

With houses and hobnobbing like this, who would want to leave?

Heads of state have a lot on their plates, but at least the crockery is of a very fine quality. When they solemnly take the oath to baby-sit a country, these guys (they are usually guys) land with their bottoms firmly in the butter.

Let's for a moment put aside the scavenging Guptas, those 783 counts and all the other scandals surrounding Nkandla's most famous resident: one cannot discount the fact that one of the reasons Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma hung on to his job like a ravenous baby on mama's teat was so that he could continue enjoying the grand life that comes with being the boss.

There's always a subordinate to go buy your airtime. The corner cafe is merely a helicopter ride away. With the exception of oddballs like former Uruguayan president José Mujica and his blue 1987 Beetle, presidents never have to bother practising their three-point turns. Only eccentrics like Nelson Mandela choose to make their own beds.

Those who play their cards correctly can even land up with their



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She would have hauled out pieces of her Grand Service, a set of thousands of silver-gilt table pieces bought by one of the previous incumbents 200 years ago. This historic set takes eight members of the royal household three weeks to clean.

So seriously does the palace take these dinners that just before the banquet some poor sucker is assigned to check each place

faces beaming back at them from a newly issued banknote.

Even the prospect of doing endless belly flops in Nkandla's fire-pool was not enough of an inducement for Citizen Zuma to voluntarily hand over the keys to the presidential home and hike back to the rural heartland of KwaZulu-Natal.

As the sitting Big Cheese, the president gets to dine with the world's A-listers. Remember when Zuma and Missus No 3 (or was it Missus No 4?) cracked an invitation to Buckingham Palace in 2010? It doesn't get more A-list-y than that.

For the occasion, the Queen would have pulled out all the party tricks traditionally associated with a monarchy that's been around for centuries.

setting with a special measuring stick – 45cm for each setting.

Dinner at Mahlamba Ndlopfu doesn't exactly provide the opportunity to throw bread rolls at Her Majesty's footmen, but at least you get biltong instead of Yorkshire pudding.

Another advantage to being the headmaster of the republic is that there's no mention in the Presidential Handbook of having to help with the dishes. (Who wouldn't want to hang around a bit longer to dodge MaKhumalo's washing-up roster back home?)

Zuma must have developed an unusual craving for borscht while learning AK-47 acrobatics in Russia as a young revolutionary because as president he made sure he spent a great deal of time at the Kremlin with his good comrade Vladimir Putin.

Or were they secretly plotting how to govern a country from a nuclear bunker?

South African presidents get to have two official homes. Apart from Mahlamba Ndlopfu in Pretoria, in Cape Town there's Genadendal on the Groote Schuur estate on the slopes of Devil's Peak, which Cecil John Rhodes bought in 1893. Here Rhodes could dream of landscaping his garden right up to Cairo.

Genadendal is almost spacious enough to have squeezed in the entire Zuma family.

The president never has to get bunions queueing at customs or the Department of Home Affairs. He does not have to pay his TV licence or wait his turn at the bank.

Somebody else takes the kids to school, which in Zuma's case would have been an extra perk.

No president needs good marks in woodworking on his CV. He never has to carry the ladder in from the tool shed or find some putty for emergency DIY. Keeping everything up to scratch is the responsibility of a designated government department.

When Mahlamba Ndlopfu needed sprucing up in 2010, the Department of Public Works announced upgrades that would include a sauna and steam room.

Wait a bit, there's another advantage to being president: everybody spends their working hours trying to please you, and anticipating your needs.

Without being privy to the plumbing intricacies of Mahlamba Ndlopfu or Genadendal, it's probably safe to assume an army of architects would have made sure the showers attached to the master bedrooms were in excellent working order.

No point in annoying this method of washing's most high-profile enthusiast.