



TRAVELLING TIPS

1. Carry rucksacks as **hand luggage** instead of pull-along bags to avoid over packing and paying penalties.
2. Pack **miniature-sized toiletries** and check whether the hotel has a hairdryer. Most hotels do provide this, however, please check in advance
3. When travelling with sun cream and other **liquids**, these should be wrapped in plastic bags to avoid damage and leakages. All liquids over 100 ml must be packed in the checked suitcase.
4. Aircrafts can get very cold, therefore always carry a **jersey** or dress in layers.
5. If you plan on **shopping**, pack an extra bag [flat packed] so that this can be filled with new purchases.
6. Put a return address **label** and phone number on all **luggage** and valuable items in case they get lost.
7. Carry a flash drive containing scans of any **valuable documentation** such as your itinerary, passport, visas, marriage certificates etc
8. Carry a range of **zip-lock bags** in various sizes in which you can put loose change, toiletries etc
9. **Tipping** – Gratuities are appreciated but are completely at your own discretion. Here are some guidelines:

Porters, Bellman and other baggage handlers

R 5 (\$1) per bag.

Rangers

R 150 – R 200 (\$20) per person per day

Trackers

R 50 – R 100 (\$10) per person per day

Drivers

R 50 – R 100 (\$10) per day

Transfers & Taxis

R 20 (\$5) per trip

Restaurant Waiters

10 % of the bill unless service is already included.

SAFETY HINTS AND TIPS

When visiting any major city, visitors should take certain health and safety precautions. Ours is no different. To make your visit as enjoyable as possible, here are some basic tips:

HEALTH TIPS

High-quality tap (faucet) water is available across the City and it is both palatable and safe to drink straight from the tap.

The quality of the **food is excellent** and South Africa has some of the top restaurants in the world.

Medical facilities in South Africa are world-class. There is an excellent network of both state and private hospitals.

We have a warm sunny climate and you should **wear sunscreen** and a hat whenever you are out of doors during the day, particularly between 10am and 4pm.

If you're an adult, you won't need any **inoculations** unless you're travelling from a yellow-fever endemic area (the yellow fever belt of Africa or South America), in which case you will need certification to prove your inoculation status when you arrive in the country.

Hepatitis B inoculations are recommended **for children** up to the age of 12 who have not completed the series of injections as infants.

VISITOR SAFETY TIPS

Avoid carrying large sums of cash, carrying cameras or video cameras in plain sight and leaving belongings unattended.

Heed the advice of your hosts, Cape Town Tourism Visitor Centre staff or locals on where to go after dark. Try not to walk alone, and take special precautions at lonely lookout points, especially at dusk or after dark.

Do not allow strangers to assist you in any way at **ATMs**.

Street children and beggars may approach you for a handout. Many social workers counsel against giving money to the children as it usually gets handed over to an older person or is used to purchase drugs.

At night, park in a secure, well-lit area.

Keep **photocopies of all valuable documents** in a safe place.

To report any safety incident, call the following numbers:

All emergencies from your cell phone – 112

All emergencies from a landline – 107

South African Police Services (SAPS) – 10111

OPENING HOURS

Most **shops and businesses** are open between 09h00 and 17h00 on weekdays and on Saturdays until 13h00.

Major malls tend to stay open later: up to 21h00 during the week, on weekends and on most public holidays.

Government agencies keep to limited weekday only hours, often closing around 15h00.

Most **banks** close at 15h30 weekdays, but are open on Saturday mornings (from around 09h00 to 11h00).

Muslim-owned businesses close between noon and 13h00 on Fridays.

Most stores, cinemas and restaurants are open on most **public holidays**. The exceptions are Christmas Day, 25 December and New Year's Day, 1 January.

Money

Currency: The local currency is the South African rand. Foreign exchange facilities are widely available and can be found at the V&A Waterfront, Cape Town International Airport and at bureaux de change in various major shopping centres.

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) accept most international bank and credit cards.

Credit cards: South Africa has a modern and sophisticated banking and commercial system, and most shops and hotels accept all major credit cards.

VAT: South Africa has a Value Added Tax system of 14% on purchases and services. Foreign visitors can reclaim VAT on collective purchases of more than R250.

BANKS AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

With a favourable exchange rate for many international currencies, you'll find South Africa a very inexpensive destination. And an easy one – our financial institutions are world-class, with no shortage of banks, bureau de change and automatic tellers.

