

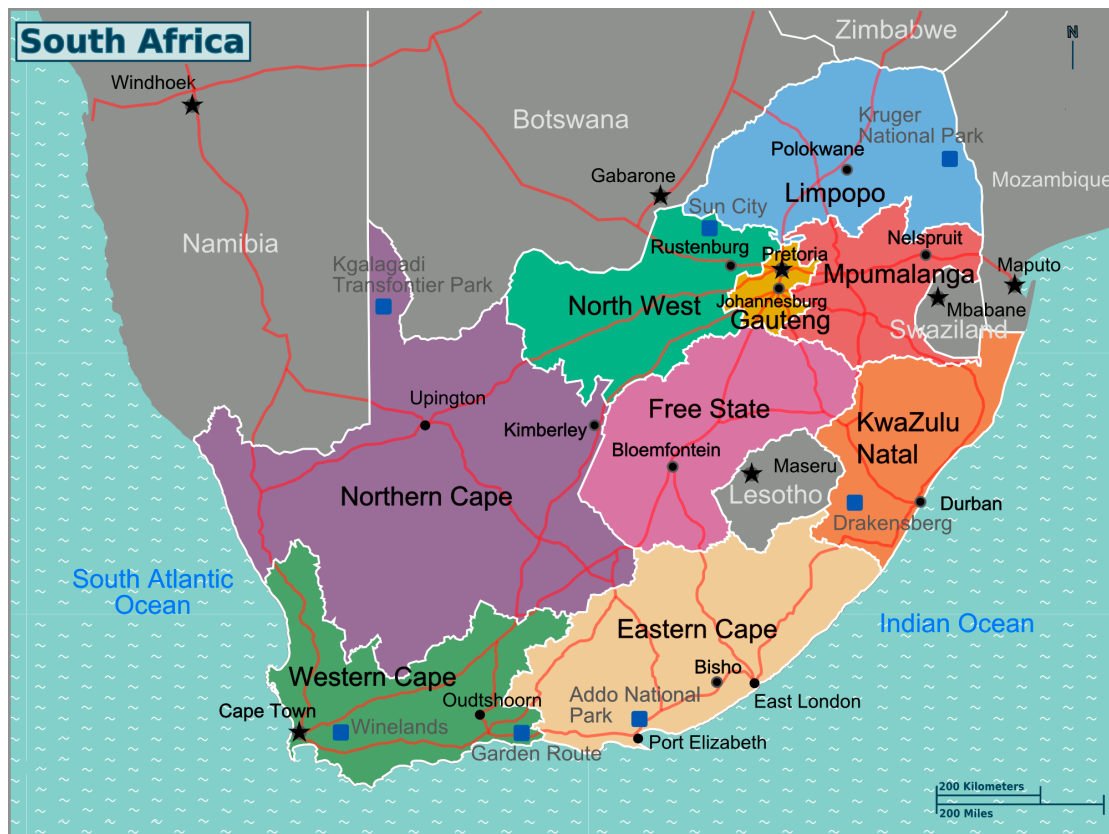
# African Sojourns

Specialists in Personalised Travel

## SOUTH AFRICA COUNTRY INFORMATION



*In preparation for your South African Sojourn please find below some interesting facts about South Africa. For further information you can visit the official South African Tourism Authority's website: [www.southafrica.net](http://www.southafrica.net)*



### ***The country:***

*At the southernmost tip of the African continent, flanked to the west by the Atlantic Ocean and to the south and east by the Indian Ocean, is the Republic of South Africa. This fairly new democracy, aptly called "The Rainbow Nation", is a colourful combination of ethnic cultures living in a land of scenic contrasts. South Africa occupies 1 223 410 sq. km (472659 sq. miles) and stretches from The Limpopo River in the north to Cape Agulhas in the south. It is five times the size of Britain, twice as big as France is about one eighth of the size of the United States. South Africa borders Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe to the north, and Mozambique and Swaziland to the Northeast.*

