



GENERAL TRAVEL INFO SOUTH AFRICA



SOUTH AFRICA

The winter months May to August is the best time for game viewing and visits in the bush. From November to March is Summer and ideal beach time and visits to the coasts.

The best places to explore in South Africa are as per our recommendations:

- Ai-Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Conservation Park
- Augrabies Falls National Park
- Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve
- Cape Town and the famous Cape winelands
- Cape Peninsula National Park
- Cape Agulhas
- Drakensberg
- Garden Route
- Gauteng and Pretoria
- Great Karoo
- Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park
- Kgalagadi National Park
- Kruger National Park
- Kwazulu Natal and coast
- Madikwe Game Reserve
- Mapungubwe National Park
- Namaqualand



- Pilansberg National Park
- Pilgrims Rest
- Tsitsikamma Coastal National Park
- Westcoast National Park
- Wilderness Area

Some great things we recommend to Do and See:

Cape Town:

- Visit the vibrant Bo-Kaap in the Mother City & take photos across Table Bay from Table Mountain
- Take a ride in an open-top bus to discover Cape Town and surroundings
- Visit the beautiful Winelands with famous wineries in Franschhoek and Stellenbosch
- Take a drive to Namaqualand where you will find flowers blossoming in August / September months.
- Take a boat ride to Robben Island the prison of former president Nelson Mandela
- Discover Cape Town from above by a helicopter flight
- Visit Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve

- Travel to Gansbaai for a shark cage dive and interact with the most awesome predators

Garden Route:

- Experience the majestic Southern Right Wales in Hermanus (seasonal)
- Sunset cruise in Knysna
- Unique Marine Encounter boat tour with the Humpback Dolphins, Bottlenose and Common Dolphin in Plettenberg Bay (seasonal)
- Visit Diaz Museum and Shell Museum in Mosselbay
- Take a visit to the Cango Caves, Cheetah and Crocodile Reserve in Oudtshoorn
- Visit the Tsitsikamma Forest and take a walk in the high forest with deep river gorges
- Addo Elephant National Park in Port Elisabeth offers the best Elephant viewings.

Durban and Coast:

- Visit the Ushaka Marine World in Durban an experience not to be missed
- Take a Durban City Tour
- Take a boat cruise along the St. Lucia Estuary and get close to hippos and crocodiles
- Once in a life time experience is the encounter with the leatherback and loggerhead turtles returning to their birthplace to lay their eggs in St. Lucia (seasonal Nov - Feb only)
- In Shakaland one can experience the traditional Zulu culture and customs. Try some local beers and enjoy the grace and tradition of the Zulu dancers
- Visit the battlefields of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift where the Zulu and British armies fought the heart-wrenching battle.

Kruger National Park and surroundings in Mpumalanga:

- Enjoy a morning walking safari or game drive with a highly experienced ranger in the Kruger National Park



- Take a hot air balloon and enjoy the surrounding countryside as the balloon floats over the magnificent landscape
- Take a helicopter ride to explore God's Window, the three Rondavels and the dramatic Blyde River Canyon
- Visit the Cheetah rehabilitation centre near Hoedspruit

Pretoria and Johannesburg:

- Visit the Voortrekker Monument, Church Square, Paul Kruger's house and the Union Building in Pretoria
- Take a Johannesburg City Bus Tour
- Take a tour guide and visit Soweto the home to anti-apartheid activist, Nobel Prize winners and uprising that rocked the world

Sun City and Pilansberg National Park:

- Visit Sun City and take a plunge at the Valley of the Waves.
- Take a morning or evening game drive in the Pilansberg National Park home to the big 5

Great events not to be missed:

Event dates and online tickets: [visit - www.quicket.co.za](http://www.quicket.co.za)

CURRENCY:

The South African Rand (Symbol: "R", Code: ZAR) is the official currency of South Africa. It is subdivided into 100 cents. The Rand was introduced in 1961 to replace the South African Pound.

Denominations:

Bills: R10, R20, R50, R100, R200

Coins: 5, 10, 50 cents and R1, R5

To exchange money you will need to provide identification, all banks and money exchange offices require to see the original passport.

