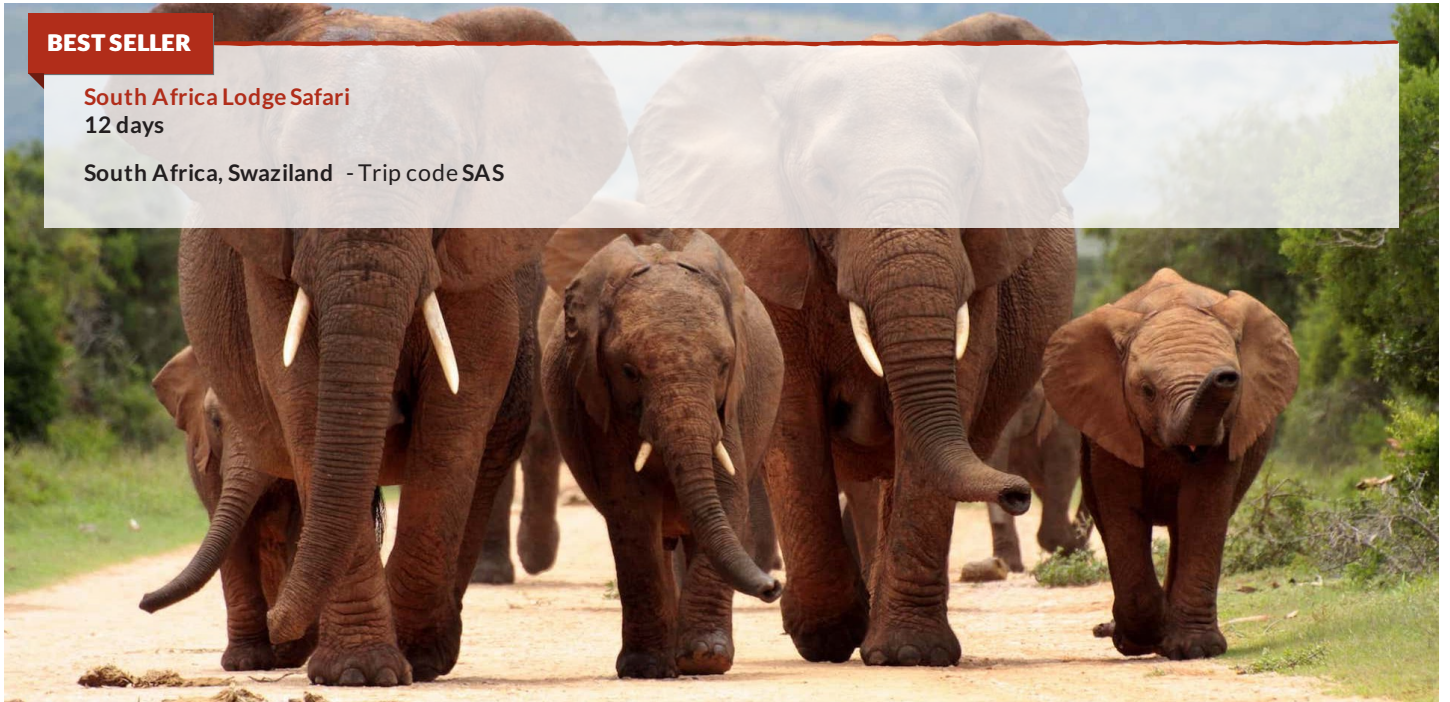


# EXPLORE!

**BEST SELLER**

**South Africa Lodge Safari**  
12 days

South Africa, Swaziland - Trip code SAS



## South Africa Lodge Safari

Discover the best nature reserves and national parks in Southern Africa as we stay in intimate lodges and go in search of wild game. We explore mountainous Ithala on foot, look for turtles in Kosi Bay and head to Tembe Elephant Park, home of the big tuskers. We cross into the Kingdom of Swaziland and find abundant rhino at Mkhaya whilst staying in stone lodges deep in the reserve. Our final destination is the world famous Kruger National Park, to spot the 'Big Five' and eat a traditional brai.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Soweto** - Tour of this famous township to uncover the history of the struggle against apartheid
- ★ **Ithala** - Game walks through the deep valley of Ithala Game Reserve
- ★ **Tembe Elephant Park** - 5 star accommodation in the middle of the bush
- ★ **Mkhaya Game Reserve** - Rhino spotting and stay at the tranquil Stone Lodge
- ★ **Kruger National Park** - 'Big Five' safaris at this world famous park

