

Cape Town, Garden Route, Safari & Mauritius



Overview

This combination trip offers some of the best that Southern Africa can offer. South Africa's scenery, coastline, excellent food and wine – together with a fantastic wildlife experience on safari, is a unique combination. Mauritius, lying in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean – with turquoise waters and golden sandy beaches, is excellent for relaxing, taking part in watersports, fresh seafood and sunsets and cocktails!

Trip Highlights

- Visiting cosmopolitan Cape Town, taking in Table Mountain, Robben Island, and the vibrant waterfront.
- Having a sumptuous lunch at a local vineyard in the winelands.
- Seeing whales, seals and dolphins on a marine cruise off the Garden Route
- Hiking through the forests or taking a gentle walk on one of the Garden Route's Nature Trails
- Big Game Viewing in a malaria-free Eastern Cape Game Reserve
- Watersports or relaxing on the pristine Beaches of Mauritius

Day 1

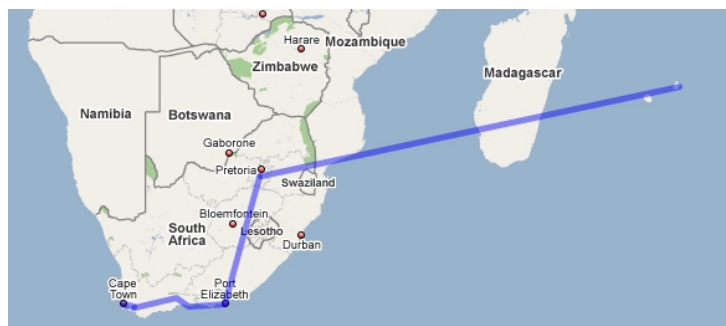
Depart the UK on your overnight flight to Cape Town.

Days 2 - 4

Arrive Cape Town International Airport where you will be met and privately transferred to your hotel at the Waterfront for a 4 night stay in a mountain & harbour facing twin room on a bed and breakfast basis

Cape Town is a vibrant, cosmopolitan city offering outdoor activities, a lively music scene and a host of trendy bars and restaurants. Contrasts abound in this city, with beaches, vineyards, and of course Table Mountain within easy reach, and of course the stark differences between the townships and beach-side mansions provide a constant reminder of this nation's tumultuous history. We can provide advice on things to do: some suggestions include:

- Take the cable car to the top of Table Mountain for fabulous views
- Take the ferry to Robben Island for an insight into South Africa's tumultuous past. (Note: Robben Island tickets must be booked in advance in order to avoid disappointment)
- Spend an afternoon soaking up the atmosphere at the V&A Waterfront: this area is buzzing usually some live music on and this is a great place to sit in the sun with a beer overlooking the water and Table Mountain.
- Take a Township Tour: we can advise on trips that are sympathetic to the communities.
- Take a cookery course in Cape Malay cuisine this normally includes either lunch or dinner.
- Drive the Peninsula circuit, including a visit to Simons Town and Boulder Beach, home to a large colony of African Penguins. There is an option to rent kayaks, take a walk with the resident baboons with an expert biologist,



or an unusual experience watching wild white sharks take their feed from the sealife.

Visit Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, 528 hectares of gardens that support diverse fynbos flora and natural forest. This is a popular place with locals to take a picnic and take in the scenery of Table Mountain and the City in peace: your guesthouse will help if you wish to do this.

Days 4 - 6

This morning, take to the road for the relatively short drive to Franschhoek in the Winelands for 2 nights at a lovely Wine & Country Estate on a bed and breakfast basis including high tea, soft drinks and local beers.

The Wine & Country Estate is set in a peaceful corner of the Franschhoek Valley, just 5 minutes drive from the centre of Franschhoek village. This luxury Franschhoek hotel only accommodates fourteen visitors at a time, assuring that each and every person gets the special care and attention that they deserve. Home-made food, thoughtful service and pampering beauty treatments are part and parcel of this sensory experience and guests can expect to leave this luxurious choice of Franschhoek accommodation with a regenerated sense of spirit.

