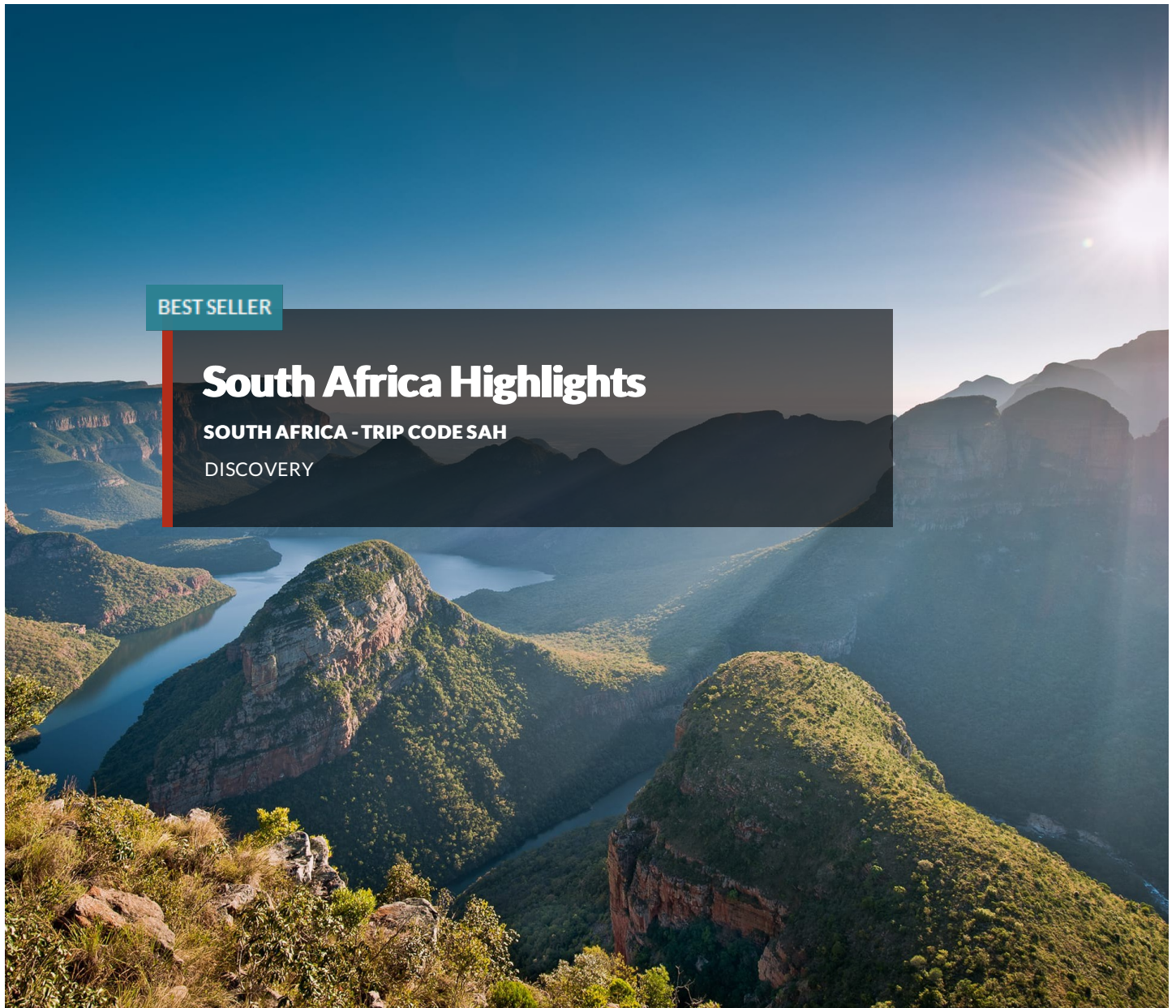


EXPLORE!



BEST SELLER

South Africa Highlights

SOUTH AFRICA - TRIP CODE SAH

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

A trip to discover the highlights of South Africa, including understanding the turbulent history in Soweto, searching for wildlife in Kruger, travelling along the iconic Garden Route to see penguins and try delicious wines in the Cape Winelands, all before ending in colourful Cape Town.

