

EXPLORE!

Cycle the Cape

10 days

South Africa - Trip code CTC



Cycle the Cape

Cycle with us through South Africa's Western Cape Province. We pedal along the rugged coastline of Cape Point and through the forested shorelines of the 'Garden Route'. In Stellenbosch we ride through vineyards and enjoy a glass of the locally produced wine. Along the way we explore the dripstone caverns of Cango Caves and visit Boulders Beach - home to a colony of African Penguins.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Cycle Cape Town** - Ride on the slopes of Table Mountain
- ★ **Cape Peninsula National Park** - Scenic coastal cycle from Cape Point and Cape of Good Hope
- ★ **Stellenbosch winelands** - Cycle through stunningly beautiful vineyards and farmlands
- ★ **Redstone Hills** - Cycle through the dramatic orange and red sandstone scenery
- ★ **Oudtshoorn** - Down the dramatic Swartberg pass
- ★ **Tsitsikamma National Park** - Dramatic forest covered Indian Ocean coastline
- ★ **Knysna** - Ride through the Knysna Harkerville Forest
- ★ **Cape Agulhas** - Cycle to the Southernmost point of Africa

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

CYCLING GRADE:

Moderate

Medium length rides suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. Mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour Cape Town; optional introductory ride

Join the tour in the wonderful city of Cape Town. Cape Town embodies the feeling of energy and hope that South Africans feel for the future of their country - with its spectacular natural assets, modern high-tech city centre and mixed population. Cape fur seals can often be seen playfully frolicking in the harbour waters. This afternoon we have an optional first bike ride, most likely on the face of Table Mountain for spectacular views, then back to our hotel. This will be our first encounter with some of the unique and colourful flowers from the Cape Floral Kingdom, which has more indigenous plant species per square metre than anywhere else on earth! Please note if you wish to join the bike ride today you must have a morning arrival flight and be at the hotel ready to start cycling at 2 pm. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 12 kilometres with 200 metres total ascent (optional).



Accommodation: Tudor Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Drive to Cape Point Nature Reserve via Hout Bay; cycle to Kommetjie, or Simon's Town

The focus of our activities today is the area of the Cape Peninsula. The Cape of Good Hope was first seen by a European in 1488 when Diaz sailed round it on his search for a sea route to the East Indies. A century later Sir Francis Drake described it as 'the fairest cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth', but it was another century before the Dutch East Indies Trading Company established a permanent settlement to supply ships with cattle and water traded from the indigenous Khoi who reared livestock in the land around the coast. In Hout Bay, weather permitting, we enjoy a boat ride to view Seal Island, where a population (7,000 approx!) of Cape Fur Seals have made their home. There might be whales or even pods of porpoises there too. From Hout Bay we

drive over Chapman's Peak to Cape Boulders beach where we get a close up view of Africa's only resident penguin species, the African Penguin. From here we continue by bus for around three hours to Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope for lunch and a chance to explore this stunning wild place. After lunch we cycle back through the Nature Reserve and head out along the Atlantic seaboard to the seaside village of Simon's Town or Kommetjie, depending on the wind direction. Finally we transfer by bus back to our accommodation, with time to relax this evening. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 33 kilometres, with 250 metres total ascent.



Accommodation: Tudor Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Drive to Stellenbosch; cycle through wine farms to Jonkershoek Reserve

Today we'll head out of Cape Town to explore the Stellenbosch region. To the north and east of Cape Town are the Cape Winelands, whose rugged mountains rise sheer from rolling green valleys, neatly planted with vineyards and dotted with whitewashed manor houses. This is an image more reminiscent of a central European fairy tale than 'Darkest Africa'! A settlement was first established in Stellenbosch in 1679 following the discovery of a river running through a fertile, green valley by Simon van der Stel, then Governor of the Cape. Grapes were planted in the fertile valleys and soon Stellenbosch became the centre of the wine industry. It now produces some of the finest 'New World Wines', wines that have been honed over several centuries by the Afrikaans wine growers. We cycle today from Lazerac to Jonkershoek Nature reserve firstly along tarmac roads and then on gravel tracks through the forest, before returning to Lanerac. After enjoying a cycle ride through the stunning scenery you may like to reward yourself by sampling some of the latest vintages with an optional wine tasting. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 18 kilometres, with 250 metres total ascent. There is the option to extend the cycling for another 7 kilometres (150 metres additional total ascent).



