luxury train service in South Africa that offers travelers a unique and extravagant way to explore the country. The train is known for its opulent carriages, attentive staff, and gourmet cuisine, providing guests with a truly unforgettable experience. With its old-world charm and modern amenities, Rovos Rail is the perfect way to travel in style and comfort while experiencing the wonders of South Africa. Whether you're a seasoned traveler or a first-time visitor, a journey on Rovos Rail is sure to leave you with memories that will last a lifetime.

28 June - Kimberley and Diamonds **BLD**

Breakfast is aboard our train while we travel to Kimberly. Kimberley is well known for the discovery of diamonds that led to its establishment in 1871. After lunch we visit the The Big Hole , an awe-inspiring man-made crater, measuring over a quarter mile across and almost 800 feet deep. It was once the largest hand-dug excavation in the world, yielding an estimated 2,722 tons of diamonds between 1866 and 1914. The amazing Mine museum offers a trip back in time to when diamonds were first found in South Africa in 1866, near Hopetown in the Northern Cape. Three years later the 83-carat 'Star of South Africa' was discovered in the same area, unleashing a frenzied diamond rush seldom seen before or since. We'll reboard the train in the afternoon before formal dinner is served in the dining cars as we make our way to Matjiesfontein.



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The Big Hole is an awe-inspiring man-made. We'll be back aboard the train for lunch before next visiting the Kimberley Mine Overnight: Aboard Rovos Rail)

29 June – Matjiesfontein BLD

As we enjoy breakfast, our train will be traveling through the Karoo, a vast semi-desert region that was once an enormous inland sea. Over millions of years, volcanic matter was ground down and deposited as silt upon the seabed to form what geologists call the Karoo system.

After lunch, we'll have the chance to disembark the train at Whitehill Siding and walk into the historic Victorian village of Matjiesfontein. The railway line and station building run parallel to the main street, along which stands an assortment of highly ornate buildings unified by a common wall inset with cast-iron railings and lit at intervals by typical London cast-iron streetlamps. There's a museum on the platform and a collection of historic cars and railway carriages to the right of the Lord Milner Hotel.

We'll enjoy teatime as we continue our journey. About an hour after Matjiesfontein, we'll travel through the first of a series of four tunnels, so be prepared to turn on lights if needed. The first tunnel is more than 8 miles long, so be careful when walking on the train. Dinner this evening is again formal and is served as the train climbs 750m down the escarpment towards Worcester.

Overnight: Aboard Rovos Rail



30 June – Cape Town city tour to the Cape Winelands B D

Welcome to Cape Town. We'll pull into the city in the morning and be whisked to the top of Table Mountain via cable car. Towering a half mile above the city, the 360-degree views are spectacular. We can take our time and enjoy this unique environment, go for a walk or have a bite to eat at the restaurant with arguably one of the best views possible.



We'll then be taken on a Cape Town city orientation tour to see what this beautiful city has to offer, including its stunning viewpoints, beaches, Cape Malay culture, and markets. In the afternoon, we take the short drive to the incomparable **Vergenoegd Löw Boutique Hotel & Spa on Vergenoegd Löw Wine Estate**. We'll be greeted with a tapas-style menu and wine tasting.

The hotel features bespoke rooms, suites and cottages nestled in vineyards and gardens. Our evening is free to take advantage of treatments in the luxury spa, including massages and facials, or work up a sweat in the adjacent gym or yoga room. There are two on-site restaurants by renowned chef Bertus Basson.

Overnight: [Vergenoegd Löw Boutique Hotel & Spa](#) (3 nights) [View iBrochure](#)





Vergenoegd Löw Boutique Hotel & Spa is a luxurious retreat nestled in the heart of the Cape Winelands in South Africa. The hotel offers elegant and spacious accommodation, with each room meticulously designed to provide a tranquil and relaxing atmosphere. Guests can indulge in a range of spa treatments, gourmet dining experiences, and wine tastings at the nearby vineyards. With stunning views of the surrounding mountains and vineyards, Vergenoegd Löw Boutique Hotel & Spa is the perfect destination for a getaway and a rejuvenating escape.



1 July Ducks, Motorbikes, Pigasso - Cape Winelands B L D



It's time to enjoy Wine Country. Resting at the feet of the Boland Mountains in South Africa's **Western Cape Province**, the Cape Winelands area is renowned for producing some of the world's finest wines. And we'll get to, but the day starts with ducks. Each morning, Vergenoegd releases its famous working flock of hundreds of Indian Runner ducks, which happily forage in the vineyards. They naturally clear the vines of snails and pests.