- **Tsitsikamma National Park** - A marine and forest park in the heart of the famous Garden Route
- **Stellenbosch** - World renowned vineyards overlooked by stunning, rugged mountains
- **Hermanus** - The best place in Southern Africa to admire whales (in season).



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 13



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour
Leader
Driver(s)



TRANSPORT
Minibus



ACCOMMODATION
1 nights
comfortable
guesthouse
9 nights
comfortable hotel
3 nights
comfortable lodge



TRIP PACE:
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
12 - 18

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

We join our trip 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:
Aero Guest Lodge (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Lodge



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL 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)



Grade: Comfortable 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)

**Grade: Comfortable Lodge**

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL 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)

**Grade: Comfortable Lodge**

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



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)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL 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)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL 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)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL 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. Enroute 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 have a free afternoon. This sleepy town is an area of beauty as it's centred around a large lagoon and a great place to get out on the water. There will be an option to go on an eco-experience trip by boat to Featherbed Nature Reserve, where a specialist guide will educate you about the local flora and fauna as you walk through this coastal forest. Or alternatively, enjoy a slower pace and join a late afternoon cruise on the lagoon to take in the renowned sunsets. There is a selection of bars and restaurants in the harbour area of the town and we recommend eating like the locals and trying white mussel cracker, a local fish speciality.



ACCOMMODATION:
Lagoona Inn (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Drive to Hermanus

We leave Knysna behind and get back on the Garden Route to continue along the spectacular coastal road westwards for around 400 km towards Hermanus, the whale watching capital of South Africa. Home to the whale crier, Hermanus is a highlight of the Garden Route but retains its small fishing town charm and from June - November it is common to see southern right whales migrating past the town from the shore!



ACCOMMODATION:
Windsor Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable 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:

Windsor Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable 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:

Rosenvue Guesthouse (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Guesthouse





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL 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:

Lady Hamilton Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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:

Lady Hamilton Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 14 - Trip ends in Cape Town

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



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	3 Pin Round	Christian	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 - R280.00 per person

Dolphin encounter boat trip - R570.00 per person

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

Hermanus

Whale watching trip in Hermanus - R900.00 per person (seasonal from June to Dec)

Eco Marine Big 5 Boat Trip Hermanus - R1290.00 per person (seasonal from June to Dec)

Cape Town

Full day Cape Peninsula tour including Hout Bay, Cape of Good Hope and Boulders beach - R1203.00 per person

Robben Island tour - R550.00 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 and layers are recommended but remember to also take some warm clothing for the evenings and early mornings especially between May - November.

All year round long trousers, a waterproof and windproof jacket are recommended. Take swimwear and quick-dry 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 areas is drinkable, 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

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

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, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow £30.00 per person for group tipping.

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£6	£12	£1.2	£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 at the airport.

Where To Exchange

Most towns or cities, your tour leader will advise you. If your trip is wildlife based and visits rural regions we strongly recommend to exchange money at the airport upon arrival for your trip.

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

South Africa has a good tourism infrastructure and generally good service standards. Our accommodation throughout this trip varies in style to reflect the regions we are in. We use a combination of guesthouses, comfortable hotels and 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.

Please note, due to high seasonal-demand accommodation may vary from what is listed on the main webpage and trip description. We will always endeavour to offer the same or higher standard of property and ensure it has minimal impact on the included itinerary. Please ask an Explore Sales Consultant or refer to your final documentation for a final hotel list.

South Africa

Food and drink

Dietary requirements: Most restaurants and hotels in South Africa do not have a wide selection of vegan and vegetarian choices. There is usually a choice of salads and one main vegetarian and/or vegan main dish on the menus, but choice will be limited especially in more remote locations. If you have specific dietary requirements we do recommend for you to bring some food with you.

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)

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, has a minimum of 6 months validity from your arrival date into the country 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 be able to apply 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.

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 complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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.

Additional Information





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.](#)

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.

Reviews



AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE



AIRPORT
TRANSFERS