

# South Africa Prelude

## Entrance Requirements

### Passports

- A valid passport is required for entry into South Africa.
- The passport must be valid for **30** days after your scheduled return date.
- You will need two blank pages per country for entry and exit stamps in the visa section of your passport. "Two blank pages" is defined as the front and back of a page.
- If you **need a new passport** to be issued **act now**: It can take up to 6 weeks to receive your new passport. It is no longer possible to purchase additional pages for an existing passport. If you travel frequently, please consider purchasing a 52-page passport. For more information contact the National Passport Information Center toll free at 877-487-2778 or visit <http://www.travel.state.gov>.

Passengers traveling to South Africa with children under the age of 18 are required to present additional documentation such as a copy of an unabridged birth certificate reflecting the particulars of both parents. Beware that securing an unabridged birth certificate can take from six to eight weeks.

In the case of one parent traveling with a child, he or she must additionally show consent in the form of an affidavit from the other parent registered on the child's birth certificate, a court order granting full parental responsibilities and rights or legal guardianship in respect of the child, if he or she is the parent or legal guardian of the child or where applicable, a death certificate of the other parent registered as a parent of the child on the birth certificate. For additional details, please consult the nearest South African embassy or consulate. [www.saembassy.com](http://www.saembassy.com)

***Advisory:** When you travel, we recommend that you make two copies of your first passport page; keep one copy at home in the unlikely event that your passport is lost, and take one copy along to use as an ID, should you leave your passport behind in the hotel safe deposit box. Air Tickets must be in the same name that appears on your passport so make certain that you are registered on your Classic Escapes program in the same exact way.*

### Visa

Visas are not required for U.S. passport holders for tourist visits of 90 days or less.

## Health & Wellness

You will be visiting a country with a rich and diverse cultural history, but is on a different continent than we are accustomed to. As a result, you may be exposed to some pathogens that you would not ordinarily encounter in the U.S. There are some preventative steps that you can take to help ensure that you do not bring back to your home more than your luggage.

### Inoculations

There are no compulsory vaccinations required for entry into South Africa for those traveling from the United States. However, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) suggest that you be up to date on routine vaccines such as:

- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis)
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Polio
- Influenza

The CDC recommends these vaccines for MOST travelers. They are NOT mandatory:

- Hepatitis A & B
- Typhoid

In addition, consult your doctor for a prescription for a **Malaria** suppressant at least two weeks prior to departure as some tablets must be taken a week before you depart, as well as during and after trip.

### **Additional Information**

The CDC issues regular travel health notices on their website:

- [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/southafrica](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/southafrica)

### **Yellow Fever**

There is no risk of Yellow Fever in South Africa.

**Note:** if you are traveling from a country with risk of yellow fever, the government of South Africa requires proof of vaccination.

Please consult your physician, local health authority or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at **877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747)** or via their web site at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) for any additional health precautions. For outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad consult the World Health Organization's web site at <http://www.who.int/en/>. Further health information for travelers is available at <http://www.who.int/topics/en/>.

### **Water & Food**

Food, even in remote tented camps, is carefully prepared, and the local produce is refreshing. Generally, water throughout South Africa is safe to drink directly from the tap. Bottled water is readily available, so please do not allow yourself to become dehydrated. In remote areas water is usually boiled or bottled and is safe to drink but not from the tap. It is very important that you drink plenty of water especially during the warmer months. It is generally recommended that guests drink at least 2 to 3 litres (4 to 6 pints) of water per day to limit the effects of dehydration. This excludes tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages, which act as diuretics and actually contributes to dehydration.

### **Physical Conditioning**

To enjoy your trip to the fullest, you should be in good physical and mental health. Your safari will include some strenuous activity, such as hikes in high temperatures over soft sand or rocky and uneven plains. Activities include game drives, walking safaris and rhino tracking on foot. Further, you need to be able to climb into the safari vehicles and bear in mind that rough terrain may bounce you around so you should be prepared.

### **Travel Insurance & Medical Evacuation**

We recommend that you consider a Trip Cancellation policy that also includes medical coverage and evacuation against unforeseen circumstances.

## **Climatic Conditions**

### **Altitude**

Altitudes are generally low with the exception of Johannesburg. There are no specific factors such as age, gender, or physical condition that correlates with susceptibility to altitude sickness. Some people get it and

some people don't, and some people may experience it one visit and not the next time. Symptoms include headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, lack of concentration, nausea, swelling of ankles, and in extreme cases, hallucination. Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, heavy food and strenuous physical activity. Citrus fruits and bananas may diminish the effects. If you do not feel well, take it easy. Put your feet up, drink plenty of clean (boiled or bottled) water, and take a siesta after lunch. People with respiratory problems may be affected by the air pollution of the larger cities, although the local government has taken recent steps to curb emissions.

