

THE BLUE TRAIN: MAGNIFICENT MOVING FIVE-STAR HOTEL



South Africa can offer a wonderful countryside. Visitors who like luxury can experience it from board of the Blue Train. This train dates back to the days of Union Limited and Union Express trains of 1923, commuting the passengers from Johannesburg to Cape Town. It was even used by number of presidents.

Blue Train was renovated and re-launched in 1997 as a "magnificent moving five-star hotel". The train offers both scheduled and chartered routes. The scheduled route goes from Pretoria to Cape Town and then back to Pretoria. There are two Blue Train sets. The first train accommodates 82 guests in 41 suites. The second accommodates 74 guests in 37 suites and features a conference or observation car at the back of the train. The usual speed is 90 kilometers per hour. Both trains are 336 meters long and consist of 18 carriages, 11 of which are for the use of the guests.

Passengers can enjoy the luxury of this "moving five-star hotel" in its fully equipped suites. Each suite has its own bathroom with either a shower or bath. The beds were custom-designed for the train. A butler pulls them out and creates more room. The luxury suites are equipped with hi-fi, audio CD and VHS video systems. Passengers can enjoy a driver"s-eye-view of the scenery ahead on a TV because there is a camera mounted on the front of both trains. There is also a cellular communication telephone in each suite. All the public cars are fitted with gas-filled air-conditioning systems. The suits have individual temperature controls which range from 18 to 24°C. These trains are not only comfortable, they are also safe. After every trip the trains are thoroughly serviced at the Pretoria depot. During the journey there are always two qualified technicians on board. In case of emergency, passengers can use the services of first-aid worker who is also on board .There are also doctors on standby en route.

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