ATMs are found in all towns, cities and shopping malls and most petrol stations. Almost all hotels, shops, restaurants, national parks and game reserves accept credit cards. They are now acceptable at most petrol stations too, but since that is a relatively new measure, it's worth checking before you fill up.

Credit cards are widely accepted throughout South Africa, Mastercard and Visa are preferred - American Express and Diners Card are not widely accepted. But bear in mind that payment can be a little time consuming in remote areas as occasionally they have connection problems.

Travelers' cheques are valid at banks, hotels, restaurants and some tourist-orientated shops. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, you are advised to take traveller's cheques in Pounds Sterling or US Dollars.

Please note that visitors are restricted to bringing in and taking out a maximum of R5,000 in cash.

Banking hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1530, Sat 0830-1100.



DRIVING INFO:

South Africa is a left-hand driving country.

It is the ideal country to self-drive due to its excellent road infrastructure and availability of fuel and spares. This plus the freedom you have to stop and go as you please makes your trip extremely rewarding.

The general speed limits in South Africa are **60 km/h** on a public road within an urban area and may be lifted to **80 km/h** on some major urban roads. **120 km/h** on every tarmac freeway and **100 km/h** on secondary roads.

Driving in the Kruger National Park is on well-maintained gravel roads. Summer rainfalls can influence the roads and therefore follow speed limits and road signs (60km/h) at all times.

The network of service/petrol stations is very good with most small towns having at least one. Petrol stations will generally have a shop attached where basic food can be purchased. Please note credit cards & cheques are not always accepted, so be sure to have a wad of cash handy to pay.

The general rule is to refuel at the last town you visited, especially when travelling into remote areas. The next petrol station will probably come a long way before you need it, but occasionally they may be out of fuel too.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

In the last 15 years of operating and selling holidays in Africa we fortunately did not experience any big emergencies. But just in case anything would happen please find some important info below.

Medical facilities are good in urban areas but can be limited elsewhere. Doctors and hospitals often require immediate cash payment. Comprehensive health insurance is recommended to cover the fees of private facilities.

The National Tourism Information and Safety Line is +27 83 123 2345.

The general emergency services number is +27 10111.

Netcare 911 (Tel: +27 82 911; www.netcare911.co.za) is a private emergency service offering road assistance and evacuation, ambulances, private hospitals and emergency over the phone medical advice.

Numbers of Hospitals by towns (selection):

Johannesburg: Ambulance and Fire +27 (0)11 375 5911

Pretoria: Mediclinic Heart +27 (0)12 440 0200

Durban: Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital +27 (0)31 240 1000

Bloemfontein: Mediclinic Bloemfontein Private Hospital +27 (0)51 404 6666

Kimberley: Mediclinic Kimberley Private Hospital +27 (0)53 838 1111



Port Elizabeth: Netcare Greenacres Private Hospital +27 (0)41 390 7000
East London: Fort Grey SANTA Hospital +27 (0)43 736 9850
Cape Town: Red Cross Children's Hospital Poison Line +27 (0) 021 689 5227
Polokwane: Mediclinic Limpopo Private Hospital +27 (0)15 290 3600

Central Police Stations by towns (selection):

Johannesburg: +27(0)11 347 1626
Pretoria: +27(0)12 393 1000
Durban: +27(0)31 325 4453
Bloemfontein: +27(0)51 432 4070
Kimberley: +27(0)53 838 4200
Port Elizabeth: +27(0)41 394 6000
East London: +27(0)43 707 0687
Cape Town: +27(0)21 467 8001
Polokwane: +27(0)15 293 7517

CREDIT CARD EMERGENCY NUMBER:

We suggest to keep the emergency number which is on the pack of your Credit Card separate in case the card gets lost or stolen so that you can contact your bank directly.

LANGUAGES / HOSPITALITY:

The official languages are Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. But travelers are getting around with English nearly everywhere in the country.

As a country South Africa is still trying to find a national identity, but each of the country's cultural groups has its own rich heritage and traditions.