<b>Altitude Charts: (Feet)</b>	
Addo Elephant National Park	0 - 3,120
Blyde River Canyon, Pinnacle Viewpoint	1,841 - 6,378
Cape Town	500
Durban	19
Hermanus	66
Johannesburg	5,800
Kruger National Park	850
St. Lucia Wetlands	564
Thanda Private Game Reserve	557

## **Temperature**

The country is affected by the waters surrounding the country on three sides creating variation in the weather patterns. In Cape Town, the winter months (June-August) are mild and changeable; this is also the time when most of the rainfall occurs. Summer months (January-March) are generally dry in Cape Town. On the high veld, in the center of South Africa, there are sharp differences in temperatures between day and night and it can be quite cold during the winter months. April through August represent the winter months in Southern Africa which in turn means very little rain in most of the country, except for the Cape.

Kruger National Park has its share of rain and hot weather. During the summer months (September-April), the Park experiences sporadic rainfall in the form of quick thunder showers. April through August represent the winter months in Southern Africa which in turn means very little rain. As far as rainfall is concerned, the southern region receives the largest amount of rainfall while the central plains receive the least. The temperatures average from 86 F in January (summer) to 73 F in July (winter). Please be aware that the maximum temperature can reach 115 F in January and 95 F in July. The average nightly temperature can range from 45-65 F (January) and most certainly freezing in July.

<b>Average Temperature (°F)</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
Addo Elephant National Park	71/77	69/76	67/74	65/75	55/70	52/70	55/71	57/69	61/69	62/70	65/71	67/73
Cape Town	61/79	59/79	57/77	54/73	50/68	46/64	45/63	45/64	46/66	50/70	55/75	59/77
Durban	74/82	74/81	75/83	68/76	62/73	58/72	64/74	65/75	67/75	67/73	69/76	71/77
Hermanus	66/71	66/72	64/69	61/74	55/67	51/62	56/66	56/63	58/63	58/63	62/66	64/69
Johannesburg	59/79	57/77	55/75	52/72	46/66	41/61	41/61	45/66	48/72	54/75	55/77	57/77

Kruger	63/ 100	68/ 97	64/ 95	57/ 91	45/ 86	43/ 84	48/ 88	45/ 91	59/ 100	64/ 100	57/ 97	59/ 100
St. Lucia Wetlands	75/ 80	76/ 81	77/ 86	69/ 77	64/ 74	61/ 73	67/ 79	68/ 76	69/ 75	70/ 75	72/ 76	7378
Thanda Private Game Reserve	68/ 88	66/ 84	66/ 82	59/ 73	51/ 67	46/ 65	49/ 70	53/ 72	63/ 81	63/ 79	66/ 82	65/ 83
<b>Average Rainfall (inches):</b>												
Addo Elephant National Park	2.8	4.0	2.3	1.4	1.6	0.1	0.7	3.7	3.9	1.8	4.1	1.8
Cape Town	0.6	0.6	.9	1.9	3.6	4.1	3.6	3.3	2.1	1.6	1.0	0.8
Durban	3.1	4.4	3.3	3.5	8.8	0.2	0.9	1.7	0.9	4.8	6.9	7.2
Hermanus	1.4	1.6	0.9	1.5	0.5	3.0	2.3	3.0	0.5	1.0	1.8	0.8
Johannesburg	5.9	5.1	4.3	1.9	1.0	0.3	0.4	0.4	1.0	2.6	5.0	5.6
Kruger	5.3	7.5	2.9	2.5	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.8	1.8	5.1	3.1

## **Recommended Packing List**

### **Clothing**

- Long-sleeved shirts, slacks and socks to protect you from insect bites and sunburn
- Shorts/skirts
- Long trousers/slacks
- Good quality sunglasses (preferably polarized).
- Sun hat with a brim
- Good walking shoes (running/tennis shoes are fine)
- Sandals or rubber flip/flops for poolside
- Swimsuit with light cover-up garment
- Lightweight jersey for cooler mornings
- Light raingear for summer months (late November to April)
- A set of smart casual evening wear

### **Toiletries**

- Personal toiletries (basic amenities supplied by many establishments)
- Moisturizing cream & suntan lotion
- Insect repellent e.g. Tabard, Rid, Jungle Juice, OFF, etc.
- Basic medical kit (aspirins, plasters, Imodium, antiseptic cream, and Anti-histamine cream, etc.)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Packaged wet tissues ("Wash & Dry" "Wet Ones")
- If you wear contact lenses, we recommend that you bring along a pair of glasses in case you get irritation
- Small sewing kit

