

# Help raise Lions and Tigers in South Africa

## Project Overview

### Are you scared of big cats?

Well, you should be. These ferocious carnivores have earned their title as 'kings of the jungle' for good reason. Though they will grow up to be prowling hunters of the night, they don't start out that way. Actually, at two months old, they are simply adorable creatures who are always in search of care and attention. This is where you come in. At the big cat breeding center, you will help care for the cubs by getting involved in a host of activities including feeding and playing with the cubs and their older brothers and sisters!



### Trip Highlights:

- Helping to look after lion, tiger and other 'big cat' cubs
- Tumbling around with the lion cubs
- Learning about all the different big cats
- Being surrounded by the beautiful wilderness of South Africa

### Fast Facts

#### Project Information

- Project Duration: Min 2 weeks - Max 4 weeks
- Project Costs: £1199.00 for 2 weeks, £350.00 for every week thereafter
- Location of project: *Near Kroonstad, Johannesburg, in Free State Province, South Africa*
- Arrival Airport: *Johannesburg (JNB)*
- Activities: *Various types of work with lions, tigers and other big cats including helping with feeding and facilities maintenance. Also assisting in showing visitors around the centre.*
- Working Hours: *Flexible; including night shifts on a rotational basis for bottle feeding cubs*
- Getting to the project: *Accommodation is on site*
- Requirements: *Minimum age 18*

#### What's Included

- Accommodation: *Shared room in lodge at project*
- Food: *Food is not included; you will need to purchase your own food (budget approximately \$US 50 per week)*
- Airport Pickup: *Included on arrival date. Ask us for details if you're arriving early!*
- Training: *In-country orientation and briefing on arrival at the project*
- Support: *Pre-departure helpdesk, Local in-country team and 24hr emergency support*

#### What's not included

- *Flights, Insurance, Visas, Return Airport transfer, Local Transport, Food*

## **Detailed Itinerary...Your first week**

### **Day 1 (Monday) – Arrive into Johannesburg Airport (airport code JNB)**

Today you will be met at the airport and taken to our backpacker's hostel in Pretoria. You'll need to arrive in before 4pm so that you're all ready for the orientation which kicks off at 5pm. The journey from the airport to Pretoria should take around 45 minutes. The orientation is a crucial part of settling in to life in South Africa and will take you through what it's going to be like at your project, do's and don'ts, how to stay safe and it's your prime opportunity to ask any burning questions that you haven't yet had answered. After the orientation you'll have some time to relax and prepare before your first day at the project tomorrow.

If you aren't able to arrange a flight to get you into Johannesburg before 4pm then we'd recommend you fly in a day early. We can arrange an early airport pick-up for you including one night's accommodation. Please give us a call for more information.

### **Day 2 (Tuesday) – Introductions at your project**

You'll be up early this morning to take the bus, which takes around three hours, from Pretoria to Kroonstad. Here you'll be met by the lion center team who'll take you the short trip to your new home! The project and accommodation are on the same site so you'll never be late for work! Take time to settle in, because this is home for you for the next few weeks.

Your first day will be all about settling in, getting to know the staff and how things work. The team at the project will be on hand for you to ask any questions so ask away!

### **Days 3 to 5 (Wednesday to Friday) – Keep up the good work**

Once you've had a day to learn the ropes you will act as an extra pair of hands at the project assisting in whatever is needed. There'll always be someone there to help you but the more pro-active you are the more you'll get out of the experience. If you think something needs doing, get in there and do it! From cleaning cages to feeding meat to the lions, it's all done with the lion's welfare in mind. Surely the toughest job of all is Cub Duty; hand feeding the lion and tiger cubs twice a day, playing with them and giving them that all important one on one attention. You will also need to be prepared to work some night shifts too to feed these little cuties through the night! This will be on a rotational basis.

Working hours are flexible and night shifts will be included on a rotational basis.

### **Days 6 and 7 (all day Saturday and Sunday afternoon) – Free time**

The weekends are your valuable free time to rest and explore. You probably won't want to move away from the swimming pool at your accommodation, however, if you can drag yourself away, there are plenty of places of interest worth visiting in the nearby area. The team on site can help you with ideas and logistics. You will be able to arrange trips over the weekend into the nearest town (about 20 minutes drive) to catch up on e-mails and so on.

