



SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS VACATIONS



Before You Go South Africa

Best Time To Go

South Africa is a fabulous, year-round destination; so when you visit depends on what you would like to do. The best time for game watching, for instance, is early spring (August to October). The southern right whales can be seen off the coasts from about mid-June to the end of October, and the humpback whales from May to December.

Shark cage or just diving is generally best from April to September, and so is the surfing, but such activities are not limited to these time periods. Flowers are at their best in August and September.

In Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces, activities are not quite as time-dependent but spring and autumn are best for hiking because summer can be very hot. If you want to lounge on the beaches, midsummer (December-February) is the best time to do so, though bear in mind that everyone else will be there too. The beaches of KwaZulu-Natal are warm and sunny, even in midwinter (June-August).

- **Game Viewing: June to October when the vegetation isn't as thick and game viewing is easier but good all year round at private reserves.**
 - **Whale Watching: Mid-June to October (Southern Right Whales) and May to December (Humpback Whales).**
 - **Diving (Scuba & Shark Cage diving): April to September**
 - **Flowers: August to September**
 - **Birding: The arctic migrants arrive in November and the intra-Africa migrants usually by mid-October**

Climate & Weather

South Africa is known for its long sunny days. Most of the nine provinces have summer rainfall, except for the Western Cape, which experiences rainfall in the winter as well. The areas in higher altitude, mostly inner South Africa, can be chilly in winter.

In the Western Cape, the average rainfall is highest in the winter months, while in other provinces; the average rainfall is highest during the summer. Overall South Africa enjoys a temperate and pleasant climate, with lovely warm sunny days most of the year. KwaZulu-Natal has a sub tropical climate with high humidity in summer. The Southern Gauteng region has hot summers with occasional thundershowers and frosty winters, while the Eastern part of this region (known as the Lowveld) enjoys mild winters. The Cape interior and the Free State have similar weather conditions to the Southern Gauteng region. The Western Cape region has a Mediterranean climate with warm, dry summers and cold, wet winters.

Fall – March to April ** Winter – May to August

Spring – September to October ** Summer - November to March

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cape Town	61-81	59-77	59-77	55-72	54-66	50-64	50-63	50-63	52-66	54-70	57-75	59-77
Johannesburg	59-77	59-77	57-75	55-70	54-64	41-61	43-61	45-66	50-72	54-75	55-75	57-77
Kruger NP	68-90	66-90	64-88	59-86	50-81	43-79	43-77	46-81	54-84	59-88	63-90	66-90

Entry Requirements

U.S. citizens (US passport holders) traveling to South Africa for 90 days or less for tourism or business purposes do not need visas.

U.S. green card holders (Non-US passport holders) require visas to visit South Africa.

Nationals of other countries must check the list of visa exempt countries to see if they need to apply for visas.

Please note that **all foreigners** who wish to visit South Africa must have a passport that is valid for at least 6 months after his/her intended return date and a minimum of four blank (unstamped) visa pages in the passport to enter the country.

A Yellow Fever vaccination will be required for entry at least 10 days before arrival, **if** originating from or transiting through WHO-designated yellow fever countries.

http://www.who.int/ith/ITH_Annex_I.pdf

As a general precaution, all travelers are advised to carry a photocopy of the photo/bio information page of their passport and keep it in a location separate from their passport.

Traveling With Minors

Minors younger than 18 years old, traveling to/from South Africa:

With 1 parent, must hold:

- a. **A valid passport; copy of birth certificate/ equivalent document;** a parental consent letter from the absent parent or legal guardian containing a copy of his/her passport or identity document and his/her contact details; OR
 - b. A letter of special circumstances; OR
 - c. A court order granting full parental responsibilities and rights or full legal guardianship to the present parent.
 - d. In case of the other parent is deceased, a death certificate.

With an adult other than parent, must hold:

- a. **A valid passport; copy of birth certificate/equivalent document;** parental consent letter(s), copies of identification documents of parents/legal guardians, contact details of parents/legal guardians; **AND**
- b. contact details of the person in whose care the minor will be; **where applicable copy of death certificate/adoption order/court order granting full or legal guardianship.**
- c. **when traveling as a primary or secondary school tour with a teacher or a train** must hold a letter of consent from the school principal, confirming that consent letters from all parents are held by the school, together with an ID/passport copy of the accompanying teacher or trainer.

