**Herewith some handy tips and guidance to assist you with your planning of your tour!**

**Weather:**

The greater part of the region receives summer rains, with the exception of the Western Cape, which is a winter rainfall region. The world climate is however on its head and we cannot guarantee what the weather will be like.

Southern Africa does not have lengthy distinct Autumn and Spring times, but in general these are our seasons:

Summer: November to March

Autumn: April to May

Winter: June to August

Spring: September to October

For comprehensive weather forecasts, please go to [www.accuweather.com](http://www.accuweather.com). Links to forecasts in popular areas:

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| --- | --- |
| **South Africa:**[Johannesburg](https://www.accuweather.com/en/za/johannesburg/305448/weather-forecast/305448)[Sun City/Pilanesberg](https://www.accuweather.com/en/za/sun-city/306096/weather-forecast/306096)[Madikwe](https://www.accuweather.com/en/za/madikwe/299776/weather-forecast/299776)[Cape Town](https://www.accuweather.com/en/za/cape-town/306633/weather-forecast/306633)[Knysna (Garden Route)](https://www.accuweather.com/en/za/knysna/301196/weather-forecast/301196)[Port Elizabeth](https://www.accuweather.com/en/za/port-elizabeth/304827/weather-forecast/304827)[Durban](https://www.accuweather.com/en/za/durban/305605/weather-forecast/305605)[St Lucia (Hluhluwe)](https://www.accuweather.com/en/za/hluhluwe/298995/weather-forecast/298995)[Hoedspruit (Kruger)](https://www.accuweather.com/en/za/hoedspruit/1147501/weather-forecast/1147501)**Botswana** [Chobe / Kasane](https://www.accuweather.com/en/bw/kasane/242276/weather-forecast/242276)[Central Kalahari / Makgadikgadi](https://www.accuweather.com/en/bw/rakops/32527/weather-forecast/32527) [Maun](https://www.accuweather.com/en/bw/maun/34366/weather-forecast/34366)**Eswatini (Swaziland)** [Ezulwini Valley](https://www.accuweather.com/en/sz/ezulwini/307975/weather-forecast/307975) | **Mozambique:** [Maputo](https://www.accuweather.com/en/mz/maputo/242431/weather-forecast/242431) [Vilaculos](https://www.accuweather.com/en/mz/vilanculos/243693/weather-forecast/243693)**Namibia:** [Windhoek](https://www.accuweather.com/en/na/windhoek/243939/weather-forecast/243939) [Sesriem / Sossuvlei](https://www.accuweather.com/en/na/sesriem/243462/weather-forecast/243462) [Swakopmund](https://www.accuweather.com/en/na/swakopmund/242933/weather-forecast/242933) [Etosha](https://www.accuweather.com/en/na/oshakati/360438/weather-forecast/360438)**Zambia:** [Livingstone (Victoria Falls)](https://www.accuweather.com/en/zm/livingstone/355959/weather-forecast/355959) [Luangwa](https://www.accuweather.com/en/zm/chibembe/353044/weather-forecast/353044) [Kafue](https://www.accuweather.com/en/zm/kafue/354528/weather-forecast/354528) **Zimbabwe:** [Victoria Falls](https://www.accuweather.com/en/zw/victoria-falls/354760/weather-forecast/354760) [Hwange](https://www.accuweather.com/en/zw/hwange/354758/weather-forecast/354758) [Bulawayo (Matopos)](https://www.accuweather.com/en/zw/bulawayo/352477/weather-forecast/352477) [Kariba (Mana Pools)](https://www.accuweather.com/en/zw/kariba/354671/weather-forecast/354671) |

**Dressing for Safaris:**

The difference between day and night temperatures can be extreme and the best way to dress is in layers that you can take off and put back on as required. We very seldom experience sub-zero temperatures, unless you are in the mountainous areas such as the Drakensberg.