Accommodation: Rosenview Guest Farm (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Drive and cycle through Red Stone Hills to De Poort

We start early on our incredibly scenic five hour drive along Route 62 to the 'Little Karoo'. En route we pass through the heart of the verdant Breede River Valley, the largest of the Western Cape's fruit and wine producing valleys. As we continue eastwards along the world's longest wine route, passing through Barrydale and Ladismith the scenery changes dramatically to the stark and arid landscapes of the Little Karoo. At Calitzdorp, we turn off the main road into the beautiful Red Stone Hills at the foot of the Swartberg Mountains. Here we take to our bikes and explore on gravel tracks with some steep sections, marvelling at the dramatic panorama of ancient red and orange sandstone the area is famed for. There is also the option to extend the cycling with some more challenging riding through steeper hills. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 18 kilometres, with 400 metres total ascent, plus an optional extra 7 kilometres (150 metres additional total ascent).



Accommodation: De Poort Guesthouse (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Cycle Swartberg Pass; optional visit to Cango Caves

After a hearty country breakfast in view of the magnificent surrounding mountains, we board our coach and head to the top of the dramatic Swartberg Pass. Once at the top we mount the bikes for the steep, exhilarating cycle down the pass, enjoying the fresh air, magnificent views and birdlife. The towering mountain walls provide welcome cool and an extraordinary backdrop for our cycle as we move through from one distinct ecological area to another. The Swartberg Pass is one of 34 that were built by Andrew Gebbes Bains in the middle of the 19th century to open up the interior and extend the trade routes down to the coastal areas. Our journey then takes us to the world famous Cango Caves. Here we have an optional guided tour of the natural chambers and an insight into how the area has changed through the ages. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 19 kilometres, with 200 metres total ascent. There is the option to extend the ride with an additional 27 kilometres climb up Swartberg pass (840 metres additional total ascent). Please note: in high summer this ride can be very hot and exposed. Your Tour Leader may substitute another route if necessary.



Accommodation: De Poort Guesthouse (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Drive to Plettenberg Bay via George to Knysna; cycle through the Knysna Harkerville Forest

Driving south and east today through George, we return to the coast and arrive at Knysna. Knysna was originally a harbour, as well as a forestry and mining centre. Today it is noteworthy as an artists' retreat and adventure activity base. After some exploration and lunch here, we drive to our accommodation at Knysna to check-in, to avoid cycling in the heat of the day. Afterwards we go off road to explore through part of the Harkerville National Forest with an exciting cycle ride in the cool of the late afternoon. There is also the option this afternoon for a refreshing coastal cycle ride from our accommodation around the estuary in Knysna. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 12 kilometres, with 200 metres total ascent. Optional additional 18 kilometres cycle ride (200 metres total additional ascent).



Accommodation: Lagoon Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Drive to Tsitsikamma NP; cycle Bloukrans and Nature's Valley Passes

This morning we drive for an hour out to Tsitsikamma National Park and the Storm's River mouth. The Tsitsikamma NP is a pristine marine and forest reserve stretching for 50 kilometres from Nature's Valley across to the mouth of the Groot River. We can take time for a 4 kilometre (hour and a half) walk this morning across the suspension bridge over the river and up to the look out point to for impressive views of the bay. There is also the possibility for an optional boat cruise up the river, before we stop for lunch at Storm's River village. In the afternoon we drive the short way to the forestry village of Coldstream, where we take to our bikes and ride through the magnificent Tsitsikamma Forest along the Bloukrans and Nature's Valley Passes. The fairly flat winding forest paths and fun descents through the forest passes are a real highlight of the trip. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 37 kilometres.



Accommodation: Lagoon Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Drive to Witsand, cycle to Malgas Pont, drive Swellendam

This morning we drive to a stunning viewpoint overlooking the coast at Knysna Heads, before continuing to the seaside town of Mossel Bay for lunch. In the afternoon we travel along the world renowned 'Garden Route' into the wheat fields of the Overberg to Witsand, across to St Sebastian Bay. We cycle on a quiet gravel backroads through picturesque rolling rural farmland to Malgas Pont, the only remaining manual pont in Africa. This carries vehicles over the Breede River. After crossing the river we drive to Swellendam, enjoying views of the impressive Langeberg Mountains. Please note that the route cycled may be reversed dependant on head winds that day. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres, with 350 metres total ascent.



Accommodation: Aan Huizen Guesthouse (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Cycle to Cape Agulhas; return Swellendam

The destination for our last cycle ride is the wild and dramatic Cape Agulhas, the southernmost point in Africa, where the warm Agulhas current from the Indian Ocean meets the cold Benguela current from the Atlantic in a turbulent clash. We start by driving to Bredasdorp and take to our bikes for the rest of the way. The cycle route to Cape Agulhas takes in fantastic open sheep and livestock farmland and indigenous fynbos and other vegetation and will take most of the morning to complete on some good flat gravel surfaced and tramac roads. (Please note that the route cycled may be reversed dependant on head winds that day). In the afternoon we head to the coast for a swim at the beach, walks along the coast, or a visit to a local fishing village, which has been declared a national monument. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 44 kilometres, with 200 metres total ascent.



