



Frequently Asked Questions

How can I book and pay my South Africa Tour with Expat Explore?

You can book online through our website. You must pay a deposit of 10% when booking to secure your place. You can pay the remaining amount, with PayPal (or online credit card payment option) or an international bank transfer. If you have an Expat Explore office in your country, you can also contact the local office for more payment options. The full tour balance must be paid in full 28 days before tour departure.

How to get to South Africa?

Getting to South Africa is easy. The country boasts 3 international airports:

- 1) OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg,
- 2) Cape Town International Airport,
- 3) King Shaka International Airport in Durban.

Most international airlines flying to South Africa fly into OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, also called ORTIA for short. The airport is one of the busiest in Africa. All 3 airports are managed by the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA) - its website is a great source of South African travel information. (www.acsa.co.za)

Book your flights to Johannesburg or Cape Town, return. Also check with your airline if it's possible to arrive in the one city, and depart from the other city – this way you don't need a domestic return flight.

What if I need to book a domestic flight in South Africa to return back to Cape Town or Johannesburg at the end of my tour (or beginning)?

We offer two free airport transfers during your tour with us. (Extra airport transfers at a local fee of R275 per person)

We recommend that you book domestic flight departures so that they depart between the following hours: book flights between 10:00 and 13:00 to arrive at your destination before 15:00. Book your own flights on any day before or after your South Africa tour (depending on your route) and simply email us your domestic flight details.

Recommended domestic airlines:

Kulula.com: www.kulula.com

British Airways www.ba.com

Mango: www.flymango.com

1Time.co.za: www.1time.aero

SAA: www.flysaa.com

Airport Transfers

Two airport transfers are included in your tour package, to and from the Airport and your First night on the tour accommodation.

Extra airport transfers may be organised at a cost of R275.00 per person

Visas and Passport requirements.

You need a passport to visit South Africa. The passport needs to be valid for at least 6 months on entering the country and needs to have at least two consecutive blank pages.

Most international visitors can get visas on arrival at the airport. Visitors from most commonwealth countries will get a free entry permit valid for 90 days. Please check with the South African consulate in your country for specific Visa requirements.

To find out if you need a visa to visit South Africa, visit the South African Department of Home Affairs website which provides detailed information on South Africa's visa requirements.

The website gives particulars about which nationals require visas and which are exempt. Enquiries regarding South Africa visa information can also be obtained from South African missions in your home country, or the one nearest to you. www.home-affairs.gov.za

What happens if my visa gets rejected?

Please allow sufficient time to complete the visa process (at least these facilities 3 weeks). In the unlikely event that your visa application is unsuccessful, you will be given an option to change your date subject to availability and advance notification. If you wish cancel your tour you should notify us as soon as possible (cancellation fees apply so please look at our terms and conditions.)

Yellow fever entry requirement in South Africa

South Africa's yellow fever vaccination requirements policy has been reviewed.

As of 1 October 2011, South Africa requires all travellers journeying from yellow fever risk countries to show proof of yellow fever vaccination by means of a valid yellow fever certificate.

The tour I want is unavailable, what does this mean?

This means that the tour you want is currently fully booked so you will have to consider an alternative date.

Will I get confirmation of my payment?

As soon as your payment has been processed by our accounts team, we will send you a confirmation. Please note this maybe take anywhere between 3 and 5 working days, depending on your method of payment.

Is my deposit refundable?

No, your 10% deposit paid at the time of booking in non-refundable.

Where do the South African tours depart from?

South African coach tours usually depart between 07:00-08:00 in the morning from your hotel. Please email us your international flight details as soon as you have booked this so that we can arrange your airport transfer from the airport to the hotel.

What is included in the tour price?

The tour price includes accommodation for the duration of the tour, transport by private coach, breakfasts and some of your dinners as per your itinerary, guided walking tours and excursions as per your itinerary. On top of this, you will have a professional guide to assist you along the way with great tips and handy advice! Please refer to the tour page on the website where a full breakdown is given.

What kind of accommodation do you use on your tours?

We use a mix 3 and 4 star hotels and safari lodges with private en-suite bathrooms. Clean linen is always included, so you do not need to bring a sleeping bag. We have searched and invested in excellent options. You have the option to prolong your stay in South Africa before or after the tour. Please contact the Expat Explore office to book you pre- or post accommodation in the hotel to receive special rates on offer.