On safari most people wear shorts and a T-shirt during the day and put on long sleeved shirts and long pants in the evening for warmth as well as protection from mosquitoes. Should you be particularly sensitive to the sun a loose cotton shirt is essential during the day.
White is not a suitable colour for these activities. Firstly, it increases your visibility quotient to the animals you are wanting to get a closer look at, and secondly, it will get dirty very quickly.
A fleece or sweater and a windbreaker for game drives, because it is highly possible that you may go out on a hot day but be faced with a chilly evening on your return.  Some areas have a steep temperature gradient, i.e. Very hot days and very cool nights.

Remember that layering your clothing will keep you warmer than relying on one thick item.

**Most places offer laundry services, so you don’t need to pack your entire wardrobe.**

**Clothing to Pack:**
Khaki cotton pants

Jeans
Shorts
Long sleeved shirts (for sun protection as well as warmth).
A light sweater or sweatshirt
A lightweight, waterproof windbreaker
Short-sleeved shirts or T-shirts
Underwear and socks

Swim and beachwear

Scarf
Comfortable walking boots or running shoes – in most cases heavy duty hiking boots are unnecessary

Flip flops

A hat with a brim (baseball caps might cover your nose but not your ears and neck).
The African sun can be very harsh. Sunburn on safari, in the heat, is not fun.

**Essentials:**

Sunglasses and extra contact lenses if you use them
Personal toiletries, including moisturiser, lip balm and sunblock
Insect repellent (can also be bought locally)
Good quality sunglasses plus protective case
Handiwipes or ‘Babywipes’ are handy (can also be bought locally)
Basic sewing kit with needle and thread
Personal First Aid kit with plasters, anti-bacterial ointment, pain tablets
If you take prescription medicines, bring a supply for your entire trip (pack this in your hand luggage!!), as these are not available on safari. Also bring a copy of your script in case some pesky border official wants to know what your medication is for. Please note that you may be very far from any medical facility. For detailed and/or definitive medical advice, please consult your physician. Your medical requirements are your responsibility.

Travel plug adapter – this will depend on the areas you travel to, so one that has various options is great to have.

**Optional:**
Camera and film or memory card and batteries.

Binoculars

**Health requirements:**

Please consult your doctor for advice on malaria precautions before travel to Africa. Please check what vaccinations are required as these can change from time to time.

Anyone who takes any special medication should take enough supplies to last the visit.

Most popular safari areas are malaria areas and you should take precautions for this.

Yellow fever certificates are required for entry into most Southern African countries if you have travelled through the yellow fever belt.

Ticks can be found in Africa’s wilderness areas. To avoid getting bitten when going on bush walks, guests are advised to take precautions by wearing long trousers, socks and boots. Please check yourself carefully after walking in the bush. Please note that there is a possibility that tick bites could lead to tick bite fever. Symptoms include fever, headaches and painful, enlarged lymph glands in the area of the bite. If you experience these symptoms after returning home, please visit your doctor and advise them of the possibility of tick bite fever.

**Handy advice:**

Make sure your bank knows you are traveling and the countries you will be visiting, so that they don’t block your card thinking it is fraudulent transactions.

Also activate your bank card of choice for international cash withdrawals, so that you can withdraw local currency at an ATM. You will find ATM’s in all major towns and cities but be warned that smaller towns might not have ATM’s and at present withdrawing cash in Zimbabwe is not possible at all.

If you use a smart phone, install Whatsapp that will allow you to make free calls and messages when connected to Wi-fi. Your own service provider may also have a package that allows you a certain amount of data on roaming at a reasonable price, so be sure to check with them what your options are. Beware of general roaming contracts as the charges can be exorbitant!

**Tipping / Gratuities:**

Tipping and how much to give is always a tricky question. Although tipping is not compulsory, it is always very much appreciated and it is customary to even give the fuel attendant or person watching your parked car something. Nobody can force you to pay a tip or how much to tip. As an indication, herewith a general tipping guide:

**Restaurants:** 10% of the total bill (note that the waiter will usually bring the credit card machine to your table and that you need to add the tip BEFORE they process your payment.