**Currency:**

*The South African Rand (ZAR) is the legal tender. You can change money at most city hotels, local banks or at the airport. Most banks and airports have ATM machines where you can use your international credit cards to obtain local currency. Visa and MasterCard are usually accepted throughout. Safari Camps will not change money so change your Rand before you arrive in the camps.*

**You will need money for the following:**

- *Tips.*
- *Road tolls and fuel if you are renting a car.*
- *Souvenirs and personal items.*
- *Other items not included in your pre-paid trip.*

**Tipping:**

*Tipping is not compulsory, if, however, you want to tip because you have received good service our general recommendation is to tip moderately - in accordance with the level and quality of service provided. The following guidelines are generally accepted practice for a couple / family travelling together. Tips are generally given at the end of a stay. See the separate attachment for further information.*

**Passports and Visas:**

- *You must have a valid passport that does not expire for at least six months after your return home date.*
- *When entering South Africa, you must have at least 2 blank visa pages (not endorsement pages) to enable the entry visa to be issued.*
- *If travelling with children 17 years and younger you must bring the original birth certificates showing both parents names who are travelling.*

**Malaria:**

*Malaria area occurs in the north eastern parts of South Africa (Mpumalanga, Kruger Park, Swaziland, Kwa-Zulu Natal) and the time of year when it is most active is from mid January to April after the rains. However, if you become ill on your return (high fever and similar symptoms to Flu), make sure that your doctor does everything necessary to establish that your illness is not malaria. It is essential to seek specialist advice - a delay of even 24 hours can be dangerous. Prompt and proper treatment of malaria should always be successful. Six/seven days is the minimum incubation period.*

**Tick Bite Fever:**

*Ticks are found throughout Southern Africa and contracting tick bite fever is increasingly common. "Tick bite fever is an infection caused by bacteria from the Rickettsial family, transmitted by infected ticks to humans in their saliva when they bite. The bacteria can also infect through small skin abrasions when the tick is crushed on your skin. Tick bites most often occur when hiking or camping in wilderness areas, particularly where there is long grass. The incubation period (time from the infected bite to the appearance of symptoms) is 5-11 days. Symptoms vary depending on the bacterial species, your age and current health status. African tick bite fever is usually mild, thus serious complications and death are rare. In most cases you will get better in about two weeks without treatment. As with most things, prevention is better than cure and early diagnosis speeds recovery. Try to avoid tick bites by wearing long sleeved shirts, long pants and shoes when you walk in the bush; apply insect repellent to exposed skin and always check yourself after you have walked in the bush"*

<http://www.ar.co.za/articles/tickbite.html>

**Yellow fever:**

*If you are arriving into South Africa from a yellow fever infected area you will need to show your yellow fever inoculation certificate. This includes, but is not exclusive to counties such as Kenya and Tanzania. If you are not sure of the requirement, please contact us.*

**The sun:**

*Always take precautions against the persistent overhead sun. Proximity to the equator makes the African sun particularly strong so ensure you use a high level of protection.*

**Water:**

*It is very important that you drink plenty of water especially during the warmer months. Dehydration is possibly the single biggest cause of ill health on safari. In South Africa water is generally safe to drink anywhere. It is generally recommended that guests drink at least 2 to 3 litres of water per day to limit the effects of dehydration. This excludes tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages, which act as diuretics and can actually contribute to dehydration. If you suffer from the heat it is recommended you add dehydration salts to the water.*

**Power:**

All electrical appliances run on 220 volts. Outlets are round 3 pin, 15 amp type. Special adapters for video cameras, chargers and hairdryers are needed and are mostly supplied by the hotels can camps. Various safari camps and lodges may not have 220 volts and may operate on solar powered or generator 12-volt electricity.

