

# Monkey sanctuary near the Kruger Park, South Africa

## Project Overview

### Fancy some monkeying around?

Monkey business is certainly allowed on this project which is set in a stunning area of South Africa close to the wilderness of the world-famous Kruger National Park. The Vervet Monkey Foundation is a huge rehabilitation centre and currently looks after around 500 monkeys, so there will be plenty of opportunities to meet the cute little things. Your time may be spent caring for injured or orphaned monkeys (in baby season Oct – March), working one on one with ex-pets, doing general maintenance work around the centre, enrichment of enclosures and contributing towards the building of new facilities. In your spare time you can even take advantage of the great location and enjoy the country's animals in the wild.



### Trip Highlights:

- Living and working with Vervet Monkeys - WOW!
- Experiencing the 'bush life' in South Africa
- Meeting and making friends with people from all over the world - this is a very sociable project!

### Your first week

#### Day 1 (Monday) – Arrive into Johannesburg International 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

This is the time to get things started! Today you will be transferred to your project; you will meet your team and start your volunteering. This project is based in Tzaneen, which is roughly 420kms north of Johannesburg. To get there you'll travel from Pretoria bus station by Translux bus, which leaves at 10.30am daily and arrives in Tzaneen at 3.40pm. A representative from the monkey sanctuary collects you from the Tzaneen bus stop –and then it is a journey of 25minutes approximately from Tzaneen to the project.

The project and accommodation are on site, so there are no transport costs once you arrive! The team will make sure you get settled in and know what you're doing. You will be introduced to the staff at the project who will be your main contacts while you are working. Your first day will be all about settling in and getting to know how things work.

#### Day 3, 4 and 5 (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday) – Getting stuck in!

Be prepared for the fact that between November and February, you may be starting the day as early as 6am and finishing at 4pm in baby season including occasional overnight shifts with the babies – well worth it to see that sun rise. Outside of these months, you may start at 8am and finish at around 5pm. You have half a day off at weekends and one day off during the week. Talk to the team if you'd like to take some time to go to Kruger; you just need to make sure that your absence can be covered, that's all.

You can expect to become involved in a variety of duties which can vary from starting with monitoring the health of monkeys in the morning to a baby shift and then possibly helping with construction or

maintenance. Duties involve looking after the orphans, bowl washing, feeding, sickbay, enclosures, observations & recording data, working with and grooming ex-pet monkeys, blanket washing, construction, writing articles for newsletters or taking photos collecting fruit and vegetation for monkeys.

Now that you've learnt the ropes you will be acting as an extra pair of hands at the project, assisting wherever help is needed. You'll be working alongside the regular staff so there'll always be someone there to help you, but the more pro-active you are the more you'll get out of your experience. If you think something needs doing, don't be afraid to get in there and do it!

### **Days 6 or 7 (Saturday or Sunday) – Half day of free time**

You are entitled to a half day of your own time on either day at the weekend which can be spent exploring all that the local area has to offer. Occasionally a member of staff will be able to take a group out on an afternoon (dependant on vehicles and drivers), or drop you at the nearby country lodge, pool & spa. Our suggestions include visiting Debengeni waterfalls, visiting the tea gardens and the baobab tree, relaxing at the local country lodge and spa, visiting Kruger National Park, visiting Graskop, Gods window, potholes, go on the gorge swing, quad biking, horse riding or other activities. You can then also choose a day off midweek to spend as you choose.

### **Following weeks**

Mondays to Fridays will be spent at the project with your half day during the weekend and day off free to fill with whatever you fancy! Don't forget to keep asking the staff for more challenges if you feel like it – there's more than enough work to go around.

Once you're ready to explore further afield the team at the sanctuary can help organise touring trips with a local qualified tour guide. Whether it's a riverboat safari, visiting the magnificent Kruger park, or just a day chilling by the pool in a 5\* hotel. The guide will collect you directly from the volunteer village and return you safely.

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

Having said goodbye to all your new friends and packed your bag full of souvenirs you'll travel back to the airport. The return transfer from Tzaneen to Johannesburg is not covered within your project fee, but our regular transfer company will be able to help you sort the journey back, the costs will be around US\$20 and this is easily arranged in country.

### **Fast Facts**

#### **Project Information**

- Project Duration: Min 4 weeks - Max 8 weeks
- Project Costs: £1499.00 for 4 weeks, £85.00 for every week thereafter
- Location of project: *Near Tzaneen, around six hours from Johannesburg*
- Arrival Airport: *Johannesburg (airport code JNB)*
- Activities: *Various types of work with animals, including helping with feeding and facilities maintenance*
- Working Hours: *Flexible; one day off per week worked, plus 1 touring day per week worked*
- Getting to the project: *On site*
- Requirements: *Minimum age 18*

#### **What's Included**

- Accommodation: *Shared wooden cabins*
- Food: *All meals*
- Airport Pickup: *Included on arrival date. Ask us for details if you're arriving early!*
- Training: *In-country orientation*
- Support: *Pre-departure helpdesk, Local in-country team and 24hr emergency support*

#### **What's not included**

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

## 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.