### 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.

**TRIP PACE:****Moderate**

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

**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 trip in Johannesburg. Tour of Soweto and visit the apartheid memorial

We join our trip in Johannesburg, the largest city in South Africa. After meeting our Explore leader and fellow group members we spend the afternoon in Soweto, the huge township on the outskirts of Johannesburg where 40% of the city's inhabitants live. Soweto, originally an acronym for South Western Townships, played a prominent part in the fight against the former apartheid regime, notably the uprising of 1976; when mass protests erupted. We will take a tour of the area and meet local people to understand how life has changed since the end of apartheid. We will visit the Hector Pieterse Memorial, a museum that honours the vital role that the youth of South Africa played in the struggle. He was one of the first students to be killed during the uprising when he was just 13. We will also visit Nelson Mandela's former home (now a museum) which tells the story of Mandela and his family.



**Accommodation: Aero Guest Lodge** (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None


## DAY 2 - Drive to the Kingdom of Swaziland and explore Mantenga Nature Reserve

Today we leave the big city behind and cross the border into the Kingdom of Swaziland; a land of green rolling hills filled with sugar cane and mountainous peaks overlooking vast valleys. We are staying on the outskirts of Mantenga Nature Reserve and the afternoon is free to explore the pristine woodland of Mantenga Nature Reserve. There are many walking trails in the area, a popular one is to visit the Mantenga Falls and it is also possible to hire bikes. Another option today is to visit the Mantenga cultural village, this features traditional Swazi huts, farming techniques and it's very own fully fledged singing and dancing troupe, who are famous throughout Swaziland and even performed at the World Cup in South Africa. Alternatively visit a local market or just relax in our lodge.




**Accommodation: Matenga Lodge** (or similar)


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 Premium Lodge

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 Swimming pool available

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 3 - Drive to Ithala Game Reserve, afternoon safaris

We cross back into South Africa today and head to Ithala Game Reserve. As we approach we can see Ngotse Mountain, the predominant feature of Ithala, towering over the plateaus, ridges and deep valley. We will arrive in the early afternoon, and after checking into our chalets we will head out on our first game drive of the trip. Giraffe are plentiful and we will also be on the lookout for elephant, buffalo, black and white rhino and a huge variety of antelope; including less commonly seen oribi and tsessebe. It is also possible but rare to see Ithala's resident leopards, spotted hyena and brown hyena.




**Accommodation: Ntshondwe Camp** (or similar)


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 Standard Lodge

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 Swimming pool available

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 4 - Game walk in Ithala looking for rhino; afternoon game drives

A game walk is one of the best ways of seeing animals and this morning we will meet a local ranger who will take us on an adventure. We will learn about tracks, trails, dung and general bushcraft as we slowly make our way across the reserve. Apart from increasing our understanding of the wild, our primary focus is seeing rhino; these prehistoric-looking beasts were reintroduced to Ithala and have been successfully breeding here. The feeling of slowly and safely walking towards a rhino is always a mixture of excitement, awe and nerves; though we will heed our ranger's guidance and keep a safe distance. After lunch we will wait for the heat of the day to subside before heading out on another game drive. This afternoon we will explore parts of the reserve that we haven't seen yet, which will probably include the Pongola River the top of Ngotse Mountain, which rises to 1400m.



**Accommodation: Ntshondwe Camp** (or similar)


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 Standard Lodge

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 Swimming pool available

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 5 - Drive to Kosi Bay. Guided walk around four beautiful coastal lakes

Leaving Ithala, we drive towards the Indian Ocean until we reach Kosi Bay, a part of iSimangaliso Wetland Park. iSimangaliso means

'a miracle' or 'something wondrous' in the Zulu language and it is because of the beauty and rich biodiversity that saw the park become a world heritage site. We should arrive around lunch time and in the afternoon we will take a guided walk around the four interlinked lakes of Kosi Bay. The lakes run parallel to the coast, all the way up to Mozambique and we will spend 3-4 hours exploring the area, looking for local birds and being in awe of the sandy beaches and green forested coastlines. Our lodge tonight is close to Lake Nhlanga, locally owned and built with to be in tune with traditional architecture.



### Accommodation: Kosi Bay Lodge (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Free day to explore Kosi Bay. Activities on offer include snorkelling, walking and canoeing

Today is at leisure to explore this wonderfully diverse area, with many activities on offer or just the chance to relax on the beach for the day. Kosi Bay is famous for its traditional and ancient fishing kraals, tendered by the local Tonga people. One of the options today is to have a tour of the kraals and meet some of the Tonga who will tell stories from their culture and explain why they revere their traditional methods. For those seeking a more active morning, it is possible to hire canoes or go snorkelling to see the huge variety of tropical fish found in the estuary. There are also hiking trails throughout the wetland area and the lodge boasts a swimming pool. During turtle season (November - March) it is also possible to see loggerhead and leatherback turtles laying their eggs on the beach.



