

The South Africa Adventure and Animal Experience

Project Overview

Are you feeling adventurous?

If you're the sort of person who wants to get off the beaten track, as well as over a few swamps and over a mountain or two and find yourself in Africa with lions, cheetahs, crocodiles (and guides who know what they're doing - we promise!). This project is a trailblazing tour through some of the continent's most iconic scenery. Starting with a welcoming glass of wine along the beautiful Route 62, you'll quad bike, abseil, bungee jump and zip slide your way along the famous Garden Route through a private game reserve and stunning mountain passes. It may be easy to forget when you're having so much fun but you'll also be contributing to a valuable project during your 10-day stay on a wildlife ranch and zoo which helps endangered animals.



Please note, you can now extend your stay at the project for up to a further 2 weeks - call us for further info!

There are no minimum numbers for this tour, it is guaranteed to run.

Trip Highlights:

- The opportunity to quad bike, abseil, bungee jump and zip slide along South Africa's stunning coastline
- Getting up close and personal with cheetahs, lion, hippo, crocodiles (!) and other amazing wildlife
- Getting a taste for South Africa - a truly stunning destination

Day 1 (Thursday) – Arrive into Cape Town International Airport (airport code CPT)

Today you will be met at the airport and taken to our volunteer house in Fish Hoek. 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 Fish Hoek should take around 45 minutes and if you keep your eyes open you might get to see Table Mountain on the way! The orientation 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 tour tomorrow.

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

Day 2 (Friday) - Mossel Bay

Today you'll be picked up by your tour guide and will start the day with a beautiful mountain drive through to Robertson passing via Worcester on the famous Route 62 which is known for its delicious wines, quaint towns and incredible scenery. An early lunch is served at a wine farm in the Breede Valley. The food is traditional Afrikaans food (lots of meat but don't worry if you're a veggie) and is a treat for any food lover!

After lunch you will partake in some wine tasting at selected wine farms whilst enjoying the wonderful scenery, it's a good opportunity to stock up on some wine for the next two weeks or pick some to take home. You will travel through beautiful little towns like Bonnievale, Swellendam and Riversdale as we make our way through the farmlands and to the coast.

This evening you'll stay in Mossel Bay and will enjoy a home cooked meal at Park House Lodge.

Day 3 (Saturday) - Plettenburg Bay

Your first stop will be for a game viewing quad bike on a private game farm near Mossel Bay; you will have the opportunity to see giraffe, rhino, wildebeest, zebra, many types of buck and other smaller animals. You'll also visit the cheetah enclosure and get up close and personal with these majestic big cats!

After lunch you'll have the chance to make some optional trips to Knysna Elephant Park (entrance fee around US\$25), or the Monkeyland Rehabilitation Centre (free entry).

Knysna and the Tsitsikamma Forest are famous for the number of elephants that used to live there in huge herds and were almost extinct at one stage. Latest research by the elephant park shows that a small herd actually still roams the depths of the Tsitsikamma Forest! The park gives you the opportunity to touch and feel other elephants that have been rescued from all over Africa and is a highly recommended activity.

In the late afternoon we will head to the gorgeous Plettenberg Bay to a 5-star backpacker hostel where a hot shower, fluffy white towels, comfy beds and another home cooked meal awaits you. Dinner and breakfast included.

Day 4 (Sunday) - Storms River Village

This morning is down to you... take a walk on the beach in Plett or even a swim, plus check out the shops and any craft markets nearby. The late morning is for optional activities that you might not have done the day before or just lazing on the beach before heading to the Bloukranz bungee jump which is the highest in the world and worth a visit even if you have no intention of jumping! They have delicious pizzas for lunch on their bungee deck where you can watch people do the jump both live on a screen or by the naked eye! If you do decide to take the plunge it's around US\$80.



This afternoon you will experience the zip slides in the Tsitsikamma forest, flying over the waterfalls and rock pools and stopping along the way to and then test your fear of heights further by doing an abseil (weather permitting!).

Afterwards you will be taken to Storms River Village where we will spend the night at Dijembe Backpackers which has a rustic, African feel to it and cooks us the most delicious dinner while we sip cocktails and toast our last night on the tour! Dinner and breakfast included.

Day 5 (Monday) - Oudtshoorn

After an early breakfast you will be transferred to Oudtshoorn via the breath-taking Outeniqua Hop drive, reaching Oudtshoorn just before midday. Your tour leader will drop you at the volunteer house (your home for the next 9 days) and help you to settle in. You can have a relaxing day before starting your project the following morning. Breakfast and dinner is included today.

Day 6 to 14 (Tuesday to Wednesday) - Cango Wildlife Ranch, Oudtshoorn

The next nine days will be spent volunteering at this wildlife ranch and zoo. It is one of very few facilities in South Africa offering volunteers hands-on experience with big cats and other endangered animals.

During your stay here, you'll be getting stuck into food preparation and feeding the animals, general maintenance and development activities, cleaning the cages and general maintenance to keep the centre running as smoothly as possible.

Lunch only is included this week so you'll need to budget approximately US\$50 for breakfast and dinner.

Your last day (Thursday) Return home

Today you'll pack up all your souvenirs, say goodbye to your new friends and depart from Oudtshoorn. The return journey back to Cape Town is down to you to arrange. Details of bus times and other possible means of transport will be given to you prior to your arrival in Oudtshoorn. You can hire a car as a group, take the bus or you can even fly if you want to. A bus journey back will cost around US\$30.

If you're flying home today please make sure that your international flight is after 8pm. If your flight's the next day you will need to arrange for an additional nights accommodation - our team can help advise you on the best places in Cape Town to stay.

If you've booked to stay on for additional weeks at the Wildlife Ranch you will need to plan to leave Oudtshoorn on either Day 22 (3 weeks) or 29 (4 weeks) depending on the duration of the trip you have booked.

Fast Facts

Project Information

- Project Duration: Min 2 weeks - Max 4 weeks
- Project Costs: £1 149.00 for 2 weeks, £200.00 for every week thereafter
- Location of project: *Tour starts in Cape Town and ends in Oudtshoorn*
- Arrival Airport: *Cape Town (CPT)*
- Activities: *4 full days of travel along the Garden Route including a gorge drop, quad-biking and zip-slide. 9 days volunteering; various types of work with animals, including helping with feeding and facilities maintenance*
- Working Hours: *Flexible, usually full days on the tour and at the project*
- Getting to the project: *30 minutes walk*
- Requirements: *Minimum age 18*

What's Included

- Accommodation: *Shared hostels on tour; shared volunteer house at project; couples can be accommodated in twin rooms*
- Food: *Breakfast and dinner while on tour. Lunch only at project (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*
- Support: *Pre-departure helpdesk, Local in-country team and 24hr emergency support*

What's not included

- *Flights, Insurance, Visas, Return journey from Oudtshoorn to Cape Town, Return Airport transfer, Lunches on the tour; Breakfasts and Dinners whilst volunteering*

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.