South Africa's biggest cities are very westernised and hold few cultural surprises for Europeans. Handshaking is the usual form of greeting, sometimes in a more elaborate African handshake that foreigners will pick up readily. Casual wear is widely acceptable, especially in less formal Cape Town. Smoking is prohibited in public buildings and on public transport.

The presence of so many diverse ethnic backgrounds certainly adds some spice outside of the main business centres. Rural areas most likely to be visited by travellers include Zulu land in KwaZulu Natal where communities are based in small traditional villages with round huts (*rondavels*) and a few hustling, bustling relatively poor towns.

In Durban you'll be entertained by beach-front Zulu dancers wearing full animal skin tribal regalia. A more modern form of culture is the now commercialised Gum Boot dance, performed in wellingtons and mining outfits and developed in men's only mining hostels when entertainment was scarce.



THE FOOD OF SOUTH AFRICA:

Meat is big in South Africa, and one national sport is the braai, the local version of a barbecue. Most campsites, self-catering resorts and picnic spots have braai facilities, as well as every self-respecting garden.

The long coastline guarantees a seemingly endless supply of fresh fish and seafood, and many restaurants are now making an effort to only use sustainable fish species. The wines produced by the numerous vineyards vary from pretty good to downright excellent, causing some restaurants to have wine lists more extensive than their food menus. Excellent local red and white wines are produced in the Cape, and are generally served as single varieties rather than as blends. Sherries and brandies are also produced.

The restaurant scene is thriving. Cape Town and the wine lands in particular tend to have the best restaurants, with Johannesburg and Durban dominated by indistinguishable chain restaurants of the pizza, pasta and steak variety.

The country's cosmopolitan heritage means all types of cuisine are available, with fruity and sweet Cape Malay cuisine a speciality of Cape Town, and a strong Indian influence making Durban's curries divine.

Specialities:

- *Boerewors* (a fairly spicy high-quality sausage, essential for a braai).
- *Bobotie* (a curried mince stew often studded with raisins).
- *Potjiekos* (a spicy casserole cooked in an iron pot).
- *Bredie* (meat, tomato and vegetable casserole).
- *Biltong* (dried meat, typically beef or venison).

Things to know:

South Africans eat relatively early by European standards, with restaurants at their busiest from 19:00. Trying to find somewhere to eat later than 22:00 can be almost impossible.

Tipping:

A tip of 10 to 15% is expected.

Regional drinks:

- *Umqombothi* (a home-brewed sorghum beer).
- *Castle* lager is also a very popular beer.
- Excellent local red and white wines (including chardonnay), sherries and brandies.
- *Klippiess and coke* (a popular mix of brandy and coke, named after Klipdrift, a cheap local brandy).
- *Rooibos* (a red-leaved tea grown in the Western Cape).
- *Amarula cream* (a sweet creamy liqueur made from the fruit of the Marula tree).

SAFETY:

Wherever you travel your safety is of course always of our utmost concern. With over 15 years of travel experience in Africa we compiled some general tips below.



If you have no experience in driving on gravel and sand roads, please be warned to keep to the speed limits, these roads do not give you the same grip as tar roads and roll overs are frequent not to mention the flats tyres. In some cases they are so badly damaged that they need to be completely replaced.

In the rainy season it pours and the sand/gravel roads turn from driving surfaces to soft mud and you will have limited control of your vehicles.

Try and drive towards the centre of the road when there is good visibility and keep to your left when approaching blind bends and hills. Due to no fencing in most areas, please be aware of all sorts of animals (especially domestic animals) which can dart out unexpectedly and your first reaction is to swerve to avoid hitting it/them. It is safer to just hit it, if it is something small like an impala or a warthog.

Camping in South Africa is generally quite safe in established campsites. For your safety please do not camp wild in river beds or undesignated camping areas.

VISA REQUIREMENT/S / BORDER POSTS:

To enter South Africa, a passport valid for at least 30 days after the intended date of departure is required by all nationals referred to in the chart above.

Passports must have at least two blank pages for entry stamps.

