

EXPLORE!

BEST SELLER

Cape Escape
11 days

South Africa - Trip code CP



Cape Escape

Flanked by the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, the Western Cape boasts incredible beaches, beautiful mountain ranges and unparalleled botanical splendour. This tour takes in South Africa's highlights as we journey from Cape Town, through the winelands of Stellenbosch and onto the scenic Garden Route. Along our way, we encounter penguins at Boulders Bay, breeding whales in Hermanus (from June to September) and game in the Botelierskop Reserve.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Cape Town** - An iconic, vibrant city surrounded by mountain and sea.
- ★ **Cape Peninsula** - Visit Cape of Good Hope and the resident penguin colony.
- ★ **Stellenbosch** - World renowned vineyards overlooked by stunning, rugged mountains.
- ★ **Tsitsikamma National Park** - A marine and forest park in the heart of the famous Garden Route.
- ★ **Hermanus** - The best place in Southern Africa to admire the humpback whales (in season).
- ★ **Botelierskop** - A reserve home to rhino, buffalo, giraffe and orphan predators.

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:**12 - 18**

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

Cape Town embodies the feeling of energy and hope that South Africans feel for the future of their country. It's a city of spectacular natural assets, with a high-tech city centre and a mixed population living peacefully together, whilst retaining their own customs. The rest of today has been left free and you may choose to use the transport provided to head down the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront. Here, you are likely to see Cape fur seals playfully frolicking in the harbour waters, against the dramatic backdrop of Table Mountain.



Accommodation: Cape Town Lodge (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Tour Cape Peninsula National Park

Today is spent enjoying a tour of the many points of interest on the Cape Peninsula. Our drive takes us via the glorious white-sand beaches of Fish Hoek and the important Naval base of Simon's Town. At Boulders Beach, we stop to see the resident African penguin colony, one of the only places in the world where this sea bird resides. Moving on to a major highlight, our next visit is to the Cape of Good Hope, 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'. Astonishingly, it was another century before the Dutch East Indies Trading Company established a permanent settlement here, when it was used to supply ships with cattle and water traded from the indigenous Khoi population. We climb up to a viewpoint and watch the reputed turbulent clash of the warm Agulhas current from the Indian Ocean meeting the cold Benguela current from the Atlantic. If you're feeling active, a short trail leads down to Cape Point. Our return to Cape Town takes us via Hout Bay, an attractive fishing port once flanked by dense forest which gave it its name, translated as 'Wood Bay'. Here, you have the option of taking a short boat trip out to Seal Island - home to 1000 Cape fur seals and guarded by the impressive towering mountain of 'Sentinel'. Alternatively, you may chose to explore more on dry land. Hout Bay has an active tuna, snoek and crayfish industry and prides itself on offering some of the best fish and chips in the world.



Accommodation: Cape Town Lodge (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Ascend Table Mountain; drive Stellenbosch

This morning we plan to ascend Table Mountain. Weather permitting, you may choose to take the three to four-hour hiking trail up to the top, accompanied by your Tour Leader. Alternatively, an aerial cableway runs frequently to and from the summit, although it does close for 2 weeks for maintenance each year roughly from the end of July, the ticket for this must be purchased locally. This is our first encounter with some of the unique and colourful flowers from the Cape Floral Kingdom. This plant kingdom has more indigenous plant species per square metre than anywhere else in the world. As you would expect, the views from the top of Table Mountain are simply stunning. A network of trails criss-cross the plateau and provide a variety of vantage points. Later in the day we'll head out of Cape Town to stay for a couple of nights in Stellenbosch. This region produces some of the finest 'New World Wines', honed over several centuries by the Afrikaan wine growers. Should you wish to do so, you will have the opportunity to sample some of their latest vintages during an optional visit to a wine estate.



Accommodation: Stellenbosch Lodge (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Exploring the historic town of Stellenbosch and the winelands

To the north and east of Cape Town are the Cape Winelands, where rugged mountains rise above rolling green valleys, neatly planted with vineyards and dotted with whitewashed manor houses. Stellenbosch is one of the most beautiful and heritage-rich towns in southern Africa. A settlement was first established here in 1679 by the Governor of the Cape who recognised the benefits of the lush and fertile landscape. Today, we have the opportunity to stroll through this historic town, taking in the distinct architecture that reflects South Africa's rich and diverse history. You can choose to explore on your own following self-guided trails, or take an optional guided tour. If you are feeling energetic, you may like to take a walk on the Helderberg Mountains just behind Stellenbosch.