### Accommodation: Kosi Bay Lodge (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

## DAY 7 - Search for the 'Big Five' at Tembe Elephant Park

This morning we will drive for a couple of hours until we reach Tembe Elephant Park, our beautiful home for the next two nights. Tembe is renowned for its big tuskers - elephants with huge tusks, but it is also a 'Big Five' reserve, so we will hope to see lion, leopard, black and white rhino and buffalo here as well. We will be staying at Tembe Lodge, a luxurious tented camp fenced in the middle of the reserve, run by members of the local Tembe people, a tribe that has protected and lived in this area for generations. During our stay we will see the park through the eyes of the Tembe people, hear their stories and learn about their way of life. We will have lunch on arrival at the park and then head out on a game drive in the afternoon, stopping at a waterhole to enjoy a cold sundowner - a great way to view game! Dinner will be at the lodge and then we will spend the evening around the camp fire.



### Accommodation: Tembe Elephant Lodge (or similar)



Premium Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

## DAY 8 - Game drives at Tembe, time to relax, swim or have a massage

Today we have a full day of the Tembe experience. After an early breakfast we head out on safari for a few hours, our local guide taking us around the park, looking for signs of big game and pointing out some of the 340 bird species found here. We return to a light brunch and then have a few hours to either relax, sleep, take a trip to the hide to spot more wildlife, eat lunch, cool off in the pool or enjoy a massage at the outdoor (but shaded) spa area, it's a pretty easy life here! We take an afternoon game safari in open sided jeeps to hopefully spot any animals we haven't seen during our stay and then back to the lodge for dinner. After eating we can listen to the soulful singing of the local Isicathamiya group, as we sit by the fire and swap stories.



**Accommodation: Tembe Elephant Lodge** (or similar)



Premium Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

## DAY 9 - Enter the Kingdom of Swaziland, spotting rhino at Mkhaya Game Reserve

We leave Tembe and South Africa behind and cross back into the Kingdom of Swaziland. We journey to Mkhaya Game Reserve, a haven for many endangered species but best known for its large numbers of black and white rhino; which we will see on our afternoon game drives here. Our accommodation for the night is Stone Camp, a tranquil area which features a collection of stone cottages and is the only lodging in the reserve. The camp is situated on a dry river bed and is surrounded by tall Fig and Sausage trees, which create a lush canopy, attracting many species of bird into the camp as well as some small game like warthogs and impala. Our plan for the day is to take a game walk after arrival, have lunch at the lodge and then head out for an afternoon safari in open top jeeps with a local Swazi ranger. Dinner tonight is a feast of local delicacies, eaten outside under the stars and we will then be entertained as we sit around the fire by a local music group of singers and dancers.



**Accommodation: Mkhaya Lodge** (or similar)



Premium Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 10 - Enter South Africa and game drive in Kruger National Park

We cross back into South Africa this morning and drive for a couple of hours until we cross Crocodile River and enter the world famous Kruger National Park. Kruger was established to protect big game that had been hunted to near extinction; it is now one of the most prolific animal habitats in South Africa and totally committed to animal conservation. We will drive through the park, on the lookout for wildlife until we reach our accommodation. After lunch and some time to let the heat of the day subside, we will be out on safari, hoping to spot some of Kruger's rarer sightings such as wild dog or honey badgers.



**Accommodation: Berg-en-Dal** (or similar)

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Standard Lodge

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Swimming pool available

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 11 - Full day of safari In Kruger, brai and wine tasting evening

We will be game driving as soon as the gates open this morning to make the most of our last day on safari. We are staying in the south of the park where we will find the highest concentration of game, this is mainly due to the vast variation in landscapes and habitats that are found here. This evening our Explore Leaders will cook us a traditional brai - a South African barbecue. Cooking outdoors is an integral part of the South African way of life and we will be able to witness the pride that our Leaders have in their brai cooking skills. This will be accompanied by a wine tasting where we will try some interesting and fun wines from South Africa, chosen by our leaders.