**Communications:**

Telephone connections in South Africa are good but it is expensive. You can hire cell phones at the airport if you prefer not to use or have international roaming on your personal cell phone. Phones are available at all hotels and restaurants. However, there are still come areas where cell phone signal is limited so if you need to have guaranteed commination you will need to rent a satellite phone in Johannesburg or Cape Town.

**Access:**

If you are taking a light aircraft flight there is a luggage restriction on these flights of 20kgs (44lbs) per person in soft-sided bags (no hard framed suitcases). If an individual weighs over 100kgs (220lbs) please ensure you have advised us due to aviation rules for safety on these flights.

If you wish to take a taxi we recommend you ask your hotel to arrange a metered taxi with a reputable company that they know.

**Driving:****Rules of the roads:**

- Driving is on the left hand side of the road
- Gravel roads are generally well maintained however you should not exceed 80km/h to avoid skidding or losing control of the vehicle.
- In rural areas, it is dangerous to drive at night because of animals and people crossing.
- The speed limit in urban areas is usually 80km per hour reduced to 60km per hour as marked in other areas; on rural roads 100km per hour, and on freeways 120km per hour unless otherwise indicated.
- Wearing seat belts is compulsory.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious offence and traffic laws are strictly enforced.
- Driving licenses must be carried at all time and these should be in English and have a photograph of the driver printed on it.
- Official motorcades are led by police escorts and the law requires that all vehicles move to the side of the road and stop when one approaches.
- We strongly recommend that you carry a torch (flashlight).
- Many petrol stations in the cities are open on a 24-hour basis. MasterCard's, Visa and Barclay petrocards are accepted. A number of garages offer a 24 hour breakdown service.
- Service at petrol stations is provided by a petrol attendant. Tipping is at your discretion but we recommend R5.00. Ask the attendant to check the oil, water and tyre pressure. Leaded and unleaded fuel is available throughout South Africa.
- People drive very fast in South Africa, especially on the open roads. They sometimes overtake on the inside lane so be careful when changing lanes. Taxi's (minibuses) often will stop in the road, especially in towns and they do not indicate. Leave a good distance between you and the car in front.
- At traffic circles one should yield to cars from the right, however many South African's treat them as a "4 way" stop, where the protocol is the first car to arrive at the traffic circle goes first.
- On the open roads you may find people moving over to the hard shoulder (in the yellow line) to let you pass. The protocol is to flash your hazards for a few seconds to thank them. If you move over be careful to do it when you can see a long way in front of you to ensure that no one is parked or broken down in the hard shoulder.

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- *When you park your car you may find someone asking if they can look after it. Generally this is fine. You can ask their name; take note of what they look like and if everything is ok when you return you can tip them around R5.00.*

## **Security:**

*Safety and security is a matter of common sense. It's sensible to take the same precautions in major cities as you would in any of the world's metropolitan areas.*

- *Never leave luggage unattended in public areas or entrances to hotels.*
- *Deposit your valuables in the safety deposit box.*
- *In safari camps that do not have safes or locked doors, please keep tempting valuables out of sight.*
- *Don't stroll around the streets / camp after dark.*
- *Always lock your car doors and keep the windows closed.*
- *Do not walk around the city looking like a tourist and keep your camera concealed.*
- *Take additional care when with drawing cash from ATM's and be aware of who is around you – even in busy areas.*
- *In bars and nightclubs, due to the risk of drugs being used, it is advisable to keep a close watch on your drink and to be wary of accepting drinks from strangers.*

**Safety on safari and respecting wildlife:** *Safety is of utmost concern to us and we request that you take note of the following guidelines:*