### **Other Things To Pack**

- Visas, tickets, passports, money, etc.
- Backpack to use during the day as you tour
- A small flashlight with extra batteries

- Adapter plugs & converters for electrical appliances
- A tiny calculator for estimating cost while shopping
- Binoculars
- Reading material
- Reading glasses
- Journal with pen

**Camera Equipment**

- Camera, memory cards and chargers
- Lenses, cleaning fluid, lens tissue
- Waterproof/dustproof bags/cover for your camera

**Tips on Clothing**

Three changes of clothes at the minimum is recommended and should be lightweight, breathable, and versatile. Pack items that will layer well together as the mornings will be cooler and you will want to be able to shed them as the day heats up. Supplex pants and chinos travel better than jeans, which take forever to dry. Pale earth colors such as tan or olive are best for viewing wildlife and birds, but camouflage clothes are illegal in many African countries.

Your primary footwear should be closed toe and comfortable. Open toes can “open” you up to insect bites, stubbed toes, thorns, et cetera. Flip flops should be limited to poolside, the beach or a shower stall. Take care of your feet and they will take care of you, and that includes having socks which can prevent blisters and insect bites.

**Power & Connectivity**

Most lodges and camps are situated in remote areas and have to generate their own electricity. Each camp has a generator that runs for about six hours per day (three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon when guests are out on activities). These generators charge batteries located at each tented room or supply power to each guest lodge room. Typically, power will be available when you are in the lodge or camp, except for overnight. Therefore, it is imperative that you have your own flashlight handy. Electrical plug outlets will be available in guest rooms.

**At a Glance**

Voltage	220 – 240Volts / 50Hz
Adapter Type D	
Adapter Type G	

**Cell Phones**

Many travelers bring along their cell phones, not only for connecting to the internet and making phone calls, but for the easy to use camera functions. If you plan on using it as a phone keep in

mind North American phones may not in South Africa, particularly in remote areas. (Many of the remote camps in Kruger National Park do not have access to cellular service.) Check with your service provider to determine if you can purchase a plan, or if your phone can be “unlocked”. If it can, you should be able to purchase inexpensive prepaid SIM cards.

*Advisory: As most people travel to “get away from it all,” some limitations on the use of these phones when on tour need to be set. We suggest the following guidelines on the use of cell phones:*

1. *Keep the ring tone at a low volume to avoid disturbing other guests.*
2. *Use your phone in the privacy of your room and not any of the common areas: dining room, bar/lounge area, or on any of the vehicles.*
3. *Use your phone for outgoing calls and to check messages only. Incoming calls, and the loud ringing that ensues, should be curtailed.*

## **Time**

The United States observes Daylight Savings Time (DST) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of March until the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of November. South Africa is in the South African Standard Time (SAST) and does not observe Daylight Savings Time. When it is noon time in South Africa it will be 7:00pm EST or 6:00pm DST in New York.

## **EQUIPMENT**

### **Cameras**

From smartphones to SLR cameras, digital photography has now made it simpler than ever to preserve the memories experienced during once-in-a-lifetime adventures. Most digital cameras use either an SD (secure digital) card or a CF (compact flash) card that comes in a variety of storage capacities ranging from 2–128 GB (gigabytes). Depending on the megapixel size of your particular camera and the format in which you choose to shoot your images, an 8GB card can hold as few as 200 images shot in RAW format (normally shot by pros and serious amateurs) to just over 2000 images shot as JPEGs (most common format shot by enthusiasts). For those cameras with megapixels higher than 12, it is recommended that at least 4-8GB cards are used and that you should always bring more than one card in case of card failure or corruption (rare but possible). If you are bringing a laptop, external USB hard drives of 1–2 TB (terabytes) are compact, relatively inexpensive, and an excellent way to store tens of thousands of images. In addition to ensuring that you bring the charger and adaptor/converter for the location to where you are traveling, it is highly recommended that you bring at least one spare, fully charged battery for your camera. There may be locations where dependable power is not available for charging and spare batteries may prove to be invaluable and help ensure that you don't miss any photo opportunities.

### **Video**

Charging facilities for video AND digital cameras should be available in every camp or lodge on the safari, as long as you have a standard charger that will plug into 220 volts. Please bring along enough batteries to last you at least three days of filming.

