

The Grand Tour



Overview

This trip of a lifetime gives an opportunity to see the highlights of South Africa, including the Big Five in their natural habitat, an insight into the Zulu tribal culture, Cape Town and the Garden Route with a mixture of luxury and authenticity in accommodation. Our expert guide will provide lively information along the way on local customs, flora and fauna and wildlife.

Trip Highlights

- Kruger National Park safari
- Swaziland & Zululand
- Garden Route
- Route 62
- Cape Town City & Table Mountain
- Cape Peninsula & Winelands

DAY 1

Depart Johannesburg and travel to the 'Land of the Rising Sun' Mpumalanga via the magnificent Panorama Route. The most spectacular stretch of the Panorama Route is the Blyde River Canyon. From many well-positioned vantage points one has a view of the 33 km long gorge, which starts at "Bourke's Luck Potholes" and ends at the "Three Rondavels". Time and weather permitting, stop at God's Window and the Mac Mac Falls. Late afternoon arrival at your hotel. Check in and freshen up before dinner. Overnight Perry's Bridge Hollow (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Dinner Included.

DAY 2:

Early this morning you will depart on an open vehicle safari through the Kruger National Park. The world-renowned Kruger National Park offers a wildlife experience that ranks with the best in Africa. At nearly 2 million hectares, the reserve is the flagship of South African National Parks and is home to an impressive number of flora and fauna. Return to your hotel in the afternoon and spend the remainder of the day at leisure. You will have the option to return to the Kruger National Park to absorb the tranquil beauty of an evening safari (additional charge). Dinner and overnight Perry's Bridge Hollow (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast and Dinner.

DAY 3

After breakfast, travel to the Royal Kingdom of Swaziland. This tiny mountainous kingdom is filled with bygone African traditions and culture and offers beautiful scenery and attractions such as game reserves and art & craft outlets to name a few. Enjoy a showcase of the traditional Swazi culture followed by lunch at the Matsamo Cultural Village. Continue to the Ngwenya Glass Works to see master craftsmen create beautiful sculptures and artwork from molten glass. After spending some time at the Mbabane craft markets, arrive at your hotel located in the beautiful Ezulwini Valley. Overnight Royal Swazi Sun (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast & Lunch



DAY 4:

Enjoy a morning visit to the Swazi Candle Factory where each candle is made and finished by hand using the age-old technique "millefiore". No two are the same and the range boasts an astonishing array of patterns, shapes and designs. Continue via Big Bend into KwaZulu Natal. Arrive at your hotel in the afternoon, in time to embark on an afternoon scenic drive up the Ubombo Mountains, offering views over Lake Jozini. At the summit and as the setting sun transforms the sky into a tapestry of colours, stop for sundowners. The drive will be combined with a visit to a local and authentic Zulu homestead for a glimpse into Zulu life in today's world. Return to the hotel for dinner on the terrace (weather permitting) or in the classically styled restaurant. Overnight Ghost Mountain Inn (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast and Dinner.

DAY 5

Today you will transfer to the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve for a full day of game viewing. The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve covers a combined area of 90 000ha and it was here that the white rhino was saved from extinction. Return to the hotel in the late afternoon. End the day with dinner at the hotel. Overnight Ghost Mountain Inn (standard room) or similar. Ghost Mountain Inn (or similar)

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast and Dinner.

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DAY 6:

Continue the journey along the Elephant Coast of KwaZulu Natal to St Lucia, located at the southern extremity of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park a World Heritage Site. Here you embark on an estuarine boat trip which provides an opportunity to view crocodiles, hippo and numerous bird species, including the elusive African Kingfisher Eagle, in their natural habitat. Continue to Durban, where east meets west; a city beneath which beats the pulse of Africa. Arrive during the afternoon at your hotel which is located on the Gold Mile Durban's distinctive beach front. Overnight Southern Sun Elangeni (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast

DAY 7:

This morning you will embark on a brief Durban City Tour where you will spend the morning discovering the cultural and historical contrasts of the city. Check in at Durban International Airport for your afternoon domestic flight to Port Elizabeth (flight cost not included). On arrival at Port Elizabeth Airport, transfer to your hotel. Overnight Radisson Blu Port Elizabeth (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast

DAY 8:

Depart Port Elizabeth and travel via the coastline to the beautiful Tsitsikamma National Park. Described as the 'garden of the Garden Route', the Tsitsikamma actually deserves a more vivid description to encapsulate the beauty of the place. Enjoy a walk along the suspension bridge across the Storms River mouth gorge which offers visitors incredible views and photo opportunities. Continue to Plettenberg Bay for dinner and overnight. Overnight Laird's Lodge (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 9:

After breakfast, get up-close-and-personal with nature at the Knysna Elephant Park. With the help of the resident African elephants and the well-informed guides, you will learn about the sad and mystical story of the Knysna Elephants. The visit presents you with the opportunity to touch, feed and photograph these gentle giants. After lunch (to own account), travel to Plettenberg Bay for a visit to Birds of Eden the largest free-flight bird aviary in the world. Birds of Eden stems from the need to create a safe environment in which to release a large collection of free-flight African birds and the sanctuary also enables bird owners to apply to release their pet birds into the sanctuary, after undergoing rehabilitation. Time permitting you have the option of embarking on a Whale & Dolphin boat experience (weather permitting and to own account) before returning to the

lodge. Dinner and overnight Laird's Lodge (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Brunch and Dinner included

DAY 10:

After breakfast and check-out formalities, proceed to the lagoon side town of Knysna the gem of the Garden Route. Enjoy some time at leisure at the Knysna Waterfront Complex before embarking on a fun and adventurous cruise to and INTO the Knysna Heads (weather permitting) on board the Three Legs Rivercat one of the most advanced river cruisers ever built. On return to the mainland, continue to Oudtshoorn the 'feather capital' of the world due to its large ostrich industry. Visit a working ostrich farm for a guided tour. Check into your accommodation in the late afternoon before enjoying dinner. Overnight De Opstal Country Lodge (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 11:

Breakfast and check-out of the hotel. Enjoy a morning tour of the Cango Caves before departing Oudtshoorn. The Cango Caves is one of the natural wonders of the world and has become a major draw-card to the Karoo area. Afterward, travel via Route 62 to Barrydale for lunch (to own account). Arrive in Cape Town around 18h00. Overnight Southern Sun Waterfront (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast

DAY 12:

This morning you embark on a full day Cape Point & Peninsula Tour an awe-inspiring tour passing magnificent beaches, breathtaking views and historic & picturesque coastal villages to the towering headland known as Cape Point. The tour ends upon return to your hotel during the late afternoon. Overnight Southern Sun Waterfront (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast



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DAY 13:

Today you embark on a full day Cape Winelands Tour. This is a delightful drive, which winds its way to the heart of the Cape Winelands through superb mountain ranges, vineyards and Cape Dutch homesteads. Return to Cape Town during the late afternoon. Overnight Southern Sun Waterfront (standard room) or similar.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast

DAY 14:

Breakfast and check-out of the hotel. Morning collection from the hotel for a City Tour – a geographical and cultural extravaganza showing you Cape Town from its historical beginnings to the dazzling modern shopping malls of the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. Your tour ends with drop-off at Cape Town International Airport.

Meal Arrangements: Breakfast

Flights can be organised by Native Escapes under our ATOL licence Number 9703

More Information

Contact us on 01342 834700 or by email at info@nativeescapes.com.

Departures

This tour departs weekly on Mondays from Johannesburg or Cape Town: call or email us for availability and assistance with flights. A pre-night stay and sightseeing tours in Johannesburg or Cape Town is recommended. We can also assist with extension ideas: options include the Victoria Falls, Mauritius or spending more time in Cape Town.

Small Group Guided Trips

This tour departs with min 2, max 12 guests, is guided with expert local guides and uses 4 star graded accommodation throughout.

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.