Change of date below - Then, some large fun - Our very own fleet of chauffeured vintage motorbikes with sidecars will transport us through the Winelands of the legendary Stellenbosch. To make this extra special, we'll all be suited up in our very cool, retro leather jackets, goggles, helmets, and complimentary bandana. There are so many popping Instagram moments on this trip for you!



Our destination is the famous **Babylonstoren farm**, one of the oldest Cape Dutch farms in the region and home to one of the top 10 gardens in the world. Set at the foot of Simonsberg in the Franschhoek wine valley, this award-winning farm is famous for its fruit and vegetable garden of beauty and diversity, fine food and wine, and evokes a sense of well-being.



After visiting the garden, we will stop to sample wines in their tasting room and enjoy a delicious platter that compliments the experience.

Next, we head to the beautiful town of **Franschhoek** to visit **Pigcasso**, the famous hog artist, at Farm Sanctuary SA. This talented trotter has amazed audiences with her unique painting skills, and visitors can view her art at the onsite OINK Gallery. The farm also hosts many other animals, such as cows with 'Balloo,' the farm's other favorite residents. Visitors are also encouraged to try Pigcasso's wines, which include the signature Pigcasso Black (Pinot Noir), Pigcasso White (Sauvignon Blanc), Pigcasso Red (Blend) and Rose.



We will have time to wander through the charming town of Franschhoek, with its wine train and wonderful collection of shops, before we travel back to Vergenoegd.

Tonight, we are invited to indulge in an exclusive experience in the Hearth Room within the historic Homestead. The menu is served in a hearty "modern-meets-farm" family-sharing style. The inspiration for Drikus Brink is a modern **South African Farm Kitchen** combining authentic, family recipes with seasonal, fresh, creative, indigenous produce. The ambiance of the manor house is relaxed and informally elegant, with excellent service and a superb wine selection.

Overnight: Vergenoegd Löw Boutique Hotel & Spa

2 July Free to Play - Cape Winelands or Zip-lining **B D**



Today is a full day of leisure, either relaxing and enjoying Vergenoegd or getting out and exploring. We have a couple of options and we will get a headcount later. Here are our two offerings:

Option 1: Cape Peninsula Full Day Tour

For those who have not been to Cape Town before, you may want to take this full-day Cape Peninsula tour. You travel to the Cape of Good Hope and see the penguins at Boulders along the way. You will experience some of the most spectacular views in the world. The tour begins with a scenic drive along the Atlantic coast, passing through the fishing village of Hout Bay. Here you will have the option of taking a short boat trip to Duiker Island to view the Cape Fur seals. Then head along Chapman's Peak Drive on to Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve. From there, we travel to False Bay and return to Cape



Town by way of the Simon's Town naval base, where we visit the Penguin colony at Boulders Beach. Travel via Fish Hoek fishing village and Muizenberg to Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens for an optional short walking tour of these beautiful gardens. Return to Cape Town in the late afternoon.



Option 2: Cape Canopy Tours

For the more adventurous, enjoy the Cape Canopy ziplining adventure through the mountains Cape Canopy Tour in the Elgin Valley is located in a World Heritage Site within **Cape Nature's Hottentots Holland Nature Reserve**. It is a system of cables and platforms with breathtaking views that allows guests to explore their limits in a previously inaccessible ecosystem. This bucket list adventure activity consists of an exhilarating 4x4 journey through the nature



reserve, then soar through the air on eleven thrilling slides, some over 300m long. Each zipline ends on a platform constructed on the cliffs and fynbos-covered mountain slopes above the Riviersonderend Gorge. A unique suspension bridge constructed between a narrow sandstone ravine above a spectacular double waterfall is guaranteed to be one of the unforgettable highlights of the tour. This is for small exclusive groups of 8 or 9 people with trained guides. Duration 4-5 hours. Past groups loved it.

Evening - All excursions will return in time for our unforgettable Farewell Dinner. Tonight, we will experience dinner in true African style with authentic African cooking done in Mama's style, with African music and dance at famous **Mzansi's**. Look forward to a complete township restaurant experience with live music and delicious food featuring traditional Xhosa meals. The restaurant is located in the oldest Township in Cape Town. It aims to introduce traditional foods to tourists served in a traditional African environment. Enjoy live music, delicious food, and a braai/barbecue of the most unique cuisines.