- *All reserves have a set of rules that you need to follow to ensure your safety. Many of the animals you will come across are dangerous and as most of the safari camps are unfenced these animals can (and do!) wander through the camps. Attacks by wild animals are rare, however, there are no guarantees that such incidents will not occur. African Sojourns, their staff members, associates, agents and/ or their suppliers cannot be held liable for any injuries caused during an incident involving the behaviour of wild animals.*
- *On arrival in camp, management will clarify the situation relevant to that particular camp. Stay in the vehicle unless instructed by your guide. Do not walk around the camp at night unassisted.*
- *Please respect your guide's judgment about proximity to lion, cheetah and leopard. Do not insist that he take the vehicle closer so you can get a better photograph. A vehicle driven too close can hinder a hunt or cause animals to abandon a hard-earned meal.*
- *Observe animals silently with a minimum of disturbance to their natural activities.*
- *Loud talking on game drives can frighten the animals away. Never attempt to attract an animal's attention. Do not imitate animal sounds, clap your hands, pound the vehicle or throw objects.*
- *Do not litter. Litter tossed on the ground can choke or poison animals and birds, is unsightly and environmentally- unfriendly.*
- *Never attempt to feed or approach any wild animal on foot. This is especially important near lodges or in campsites where animals may have become accustomed to human visitors.*
- *Refrain from smoking on game drives. The dry African bush ignites very easily, and a flash fire can kill animals.*
- *Please ensure the ring tone on your cell phone is kept at a low volume or on silent/vibrate to avoid disturbing other guests or wildlife.*
- *Please use your phone in the privacy of your room and not in any of the common areas: dining room, bar/lounge area or on any of the vehicles or on game drives.*

**Language:**

South Africa has 11 official languages: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. English however, has been declared the language of record and is therefore the main language of business. Languages such as French, German and Italian are spoken by staff members at many up-market hotels and shops. South African English is heavily influenced by Afrikaans and, to a lesser extent, by some of the African languages. First-time visitors may have trouble understanding the South African accent, which lengthens certain vowels, clips others short, and swallows others.

Below are a few phrases and words in three of the languages:

ENGLISH	ZULU	XHOSA
Good morning	Sawubona	Molo
Yes	Yebo	Ewe
No	Hayi	Hayi
Thank you	Ngiyabonga	Enkosi
Goodbye	Hamba kahle	Hamba kakuhle

**Time:**

South Africa is two hours in the advance of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+2). As South Africa doesn't operate daylight saving time, there's no time difference between the winter and summer months.

**Economy:**

The economy of South Africa is the largest in Africa and accounts for 24% of its gross domestic product in terms of purchasing power parity, and is ranked as an upper-middle income economy by the World Bank. This makes the country one of only four countries in Africa in this category (the others being Botswana, Gabon and Mauritius). According to official estimates, a quarter of the population is unemployed, however unofficial estimates put the real unemployment rate as high as 40%. A quarter of South Africans live on less than \$1.25 a day.

The country's economy is reasonably diversified with key economic sectors including mining, agriculture and fisheries, vehicle manufacturing and assembly, food processing, clothing and textiles, telecommunication, energy, financial and business services, real estate, tourism, transportation, and wholesale and retail trade.

**Public Holidays:**

The dates of certain public holidays change from year to year. If a public holiday falls on a Sunday, then the Monday is also declared a public holiday.

01 January, 21 March, 27 April, 01 May, 16 June, 09 August, 24 September, 16 December, 25 December and 26 December.

**The South African flag:**

The flag of the Republic of South Africa was adopted on 27 April 1994, at the beginning of the 1994 general election, to replace the flag that had been used since 1928. The new national flag, designed by State Herald Frederick Brownell, was chosen to represent the new democracy.

The flag has horizontal bands of red (on the top) and blue (on the bottom), of equal width, separated by a central green band which splits into a horizontal "Y" shape, the arms of which end at the corners of the hoist side (and follow the flag's diagonals). The Y embraces a black isosceles triangle from which the arms are separated by narrow yellow bands; the red and blue bands are separated from the green band and its arms by narrow white stripes.