Rands and cents

South Africa's unit of currency is the rand, which is divided into 100 cents. Coins come in denominations of 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, R1, R2 and R5, and notes in denominations of R10, R20, R50, R100 and R200.

How far will my money go?

A long, long way. With a favourable exchange rate for the major international currencies, you'll find South Africa a very inexpensive destination.

Banking made easy

You'll also find South Africa an easy destination. From the moment you step off the plane you'll start seeing banks, bureaux de change and automatic tellers all over.

The banks are generally open from 9am to 3.30pm Mondays through Fridays, and 8.30am to 11am on Saturdays, but those at the airports adjust their hours to accommodate international flights.

The major banks have branches as well as automated teller machines (ATMs) in most large towns – and all over the cities. International banks (see the "foreign exchange services" links below) have branches in the major cities. Thomas Cook (represented by Rennie's Travel) and American Express foreign exchange offices are also available in the major cities.

Credit cards and cash

All major credit cards can be used in South Africa, with American Express and Diners Club enjoying less universal acceptance than MasterCard and Visa. In some small towns, you may find you'll need to use cash.

When it comes to paying for fuel, you may also have to pay cash. Our filling stations can now take credit card payments – regulations allowing them to do so came into effect in July 2009. However, many filling stations (or garages, as we call them) may take a while to adjust, or may choose not to. Look out for the "cash only" notices.

Many locals have special fuel credit cards, known as garage or petrol cards, for use only at filling stations. These will still be accepted.

Road tolls, on the major routes between cities, can be paid using MasterCard or Visa.

PHONING TO AND FROM SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa has a well-developed communications infrastructure, with extensive landline phone networks and four mobile phone service providers - Cell C, MTN, Vodacom and Virgin Mobile - with far-reaching coverage.

Landline services are operated by Telkom SA Ltd, with a second operator, Neotel, currently in the process of setting up shop. Telkom public telephones use coins, phonecards or Worldcall. Phonecards and Worldcall can be purchased at most retail stores, petrol stations, post offices and airports.

You can rent mobile phones - we call them cellphones - from the airport on arrival. You should find an internet café in even the smallest towns, and the postal service works, offering the usual letter and parcel services as well as securemail, freight and courier services.

PHONING INTO SOUTH AFRICA

If you're dialling a number in South Africa, it must be preceded by:

- **+27**, South Africa's international country code (the + sign represents the international access code for the country you're calling from); and either:
 - The area code of the city or town in South Africa you're calling (leaving out the first zero), if you're calling a landline; or
 - The cellular/mobile network code (leaving out the first zero), if you're calling a cellular/mobile network.

So, for example, to phone South African Airways' call centre from abroad, you'd dial +27 11 978 5313 (Johannesburg's area code is 011 - phoning from abroad, you leave out the zero).

If it were a mobile number, you might start dialling +27 82 ... (082 is the code for one of our main mobile networks - phoning from abroad, you leave out the zero).

Dialling codes in South Africa

The area codes of some of South Africa's major cities are: Bloemfontein 051, Cape Town 021, Durban 031, East London 043, Johannesburg 011, Pretoria 012, and Port Elizabeth 041

PHONING OUT OF SOUTH AFRICA

To make an international call from South Africa, dial 00, followed by the country code of the country you wish to call, followed by the relevant area code (if there is one), followed by the phone number.

What's my country's dialling code?

One of the quickest ways to find out is to dial Telkom's 24-hour international customer care centre - **10903** - and ask. The service is free.

Operator-assisted dialling

Telkom's international call centre - 10903 - offers 24-hour assistance to anyone wanting to make international calls or send faxes, along with general international directory information.

Home Direct

Telkom's Home Direct service allows you to call an operator in your home country free of charge, either to place a call on your "phone home" account, if you have one, or to arrange a reverse-charge call. Telkom's Phone Book lists all available country-specific Home Direct numbers in its international dialling code list. Alternatively, phone Telkom's international customer care centre at 10903.

Public phones for tourists

Telkom has placed public telephones at major tourist sites across South Africa. Coin-operated phones are blue, while cardphones are green, and both are user-friendly and compatible with hearing aid devices. They offer a reliable connection, high quality of speech, and are affordable.

Phonecards and Worldcall

Telkom's **Phonecards** and **Worldcall** are available at major outlets where the Telkom logo is displayed.

PHONING AROUND SOUTH AFRICA

If you're in South Africa and phoning a landline - whether you're phoning from a landline or a mobile phone - the number must be preceded by the area code (including the first zero) for the city or town you're phoning.