Accommodation: Aan Huizen Guesthouse (or similar)




Standard Guesthouse



Swimming pool available

 Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

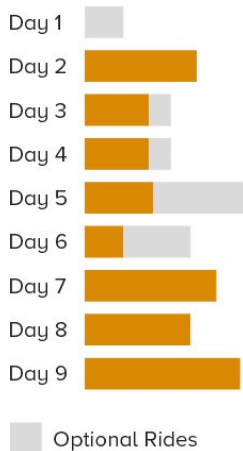
DAY 10 - Drive via Hermanus to Cape Town where tour ends

On our final day we follow by bus the acclaimed 'Whale Route' along the dramatic south coast back to Cape Town. The small seaside resort of Hermanus is regarded as one of the premier spots for whale-watching in Africa. Every year between June and November Southern Right whales spend a few months in the Cape, mating and calving. Hermanus is one of the better places to see them as they come quite close inshore and the cliff-top offers many convenient viewing points. If time allows we may make a short stop en route here before driving to Cape Town via Betty's Bay and Gordon's Bay. Out of whale season we may arrive in Cape Town earlier in the day, where the tour ends at the airport at 1 pm.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

DAILY DISTANCE



General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 211 km over eight days (an average of 26 km per day) with a further 71 km of optional rides available. We cycle on minor roads and good tracks (45% dirt roads, 40% tarmac, 10% cycle paths). A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We have graded the route as moderate.

Bike included

24 gear Schwinn Messa mountain bike with front suspension

Bike information

Your included bike is a 24 gear Schwinn Messa mountain bike with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A water bottle holder is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour and can transport your day bag if you prefer to cycle without this. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

Moderate



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 9



Transport

Bus
Bicycle



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Cycle
guide
Driver(s)



Accommodation

3 nights standard guesthouse
4 nights standard hotel
2 nights standard lodge

Trip information

Country information

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Climate

Mild throughout the year and can thus be visited year round. The Western Cape has a Mediterranean-type climate, with warm, dry summers and cold winters with rainfall. Summer runs from November to March, with temperatures averaging 22oC to 34oC. The months of April and October are generally warm and sunny. Winter is also a good time to visit as towns and sites are not so crowded and the countryside is more verdant, but it can be cold. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

3 Pin Round

Religion

Christian

Language

Afrikaans, English

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Table Mountain Cable Car - GBP 18 Stellenbosch Wine-Tasting - Approx. GBP 5 Cango Caves - GBP 7

Clothing

In general pack for warm and hot weather. However, you must bring a warm sweater or jacket for cycling on cool days and for wearing during the evenings. We recommend you bring padded cycle shorts, cycle gloves and quick drying cycle shirts. In case of rain, waterproofs are essential.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage

15Kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself. It does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage. While tap water in South Africa's urban area is drinkable, some people may take a few days to acclimatise and thus may experience traveller's tummy. Therefore we recommend for you to travel with a reusable filtered water bottle such as the ones featured at Water-to-Go: <http://www.watertogo.eu/>

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow GBP 15 for tipping.

Country Information

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Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£6

Dinner price

£12

Beer price

£1.2

Water price

£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Rand.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Take your money in a combination of cash and an ATM card. Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged.

Where To Exchange

Most towns or cities, your tour leader will advise you.

ATM Availability

Cash can be drawn on debit cards from ATM's in most South African towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

In large shops and restaurants.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Travelling with Minors via South Africa (including transits)² Regulations affecting all children aged under 18 years that are travelling to, from or via South Africa are in place. The law states that parents and/or guardians are requested by the airline and/or South Africa immigration officers to provide additional documentation for each child they are travelling with. Please refer to the South African House website and your airline for full requirements: http://outhafricahouseuk.com/visas/vis_forcit.html South Africa: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visitors should ensure their passport is machine readable and has two blank pages when entering and leaving South Africa. The South African Immigration officials will not allow child/ infant pages to be used for this purpose and visitors without the stipulated blank pages will be denied entry. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

[Read more information about what travel insurance is required.](#)

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

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Vaccinations

Please note that you will be required to supply a yellow fever certificate that has been issued at least 10 days prior to arrival in South Africa if you have travelled from or via a country where yellow fever is endemic. We recommend protection against hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid, polio and diphtheria. According to various travel health sources, the Western Cape is not regarded as a malaria risk area. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