Overnight: Vergenoegd Löw Boutique Hotel & Spa



3 July - Cheetahs and Cape Town, Playground of SA B



This morning you will visit the **Cheetah Outreach** program. Their mission is to provide education and awareness about cheetahs and their



conservation needs. They offer a great educational tour and also feature a sanctuary that provides a safe space

for rescued cheetahs to live and be monitored. From a global estimated 100,000 cheetahs at the turn of the 20th century the population is currently estimated to be 6674. You will get great photos here. Spend some time with their other ambassadors – the caracul, bat eared fox, jackal and serval whilst learning about the cheetah.

Sidecar adventure – your paparazzi moment awaits as everyone will be taking photos of you on our exclusive AFS sidecar adventure! We moved it from Stellenbosch now from Cape Town. Enjoy a chauffeured vintage motorcycle ride between mountains and sea - Clifton Bay, Camps Bay, Hout Bay, Chapmans Peak, to farm village in Noordhoek. Owner Tim brings his canine friends Brody and Theo to join us. The 3-hour tour is an unforgettable experience.

Thereafter, you will be transferred to the V&A Waterfront for an afternoon at leisure. Our hotel is a five minute walk to the famous waterfront with over 200 restaurants, food halls, craft markets, mall and more. Spend the day exploring the many shops, markets and things on offer. The waterfront is always busy, vibey and fun with a mix of people and cultures from all around the world. One of Cape Town's premier tourist attractions, this is a must see before heading home.

Victoria and Albert Waterfront is a vibrant area of many shops, markets, and so many sights! One of Cape Town's premier tourist attractions, the waterfront is always busy and fun with a mix of people and cultures from all around the world.



The V&A Waterfront was originally a harbor before being transformed into a world-class destination. With roots dating back to 1860, it seamlessly blends historical landmarks with modern attractions. Visitors can explore its diverse offerings including delectable dining, captivating museums, and thrilling boat rides, including tours to the infamous Robben Island. Be sure to take the new "Ride the Duck Tour" through the waters of the V&NA waterfront.



Our hotel is the Commodore, overlooking the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront with views of Table Mountain, Robben Island, the Harbor and the Atlantic Ocean. There is a myriad of restaurants on our doorstep to choose from for dinner.

Overnight: [Commodore Hotel](#) (1 Night) [View iBrochure](#)



The Commodore Hotel, located next to the V&A Waterfront and a short walk from Cape Town Stadium, offers stunning views of Table Bay and Table Mountain. Its nautically themed rooms feature free Wi-Fi, satellite TV, and private bathrooms. Guests can unwind in the outdoor pool, sauna, and fitness center or book a massage. The partly shaded terrace is a perfect spot to relax

with a drink or snack. The Clipper Restaurant serves a breakfast buffet and à la carte menu with seafood and regional wines, and the Admiralty Bar and Lounge offers 24-hour cocktails.

4 July - Back to the US

After breakfast, it's time to say goodbye to Cape Town and South Africa. We'll transfer to the airport for our flights back to US (Johannesburg is such an easy gateway to extend your trip onwards to anywhere else in Africa if you like on your own.)



[CHECK AVAILABILITY](#)

Land Price \$4795 pp twin share. (Based upon 20 participants. Small group cost under 20 add \$150.)

(A single room costs \$2000 extra due to the train. Very limited).

Includes:

- Road transfer to Rovos Rail
- 3 nights Rovos Rail including all meals, drinks and activities
- Half day Cape Town city tour with Table Mountain cableway
- 3 nights Vergenoegd Wine Estate in Vineyard Cottages including breakfast and dinner
- Full day exploring the winelands including Cape Sidecars adventure, Babylonstoren garden tour with wine tasting and lunch, visit to Piccasso art
- Visit to Cheetah Outreach program
- All transfers
- 1 night Commodore Hotel in the V&A Waterfront, including breakfast

Deposit \$500 Rovos terms requires \$1000 by Dec 15. Final payment April 20.



Includes:

- Road transfer to Rovos Rail
- 3 nights Rovos Rail, including all meals, drinks and activities
- Half-day Cape Town city tour with Table Mountain cableway
- 3 nights at Vergenoegd Wine Estate in Vineyard Cottages, including breakfast and dinner
- Full day exploring the Winelands including Cape Sidecars adventure, Babylonstoren garden tour with wine tasting and lunch, visit to Piccasso art
- All transfers
- 1 night Commodore Hotel in the V&A Waterfront, including breakfast

Not included: Gratuities on Rovo's rail on your own. \$95 for Winelands & Cape Town tours will be added to your invoice for ease of

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Have you read the Trip Tips yet? See the next tab at the top of this page.

Itineraries are prepared up to a year ahead, and things can change. Modifications may be made.