Unaccompanied, must hold:

- a. **a copy of his/her birth certificate;** a parental consent letter containing a copy of his/her/their passport/s or identity document/s and his/her/their contact details (or consent from one parent together with a court order granting full parental responsibilities and rights or legal guardianship or death certificate or **adoption order**); **AND**
- b. a letter from the person receiving the minor in South Africa, containing address and contact details; copy of identification documents of the person receiving the minor, including visa/residence permit (if required).

WARNING: All documents must be in English. The parental consent letter must be issued with 6 months prior to date of travel.

Health & Medical Care

Many of the main tourist areas are malaria-free, however, the Kruger National Park, the Lowveld of Mpumalanga and Limpopo, and the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal do pose a malaria risk in the summer months. All guests must consult their own medical doctor or health authorities regarding the use of anti-malarial tablets prior to departure.

Be sure you are up-to-date on all your vaccinations, recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Medical services in South Africa are readily available. Visitors are advised to secure medical coverage on their medical insurance before arriving in the country. Major hotels have contracts with physicians and dentists that they can refer you to. Visitors are however advised to bring along supplies of specialized medication they may require.

As always, don't forget to use sunscreen and drink plenty of water while out in the African sun.

Travel & Medical Insurance

Comprehensive medical insurance is advised.

Travel insurance is highly recommended and can be purchased through SAA Vacations or your travel agent. It can be used to cover baggage and personal item loss as well as trip cancellations. SAA Vacations will not be held responsible for any loss or damage to passenger's belongings. Travel Guard is the (travel) insurance carrier offered through SAA Vacations.

For additional information, please inquire.

Credit Cards

Visa, American Express, and Master Card are honored at most restaurants, stores, hotels, car rental firms, and other points of sale and service. Proof of identity may be requested in some instances and it is therefore advisable to carry a passport or some form of photo identification at all times. Credit cards are not accepted at petrol stations (gas stations), however, ATM's are available everywhere. It is advisable to notify your credit card company that you are traveling out of the country.

Currency

South Africa's currency is the Rand, which offers visitors great value for their money. The rand comes in a range of coins (R1 = Approx. 100 cents) and note denominations of R10, R20, R50, and R100. With the exchange rate in your favor, you'll find South Africa offers great value. It is advisable to exchange US Dollars into Rands upon arrival for tips and small purchases where credit cards are not normally used. Exchanging large denominations of US Dollars at game lodges can be challenging so come prepared.

Banks

Major hotels and shopping malls have foreign exchange facilities and most shops, lodges and travel agencies take travelers cheques. Automated teller machines (ATM's) are readily available in cities and towns.

Clothing & Necessities

Two general rules to go by when traveling are to pack light and to pack right!

Here is a guideline of other important items to bring:

- ✓ Casual, comfortable wash and wear clothing is most useful.
- ✓ Shorts, capris & Cotton T-shirts
- ✓ Comfortable walking shoes
- ✓ Long pants & shirts for evenings
- ✓ Fleece jacket for early morning and evening game drives
- ✓ Swimwear
- ✓ Sun hat & Sunglasses
- ✓ Casual light-weight cotton, khaki or neutral colored clothes for safari
- ✓ Wide brimmed hat, Personal toiletries, sun screen and lip balm
- ✓ Anti-malaria prophylactics and prescribed medication
- ✓ Binoculars, camera, batteries and accessories
- ✓ Rain ponchos on safari are usually provided by game lodge

Laundry service is available at most hotels, camps and game lodges. Luggage should be kept at a minimum in order to be compliant with weight restrictions on aircraft.

A small soft suitcase is more practical than a hard suitcase when traveling, as they are easier to fit into the small planes or transfer vehicles. Also, don't forget to leave room for the souvenirs you'll be bringing home.

Trip Tip: Bright & white colored clothing will attract unwanted insects.

Carry On Luggage

Economy class passengers entering a commercial aircraft are now restricted to the following:

- 1 bag + 1 slimline laptop bag per economy class passenger.
- No bag should exceed these dimensions: 56cm + 36cm + 23cm = total dimension of 115cm including handles and wheels. (Roughly - 22in + 14in + 9in = total dimension of 45in including handles and wheels)
- Weight limit per bag: 7kg. (15 lbs)

Any hand luggage which exceeds the dimensions; piece and weight restrictions stipulated above will have to be checked-in and may result in delays. The airlines are not accepting responsibility should you miss your flight due to incorrect



Valuables like these should **NOT** be packed in your check-in luggage but rather in your hand luggage.