There are also fantastic views from the verandah of the animal enclosures, so relax and soak up the sights and sounds of rural South Africa. From time to time you will also be able to go to local bars and restaurants or have a traditional South African braai (BBQ). The team has close links with reputable tour companies so there will always be something going on!

## **Following weeks**

Mondays to Fridays you will be working hard with the lions and tigers at the project, with your weekends free to fill with whatever you fancy! The more you put in, the more you get out of this project so get stuck in!

### **Your Last Day (Monday)**

The time to leave has come around already and you can expect to leave Kroonstad on the bus at around 9.30am and arrive back in Pretoria at around 1pm. The team will take you to the bus stop and your return bus ticket to Pretoria is included in the project fee. Your return transfer from Pretoria to the airport is not included, but our team will be able to advise you of the best route depending on your onward travel after the project.

## Country Guide – South Africa

### A little bit of history...

A journey into South Africa's history is to haul through periods of racial tension, oppression and hope. Its multicultural mix originates from the earliest settlers, the San (also known as Bushmen) and Khoi-Khoi tribes, followed by Bantu-speaking groups, and through to the swarm of European traders. The Dutch were among the first European settlers and arrived in the 17th century, establishing their presence through their own dialect, Afrikaans, and religion in the form of the Dutch Reformed Church. By the end of the 18th century, the British began to push their presence forward into the country's towns. It was a period of flared tensions with Zulu chief Shaka renouncing war on neighbouring tribes. Meanwhile, the Boers (Dutch Afrikaner farmers) and the British became locked in conflict; the Anglo-Boer War lasted from 1899 to 1902, ending with the British taking control of the Boer republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State (OFS) and consequently ruling the country.



By 1910, the Union of South Africa was created and gave political power to whites, while blacks set up political parties in protest, the African National Congress (ANC) the best known. It ushered in the beginnings of apartheid, which became widely ingrained after the Afrikaner National Party came to power in 1948. Violence against protests from blacks was enforced and the black population were evicted to so-called Homelands. In the 1960s, leaders of the ANC were imprisoned, notably Nelson Mandela, and the country became isolated having left the Commonwealth and declaring its republic status. After a long period of racial divide and conflict, in 1989 FW de Klerk came to power with the aim to rid the country of apartheid and instil democracy. The following year, Mandela was released from prison and in 1994 became president after the ANC won the country's first non-racial general elections; the country also returned to the Commonwealth. The country's democratic stance has steered it toward a more harmonious future, though economic inequalities between whites and blacks exist, but as the most developed economy on the continent it is in a good position to reconcile with its past.

### Best time to go...

Naturally, South Africa's seasons are the reverse of the northern hemisphere with summer heat burning from November to March and cooler winter temperatures from June to August. Temperature wise, spring (September to October) and autumn (April to May) provide a happy medium. Certain must-do activities are restricted to specific times of year: safari is best from June to September and the whale watching season is June to December. The busiest time, hence the most expensive, is during the summer months, while the major school holidays are during December and Easter.

### Getting around...

Given the distances involved, flying is the most convenient way to travel between the main destinations, while land transportation can efficiently pick up the rest of the mileage for exploration in and around. There are an assortment of domestic carriers to choose from that fly the main routes, with most running from Johannesburg or Cape Town; these include South African Airways, Nationwide Airlines, Kulula and 1Time. Booking early is advisable to secure discounted rates.

There country also boasts a comprehensive bus network that covers the main cities; the road trip from Johannesburg to Cape Town is around 20 hours (compared to a 2 hour in a plane). The main bus companies are Translux, Greyhound and Intercape. Baz Bus is aimed at the backpacker crowd and provides a hop-on, hop-off service and also travels to remote areas. It's a good way to discover the picturesque patch of coastline that is the Garden Route, which it services en route from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth.

Train travel can work out longer than by bus, with the trip from Johannesburg to Cape Town edging toward almost 30 hours. If you're after a little luxury, try the Blue Train or the Rovos Rail for a taste of stylish travel.

Car rental is an attractive option thanks to the good road conditions, great scenery and the flexibility driving allows. The big car rental companies like Avis and Budget have outlets and it's essential to be fully insured and have a valid driver's licence. It's also a convenient way to get around cities as public transport can be unsafe.