What about room sharing?

We don't offer single supplements for our South African tours. If you are a single traveller, you will be roomed with a fellow traveller of the same gender. If you booked separately but have a friend on the tour and would like to share rooms, please send an email to the Expat Explore office.

What is the average age of your groups?

The average age of groups is between 20 to 49 years old. Although we do welcome "older travellers" who are still young at heart!

Are children allowed and is there a discount?

Our tours are not suitable for young children. So we set a minimum age limit of 12 years old. There is no discount.

How many other people will be on my tour?

It depends on how many other people book! There could be between 25-45 other people so you have the opportunity to make lots of friends!

Security and safety in South Africa?

South African safety precautions are not unlike those recommended when travelling to other countries and major cities. Safety precautions in South Africa mostly require vigilance on behalf of the traveller and sound travel preparation.

Important South African safety advice includes avoiding deserted areas at night; securing valuables such as photographic equipment and wallets on your person; and leaving expensive, flashy jewellery in your hotel safe while out and about.

Other safety precautions you may want to consider include:

- Being vigilant of your luggage and other belongings (never leave them unattended).
- Storing valuables in your hotel safe.
- Limit the amount of money you carry on your person. Also, don't accept offers of assistance at ATMs and keep your pin numbers secure.
- When using a credit card in restaurants, ask the waiter to bring a portable credit card machine to your table. Report stolen or lost cards immediately.
- Carry a current road map with you. If you're in any doubt about a place you wish to visit or how to get there, have a word with your hotel concierge first or contact the National Tourism Information and Safety Line on 083 123 2345 for assistance.
- Follow the advice of your professional tour guide and tour driver.

Do you have storage/left luggage facilities?

No, we don't have these facilities.

Do I get allocated a seat on the coach?

No, we do not allocate seats as we like to encourage you to change seats each day!

What time does each day start on tour?

Generally we like to make an early start, so that you can spend more time at each destination.

Where possible your guide will arrange a later start. On your free days you can have a lie in!

Can you cater for my dietary?

Yes, before the tour starts you will receive an email from us asking you about your dietary requirements. There is always a "vegetarian" option which does not include meat. Also, we eat the local cuisine of the places we are staying so cannot offer your native cuisine.

How much spending money do I need for the South African tours?

This is up to you of course, but as an indication you might want to budget for about ZAR500.00 per day. This does not include optional excursions. Lunches and some meals are not included. We do not include entrance fees to attractions and museums. We do, however, provide you with free time to see everything you want, and our guides will have all the information on pricings and locations so you can manage your own budget.

Do I need to change money before the tour?

It's entirely up to you, but we don't recommend carrying large amounts of cash. You can come equipped with some South African Rands or change money as you go. There are also cash machines at or near most of our hotels and resorts where you can withdraw cash. If you intend to do this then make sure that your card issuer is aware that you will be travelling

What about payment options in South Africa?

Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted and ATM facilities as well as online banking are available in all towns.

South African Currency?

South Africa uses the Rand (ZAR) and credit cards are accepted.

Bear in mind when shopping in South Africa that foreign tourists can get a VAT refund on purchases. A tax invoice must be requested from the vendor for the items purchased. The invoice must bear the seller's name and address, their VAT registration number, a description of the purchased goods, the cost of the goods in South African Rands, and the amount of VAT charged. VAT is levied at a rate of 14%. For purchases of more than R3000, the buyer's name and address must appear on the tax invoice.

Shopping in South Africa?

Shopping in South Africa is a very popular pastime for South Africans. International visitors are often attracted to goods that are proudly South African and the attractive exchange rate against other major currencies means these can be picked up for a song.

South African wines are another sought-after purchase, and most wine estates and dealers will make arrangements to ship your selection abroad.

Colourful curios and carvings, representing a myriad of South African and African cultures, are also popular purchases and include wooden and soft stone carvings, beading, weaving, pottery and basket ware. Articles imaginatively made of ostrich eggshell, wire and recycled goods are sought after.

Telecommunications in South Africa?

South African telecommunication infrastructure is cutting edge, and connections to countries beyond our borders are easy and efficient.

Weather in South Africa?

South Africa's climatic conditions generally range from Mediterranean in the south-western corner of the country to temperate in the interior plateau, and subtropical in the north-east. A small region in the north-west has a desert climate.