If, on the other hand, you're phoning to a mobile number, you never use an area code, only the appropriate mobile network code.

08 NUMBERS

Many businesses and organisations have special landline numbers beginning with an 08 code - 0800, 0860, 0861, and so on. (But not 082, 083 or 084, which belong to the mobile networks.) These are, in effect, national numbers - area codes are dispensed with, and callers dial the same number regardless of where they are. Note that these lines can only be accessed from within South Africa.

- 080 numbers (usually 0800) - no charge to the caller.
- 0860 numbers - the caller does not pay for any long-distance portion of the call.
- 0861 numbers - the caller is charged a flat rate for the call.

SOUTH AFRICA PHONE DIRECTORIES

For landline numbers in South Africa, Consult Telkom's phone directories. The print versions are published and millions of copies distributed free of charge every year - you'll find them in airports, hotels, offices, homes and public phone booths just about everywhere. The online versions are at:

- **Phone Book** (White Pages) - residential Telkom subscribers.
- **Yellow Pages** - businesses, services and products.

Alternatively, dial Telkom's telephonic directories:

- International - 10903
- Directory Services (Phone Book) - 1023
- Talking Yellow Pages - 10118
- Mobile Yellow Pages - SMS what you're looking for and where (eg "flowers cape town") to 34310.

HEALTH TIPS FOR TRAVELERS

Nothing can spoil a holiday more than feeling off-colour, and nothing can dull the pleasure of your holiday memories more than getting ill far from home. There are a number of health issues that you should be aware of, particularly if you're from the northern hemisphere.

However, while there are risks anywhere, South Africa has a relatively salubrious climate and our levels of water treatment, hygiene and such make it a pretty safe destination.

Inoculations

If you're an adult, you won't need any inoculations unless you're travelling from a yellow-fever endemic area (the yellow fever belt of Africa or South America), in which case you will need certification to prove your inoculation status when you arrive in South Africa.

It is recommended that you have the required inoculations four to six weeks before you travel to South Africa (a yellow fever inoculation certificate only becomes valid 10 days after inoculation - after which it remains valid for 10 years).

Hepatitis B inoculations are recommended for children up to the age of 12 who have not completed the series of injections as infants. Booster doses for tetanus and measles can also be administered.

Medical facilities

Medical facilities in cities and larger towns are world-class, but you will find that in rural areas the clinics and hospitals deal with primary health needs, and therefore do not offer the range of medical care that the large metropolitan hospitals do. Trained medical caregivers are deployed round the country, so help is never far away.

The sun

We have a warm sunny climate and sunscreen and a hat are recommended whenever you are out of doors during the day, particularly between 10:00 and 16:00, regardless of whether there is cloud cover or not.

Even if you have a dark complexion, you can still get sunburned if you are from a cooler climate and have not had much exposure to the sun. Sunglasses are also recommended wear, as the glare of the African sun can be strong.

Can I drink the water?

High-quality tap (faucet) water is available almost everywhere in South Africa, treated so as to be free of harmful micro-organisms, and in any area other than informal or shack settlements, is both palatable and safe to drink straight from the tap.

In some areas, the water is mineral-rich, and you may experience a bit of gastric distress for a day or two until you get used to it. Bottled mineral water, both sparkling and still, is readily available in most places.

Drinking water straight from rivers and streams could put you at risk of waterborne diseases - especially downstream of human settlements. The water in mountain streams, however, is usually pure and wonderful.

In the Cape, particularly, the water contains humic acid, which stains it the colour of diluted Coca-Cola - this is absolutely harmless, and the water is wonderful. You may also find this colouring in tap water in some areas. It's fine - it just looks a bit weird in the bath.

Do I need to take malaria tablets?

Many of the main tourist areas are malaria-free, so you need not worry at all. However, the Kruger National Park, the Lowveld of Mpumalanga and Limpopo, and the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal do pose a malaria risk in the summer months.

Many local people and some travellers do not take malaria prophylaxis, but most health professionals recommend you do. Consult your doctor or a specialist travel clinic for the latest advice concerning malaria prophylaxis, as it changes regularly.

Whether you take oral prophylaxis or not, always use mosquito repellent, wear long pants, closed shoes and light long-sleeved shirts at night, and sleep under a mosquito net in endemic areas (the anopheles mosquito, which carries malaria, operates almost exclusively after dark). It is advisable to avoid malarial areas if you are pregnant.

HIV/Aids

As in other countries, always take precautions when having sex. South Africa has one of the highest rates of HIV in the world.

