

South Africa - General Information



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Getting there

Travel to South Africa is easy; with several flight options to Johannesburg and Cape Town directly from the UK. Internal flights are inexpensive with a number of low cost airlines operating, and transfers to Botswana, Zambia (for Victoria Falls), Namibia and Mozambique all easy to source.

When to go

South Africa is a large country and has diverse climatic regions, but in general the weather is sunny and hot in the summer months (December to April), and mild during winter (May to November). Game viewing is at its best in September-October and the southern right whales can be seen off the coast from mid June to the end of October.

Wildlife - When to travel

There are two seasons: dry (Winter: May - August) and Wet (Summer: Nov - March) though be aware that it is quite possible for there to be several days without rain in the wet season, and for there to be wet weather during the dry season.

The best time for game viewing is probably during the dry season May August, though rainfall starts declining in April and is still fairly low in September and October. During this time, permanent waterholes attract animals, the vegetation is thinner and there are less leaves on trees to obstruct views.

The climate is comfortable in the dry winter months with warm days and chilly nights. The average maximum temperatures is around 24 degrees in winter, and the average minimum is about 8 or 9 degrees, although it can drop as far as 5 degrees. Take a warm jacket for early morning and evening game drives!

Wet Season (Summer)

From November to March, the Kruger Park area receives most of its rainfall, usually in dramatic afternoon thundershowers. The weather is hot and balmy. Average maximum temperatures are about 30 degrees Celcius, with an average minimum of 20 degrees.

With the arrival of the rain, the grass and foliage becomes lush and green, and while this makes for beautiful scenery, it can also make game viewing difficult. Animals also tend to travel away from waterholes because there are now other sources of water. Despite the tougher game-viewing the summer months are when most people choose to go the Kruger.

If you are a keen birder, the wet season is the best time for travel to the Kruger National Park, as this is when the visiting migrants arrive, and when all the local birds are at their most active.

It's also the best time to go and see baby animals, as most animals calve at the beginning of the rainy season to take advantage of the new shoots.

Peak Season (Holidays)

In the Kruger Park, the so-called 'peak season' is just that. Accommodation during these times needs to be booked well in advance of your travels. Space is at a premium, as the Kruger Park has started to implement a daily limit on the number of visitors allowed into the park. If you have pre-booked

Accommodation at one of the safari lodges in the park or in one of the private game reserves, you don't need to worry about this.



The Kruger Park is always a popular destination for South Africans. During the school holidays, particularly Christmas, Easter, and in July, it can become rather crowded. If you want to visit during these times it would be a good idea to stay at a Kruger lodge in a private concession, or to visit one of the private game reserves instead.

Visas

Visas are not required for UK or Irish nationals for stays of up to 90 days. Passports must be valid for at least 30 days beyond the period of intended stay. An onward or return ticket is required, as well as sufficient funds and documents needed for further travel. Note that visitors to South Africa must have at least two blank (unstamped) pages in their passport, each time entry is sought; these pages are in addition to the endorsement/amendment pages at the back of the passport.

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 and typhoid are also recommended by the Centres for Disease Control & Prevention (www.cdc.gov) for travel in South Africa. Depending on the area visited, anti-malarial drugs may also be recommended. All travellers should seek advice from their local GP or travel clinic for up to date advice on vaccinations and different malarial options.

Electricity supply

230v, 3pin South African plug. Adaptors are required to charge cameras, etc.

Money

Currency is the South African rand.

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