

# EXPLORE!



**BEST SELLER**

**South Africa Highlights**

14 days

South Africa - Trip code SAH

## South Africa Highlights

On this trip we discover the highlights of South Africa, learning about its turbulent history in Soweto and then visiting Kruger, the most famous National Park in Southern Africa for two full days of safari, searching for big game. We fly down to the Garden Route to take an incredible journey from Tsitsikamma down to Cape Town, taking in Knysna and Featherbed National Park, Hermanus for some of the best whale watching in the world and of course an overnight stay in the historic town of Stellenbosch, known for its award winning wineries and vineyards. In Cape Town there is the chance to take a trip to Robben Island or the cable car up Table Mountain.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Tsitsikamma National Park** - A marine and forest park in the heart of the famous Garden Route.
- ★ **Cape Town** - A beautiful city surrounded by mountain and sea.
- ★ **Stellenbosch** - World renowned vineyards overlooked by stunning, rugged mountains.
- ★ **Hermanus** - The best place in Southern Africa to admire whales

### 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 trip in Johannesburg, Soweto township tour

The trip begins at the hotel in Johannesburg, the largest city in South Africa. After meeting our local guide 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, notable the Soweto Uprising of 1976; when mass protests erupted and the government shot at the crowd, killing many innocent protestors. We will take a tour of the township 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. Hector Pieterse was one of the first students to be killed during the uprising when he was just 13. We will also visit the Mandela House Museum, situated in Nelson Mandela's former home which tells the story of Mandela and his family.

Please note: For those arriving on the earlier flights around 7-8 am into Johannesburg, rooms will be provided to freshen up after a long flight. For those arriving on the later flight nearer to 10am, the trip will kick off immediately with an afternoon trip to Soweto.



**Accommodation: Safari Club** (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Drive to Graskop, stopping at God's Window and Blyde River Canyon

We leave Johannesburg this morning and start to see some of the beautiful mountainous landscape as we make our way to Kruger National Park in the east of the country. We will drive through the airy uplands of Mpumalanga (formerly Eastern Transvaal) which have been inhabited since stone age times and with the region's plentiful water from mountain rivers, multiple waterfalls, beautiful craggy escarpments covered in vegetation, and colourful birdlife, it is easy to understand why. We'll stop at several excellent

viewpoints, including the aptly named 'God's Window' and admire the awe-inspiring Blyde River Canyon. Our stop for this evening is a small town called Hazyview, the self-titled 'gateway to Kruger' and we spend the night in a small locally run guesthouse.



**Accommodation: Graskop Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Full day of safari inside Kruger National Park

This morning we are up early to head out on safari inside Kruger National Park, one of the premier wildlife viewing spots in southern Africa. The Kruger National Park was established in 1898 to protect big game that had been hunted to near extinction, it is now one of the most prolific animal habitats in South Africa, committed to animal conservation. During today's safari we will stop at various watering holes where we may see buffalo or antelope refreshing themselves and hopefully a pride of lions nearby. As well as lions you can see the rest of the 'Big 5' here, along with cheetah, giraffe, wildebeest, zebra and many more. We will have lunch in the park and continue our game drive in the afternoon.



**Accommodation: Timbavati Safari Lodge** (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Game drives in Kruger National Park

We spend another full day in the park on safari and today we will focus on trying to find some of the park's more unusual and rare animals including honey badger, black rhino and eland. There also is the opportunity to see wild dog in Kruger which are very hard to find as they have been hunted to near extinction in many places. This evening we will stay within the parks borders and there is the option of taking a night game drive. The lodge where we will stay also has facilities for a Braai, a South African style barbeque which is seen as central to the culture of the country, no matter your tradition or ethnicity. South Africans are lovers of meat and see the braai as being the best way to cook, it obviously helps when you have beautifully warm nights to sit out under the stars and enjoy good food and wine. This evening it is recommended that you check-in online for tomorrows flight to Port Elizabeth (your e-ticket will be provided in your final documentation); it is possible to check in 24 hours before departure.



**Accommodation: Timbavati Safari Lodge** (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Head back to Johannesburg, fly down to Port Elizabeth

Leaving Kruger behind us we make our way back to Johannesburg where we will take a late afternoon flight down to Port Elizabeth, a large port city on the Indian Ocean. The city was first populated as a stop over point with clean water on the way to Goa in India, it was later populated by the British during colonial times. For us this is the start of our exploration of the famous Garden Route .