Nationals from Australia, the UK, the USA and the EU **are not** required to obtain Visas to travel to South Africa on holiday for visits shorter than three months. Entry Permits will be issued at border posts. Nationals of Cyprus, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia may stay visa-free for up to 30 days. Nationals of Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia do require a visa.

Nationals not referred to above are advised to contact the embassy/high commission for visa requirements.

The Department of Home Affairs website (www.dha.gov.za) has comprehensive details on visa requirements and exemptions and the relevant forms for downloading. If you are one of the few travelers subject to visa requirements, you should apply for your visa at least a month before you intend to travel, and wait for it to be issued before you travel. No visas are issued at South African points of entry. If you arrive without the necessary paperwork, immigration officials are obliged to refuse you entry.

PLEASE NOTE as from the 1st July 2015 visitors entering South Africa travelling with kids require an unabridged birth certificate to enter the country.

No passenger will therefore be allowed to travel without these papers - be it by land, sea or air.

For more detailed info on the minor travel/immigration regulations, please visit - www.dha.gov.za

There are several borders you can cross to get into South Africa if you are entering the country by car and border posts are open daily.

For our self-drive tourists the most used border posts into South Africa are:



- Namibia Vioolsdrif / South Africa, open 24 hours / 027 761 8770
- Mozambique Komatipoort / South Africa, 0700-2200 / 013 793 7626
- Botswana Kopfontein / South Africa, 0700-2200 / 017 846 9429
- Zimbabwe Beitbridge / South Africa, 0600-2200 / 015 530 0066
- Swaziland Oshoek / South Africa, 0700-2200 / 017 882 0061

HEALTH / OTHER RISKS / INSURANCE:

Health Care and Vaccinations

No vaccinations are essential. A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travellers over one year old arriving from an infected area.

Extreme caution should be exercised when considering bathing in African rivers. Most rivers carry the Bilharzia pathogens and harbour dangerous crocodiles and hippos. Avoid swimming and paddling in stagnant or slow-moving water as there is a low risk of contracting bilharzia, and a risk of catching E.coli. Cholera is spread by contaminated food or water and occurs in some rural areas of Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, where it can be picked up from swimming in contaminated streams. Swimming pools that are well chlorinated and maintained are safe. Vaccinations against tuberculosis and hepatitis B are sometimes recommended.

Department of Health statistics show the prevalence of HIV/AIDS remains high despite increasing efforts to combat it, with 178 out of 1,000 adults infected, compared to a global average of just 8 in 1,000.

However, Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga and northern KwaZulu-Natal are low risk malaria areas during December-April. Malaria is found in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the north-east of KwaZulu-Natal, and the Department of Health recommends taking preventative drugs during the peak period between September and May.

Sunburn is a much more common risk, with the African sun being far fiercer than most people realise. Tourists are also vulnerable to theft or mugging and the usual precautions apply – keep jewellery, cameras, handbags and other valuables out of sight, do not carry large sums of money, and avoid walking at night or along isolated beaches and streets. Motorists should park in well-lit areas, be alert when waiting for traffic lights to change, and if a hijacking does occur, keep your hands where the attackers can see them and do not try to resist.

A Medical and Travel insurance is highly recommended prior to the start of the holiday.

WHAT TO PACK:

During the summer months one wears most of the time light, summer-weight clothes but also do pack:

- A jacket, socks, good shoes and a rain jacket for summer thunder storms
- Sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses and beach wear.

Make sure you have at least one cotton shirt, with a collar, for sun protection and a cooler evening at the coast. Bring insect repellent if you're planning to be in a malaria area (National Parks) and



plan to wear long sleeves and long pants for evenings. Bring good walking shoes for walks and hiking.

If you're visiting in winter, please pack the following:

- Warm clothes, including a fleece and rain jacket as it can get nippy in mornings and at night, and have rainfalls along the costs.

For game drives aim for reasonable neutral colours – think of the movie “Out of Africa”. A windbreaker or hoddie is ideal too. For evening we suggest something more formal at more up market and exclusive lodges/hotels. DO NOT FOGET the binoculars for the game viewing!

camping
Africa