Other health issues

Bilharzia can be a problem in some of the east-flowing rivers, but it is easily detected and treated if it is caught early. Perhaps it would be a good idea to have a routine test a month or two after you get home - just to reassure yourself.

Ticks generally come out in the early spring and may carry tickbite fever, which is easily treated. You should also be aware of hepatitis, for which you can be inoculated.

USEFUL FACTS FOR TOURISTS

What facilities are open on public holidays?

In the major cities most stores, cinemas and restaurants are open on most public holidays. The exceptions are Christmas Day, 25 December and New Year's Day, 1 January.

The calendar of South African public holidays for 2009 is:

- 1 January – New Year's Day
- 21 March – Human Rights Day
- 10 April – Good Friday (the Friday before Easter Sunday)
- 13 April – Family Day (the Monday after Easter Sunday)
- 27 April – Freedom Day
- 1 May – Workers Day
- 16 June – Youth Day
- 9 August – Women's Day
- 24 September – Heritage Day
- 16 December – Day of Reconciliation
- 25 December – Christmas Day
- 26 December – Day of Goodwill

If a public holiday falls on a Sunday, the Monday following becomes a public holiday.

Where can I smoke?

The law prohibits smoking in most public spaces, including airports and railway stations. Most restaurants have designated smoking and non-smoking areas.

South African time

South Africa does not change its clocks during the year, and there are no regional variations within the country. South African Standard Time is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean (or Universal Standard) Time, one hour ahead of Central European Winter Time, and seven hours ahead of the USA's Eastern Standard Winter Time.

Tipping

Tipping is common practice in South Africa for a range of services. In restaurants the accepted standard is around 10% of the bill, although sometimes a gratuity will be included (often in the case of a large party). Barmen are tipped a similar percentage.

Petrol stations are manned by attendants who will expect a tip of two or three rands for filling up with petrol, checking oil, water and tyre pressure and cleaning windscreens. Hotel porters should be tipped two to five rands. It is also appropriate to tip taxi drivers, tour guides and even hairdressers.

If you park a car in a populated area such as near a shopping centre, street security guards will usually ask whether they can watch over your car and in return should be paid a small fee - anything from two rands upwards.

The seasons

- Summer - mid-October to mid-February
- Autumn - February to April
- Winter - May to July
- Spring - August to October

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

There are two ways of organising a holiday. The first is to decide on the spur of the moment to head off, and do just that. It's a valid option, but you will probably have to maintain that frame of mind or you might start getting irritated at the things you forgot to organise and pack.

The more usual way is to plan ahead a bit, thus ensuring that you won't have any unpleasant surprises. Check your passport isn't about to expire, check whether you'll need visas, organise travellers' cheques well in advance, organise travel insurance and medical insurance. Check your flight details and don't forget to confirm them – including onward connections and returns. Don't forget to order special meals on flights, or children's meals, if necessary.

What to pack

Pack a while ahead. Most of the time you'll be most comfortable in light, summer-weight clothes but do pack a warm jacket, socks, good shoes and a rain jacket. Pack sunscreen – lots of it – and a hat and sunglasses. Make sure you have at least one cool shirt with a collar for sun protection. Stock up on insect repellent and, if you'll be in a malaria area, ensure you have a cool, long-sleeved shirt and cool long pants for evenings. Bring good walking shoes.

Always pack a bandanna or cotton scarf and a sarong, kanga, pareo, kikoi – whatever you want to call it. These two garments are probably the most useful and versatile items in the world. If you're spending time watching game, you should try to wear reasonably neutral colours but, really, you don't have to look like an extra on the set of *Out of Africa*. You don't need formal clothes, but you will need something pretty smart for exclusive hotels and the Blue Train.

What to take on Safari

- A variety of clothing : Light comfortable clothing for the hot days and warm windbreakers or jackets for your game drives. The Game drives are usually conducted in the early morning and the late afternoon into the evening – and it can get chilly. Clothing should be in neutral colours. Long sleeved clothing is recommended for the evenings
- Comfortable shoes
- Sunblock / Sunhats / Insect repellent
- Anti Malarial Tablets if entering a Malarial area
- Cameras with plenty of film and video camera's and binoculars – for capturing those magical moments of perhaps a Lion Kill
- Any personal medical supplies – including those for personal medical conditions.