Laptops Cameras Legal Documents i.e. Passport
Cash / Cards Jewelry Medication

Mobile Phones & Internet Access

There are several ways you can communicate while abroad.

If traveling with your regular phone, avoid data overage charges by not leaving home without an international plan. Depending on your carrier this can be a cost effective solution to keeping an open line of communication.

You could also buy a sim card in South Africa that would allow you to connect to the local network. However, this would only allow you to text and make calls within the covered areas and can only be done with unlocked phones.

Most hotels and lodges offer free Wi-Fi and simply downloading an app like Skype or WhatsApp can allow you to communicate with those back home. With Skype you can also make international calls.

Checked Luggage

Please make sure your checked bags are within the dimensions outlined in the diagram. Bags greater than the dimensions provided are too large for airport conveyor belts and will not be accepted on the flight.

Make your bag easy to recognize and distinguishable from others by tagging the outside with a colorful ribbon and by using a nametag. This will make it easier to quickly identify your bag, especially in the unfortunate event of it being lost or misplaced.

On your nametag include details such as:

- Name
- Contact Details
- E-mail address
- Destination address



Economy Class
1 to 2 pieces at 50lbs each.

Business Class
1 to 2 pieces at 70lbs each.

Infants not entitled to seat
1 piece at 22lbs plus a stroller.

Wildlife



The Big 5

(Lion, Leopard, Elephant, Rhino, Buffalo)

The Big Cats

(Lion, Leopard, Cheetah)

Rich diversity of mammal species

(Zebra, Wildebeest, Giraffe, Primates, etc..)

Crocodiles & a range of other reptiles



Always remember that while some animals have become accustomed to the presence of people they are still wild animals. Keep your distance and always adhere to the advice of your guide.

Easy Metric Conversion

To convert Celsius into Fahrenheit = double then add 32

.62 miles = 1 kilometer

3.3 feet = 1 meter

1 acre = .405 hectare

1.05 quarts = 1 liter

2.2 pounds = 1 kilogram

Driving

South Africans drive on the left hand side and give way to the right.

Drivers must have a valid driver's license, with photo, or an international drivers license.

Water

The water in South Africa is safe to drink. However, bottled water is available for sale. Ensure that you take bottled water with you when traveling to remote rural areas and the bush.

Electricity

The South African electricity supply is 220/230 volts AC 50 HZ.

You will need to purchase or bring adapters for the outlets. You can purchase the adapters in many US stores, online, or from a store while in South Africa. M & D are the type of plug and sockets found in South Africa.

Adapters are usually available on loan at major hotels in South Africa. Three to five star hotels usually have 110-volt outlets for electric shavers in bathrooms and often provide hair dryers and irons.

A NW 4 plug with two prongs, 0.19 inches in diameter is required.

Adapters are usually available on loan at major hotels & lodges in South Africa.

Language

There are 11 official languages in South Africa: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, and Zulu. However, an English-speaking visitor will have no problem communicating while traveling through the country.

Tipping

Tipping is a sensitive issue, but there is no need to feel embarrassed. It's a normal part of a service industry in South Africa, as it is in restaurants in many countries. Just remember that relatively affluent visitors can have a big impact on the local economy: tipping does influence the economic and social balance – so keep that in mind when you tip the staff during your safari in South Africa.

Transfer Drivers	R26 - R67 per transfer
Safari Guides	R450 per couple per day
Lodge Staff <i>(to be put in tipping box)</i>	R134 per traveler per day
Private Guide (1/2 day) Private Guide (Full day)	R200 per vehicle R400 per vehicle
Tour Guide (1/2 day) Tour Guide (Full day)	R25 per person R60 per person

Emergency Contacts

If you have lost your passport or wallet, please contact the local police department and file a report. Once you have done this, contact one of South Africa's U.S. Embassies or Consulates (located in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban).

Contact Information:

Cape Town Consulate General
Telephone: (021) 702 - 7300
Email: americanscapetown@state.gov

Durban Consulate General
Telephone: (031) 305 - 7600
Email: consulardurban@state.gov

Johannesburg Consulate General
Telephone: (011) 290 - 3000
Email: acsjohannesburg@state.gov

Alternately, you can obtain information online at
<https://za.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/emergency-contact/>

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