

Eastern Safari, Garden Route & Cape Town



Overview

This itinerary takes in the best of South Africa. Cape Town is arguably one of the most beautiful cities in the world, with fabulous scenery, locally produced wine and gastronomic delights and plenty to see and do. The vineyards and restaurants in the winelands are well worth exploring for a few days, and the Garden Route provides a huge range of activity options, including hiking through forests, boat cruises, and beach based activities. During the winter (July – November), Southern Right Whales can be seen breaching offshore. More unusual and special opportunities exist to have up-close encounters with Meercats with an expert, or a short course in Cape Malay cuisine. On safari in the renowned Kruger National Park, you are virtually guaranteed an opportunity to see the Big 5, and the luxury lodges will provide a truly memorable wildlife experience.

Trip Highlights

- Highlights include Kruger, Garden Route and Cape Town
- Small personal groups and expert guiding
- Intimate accommodation of a very high standard
- Dinner or lunch daily
- Unpack and relax - 2 nights Kruger, 2 nights Zululand, 2 nights Knysna, 3 nights Cape Town

Day 1

On arrival in Johannesburg, you will be met and transferred to your accommodation in one of this city's green suburbs. The economic heart of South Africa, Johannesburg has a wonderful energy, and is also one of the greenest more trees have been planted here than anywhere else in the world. This evening, your group will all meet up with your guide for a welcome dinner. Dinner included.

Day 2

This morning after breakfast we head south for Soweto, heart of the struggle against apartheid. There is much history here, including the houses where Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu lived, as well as the monument to the Soweto uprisings of 1976. But there is also a very warm and friendly people, whom we will meet during a lunch stop at one of the local shebeens (pubs). From here, we head east, before stopping for overnight in one of the towns near the escarpment, which will be revealed to us tomorrow. Our lodge is simple with incredible views over Long Tom Pass. Includes breakfast and lunch.

Day 3

We set off this morning to discover the scenic splendour of this region. First stop is the little gold mining town of Pilgrim's Rest, discovered at the turn of the century during a short lived gold rush, and perfectly preserved, before we join the Panorama Route, taking in the strange rock formations at Bourke's Luck Potholes, the impressive Lisbon Falls, and the highlight Blyde River Canyon, the third largest canyon in the world. Dinner and overnight on the edge of the Kruger National Park. Includes breakfast and dinner.

Day 4

An early start as you join your ranger in an open vehicle for your safari into the



Kruger National Park. A full day here will allow you the opportunity to spot the Big Five (lion, leopard, rhino, elephant and buffalo) as well as a host of other animals in this huge wilderness. Return to your lodge for dinner and a chance to discuss today's sightings!

Includes breakfast and dinner.

Day 5

Depart after an early breakfast and enter the independent kingdom of Swaziland. With its green hills and indigenous forests, it is known as the Switzerland of Africa and it is equally well known for its excellent markets where craft and curio sellers from all over Africa bring their goods for sale. You will have the opportunity to stop at one of these markets en route, before entering northern Zululand. Here we will check into our lodge for dinner and overnight.

Includes breakfast and dinner.

Day 6

This morning you will embark on a boat cruise on one of Zululand's most scenic lakes, giving you the opportunity to spot hippos, crocodiles and fish eagles. Return to your lodge late morning, with an optional activity available to you this afternoon - a game drive in either Hluhluwe Imfolozi Game Reserve, renowned for its white and black rhino populations, or Mkhuze Game Reserve, with its large hippo pods and resident pack of wild dog. Return to your lodge for dinner and overnight.

Includes breakfast and dinner.

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Day 7

We follow the sugar cane fields of KwaZulu Natal south after breakfast, arriving in Durban late this morning. We visit the impressive new uShaka Marine World, one of the largest marine worlds in the Southern Hemisphere particularly renowned for the large shark tank! We then transfer to Durban International for your onward flight to Cape Town. On arrival in Cape Town, you will be met and transferred to your overnight accommodation, Breakfast included.