**Guides:** It is customary to tip your guide about US$10 per guest per day

**Trackers:** In some game reserves you will also have a Tracker and the customary tip is US45 per guest per day

**Transfer drivers:** The customary tip is 10% of the fare or around $5 per local transfer

**Lodge / camp staff:** $10 per guest per day

On safari, the custom is to give the guide and tracker their tips directly and give the general staff tip to the person you are settling your account with on check-out. Most places have either a tip box, or will provide envelopes for this purpose. Please speak to the duty manager if you are not sure what to do.

**Social responsibility**

**Begging:**

We don’t recommend giving money to beggars. It is better to give donations to established charities that help the homeless or street children or schools. Exercise books, pens and pencils are useful gifts but not money or sweets as they create a dependency culture. Please contact us for advice on how best to get involved in helping the disadvantaged.

**Donations**:

In line with the above, we believe there is need everywhere in the world; however, it is sometimes difficult to identify specific needs in places far from home. Over the years, guests who have travelled with us, want to make meaningful contributions to help meet the needs of the places they visit. Such contributions are one way of expressing appreciation for the experiences and hospitality they enjoyed in other lands. This in turn contributes towards conservation of the places visited as the communities appreciate the gifts/donations from guests who come to enjoy the natural beauty around them.

We have partnered with the local schools and orphanages in the areas our guests frequent and will gladly drop-off your gifts, or if your schedule allows it can include a visit to these establishments in your tour and you can hand any such gifts over in person. Listed here are the specific needs that we feel will assist community project(s) so you can choose exactly what to pack or may get in contact if you have any other ideas.

**General School Supplies**: Chalk, Coloured Construction Paper, Coloured Pencils, Compasses, Crayons, Dry-Erase Markers, Erasers, Glue Sticks, Handheld Pencil Sharpeners, Markers, Pencils, Pens, Protractors, Rulers, and Solar Calculators.

**Reference Materials**: (English) Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias

**Flash Cards**: (English) Alphabet, Math, and Word

**Wall Charts**: (English) Human Body, Language, Math, Science, and World Maps

**Text/Reading Books**: (English) Age Appropriate Story Books, Biology, General Science, Health, Language/Grammar, and Math

**Art Supplies**: Craft Scissors

**Computer Hardware/Software**: Educational Software, Flash Drives/Memory Sticks, Printers, Printer Cartridges, Solar-Powered Working Laptops, USB Cables, Working Laptops and Tablets

**Educational Games/Toys**: Connect Four, Puzzles, and Stuffed Animals/Soft Toys

Sports/Outdoor Activity: Frisbees, Inflation Pumps, Jump Ropes, Netball/Basketballs, Soccer Balls, and Tennis Balls

**Clothing/Shoes**: New or Gently Used Children’s Clothing and Shoes

**First Aid/Health**: Antibiotic Ointment, Band-Aids, and Sanitary Napkins.

**Note**: Candy and balloons are not on the needs list as they are harmful for the children and the environment. Instead of taking candy or balloons, use that space for additional requested supplies, as they are priceless.

Please note that you should never leave items behind in your room with the idea that the housekeeper / cleaner can take it, or even give it to them directly. This can cause confusion, or someone being accused of theft, as someone might have left an item behind by accident and may want it returned. If you want to leave something behind with the idea that someone who needs it should have it, the best it always to hand it to the duty manager.

You are thus NOT doing anyone a favour by leaving stuff behind in your room, thinking you are being kind. Most establishments have some form of charity they support and will give items / gifts to their charity or divide it equally among their staff at appropriate times. Any gift you would like to leave, whether be it clothing or toiletries you have used and don’t want to take with you, or specially bought gits such as stationery etc, is always greatly appreciated, but needs to be given to the right responsible person.