

Live with lion cubs in South Africa

Project Overview

Want to spend your days looking after and playing with lion cubs?

At this wildlife reserve and lion breeding centre in South Africa you will be spending your days looking after incredibly cute lion cubs as well as helping out on a whole range of duties throughout the reserve. Set in a stunning location the reserve is home to a number of lion cubs - and their older brothers and sisters, mums and dads! - and after spending time here we're certain you won't want to go home. You can get involved in a whole range of activities or, if you'd rather, spend all your time with the cubs - it's up to you. What we can guarantee though is that you'll fall in love with these incredible animals.



Trip highlights

- Feeding and caring for lion cubs
- Helping to look after other the animals at the reserve
- Living in and enjoying life an incredible wildlife reserve
- Taking the opportunity to learn how to abseil and rock climb
- Participating in game drives on the reserve

Fast Facts

Project Information

- Project Duration: Min 2 weeks - Max 4 weeks
- Project Costs: £1299.00 for 2 weeks, £400.00 for every week thereafter
- Location of project: *Near Johannesburg, South Africa*
- Arrival Airport: *Johannesburg (JNB)*
- Activities: *Working with the lions and general maintenance around the reserve.*
- Working Hours: *Approximately 7am to 4pm daily - with time off arranged in country*
- Getting to the project: *Accommodation is on the reserve*
- Requirements: *Minimum age 18*

What's Included

- Accommodation: *Shared room in chalet at project*
- Food: *All meals are included and prepared for you*
- Airport Pickup: *Included on arrival date.*
- 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 transfer from Pretoria to the airport*

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 straight 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 dinner prepared for you and 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

The following morning you will be taken from Pretoria to Brits where you will be based. The project is 1-2 hours drive away, around 70km north of Johannesburg. The project and accommodation are on the same site so you won't be late for work! Take time to get to know everyone and settle in, because this is home for you for the next few weeks.

Your first full day will be all about settling in at the reserve and getting to know how things operate, but it's fairly laid back overall. The staff at the reserve are always happy to answer any questions that you might have. You will have an amazing experience here including hands on feeding and caring for the lion cubs. However, don't forget that the animal enclosures will also need to be kept in good order, so expect to get dirty! General maintenance of the enclosures and facilities will also be one of your roles around the park.

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

Now you're a fully fledged member of the team, you can aim to be on duty from around 7am to 4pm daily. You'll be up with the birds in the morning but the afternoons are yours to relax by the pool on the reserve. If you want to carry on working then there will always be something for you to get involved in – even if it's just cuddling the cubs...it's hard work, but someone has to do it. This project is quite laid back and structured with you in mind, you get to decide what activities you want to get involved in on a daily basis. Part of this experience is what you put in, but it's also about what you want to get out of it.

Days 6 and 7– Free time

Time off is arranged in country and is flexible. So whilst we say here that the weekend is your time, you might prefer to have different days off. These days are your valuable time off to rest and explore. You probably won't want to move away from the swimming pool at your accommodation but if you can tear yourself away, take time to explore the surrounding area. Around Brits there is a cheetah centre, crocodile farm, cultural village and plenty of curio shops to browse, so you won't be bored! You can also check out the climbing wall if you are wanting to learn how to rock climb or abseil, this is free and depends on availability!

Following weeks

Mondays to Fridays will be spent on the reserve with your weekends or days off free to fill with whatever you fancy!

Your Last Day (Monday)

At the end of your project our team in South Africa will pick you up and transfer you back to Pretoria Backpackers from where you can either transfer back to the airport or head off for further travels in South Africa. You will get to the backpackers in Pretoria in the afternoon (normally around 1pm) so please don't book flights home before 5pm. You need to organize your own transport back to the airport from Pretoria which will cost around US\$ 40. Please also note that the transfer from Pretoria back 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.

The 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 Intercap. 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.