

Surrender to the Luxury of Slow... for time is the greatest luxury



ALL CHANGE – REINVENTING THE BLUE TRAIN

In 2018 Thomas the Tank Engine, the little blue steam engine who always strived to be useful on the island of Sodor underwent a major overhaul after 70+ years to embrace the modern world, global trends and a new and inclusive way of thinking. Keeping up with the times means even the best of the best need to constantly strive to evolve, stay ahead and make changes to remain relevant and offer the best possible experience.

With this in mind, at roughly the same age as Thomas, and despite being recently voted Africa's Leading Luxury Train at the 2019 World Travel Awards, 2019 will see South Africa's iconic **Blue Train** reinventing itself too! Not only has its second train set been given a makeover and extension – but its classic cross-country journey is changing to a slower, more relaxing experience in January 2019. Guests will get an additional 10 hours, meaning two nights' sleep onboard instead of just one, to better enjoy the scenery and luxury rail experience.

Train Set 1 was always a much shorter train with no Observation Car, but it has now been extended to 15 carriages with the addition of a beautiful observation car at the end for maximum enjoyment of the passing scenery. The Observation Car has been tastefully designed by Wilson & Associates, featuring mute gold tones, rich blue hues and African prints which complement the polished, birch solid-wood panelling. Wide double-glazed window panels offer panoramic views of the landscape with two plush wingback chairs enjoying pride of place at the tail end of the train. The central area of the car is lined with comfortable chaise lounges, intimate table seating and leatherback chairs coupled with solid wood tea tables - the perfect spot to while away the hours, enjoy a sundowner and meet other travellers. The new Observation Car can also be converted for meetings and intimate events when the train is chartered. The set will soon also be able to accommodate 70 guests rather than the previous 54 when two new sleeping coaches are added.

Speaking on this new addition, Vincent Monyake, Executive Manager of The Blue Train said, *"Our guests and clients spoke, and we listened. We are pleased that our second train set is updated and guests on either train will have The Blue Train's quintessential viewing experience, complete with the wide-angle viewing at the end of the train. Travelling through South Africa's sweeping landscapes takes a different form with the majestic view from the Observation Car."*

LINGER LONGER... THE LUXURY OF SLOW TRAVEL



Another major change coming into effect in January 2019 is that its classic Pretoria to Cape Town (or vice-versa) experience will be extending from a 1-night to a 2-night journey which will reap many rewards. Guests will be able to begin their journey on the same day as their flight lands in SA, since the train will depart in the evening at 18h30 from Pretoria, and in the late afternoon from Cape Town at 16h00 - so they no longer HAVE to book a hotel the night before - and there will be no more early morning wake-up calls to make their way through the traffic for the previous station check-in time of 07h30. Delays will also be unlikely going forward as the trains will depart and arrive during off-peak hours so that no clashes occur with other commuter or freight trains. Guests can also book flights or make other forward arrangements after the train journey in either Pretoria or Cape Town, as both trains arrive at 10h30. Furthermore, guests can enjoy day tours in either Pretoria or Cape Town before departure. Another plus is that both northbound and southbound departures will have a guaranteed extended 2.5 hour off-the-train excursion in Kimberley at the famous diamond mine's "big hole" and museum giving them more time to linger - which is always more popular than the previous Matjiesfontein excursion on northbound departures.

GREAT RATE...

Great news for travellers is that despite getting to enjoy an extra 10 hours of fully-inclusive wining, dining and pure pampering, the rate will only increase by around £115 per person i.e. from R16 430 pp (about £953) to R18 405pp (about £1,067) - and because it is 2 nights on-board, it saves the cost of that extra hotel night.

Please visit www.bluetrain.co.za or email info@ethosmarketing.co.uk for further information. Images can be accessed in this **DropBox**. Please feel free to contact Claire Roadley, PR Manager, should you need any further assistance on claire@ethosmarketing.co.uk or call +44 (0)1403 243619. Ethos Marketing - proudly representing The Blue Train for over 20 years...