Accommodation: Stellenbosch Lodge (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Scenic drive to Oudtshoorn, stopping in wine country on route

We start early this morning for our scenic journey into the Little Karoo, as there are several points of interest worth visiting en route. After a short time, we will stop for a brief visit in Franschhoek. One of the oldest towns in South Africa, it is now renowned for its top restaurants and foodie offering, with property here among the most sort-after in the country. Worcester is our next stop. Located in the heart of the verdant Breede River Valley, it is surrounded by the largest of the Western Cape's fruit and wine producing valleys. Here, we will find the Karoo National Botanical Garden - a haven for rare and endangered plants. We will also drive through the picturesque town centre, with its fine Victorian town buildings. We continue our drive through the stark and arid landscapes of the Little Karoo, heading east through Barrydale and Ladismith. Finally, in the centre of South Africa's ostrich farming country, we reach our country lodge accommodation near Oudtshoorn, where we will spend the next two nights.



Accommodation: Kleinplaas Resort (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - In Oudtshoorn, exploring the Cango Caves

We head off early this morning to make the most of the stunning variety of landscapes in this region. We start by exploring the massive limestone caverns of the Cango Caves, where we have the option of joining one of the guided tours which run regularly throughout the day. The caves are an underground wonderland of extraordinary structures, millions of years old. The combination of dripping rainwater and limestone has led to the creation of some of nature's most breath-taking natural arrangements. A local European farmer first discovered the caves late in the 18th century. Ever since then, they have been enjoyed and explored by professionals and amateurs alike. This afternoon, you have the option of a visit to a local Ostrich Farm, where you can see Zimbabwean Blue, Kenyan Red and South African varieties of this bird, along with the rare and beautiful white ostriches.



Accommodation: Kleinplaas Resort (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Drive to Knysna, walk on peninsula looking for Seals and Dolphins

After leaving Oudtshoorn, we travel along the dramatic Outeniqua pass through the Outeniqua Mountains. These mountains form a formidable barrier between the dry interior and the lush coastal strip known as the 'Garden Route'. Our next two nights are spent in Knysna, which is a popular artists' retreat and adventure activity base, twice voted South Africa's favourite town. It was originally a lucrative harbour, forestry and mining centre, established as a commercial town by the reputed illegitimate son of King George III, George Rex. Its wealth was built on its lagoon from which goods could be easily transported. Later today, it may also be possible to take an easy walk on the magnificent Robberg Peninsula. Named after the seal colony found there by Dutch sailors, it offers stunning views of the coastline. From the peninsula, you may well see seals and dolphins. From June to late November, you may also catch sight of southern right whales that come into the calmer and warmer waters to calve and nurse their young.



Accommodation: Lagoon Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Visit Tsitsikamma National Park, optional walks and short treks

No visit to the Garden Route would be complete without a visit to the magnificent Tsitsikamma National Park. This marine and forest park stretches for 80 kilometres, from a lagoon at Nature's Valley to the mouth of the Groot River. Whilst in the park, you have the option to join a canopy tour, during which you can 'fly' through the forest on a zipwire. The lush forest and sheer cliffs also provide an ideal setting for trekking and we are likely to go on a short walk to the suspension bridge that spans the mouth of Storm's River. Here, the rugged coastline with its crashing waves and the forest-covered cliffs are simply spellbinding. Whilst in this area, we also recommend sampling the excellent local seafood.



Accommodation: Lagoon Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Game drive in Botelierskop reserve, drive to Swellendam

This morning, we have an early start to drive to Botelierskop Private Game Reserve for our three-hour game drive. Here, a local guide will accompany us as we explore the 3000 hectare reserve in an open four-wheel drive safari vehicle. There are around 1800 animals in the reserve, across 26 species, including rhino, buffalo, giraffe, zebra, eland, bontebok and black impala. The reserve also attracts over 200 species of bird. During our visit, we are also likely to meet orphaned elephants and lions. This afternoon, we will continue to follow the garden route into an important farming region where we will find Swellendam - our base for the night.