Less than an hour's drive from Cape Town, this area has stunning scenery: vast mountains towering over pretty vineyards with Dutch-architectural

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homesteads, and the area is fast building a world-renowned reputation as top gastronomic destination. Franschhoek in particular is a very pretty village with top class restaurants (many of the village's restaurants have won international awards for their cuisine and you will need to book for lunch or dinner: we can make recommendations from personal experience).

The area has 3 main towns, each a bit different, but all probably worth exploring. The people in the area are extremely friendly and welcoming and more than happy to give advice on restaurants and wines.

A day out visiting local vineyards many of which include cellar tours and wine tastings is a must: some of them offer lunch as you sip! One recommendation is the 'Pique-Nique' hampers served under parasols at Boschendal winery near Franschhoek or the platters of freshly baked breads and home-cured meats served on the terrace at Bread & Wine. Another option is to take a guided wine tour this gets you out of the driving and involves a full day trip including lunch. The restaurants in this area are fabulous: fine dining at reasonable prices, and visitors are spoiled for choice: chefs from around the world have relocated here and the competition is driving quality upwards. We will be happy to recommend restaurants and vineyards to visit in the area.

Days 6 - 8

This morning, you leave the Winelands and drive to Hermanus for a 2 night stay at a 5 star villa in a superior room on a full board basis including all meals and snacks, local beverages and house wines, laundry and local Hermanus transfers. (Distance between Franschhoek and Hermanus is approximately 69 km / 1 hour's drive).

Perched high on the Hermanus cliffs, the regal Villa overlooks the whale watching paradise of Walker Bay. Accommodating guests in the utmost luxury, this is the perfect destination for those seeking the pinnacle of seaside living.

Hermanus has the status of being the best land-based whale watching destination in the world. Southern Right Whales visit Walker Bay from June through to December and can be viewed from aboard a boat, an airplane or from the shoreline. Hermanus is home to the world's only Whale Crier who blows his kelp horn when whales are spotted along the central sea route. As well as its beaches and mountain walks in Hermanus, the craft market is famous for its art. The town also has many fine restaurants and is

a wine lovers paradise with nearby wine farms offering wine tasting. Shark diving (in a cage), golf, horse riding, quad biking, and sea kayaking are also options.

Days 8 - 11

This morning, you drive from Hermanus to Knysna for a 3 night stay in a deluxe suite on a bed and breakfast basis at a lovely 5 star hotel.

Once past Mossel Bay, you are on the road known as the Garden Route: beautiful scenery of forested mountains, lakes and coastline. The hotel in Knysna is an exclusive, owner-run, five-star, country-house hotel situated on the shores of the famous Knysna Lagoon. The luxuriously appointed suites and rooms offer amazing views across this peaceful lagoon to the dramatic Knysna Heads or over the magnificent three-acre gardens. All the rooms and suites feature en-suite bathrooms, minibars, tea/coffee-making facilities, satellite TVs, safes, irons & ironing boards, bath robes and hairdryers. The magnificent gardens offer peaceful walks, a large Koi pond, two swimming pools, croquet, and angling off the private jetty. For an additional charge payable locally, there is a powerboat for water-skiing and sightseeing cruises and canoes for those who wish to explore this fascinating ecosystem on their own.

The Garden Route is blessed with a year-round warm climate that encourages lazy days on the beach, cocktails at sunset, to be followed by lingering dinners. The Tsitsikamma Mountains form the backdrop to pristine sandy beaches and eco-sensitive riverine forests and wetlands. Options for things to do abound.