**Accommodation: Berg-en-Dal** (or similar)

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Standard Lodge

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Swimming pool available

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

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## DAY 12 - Drive the Panorama Route back to Johannesburg

Leaving Kruger early, we make our way along the Panorama Route, stopping at Blyde River Canyon. One of the most extensive canyons on earth and arguably the most picturesque, with its lush green vegetation and the 'Three Rondavels' - huge rocks rising from the canyon floor. We will arrive back into Johannesburg around 5pm where the trip ends at the airport; those staying for longer in the area will be dropped at a local guesthouse.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## Why book this trip

This trip is designed for wildlife lovers who want to explore fun and beautiful game reserves and stay in comfortable and interesting lodges along the way. Due to current exchange rates, now is a great time to visit South Africa, meet its friendly people and enjoy the lovely food and drink on offer.

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 11  
Lunch: 3  
Dinner: 4



### Transport

4WD



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Driver  
Local Guide(s)  
Safari Guide(s)



### Accommodation

7 nights standard lodge  
4 nights premium lodge

## Trip information

### Country information

### South Africa Holidays & Tours

#### 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

# Swaziland Holidays & Tours

## Climate

Can be visited all year round. Most rain falls in the summer months (October-April). The climate during this period is generally hot and humid in the lowlands with temperatures sometimes up to 40°C. Winters (June-August) are much drier and colder, but still pleasant for travel. The high veld has a temperate climate. Average daily sunshine hours are high throughout the year. 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

English, Swati

## Budgeting and packing

## Optional activities

Kosi Bay; Turtle Tour (Nov - Jan) R450-500pp (depending on numbers - minimum 2 persons to operate) Kosi Bay Mouth by 4x4 R310-400pp (depending on numbers - minimum 2 persons to operate) Black Rock by 4x4 R400pp (minimum 4 persons to operate)

## Clothing

Clothing should generally be lightweight for the day. A few warm fleeces and long trousers are strongly recommended as nights can be very cold, especially from May to August and in the highlands of Swaziland. A waterproof and windproof jacket are also recommended, particularly between October and April. Avoid brightly coloured clothing for game viewing. Take a swimming costume. Please note that it is forbidden to wear camouflage clothing in Swaziland.

## Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes or lightweight boots for the walking safaris, trainers or sandals for relaxing/travelling.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

Take a tough soft bag or holdall (or rucksack with detachable frame) suitable to be carried by 4WD vehicle. Total allowance: 44lb/ 20kg maximum (due to weight restrictions on our vehicle). Also take a daypack for items needed during any short walks and game drives (20-30 litre).

## Equipment

Bring a torch, water bottle, sunhat/sunscreen and insect repellent. Binoculars are essential for game viewing and a 300mm lens is recommended for photography. While tap water in South Africa's urban area is drinkable, some people may take a few days to get used to it. Therefore we recommend for you to travel with a reusable filtered water bottle such as the ones featured at Waterto-Go: <http://www.watertogo.eu/>

## Tipping

### Explore leader

Tour 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. You should allow £20-£25 for tipping. 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.

## Country Information

### South Africa Holidays & Tours

#### 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.

### Swaziland Holidays & Tours

#### 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**

£10

**Dinner price**

£15

**Water price**

£1

#### Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Lilangeni but South African Rand is accepted

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged. Please note that the banks and Forex Bureaus do not accept US Dollar notes pre-2002. Take your money in a combination of cash and travellers cheques and take an ATM card.

**Where To Exchange**

On arrival.

**ATM Availability**

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

#### **Credit Card Acceptance**

Credit cards are usually accepted in large shops and restaurants.

#### **Travellers Cheques**

We do not recommend to take travellers cheques as these are quite difficult to exchange.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

4WD

### 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.

This trip features a fantastic range of wildlife lodges which are picked to compliment the intimate nature reserves that we are visiting. In Ithala we are staying in chalets at the foot of a mountain that towers over the reserve. Our accommodation in Kosi Bay feels like a jungle lodge, surrounded by lakes and close to the coast. Tembe lodge is the pick of the bunch and we will be treated like African royalty during our stay. In Swaziland we overnight at Stone Camp, in open cabins in a fenced area in the middle of Mkhaya, we will also stay at the luxurious Mantenga lodge. Our final accommodation is in Kruger and while not as exclusive as our other night stops, it provides us with an excellent base to explore this famous park.

## 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](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. Swaziland: Visas are not required by UK, Australian,

New Zealand, and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. 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](http://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.

## South Africa Holidays & Tours

### 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.

# Swaziland Holidays & Tours

## 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 Swaziland if you have travelled from or via a country where yellow fever is endemic. We recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid, polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Special Note: Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure. 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.

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