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*Three of the colours, black, green and yellow, are found in the flag of the African National Congress. The other three, red, white and blue, are used in the old Flag of Transvaal, the modern flag of the Netherlands and the flag of the United Kingdom; the colours white and blue were also found in the old flag of South Africa. Former South African President F.W. de Klerk, proclaimed the new flag on 20 April 1994.*

## **Shopping:**

*A variety of shopping centres, local handicrafts markets and roadside stalls are found throughout the country. Quality gold and diamond jewellery, leather goods, wooden carvings, sculptures, paintings and local handicrafts including pottery, beadwork and woven articles are also available throughout the country. Many of the smaller boutique shops are not found in the main shopping centres so please speak to us or your hotel if you are looking for something special.*

## **Suggested Shopping Complexes:**

### **Cape Town**

*Cavendish Square Claremont (15 minutes from the city centre)*

*Golden Acre Adjacent to the Cape Sun Hotel*

*Victoria Wharf Victoria & Alfred Hotel*

### **Johannesburg**

*Sandton City and Sandton Square Adjacent to the Sandton Sun Hotel*

*Village Walk, Sandton*

*Rosebank Mall Adjacent to the Park Hyatt*

*Sunstar Diamond Cutting Works 1147 Richard Road, Midrand (Peter) Tel 011-315-8015*

### **Durban**

*Gateway Shopping Centre on the North Coast*

*The Pavilion Westville, near the city*

## **Climate:**

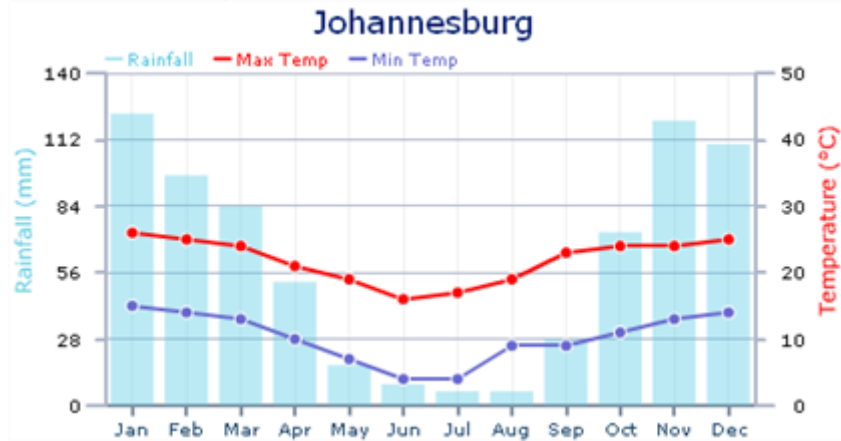
*Despite regional differences, South Africa's climate is generally mild throughout the year. South Africa is a relatively dry country with a mean annual rainfall of 502mm.*

*Summer lasts from October until March.*

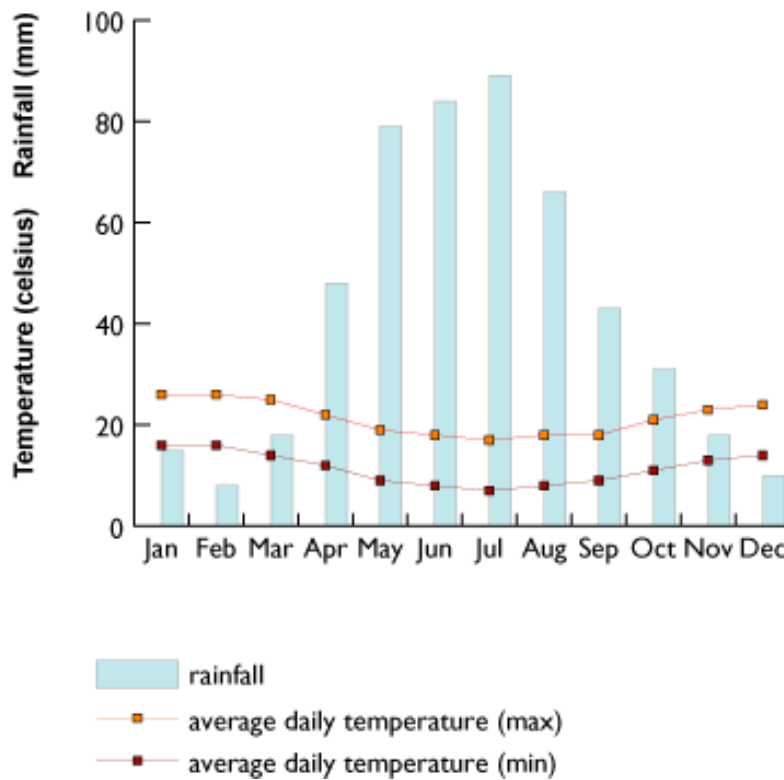
*Winter lasts from May to August. Snowfall is limited to the highest mountain peaks.*