**Accommodation: The Kelway Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Explore Tsitsikamma National park, marine and forest wonderland

No trip along 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; lush forest and sheer cliffs also provide an ideal setting for hiking and we will take 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. We continue our journey to Plettenberg Bay, our home for the next two nights; whilst in this area, we also recommend sampling the excellent local seafood.



**Accommodation: The Dunes Resort** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Full day to enjoy Plettenberg Bay and many optional activities

Plettenberg Bay and its surroundings boast some of the most exquisite beaches and stunning scenery of the Garden Route and an unparalleled range of activities. Our day is left free to choose from boat based dolphin and whale watching, to snorkelling, sailing, kayaking, mountain biking or canoeing. In season (June to November, sometime into December too) the whale watching is especially recommended, as this shoreline offers the chance to watch a truly great mammal, the southern right whale. The dunes and escarpments offer panoramic views of the coast and you have a good chance of seeing seals, dolphins and whales, plus a wealth

of bird and botanical life. There is also the option of visiting the Birds of Eden, which features the world's largest aviary over indigenous forest, the aviary has won many prestigious responsible tourism awards and is a leading light in ethical animal rehabilitation sanctuaries.



### Accommodation: The Dunes Resort (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Trail walk in Robberg Nature Reserve, continue on to Knysna

This morning we drive along the Garden route to Knysna, a town favoured by artists and twice voted South Africa's favourite town. En route we will stop at Robberg Nature Reserve where we will spend most of the morning walking along its trails with amazing coastline views where we will try to spot local seals and dolphins. We will continue onto Knysna where we will take a boat trip of the lagoon. After lunch we will have an orientation tour of Knysna with our local guide or instead you may wish to do an optional township tour. Knysna is well-known for its bars and restaurants and we recommend eating like the locals and trying white mussel cracker, a local fish speciality.



### Accommodation: Lagoon Inn (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Drive to Hermanus via Wilderness National Park

We leave Knysna behind for our morning stop at Wilderness National Park where we will enjoy a nature walk. We will continue to follow the spectacular coastal road westwards for around 400 km towards Hermanus, the whale watching capital of South Africa. From June - November it is common to see southern right whales migrating past the town, you can stand on the shore and watch as they continue on their incredible journey.



### Accommodation: Whale Coast Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 10 - Seasonal whale watching in Hermanus

We have a full day in Hermanus where we will whale watch during the season with free time later to enjoy the town at your leisure. For departures operating out of whale watching season, we will visit the Fernkloof Nature Reserve, a protected area situated above Hermanus with stunning views out over the town and the bay. The reserve has over 1400 species of flora and over 90 species of birds recorded in the area and is filled with coastal and hiking trails. We will spend the day walking around this wildlife haven; during whale watching season it is also possible to visit Fernkloof.



**Accommodation: Whale Coast Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 11 - Winelands of Stellenbosch, tasting and tour of the town

This morning we have a short drive as we enter the Winelands of the Cape and drive to Stellenbosch, a beautiful town surrounded by vineyards and mountains. We will take a walk around the town, past the famous university and visit the museum, which explains the history of the town, from its creation in 1679 to present day. Though the most enjoyable part of the day is undoubtedly when we visit two local wineries for tours and tastings; where we will have a chance to learn how the wine is made and then taste some of the best red and white wines that they produce. Stellenbosch has a reputation for excellent Chenin Blanc, perfectly matched with seafood, caught fresh from the Indian Ocean that morning. If you are more of a red fan, then expect big earthy reds, a great companion for a sumptuous steak or meat on a braai. There is also the local phenomenon of Pinotage, created in South Africa as a blend of Pinot Noir and Cinsaut, the wine has now achieved global recognition and the best place to try it is here in South Africa.



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



Standard Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 12 - Head to Cape Town, explore the town

We drive through more rolling green slopes, filled with vineyards as we make our way to Cape Town, our final destination and one of most iconic cities on earth. We can see the towering Table Mountain from miles away, though if the day isn't clear we will see the cloud rolling over the top of precipice, either vision is equally outstanding. There will be time this afternoon to take the option of a cable car up to the top of the mountain for views out over the bay and the cape, including the peaks of Lion's Head and Signal Hill. Please note the cableway closes for 2 weeks for maintenance each year roughly from the end of July. In the distance you can see Robben Island, the former home of Nelson Mandela, South Africa's favourite son and most famous hero. Apart from its obvious geographical attractions, Cape Town is also famous for its food and drink culture, with an abundance of restaurants, from trendy downtown to the slightly more touristy but beautiful V&A waterfront; and with exchange rates currently working in our favour it is possible to eat like a king for very little money.



