

# Work with lions in South Africa - 14 days

## Project Overview

### Ever wanted to spend time with one of the most iconic and majestic creatures on the planet?

We've teamed up with a lion education centre in South Africa to offer an exclusive volunteer opportunity. This centre is famed as a pioneer in the rearing of white lions, cats that are now almost completely extinct in the wild, and you could soon get to see them every day! The lion project team specialize in the care of Africa's large predators; the Lion (including the rare white lion), Leopard, Spotted Hyena, Brown Hyena and African Wild dog. It is also home to many of the other animals that make South Africa one of the wildlife jewels of the world. Volunteering in South Africa on this project means you can run wild with lions and giraffes so get involved with the team and help these amazing animals.



## Trip Highlights:

- Working and living with lions - need we say more?
- Waking up to the sounds of giraffe snuffling around 'next to' your tent
- Getting an incredible 'behind the scenes' experience in a world leading lion centre

## Fast Facts

### Project Information

- Project Duration: Min 2 weeks
- Project Costs: £1199.00 for 2 weeks
- Location of project: *Near Santon, Johannesburg, in Gauteng Province, South Africa*
- Arrival Airport: *Johannesburg (JNB)*
- Activities: *Various types of work with park visitors and animals, including helping with feeding and facilities maintenance*
- Working Hours: *Flexible; usually daily 8am to 5pm, all other time is free. Days 1 to 10 at project; Days 11 to 14 transfer to Pretoria for safari and crafts market*
- Getting to the project: *Accommodation is on site*
- Requirements: *Minimum age 18*

## What's Included

- Accommodation: *Shared semi-luxury tents at project; shared hostel on tour*
- Food: *Food is not included; you will need to purchase your own food (budget approximately \$US60 per stay at the park)*
- 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, Food*

## **Detailed Itinerary**

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

Today you will be met at the airport and taken directly to the lion park in Fourways, greater Johannesburg. You'll need to arrive in before 4pm so that you have time to go food shopping for all your supplies needed for your stay. The journey from the airport to the lion park should take around 45 minutes.

The orientation next morning at around 8.30am 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. We've got an i-to-i team leader stationed at the park so you'll never be far away from someone to help. After the orientation you'll get stuck into your project!

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, give us a call for more information.

### **Day 2 – Mind those claws!**

Your first day will be all about settling in and getting to know how things work. You'll take time to get to know the staff at the park, figure out the rota and start learning your duties. You'll learn how to prepare food for the baby animals in the nursery, as well as in the evening for the larger cubs. You will also help clean out cub enclosures in the mornings; share shifts at the giraffe feeding station, the gate to the game drive and at the entrance to cub world.

### **Day 3 to 10 - Getting stuck in**

As you start to get the hang of your duties you can spend time learning about South Africa from the park staff; expect to learn lots about the animals you are working with as well as how the park is run. You'll get to wear a staff t-shirt (provided on arrival) and interact with the lions and the visitors to the park – the best of both worlds!

The more you put in, the more you'll get out of this experience!

### **Day 11 – Pretoria here we come!**

Your stretch at the lion park finishes today, but there's no time to be glum because you're moving on for a well earned rest in Pretoria, a city close to Johannesburg. Your base for the remainder of your stay will be at a backpacker's hostel, where you have the chance to catch up on emails and sleep or just hang out with other visitors. The hostel has a pool so don't forget your swimming gear!

### **Day 12 – Safari time**

Today you will visit the Chameleon Craft Market, the biggest craft center in Africa; a great place to pick up some African handicrafts and to test your haggling skills! After the market, you will drive through rural South Africa to Pilanesburg National Centre where you will enjoy a picnic and afternoon safari looking for the Big 5 in the wild. If you're lucky you might even glimpse the hippos taking their late afternoon bath!

If you are with a large group of volunteers you may be split into two smaller groups; half will go on safari on day 12, half on day 13.

### **Day 13 – Free time in Pretoria**

Today is free to explore Pretoria and pick up any last minute souvenirs. You may want to shop in town or even go on a tour of Soweto to get a real insight into the 'new' South Africa

### **Day 14 – Your last day**

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 Pretoria to Johannesburg is not covered within your project fee, but staff at the hostel will be able to make recommendations, the costs will be around US\$20 and this is easily arranged in country.

# 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 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.