Day 8

Your guide will collect you this morning at 09h00 and you will set off for Stellenbosch, the second oldest settlement in South Africa after Cape Town. Its oak lined streets and famed Cape Dutch architecture make it one of the most charming towns in the country. We continue to Franschhoek, founded by the French Huguenots and now a gastronomic centre of South Africa, where we have time for lunch and a wine tasting at one of the renowned wine estates, before ascending the spectacular Franschhoek Pass en route to Montagu. Here we overnight in this provincial town on the outskirts of the semi desert region known as the Little Karoo. Breakfast and lunch included.

Day 9

This morning after breakfast we join Route 62, a unique motorway which passes through both expansive scenery and traditional farming towns dominated by the white spires of the Dutch Reformed Church. We stop at the little village of Calitzdorp, famous for its Haanepoort grapes for a port tasting, before arriving at Oudtshoorn, the ostrich farming capital of the world. We have lunch and a tour of an ostrich farm before visiting the Cango Caves, the largest accessible caverns in Africa. Overnight in Oudtshoorn. Breakfast and lunch included.

Day 10

After breakfast, we journey over the Outeniqua mountains, leaving behind the dry Little Karoo and entering the lush greenery of the Garden Route. Our journey takes us through a most scenic coastal route, passing the magnificent beaches and lakes of Sedgefield and Wilderness to Knysna where we join the ferry on Knysna Lagoon and set off for Featherbed Nature Reserve, where we are met by all terrain vehicles that will take us up to the top of the cliffs for breathtaking views of the area. Lunch is served on the edge of the lagoon. Breakfast and lunch included.

Day 11

We drive east after breakfast to the thick indigenous Forest of Tsitsikamma, where we head towards the coast at Storm's River Mouth. Here the Storm's River meets the Indian Ocean amidst dramatic cliffs and gorges, bordered by the forest an inspiring sight. Our tour continues with a stop at a monkey sanctuary, where

rescued apes and monkeys run wild in a protected area of the forest, before we drive to the holiday village of Plettenberg Bay, and famed Lookout Beach. We return to Knysna to have the rest of the afternoon at leisure. Dinner and overnight in Knysna.

Breakfast and Dinner included

Day 12

After breakfast, we head west via the historic town of Swellendam, with its 18th century architecture, to the coastal town of Hermanus, world famous for its excellent land based whale watching. Whales are in the bay between May and November, but even out of whale season, the location and views makes this a special place to visit. We enjoy lunch here at the Relais and Chateaux hotel, the Marine, a beacon of elegance on the coast. This afternoon, we continue to Cape Town via Sir Lowry's Pass. The next three nights are in Cape Town.

Breakfast and Lunch included

Day 13

This morning you will discover Cape Town or the "Mother City" as it is affectionately known. Rich in history you will visit the Castle, and the historic city center, as well as the Houses of Parliament and Company Gardens. We will also stop at the colourful Malay Quarter and bustling market at Greenmarket Square. Weather permitting, we will ascend Table Mountain (own cost) for spectacular views over the entire Cape Peninsula. At the end of the tour, you may choose to be dropped off at your accommodation or at the vibrant Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, a working harbour, with many shops, restaurants and outdoor performers. The rest of the day is yours at leisure to explore the city at your own pace.

Breakfast included.



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Day 14

Set off on this morning after breakfast for the Cape of Good Hope a drive that takes you along the incredible Atlantic seaboard, through exclusive areas such as Clifton and Camp's Bay, and the little fishing harbour of Hout Bay, where we will stop for a cruise to Seal Island to see the Cape Fur Seals. We continue to Cape Point where we ascend by funicular to the top to witness the symbolic meeting of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. We return via Simon's Town and the breeding colony of African Penguins on the beach there, with a stop at the world famous Kirstenbosch Gardens before reaching the hotel. A farewell dinner this evening is enjoyed at one of the local restaurants with a true African flavour! Overnight in Cape Town.

Breakfast and Dinner included.

Day 15

A day to say farewell to your fellow travellers and guide. You will be transferred to the airport in time for your outbound international flight.

The Conservation levy* of R140 per person for the Kruger National Park is not included in the price.

*Subject to annual increase in November

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 suncream, 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.