- *KwaZulu Natal has a mostly subtropical climate with high temperatures (30 degrees C+) and high humidity in summer.*
- *The Gauteng region (Johannesburg and Pretoria area) enjoy hot summers (28 – 30 degrees C) with afternoon thundershowers and frosty, cold at night and cool during the day dry winters.*
- *Mpumalanga and the Kruger National Park (known as the Lowveld) experience very hot summers (30 degrees C+) with thunderstorms and cool to cold, dry winters.*
- *The Cape interior and the Free State have similar weather conditions to the Gauteng region.*
- *The Western Cape regions enjoys a Mediterranean climate with warm, dry summers and cool to cold, wet winters.*

**Johannesburg and northern South Africa:**



**Cape Town:**





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**Recommended reading (in no particular order):**

*There has been an explosion of new authors and books on South and Southern Africa in the last few years. Below is just a small selection of some of the latest books that have been released. They can be ordered through Amazon if you cannot get them at your local store:*

- *Long Walk to Freedom; Nelson Mandela*
- *My Traitor's Heart (1990): by Rian Malan: A South African Exile Returns to Face His Country, His Tribe, and His Conscience*
- *Burger's Daughter (1979) by Nadine Gordimer: Set in the 1970's the political and historical novel follows the life of Rosa Burger, as she comes to terms with her father Lionel Burger's legacy as an anti-apartheid activist in the South African Communist Party.*
- *The Power of One (1989) by Bryce Courtenay: Set in 1930's South Africa tells the story of a young English boy who is raised by his Zulu nurse, is eventually sent to an Afrikaans boarding school and his journey into adulthood.*
- *Jock of the Bushveld (1907) by Sir James Percy Fitzpatrick: This is a much loved children's classic based on the life of Percy Fitzpatrick and his faithful dog, Jack, who accompanied him on his travels as a transport rider during the South African gold rush.*
- *Coconut (207) by Kopano Matlwa: A provocative novel which focuses on black youth of South Africa and their search for identity and culture in a Westernized society.*
- *Beyond the Miracle - Inside the New South Africa (2002) by Allister Spark: Covering both the new regime's proud achievements and its disappointing failures,*
- *Jann Turner; Southern Cross*
- *Pamela Jooste; People Like Ourselves ; Frieda and Min*
- *Christopher Hope; White Boy Running*
- *Jonty Driver; Shades of Darkness*
- *Rayda Jacobs; Postcards from South Africa*
- *Saturday is for Funerals; Max Essex*

***During Your Trip:***

*On arrival in each country you will be met and briefed you on matters relating to your trip. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have. However, please respect the requests and decisions made by each camp/operator as they take on a great responsibility when hosting you and any requests will be made in your best interests.*

*Finally, all the information contained herein is given in good faith and has been carefully compiled. However, no responsibility can be taken for errors or omissions. Many things in Africa unfortunately do not run as efficiently as we would like. Whilst we will do our best to ensure that any unforeseen changes to your itinerary or unexpected events are minimized, such changes can occasionally happen. This is all part of the African travel experience!*

***African Sojourns wishes you a wonderful and exciting holiday!***