South African temperatures, which are measured in centigrade, average at highs of 28°C to average lows of 8°C in the summer months while winter temperatures range from 1°C at night to around 18°C in the day.

Generally the days are sunny, but it cools down considerably at night. Temperatures in the north don't vary too much from that at the coast, but these interior plateau regions experience summer rainfall, and the Western Cape Coastal regions experience winter rainfall.

Our relatively mild and short winters do not justify the expense of central heating in many buildings and homes, which may lead visitors to think the winter is colder than it actually is. The answer to this is dressing in layers.

What to wear in South Africa?

South Africans are casual and laid back, so don't bring your best evening gowns.

For the summers, bring clothes that are cool, light and comfortable because summer temperatures can get well into the 30 degree range in some areas. Some rain gear / a rain jacket will come in handy. Don't forget a bathing suit.

The winters are generally mild, comparing favourably with European summers. But we do get some days when temperatures dive, especially in high-lying areas, so be prepared with jerseys and jackets and an extra pair of nice warm socks.

Always bring a hat, sunglasses and sun block as the sun can be strong even in the winter months.

For game viewing, a couple of neutral-toned items will be useful, but there's no need to go overboard. A good pair of walking shoes is also advisable. For the evening, if you are dining at an upmarket restaurant or seeing a show, smart-casual attire is recommended.

Electricity in South Africa?

The South African electricity supply is 220/230 volts AC 50 HZ.

Most plugs are 15 amp 3-prong or 5 amp 2-prong, with round pins. If an adaptor is called for, consider bringing one with you, although they can be purchased locally.

US-made appliances may need a transformer.

Most hotel rooms have 110 volt outlets for electric shavers and appliances.

South Africa's languages?

There are 11 official languages spoken in South Africa and many unofficial ones.

English is the official language of business, politics and media but on South Africa's streets you'll find a heady mix of languages spoken from all over the world, most notably Africa, Europe and Asia.

Afrikaans

English

IsiNdebele

IsiXhosa

IsiZulu

Sesotho sa Leboa

Sesotho

Setswana

siSwati

Tshivenda

Xitsonga

What Extra Options are offered on tour by Expat Explore?

Extra options, excursions or day tours are available on the tour itinerary for example bungee jumping, safari drives etc. These options are not included in your tour price and extra payments must be made directly to the various tour operators or your official Tour Guide accompanying you through South Africa.

What Day-Tours are offered as extras by Expat Explore?

A comprehensive list of day tours is available. See Webpage or contact the Expat office directly for more information on your choices.

Special individual day tours may be organised, please contact the Expat office for specific information for various activities and sightseeing possibilities.

What are the top 10 reasons to visit South Africa?

1. Affordable

During these tough times, who doesn't want an affordable holiday? In SA, you can even afford luxury and have spending money for shopping and other treats!

2. Natural Beauty

South Africa's scenic wonders are legendary. From Table Mountain to God's Window, our mountains, forests, coasts and deserts will feast your eye and lift your spirit...

3. World-class facilities

Whether you opt for Afro-chic or authentic Africa, you'll find it easy to get around, find a comfortable place to stay, have a great meal, connect.

4. Adventure

South Africa is the adventure capital of the world. With over 130 adventures and counting, there is something for everyone from mountain walks to shark cage-diving!

5. Good Weather

In sunny South Africa, our great weather invites you to enjoy the outdoors, play golf year-round and take advantage of the nearly 3000km coastline...

6. Rainbow Nation

The Rainbow Nation celebrates all its African and immigrant cultures. Find out how friendly our people are whilst you try your tongue at 11 official languages!

7. Diverse Experiences

Go almost anywhere in SA and experience the ultimate combo of nature, wildlife, culture, adventure, heritage and vibe – you're spoilt for choice, so pack it in!

8. Wildlife

Warning! Watching wildlife is addictive. First you start with the Big Five in so many ways, then whales, penguins, meerkats, wild dogs, birds, dung beetles...

9. Freedom Struggle

Discover a nation's struggle for freedom whilst following the footsteps of Mandela, Hector Pieterse and many other celebrated revolutionaries. It will touch and inspire you.

10. Responsible Tourism

In SA you can travel with care as you explore our protected areas, contribute to social and conservation projects, buy recycle art and stay green.