**Accommodation: La Splendida Hotel** (or similar)

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Standard Hotel

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 13 - Optional trips to Robben Island, Cape Point or climb Table Mountain

Today is left free for you to choose one of the many optional activities available in the area. If you want to visit Robben Island, we recommend booking this before your trip departs home to ensure a place (please see under optionals for more details). There is also the option of hiking up Table Mountain today, it is about 3 hours walking to the top, at times tough but very rewarding - start early to avoid the heat. For those wanting to get out of town and see the surrounding areas, another option is to visit Cape Point, where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet, this trip will also visit Boulders bay and its resident penguin colony. Another option is just to get out walking around the city, try one of the many museums in the centre, wander past the colourful houses in the Bo-Kaap (Malay quarter), explore District Six and learn about its troubled past or just stroll down Long Street and enjoy the coffee culture of Cape Town.



**Accommodation: La Splendida Hotel** (or similar)

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Standard Hotel

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 14 - Trip ends in Cape Town

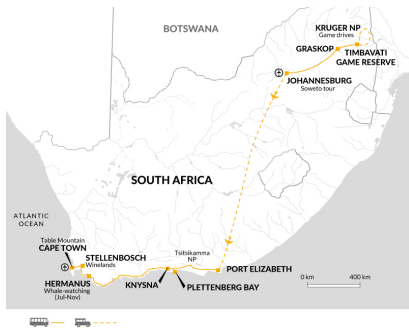
Our adventure comes to an end as the trip finishes after breakfast in Cape Town

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Meals Provided: Breakfast

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### Victoria Falls Extension (VFE)

Victoria Falls Extension (VFE)

## Extend your trip

Why not extend your holiday with an extension to the thundering Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. Click here for details.

## Cape Town water crisis

Product Manager, Naomi Jackson, has just returned from South Africa. Read her thoughts of Cape Town's water crisis and how it will affect you.

## Why book this trip

This trip has been designed for travellers who want to experience and enjoy all of South Africa's main attractions and highlights in a 2 week trip. The favourable exchange rate of the South African Rand means that prices in country are fantastic value, making it a great time to visit.

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 13



### Transport

Minibus



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader  
Driver(s)



### Accommodation

9 nights standard hotel  
4 nights standard lodge

## Trip information

### Country information

### South Africa

#### 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

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

### Kruger

Sunset Safari at Kruger NP - R605.00 per person

Timbavati BBQ at Kruger NP - R250.00 per person

### Plettenburg Bay

Wildlife sanctuaries - R230.00 per person

Dolphin encounter boat trip - R570.00 per person

Close Encounter Whale Watching (in season) - R850.00 per person

### Knysna

Featherbed Eco-Experience including buffet lunch - R 650.00 per person

Featherbed Eco-Experience excluding buffet lunch - R 460.00 per person

Sunset cruise - R220.00 per person

Eminzi Township Tour - R400 per person

### Hermanus

Whale watching trip in Hermanus - R800.00 per person (seasonal from June to Dec)

### Cape Town

Full day Cape Peninsula tour including Hout Bay, Cape of Good Hope and Boulders beach - R1040.00 per person

Table Mountain cable car - R293 per person return / R150 per person one way.

Robben Island tour - R340.00 per person

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 preferable to book the 9am ferry for day 13 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. Avoid brightly coloured clothing for game viewing. Take a swimming costume. Take a swimming costume and towel.

## Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes or lightweight boots for the walks, 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. 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. 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

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 £30 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

### 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

Minibus

### 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. Our accommodation throughout this tour is varied to reflect the many aspects of this beautiful country. We use a combination of small, family run guesthouses and characterful park lodges. Some of the properties are owner-occupied and give a real taste of traditional South African hospitality and we love supporting these small local businesses.

## 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.

### Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

Travelling with Minors via South Africa (including transits)<sup>2</sup>

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.

South Africa: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, US and Canadian citizens. New Zealand passport holders do require a visa, please consult your local consulate for full information. 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.

All visa information is subject to change. 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

### 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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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

### 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. If you are travelling to other areas in South Africa please check with your doctor about malaria requirements. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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