

# Luxury Items – Africa

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As contradictory as it might sound at first, some regions of Africa offer items not available for the purses of average travelers. As Tom Burgis puts it in his book the Looting Machine, it is the paradox of “the continent that is at once the world’s poorest and, arguably, it’s richest”. Africa’s narrative tends to be shaped by post-colonialism and poverty but the continent is so much more than that.

## 1. Rovos Rail, the most luxurious train in the world

Rovos Rail, the South African family owned railway company was founded in 1989 and is operating out of Capital Park station, Pretoria. This combination of a luxury Victorian-style hotel and a train is also labeled as the „Pride of Africa” which can take its extraordinary passengers from the Cape of Good Hope through Mpumalanga National Park all the way to the Victoria Falls. The trains carry a maximum of 72 passengers in 36 superbly appointed suites. The Royal Suites for instance take up half a carriage, measuring 16 sq meters in size with a lounge area, bedroom and an own bathroom. A 15-day train journey that

travels through South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania on board of a Royal Suit costs \$ 21.550 (HUF 5.451.000). Please note that dress code is to be taken seriously on Rovos Rail – for gentlemen a jacket and tie is a minimum requirement while for ladies they suggest cocktail/evening dresses or suits.





## 2. Horizon, the South African buffalo bull

Horizon, Africa's biggest-horned and disease-free buffalo is valued as the world's most expensive bull, worth a stunning \$ 12.1 million. Even his heirs are to remain valuable due to the impeccable genes of their father. It comes as no surprise that every farmer wants a piece of the golden genes of Horizon. Just to mention an example, a normal pregnant buffalo would cost \$ 53,000, whereas a lady bull carrying Horizon's offspring is worth a price of \$ 169,000, thus tripling the original price. The giant horn span of this majestic animal is said to be the largest in history; 142 centimeters compared to an average of 91-101. Horizon is shared by four South African businessmen, each holding a 25% stake in the animal.

## 3. Most Expensive House: Casablanca, Camps Bay, Western Cape



South Africa's most expensive house, the Casablanca mansion is a contemporary version of a neoclassical home "built to the highest standards and designed for opulent living on a lavish scale", according to the Sotheby's International Realty website. With a garage that can park 14 cars, 8 bedrooms, 13 bathrooms and reception rooms that can accommodate 1,000 guests, wine cellar & whiskey bar, it's considered the most expensive piece of real estate in the country, with a value of R440 million (\$ 37 million). If this wouldn't be enough, there is an uninterrupted sea view from every room of the house.



## 4. Luanda – Angola’s capital, most expensive city for expats



When talking about luxury, it comes as an interesting fact that Luanda ranked first in the list of the most expensive cities in the world in 2017, leaving behind the champion of 2016, Hong Kong. Even though the average wage in Angola is just \$ 2/day, the costs of living in Luanda for expats are quite high. There is a visible contrast between the poor neighborhoods and the rich area of Luanda where rent can cost between \$ 7.000 to \$ 16.000/month. Living costs are around \$ 3.259, slightly higher than New York and San Francisco.

“In the past decade, tens of thousands of American and European employees of international oil conglomerates have descended on Luanda. The country now produces 1.8 million barrels of oil a day; in Africa, only Nigeria produces and exports more. The boom has transformed a failed state into one of the world’s fastest-growing economies. In other words: Luanda may not be the most expensive city in the world for the local population, but thanks to a booming oil economy, a limited supply of luxurious housing, and a high demand for it among expats, the cost of living there is higher than any city in the world.”

## 5. Vanleles Diamonds

Diamonds in Africa were long associated with bad practices, war zones and exploitation. A positive development is when we hear of a local designer who markets gemstones from ethical sources. This is the case of Vania Leles, born and raised in Guinea-Bissau who opened her London-based jewellery shop in 2011. Vania, a jeweler and a devoted humanitarian of African/Portuguese heritage uses rare and unique stones and specifically, the highest quality conflict-free diamonds when designing. “Having witnessed first-hand the harsh illegal diamond trade in Africa, Vania remains personally involved in sourcing all diamonds and gemstones.” – states the website of Vanleles Diamonds. Prices of the items differ between \$ 2000 and \$ 180.000.

