



# All aboard for Africa's COOLEST CARNIVAL

*Vic Falls  
Carnival*

Urban legend has it that as the clock struck midnight on 31 December 1855 a Scottish missionary and explorer named David Livingstone raised his glass to toast Queen Victoria at the turn of the New Year.

Dr Livingstone was in what was then Matabeleland (now Zimbabwe) busy discovering and naming the Victoria Falls, which he described as “scenes so lovely they must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight”.

Today, 160 years on, the spirit of New Year’s Eve – or Hogmanay, as they call it in Livingstone’s native Scotland – endures in the form of the Victoria Falls Carnival.

The carnival has been running since 2009. It was originally known as Falls Fest until Sean Young and



Festival fun  
In Victoria Falls

Blessing Munyenyiwa took over in 2012 and renamed it the Vic Falls Carnival: a music festival showcasing artists from across southern Africa and catering to a whole range of music tastes, groups and ages.

The event took place on 29, 30 and 31 December, starting with a party on board a vintage steam train from Victoria Falls station. As the train made its way through Victoria Falls National Park, the carriages became a dance floor as party-goers tested the train’s suspension.

### Talented DJs

In previous years, talented DJs like South Africa’s DJ Francis spun the tunes and kept the party chugging along. On the way, the train halted at a ‘secret’ bush location and attendees were plunged into a dance party under the African sky. In 2015, for the first time, organisers ran extra trips with two trains to and from the ‘secret’ venue to allow more party-goers join in the fun.

On 30 December, a little heavy-headed from the train party but very much in the celebratory groove, festival-goers used their free time

to enjoy the adventure capital of Africa and support local businesses. The town lights up with local events hosted by lodges, hostels and bars. Activities included everything from white-water rafting to canoeing on the Upper Zambezi, bungee jumping, zip lining through the air and swimming in the Devil’s Pool, a natural rock pool at the top of Victoria Falls where, in certain months of the year, visitors can swim right to the edge of the waterfall – a plunge of more than 100 metres. Around town in that evening, venues such as Adventure Lodge, Shoestrings and the Vic Falls Rest Camp offered pre-carnival parties free to all ticket holders, with shuttles to ferry carnivalistas between the events and their



accommodation around town.

As 31 December rolled in, the carnival officially opened its doors at the Vic Falls Primary School for the grand finale: a New Year's Eve extravaganza with over 6,000 revelers partying well into the New Year.

**New acts**

Each year, the festival organisers curate a list of musicians who will appeal to a varied audience as well as showcasing a variety of new acts such as MonArk, a 2013 South African break-out artist. The line-up always includes big southern African names such as Mango Groove, an Afropop band which has sold over 750,000 albums in South Africa alone; Goodluck, one of South

Africa's most acclaimed electronic bands; and Mokoomba, a six-piece band that plays a unique blend of traditional Tonga and Luvale music fused with funk, ska and soukous. Away from the music, stilt walkers and fire breathers wowed the woozie onlookers, glow sticks illuminate the hands of dancing revellers and fairy lights twinkle in the arena as the clocks counted down to midnight.

On New Year's Day, as dawn broke and bleary-eyed ravers packed their tents away, the conversation turned nostalgic as friends and families mused on a New Year's Eve experience to rival all others. In most cases, they have underestimated how cool it would be to have the Victoria Falls, a Unesco World



Heritage Site and the world's biggest waterfall, on their doorstep, and are left with one question remaining in their heads: when do tickets go on sale for next year?



At a 'secret' bush location the attendees are plunged into a dance party under the African sky

## MISSED OUT? GO NEXT YEAR

If you read this article with a sigh, thinking it would have been rather nice to spend New Year partying on a train, dancing under the African stars, swimming in the Devil's Pool and singing along to some of southern Africa's top music talent, we've got you covered. Here's how to do the Vic Falls Festival next year:

- Fastjet flies to Victoria Falls from Harare with rates starting from just US\$ 20 one way, excluding tax, per person. Living in Tanzania? Fastjet flies you to Harare from Dar es Salaam, where you can take another fastjet flight onto Victoria Falls.
- The Vic Falls Carnival will help organise transport to the train party's starting point.
- Tickets cost US\$ 90 for the train party and entry to the carnival and go on sale in May 2016. Keep an eye on the website for more information.
- Packages, including three-, four- and five-star accommodation, can be booked via the Vic Falls Carnival website.
- For more information go to: [www.vicfallscarnival.com](http://www.vicfallscarnival.com)