PACKING SUGGESTIONS

Please find herewith a list of suggested items which should be used as a guideline whilst planning your trip. Please bear in mind that as mentioned above, there are luggage restrictions of between 15kg (33lbs) and 20kg (44lbs) (in a soft bag with no wheel or frame) on some light aircraft transfers and 20kg (44lbs) on most light Aircraft transfers

Clothing:

The weather in Southern Africa is generally pleasant throughout the year – warm to hot days, and cool to warm nights – with summer (September to April) being the hotter months. During our winter months however (May to August), it can get really cold at night and in the early morning, particularly when on safari, so we would like to suggest that you pack accordingly.

- Sun hat/bush hat.
- Headscarf/bandana – particularly for dusty dry regions.
- Golf-shirts and/or T-shirts – preferably with a sleeve to protect your shoulders from the sun. Long-sleeved cotton shirts.
- Shorts and/or skirts – really short skirts are not practical for getting in and out of game drive vehicles.
- Long trousers/slacks.
- Track suit.
- Pyjamas – lightweight for summer and warm/thermal for winter.
- Underwear – on game drives the roads can be bumpy and uneven so a suitable bra may be required.
- Socks – thermal options are recommended for the winter months.
- Good closed walking shoes (running/tennis shoes are fine).
- Sandals – preferably low heeled or flat if you are going on safari.
- Swimming costume.
- Lightweight jersey or fleece in summer.
- Light rain gear or jacket for summer months.
- Warm jersey or fleece plus anorak or parka in winter.
- Additionally, a scarf, gloves and beanies/woollen hats for the cold winter months.
- More formal attire for your stay at prestigious city hotels or on one of the luxury trains.

Equipment/Other:

1. Good quality sunglasses, UV protected, preferably polarised. Tinted fashion glasses are not good in strong light.
2. If you wear contact lenses, we recommend that you bring along a pair of glasses in case you get irritation from the dust.
3. Torch.
4. Southern African bird guide if you are a keen birder, e.g., Newman's or Sasol.
5. Personal toiletries (basic amenities supplied by most establishments).
6. Malaria tablets (if applicable).
7. Antihistamine tablets if you suffer from any allergies.

8. Anti nausea tablets if you suffer from motion sickness.
9. Moisturising cream and suntan lotion – SPF 30 or higher recommended.
10. Insect repellent for body application e.g. Tabard, Rid, Jungle Juice, etc.
11. Basic medical kit (aspirins, plasters, Imodium, antiseptic cream and antihistamine cream etc)
12. Tissues/Wet Wipes.
13. Visas, tickets, passports, money, credit cards, insurance details etc.
14. Camera equipment including spare batteries, chargers, film, flash cards, memory sticks etc.
15. Waterproof/dustproof bag or cover for your camera.
16. **BINOCULARS** – we highly recommended that you bring your own pair for viewing both wildlife and birds. 8x40 and 10x42 are the recommended general purpose binocular specifications.

Note 1: Bright colours and white are *not* advised whilst on safari. Camouflage clothing is not recommended for travel in southern African countries (camouflage or military-inspired clothing is prohibited when travelling in Zimbabwe).

Note 2: There may be a restriction on luggage limits on your safari – please ensure that you have the details from your agent according to your itinerary and ask your agent ahead of time if you would like details on the feasibility and costs of taking excess luggage with you on any of these restricted luggage safaris.

Drugs/medication

If you are dependent on any drugs – or medication, as we say – bring a supply and a spare prescription. (We call our drugstores "pharmacies".)

Important documents

Make two copies of all your important documents, like passports. Take one with you, in a different bag to the original, and leave one at home with a responsible, easily reachable person. Try to memorise all your important numbers - passport numbers, credit card numbers, etc. If you lose your bag, this could be an enormous help.

Can I use my hairdryer?

- Electricity is generally 220/230 volts, 15 amps, and is supplied through either 15-amp three-prong or 5-amp two-prong plugs, in both cases with round pins. If you're bringing anything electrical, bring an adapter – or you could buy one here. Generally, the 110V video chargers work safely on the 220V supply. Television is on the PAL system.

Spectacles, contact lenses

Bring spare spectacles, and/or a copy of your prescription. If you wear contact lenses, consider using disposables for a short holiday, especially if you're planning to river raft, dive or such. Also bring spectacles, as the dry dusty environment of some game farms may irritate your eyes.

If you've forgotten anything – don't panic. This is not the back of beyond, and you can buy whatever you need – probably at a good price.

And pack a camera – you'll want to save your wonderful memories. You can buy film anywhere, and camera batteries in any city.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT PRECAUTIONS ARE TAKEN AGAINST MALARIA