

Travel Tips

WONDERS OF SOUTH AFRICA

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

****Please check your own country's international travel advice as well as the airline requirements before travel.****

UK guests please see the UK Government Foreign Office Travel website for latest entry and exit advice;
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-africa/entry-requirements>

US guests please see Travel State website; <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/SouthAfrica.html>

IMPORTANT - As some of our South Africa tours also travel into Zimbabwe, please ensure you also check the requirements for entry to Zimbabwe, as they differ to those for South Africa.

Passports:

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months beyond the period of stay. It is advised to have 1 blank page in your passport. Please be sure to fill out the "Emergency Next of Kin" section in your passport.

Visas:

US, Canadian, British, Australian and New Zealand citizens may enter South Africa for up to 90 days for tourist purposes without a visa. All other nationalities must check the visa entry requirements before your departure. You need sufficient funds and a return airline ticket. For up to date entry requirement please visit this site.

****Note:** Visa and entry requirements, regulations, and restrictions can change. Ensure you check the current requirements well in advance of travel.

Travel Insurance:

All passengers must have valid travel insurance before traveling, including health and cancellation insurance. Please ensure you have a copy of your insurer's 24-hour emergency telephone number and your policy number.

Medical Conditions and Personal Medication:

Please advise us prior to travel if you have any medical conditions requiring special attention during your trip. If you have a specific medical condition, it is wise to carry the relevant doctor's prescription with you.

Important:

Pack a sufficient supply of any medications you are taking, copies of the prescriptions and the contact details of your doctor. Please note, some countries require that prescription drugs be carried in their original container, with the label clearly visible. In the event of you losing your medication, a qualified pharmacist should be able to source a replacement.

Travelling with CPAP or other Medical Machines:

Please inform The Big Journey Company that you are travelling with such a device as early as possible, and well before you travel. Please note, if you require distilled or ionised water, you must inform The Big Journey Company of this at the time of booking, so we are able to make preparations with our ground agents. There may be an additional charge for this.

LUGGAGE

What to Pack and Wear:

Due to the vast size of the country and the various place we will visit, the weather in South Africa will be variable. You will need clothes for hot weather as well as a warm, waterproof jacket and some layers, as it may be cooler in the evening. For the safaris it's wise to pack khaki-coloured clothing as it blends better into the bush. Pack light and remember the basic essentials. We would also recommend a good pair of lightweight binoculars.

Insect repellent and sun cream are also essential items. Don't forget your camera, with charger/spare batteries and memory cards.

Luggage Allowances:

International airlines are often strict about the size and weight of checked in baggage and carry-on luggage. Prior to your departure, please contact your airline or visit their website for specific luggage requirements, as size and weight limitations may vary according to the airline and destination.

South Africa & Zimbabwe Tours – These tours include internal flights in South Africa and Zimbabwe. You are permitted one piece of hold luggage per person, at a maximum weight of 20kg (44lb) per piece and dimensions of (H) 90cm + (W) 72cm + (L) 45cm (including handle, wheels and pockets) total dimensions 207cm per piece.

You are also permitted to carry one piece of hand luggage per person up to 8kg (18lb), with maximum dimension of 56cm(L) 36cm (W) 23cm (H), so that it fits under the seat in front of you or in the overhead lockers. Additionally, one small personal item (e.g. a small purse, small laptop case) is also allowed. Larger laptop bags and standard/bulkier briefcases will NOT be considered a personal item and will count as the normal piece of hand baggage. These luggage restrictions apply equally for flights within South Africa and to Victoria Falls.

LANGUAGE

South Africa is a multilingual country and there are 11 official languages, namely: English, Afrikaans, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. Although only about 10% of the population has English as its mother tongue, English is the language most widely understood, and is the second language of the majority of South Africans.

TIME ZONE

The time zone in South Africa is GMT+2, 2 hours ahead of London GMT. There is no daylight-saving time.

WEATHER

South Africa is in the southern hemisphere, so it is summer there when it's winter in Europe and North America. Our South Africa tours generally operate during their shoulder season, at the end of summer and beginning of autumn. South Africa is known for its long sunny days, hence the title, 'Sunny South Africa'. Most of the nine provinces have summer rainfall, except for the Western Cape, which experiences winter rainfall. Average day temperatures in summer range from a minimum of 15°C to a maximum of 28°C (59°-82°F), depending on your location. In winter, average day temperatures are 19-23°C (66-73°F), although it can get chilly at night, especially at altitude. Cape Town's best seasons are spring and autumn. Autumn offers a respite from the summer heat and the vineyards of the Cape Winelands are starting to change colour.

ELECTRICITY

In South Africa, the standard voltage is 230V and the frequency is 50Hz. South Africa uses a number of plugs, but the most common are the European-style 2 prong plug, or a 15 amp 3-prong plug (Types C, M and N). You will need to bring an adaptor and/or converter depending on which electrical appliances you bring with you. With a few exceptions (in deep rural areas), electricity is available almost everywhere but South Africa has power outages and so it is wise to carry a torch with you.

MOBILES & INTERNET COMMUNICATION

Mobile coverage is widely available across South Africa, be sure to check with your mobile provider for coverage and rates, as data roaming can be extremely expensive.

MONEY

Currency:

The currency of South Africa is the Rand R (ZAR). Credit cards are widely accepted at, but it is advisable to carry money in cash with you as well. ATMs are widely available in cities, but not so in smaller villages.

Visa and Mastercard are the most widely accepted credit cards however many places do not accept cards such as Diners Club or American Express. South Africa is well known for credit card scams, and often transactions are blocked. If you intend to use any of your debit or credit cards whilst away, please make sure that you contact your bank before you leave to inform them that you will be travelling in order not to cause any problems using your cards or whilst on the trip.

Important Note - A prepaid currency card, used in the same way as a standard credit card can be a good idea. You can load it with money in the currency of the countries (more than one is possible) you are travelling to and has the advantage of not being linked to your bank account in case of loss/theft.

Gratuities:

After feedback from previous guests, we offer a group tipping package for this tour, more information on this will be shared in the 'Pre-Tour Emails'.

WATER

The tap water in urban areas of South Africa is usually of high quality and safe to drink. It's quite safe to have ice in drinks and to eat salads. However, when travelling to remote rural areas and the bush you should drink bottled water only. Bottled water can be bought at supermarkets, kiosks and many shops.

SAFETY & SECURITY

As visitors, tourists may be more vulnerable to petty crimes like pickpocketing and scams, so we recommend staying aware and taking simple precautions.

RELIGION

About 80% of South Africa's population is Christian. Other major religious groups include Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Buddhists. A minority does not belong to any of the major religions. The Constitution guarantees freedom of worship.

PHOTOGRAPHY

South Africa offers photo opportunities one after another. You will return with many photos that can never be repeated. Remember to pack your camera, along with the charger, spare batteries and a spare memory card!

ARRIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

Please note, standard hotel check-in is around 3pm, so should you arrive earlier than this, your room may not be available upon arrival. For those arriving early morning, we will do everything we can to work with the hotel to get you an earlier check-in subject to availability.

If you have any other questions that we have not covered here; then please send us an e-mail to:
info@thebigjourneycompany.com

Disclaimer: The above information is provided as a guideline only. The Big Journey Company assumes no liability for any errors or omissions in this document.

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