Accommodation: Round the Bend Lodge (or similar)



Standard Tree-House



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 10 - Along the 'Whale Route' to Cape Town

On our penultimate day of the tour, we follow the acclaimed 'Whale Route' along the dramatic south coast to Cape Town. Our first

stop is wild and dramatic Cape Agulhas, the southernmost point in Africa. It is also the point where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Indian Ocean. We then drive on to the small seaside resort of Hermanus, regarded as one of the premier spots for whale-watching in Africa, if not the world. Every year, between June and December, southern right whales mate and calve in this area. Hermanus is one of the best places to see them as they come very close inshore and the cliff top coastal walk offers many convenient viewing points. A 'whale crier' keeps everybody informed of the whereabouts of the whales by blowing his kelp horn and is as much a part of the whale watching experience as the whales are. Finally, we return to Cape Town via Betty's Bay and Gordon's Bay, affording spectacular views across both Walker Bay and False Bay. On your final evening of the tour, you may choose to go to a traditional African drumming performance, or simply enjoy one of the many excellent restaurants in the city. Please note: Final timings of today's itinerary are flexible and depend on seasonality and the likelihood of spotting whales. Out of whale season, we may arrive in Cape Town earlier in the day, allowing us free time to spend as we wish.



Accommodation: Cape Town Lodge (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Tour ends Cape Town

The tour ends today after breakfast. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may have enough time to visit the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens. The gardens lie on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain and consist of landscaped gardens of indigenous plants and trees. They are a living display of floral beauty and feature 4700 of the estimated 20000 species of indigenous South African flora, and close to 50 per cent of the Peninsula's floral wealth! Alternatively and depending on the schedule of your flights, you may opt to take a boat trip to visit Robben Island, if you haven't already had the chance to visit it on Day 1. It is here that Nelson Mandela served most of his prison sentence under the South African government and is now a worthy and powerful symbol of the optimism and hope for the future of South Africa. If this all sounds far too strenuous, you could just soak up the vibrant and colourful atmosphere at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront and just wander or do some last minute shopping!



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

The Cape Escape is a great introduction to Southern Africa, with a fantastic variety of landscape, food, drink and wildlife. You will have the opportunity to climb one of the most iconic natural features in the world, Table Mountain, or take the cable car if you prefer. The tour allows you make the most of the wonderful food and wine culture of the cape and given the advantageous current exchange rate, it's a great time to visit this beautiful area.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 10
Dinner: 1



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel
2 nights standard lodge
1 nights standard tree-house

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

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Cape Town - Robben Island (3.5 hour tour) £25; Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens £3; Table Mountain cable car - £7 Cape Peninsula - Seal Island boat trip £5. Stellenbosch - Guided tour available £5; Wine tasting £2. Cango Caves - Guided tour of caves £7 depending on duration; Ostrich Farm £6. Hermanus - Whale watching £50. Plettenberg - Whale watching £44. Tsitsikamma NP - Canopy trail £42. Oudsthoorn - Wildlife ranch £9. Knysna - Robberg Nature Reserve £3; Township Tour £24. If you would like to book an excursion to Robben Island, the former prison where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated please use this link: <http://www.robben-island.org.za/> It is very important that you book the 9am ferry for day 11 of the tour. If there are spaces it is possible to book this excursion locally, but this is subject to availability.

Clothing

Clothing should generally be lightweight for the day. Also take some fleeces, long trousers, a waterproof and windproof jacket. Take a swimming costume and towel.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes (or well broken in walking boots if planning to hike), trainers or sandals for relaxing/travelling in.

Luggage

15Kg

Luggage: On tour

Take a soft bag, holdall or suitcase. Also take a daypack for items needed during any walks or sightseeing.

Equipment

Take a torch, sunhat/ sunscreen and insect repellent. Binoculars are essential for bird watching. Mosquito nets are not required as the accommodation provides screening where necessary. 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

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. 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 £20 for tipping.

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.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

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.

South Africa has a good tourism infrastructure and generally good service standards. Outside of our mid-range, hotel in Cape town, much of our accommodation is in small, family run guesthouses, farms and inns. These are more than just B&Bs; individually styled and tastefully furnished, with en suite rooms and often lovely gardens and a pool. The properties we use give a real taste of traditional South African hospitality and we love supporting these small local businesses. In Stellenbosch we stay in the guesthouse of a working wine farm which gives us a great feel for the country whilst staying in comfortable accommodation. We can also enjoy some great home cooking and views from the pool. Also of note is our thatched country lodge at Oudtshoorn.

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.

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.