- Hiking and cycling trails galore in the Garden Route or Tsitsikamma National Park



Cape Town, Garden Route, Safari & Mauritius



The ferry-ride to the Featherbed Nature Reserve and a gentle guided walk -

- The 'Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe' steam train
- Monkeyland a huge open-air sanctuary for rare primates, Birds of Eden or the Elephant Sanctuary.
- Fresh air - golf, swimming, hiking, riding, climbing, cycling, paddling.
- Fine dining - Knysna oysters and Knysna beer make a good combination especially on Knysna's Harbour front at sunset.
- Whale & Dolphin discovery cruises or kayaking trips.
- Treetop canopy Tours, black water rafting or bunjy jumping in nearby Tsitsikamma National Park

Days 11 - 14

Self Drive from Knysna to an Eastern Cape Game Reserve for a 3 night stay in a superior twin tent on a full board basis, including local brand drinks and two safari activities daily. There is great game viewing, in modern open game viewing vehicles that have been especially converted to maximise comfort and viewing potential. Your personal game ranger will provide insightful and valuable information about the fauna and flora. In between game drives your time is filled with relaxing, reading, spa treatments, swimming, enjoying delicious cuisine, or a game walk.

Days 14 - 15

Today, you take drive to Port Elizabeth Airport, dropping off your hire vehicle before taking your flight to Johannesburg O R Tambo International Airport. On arrival in Johannesburg, you will be met and privately transferred to a Hotel for 1 night in a classic standard twin room on a bed and breakfast basis.

Days 15-22

This morning, you return to Johannesburg Airport by private transfer for your flight to Mauritius. On arrival in Mauritius, you will be met and privately transferred to your Resort & Spa Hotel for 7 nights in a Deluxe Room on a Half Board basis. Your Mauritian-style room will have sea views, a balcony, and wireless internet access. Special touches include the fluffy bathrobe, mineral water and flowers.

Mauritius is the Pearl of the Indian Ocean, and this resort provides memories to treasure. Standing on one of the island's most famous beaches, Flic-en-Flac, you can enjoy more than 3 km of excellent, powder white sand and

calm, reef-protected water. The staff of islanders, who go out of their way to help you, dress traditionally and infuse the atmosphere with a feeling of relaxed luxury.

You can be served cocktails as you laze on your sun lounge, or amble down to our Boathouse for some water-skiing and windsurfing. Learn to scuba dive, head off on a catamaran cruise to look for dolphins or simply settle down for a lunch of fresh salad and grilled meat or fish on the beach.

Day 22

Today you will be privately transferred back to Mauritius Airport for your return flight to London, arriving late evening.

General Information

Visas

Visas are NOT required by UK citizens for South Africa. (Note that all nationalities travelling to South Africa must have 2 consecutive blank pages in their passport which lie side by side when the passport is open. Passports must also be valid for at least six months from the date of entry to South Africa. Passengers travelling to South Africa with passports that do not comply with these requirements could be refused entry.

Note: Passport and visa requirements are liable to change at short notice. Travellers are advised to check their entry requirements with their embassy or consulate.

Health

The World Health Organisation (www.who.int/en/) recommends that all travellers are inoculated against diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio as well as for hepatitis B.

Hepatitis A, malaria and typhoid are also recommended by the Centres for Disease Control & Prevention (www.cdc.gov) for travel in South Africa. All travellers should seek advice from their local GP or travel clinic for up to date advice on vaccinations and different malarial options.

Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all bookings. Guests on group departures must take their policy documents with them on the trip as the guide will ask to see this at the start. The documentation must state in writing that you are the named policyholder and that the cover is valid for the period of travel. The policy document must also indicate that medical expenses and emergency repatriation cover is included and a 24 hour contact telephone number for the insurance company must be shown on the documentation in case of emergency. Guests unable to provide all this information at the start of the trip will be asked to purchase a policy prior to joining the trip.

Electricity supply

220v, 3pin South African plug. Adaptors are required to charge cameras, etc.

Money

Currency is the South African Rand. There will be ATM's en route for guests to withdraw money.

What to bring

Binoculars, torch, walking shoes, swimming gear, plenty of high factor sunscreen, sunhat, insect repellent, camera, a day pack. Warm clothing is recommended for evenings, and a waterproof jacket. Lightweight clothing is recommended for the day. Avoid brightly coloured clothing for game viewing.

Tipping

It is normal to tip for good service in bars and restaurants in South Africa. Guests may also consider tipping their guide at their discretion.