### **Binoculars**

There will be an opportunity to observe some of the natural treasures of Namibia. Binoculars will add immeasurably to your viewing enjoyment. Preferably, binoculars should be at least 8 power (8x) and have a wide field of view to allow you to quickly find whatever it is you want to see. Some binoculars have the added advantage of “gathering light,” making objects brighter in dim morning and evening conditions. This light-gathering capability is determined by a measurement called the “exit pupil”, which is calculated by dividing the diameter of the front (objective) lens in millimeters by the power (8x, for

example). These two measurements are commonly designated on binoculars as a measurement such as 8x42, which translates to 8 power with a 42 mm objective lens. The exit pupil in this instance is  $42/8$ , or 5.25. Since the human eye can process light delivered by an exit pupil of about 4.0, these binoculars will appear bright even in dim light.

Some very small binoculars are relatively inexpensive, such as 8x21. With a very narrow field of view (usually about 400 feet at 1,000 yards) and an exit pupil of only  $21/8 = 2.6$ , these binoculars are designed for viewing stationary objects in bright light, such as at the opera, and are poorly designed for looking at wildlife. You will be far happier with binoculars designated in the range of 8x40 to 10x50.

### **Flashlights**

As the grounds of many lodges and camps are unfenced, it is essential that you bring a small flashlight as you may encounter wild animals at night. You should also bring a spare globe as well as batteries as they may be unobtainable en route.

## **MONEY MATTERS**

### **Currency**

The standard unit of currency is the Rand (ZAR). South Africa has introduced new coins and notes, but old coins are still common so it's hard to become familiar with what you're carrying. The R200 note looks a lot like the R20 note, so take care.

### **Credit Cards/ATMs**

Some major credit cards are accepted such as MasterCard and Visa, but American Express and Diners Club are often **not** accepted. Please note that Discover Card is basically unknown in Southern Africa.

Be sure to notify your bank and credit card company when and where you will be traveling and ask what fees, if any will apply.

*Note:* As there is a potential for fraud anywhere in the world, we highly recommend that you do not use your debit cards overseas and exercise caution when using your credit cards. Do not let the card out of your sight and if a vendor tries to take the card into a back room, ask for your card back immediately and refrain from using it. Keep your valuables on you, including passports and credit cards, or locked in the safety deposit boxes when provided.

### **Shopping:**

The value of the rand against most foreign currencies makes South Africa one of the most inexpensive sources of African souvenirs. Semi-precious stones, gold and diamonds are very reasonable, and the best prices are usually found in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Beadwork, wood carvings, baskets and woven rugs are some of the most popular handicrafts available. And don't be surprised if you come across traditional crafts made from non-traditional resources (like a basket woven with wire instead of reed). South Africa is a great place to buy art from all over Africa. While you might pay a bit more, the quality will be high and shipping will be much easier than elsewhere on the continent. Be sure to negotiate shipping charges prior to shipping so as not to be surprised by a high cost when receiving the goods at home.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Etiquette

When you meet someone it is customary to shake their hand while maintaining eye contact. Some women prefer a head nod rather than shake hands so wait for their initiation. Greetings are leisurely and allow time for social discussions.

### Respecting Wildlife

- The wild animals are not like those found in theme parks – they are **not** tame.
- Many safari camps are unfenced and dangerous animals can (and do!) wander through the camps. Many of the animals and reptiles you will see are potentially dangerous. Attacks by wild animals are rare. However, there are no guarantees that such incidents will not occur.
- Please listen to the lodge and camp staff and guides. The safety precautions need to be taken seriously, and strictly adhered to.
- Don't go wandering off on your own without a guide – even to your rooms. After retiring to your rooms at night, don't leave them.
- Observe animals silently and with a minimum of disturbance to their natural activities. Loud talking on game drives can frighten the animals away.
- Never attempt to attract an animal's attention. Don't imitate animal sounds, clap your hands, pound the vehicle or throw objects.
- Please respect your driver-guide's judgment about proximity to lions, cheetahs and leopards. Don't insist that he take the vehicle closer so you can get a better photograph. A vehicle driven too close can hinder a hunt or cause animals to abandon a hard-earned meal.
- At Classic Escapes, we respect wildlife and are committed to the preservation of the national parks. Off-road driving is strictly prohibited. Please do not encourage your driver to drive off-road where it is not allowed simply to get a good photo, as the damage to the environment might be irreparable.
- Litter tossed on the ground can choke or poison animals and birds and is unsightly.
- Never attempt to feed or approach any wild animal on foot. This is especially important near lodges or in campsites where animals may have become accustomed to human visitors.

Refrain from smoking on game drives. The dry African bush ignites very easily, and a flash fire can kill animals.