MOUNT ZION
TOURS AND TRAVELS
DREAM IT...WE MAKE IT HAPPEN

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Nos Excursions sont en Français, Anglais, Allemand



South Africa Travel Guide

South Africa offers a mesmerizing blend of vibrant cities, world-renowned safari reserves, and dramatic coastlines. Whether you are seeking epic wildlife encounters in Kruger National Park, wine tasting in the Cape Winelands, or the cosmopolitan energy of Cape Town, a diverse 2- to 3-week itinerary captures the country's essence.

Top Regions & Destinations in South Africa

- **Cape Town & The Western Cape:** Ascend Table Mountain, visit Robben Island, and drive the spectacular coastal roads of the Cape Peninsula.
- **The Garden Route:** A scenic road trip stretching from Mossel Bay to Storms River, featuring lush forests, whale-watching in Hermanus, and outdoor adventures in Wilderness.
- **Kruger National Park & Mpumalanga:** The premier destination for a "Big Five" safari experience. Pair it with a drive along the breathtaking Blyde River Canyon.
- **Johannesburg & Gauteng:** Dive into rich history with visits to Constitution Hill and the nearby Cradle of Humankind.

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- **KwaZulu-Natal:** Explore the beaches of the Dolphin Coast, dive at Aliwal Shoal, or hike the majestic Drakensberg mountains.

Best Time to Visit South Africa

- **May to October (best for safari):** Cooler, dry weather thins out the vegetation and draws animals to waterholes, making wildlife easy to spot.
- **November to April (best for beaches & wine):** Warm, sunny days are perfect for exploring the coast and winelands, though this is peak tourist season.

Getting Around

- **Flights:** Major domestic carriers such as Airlink, FlySafair, and South African Airways connect all major hubs.
- **Car rentals:** Renting a vehicle is essential if you plan to explore regions like the Garden Route. South Africa drives on the left-hand side of the road.
- **Luxury trains:** For a slower, ultra-luxurious pace, book a journey on the restored vintage coaches of Rovos Rail.

Safety & Local Tips

- **Security:** Avoid walking alone at night and keep valuables out of sight. Stick to well-lit, popular tourist areas, and do not carry large sums of cash.
- **Local terminology:** Traffic lights are locally known as “robots.” If an intersection’s robot is out of order, treat it as a four-way stop.
- **Tap water:** Tap water is safe to drink in most urban centers and hotels.
- **Malaria:** If you are visiting Kruger National Park and surrounding reserves, consult your doctor about malaria prophylaxis.

Things to Know Before Traveling to South Africa

- **Carry the right paperwork when traveling with kids:** If you’re entering or leaving South Africa with a child under 18, keep a few extra documents in your carry-on. In a bid to stamp out child trafficking, all minors need an “unabridged” birth certificate, one that

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lists both parents' names. If only one parent is traveling with the child, you'll also need an affidavit from the other parent confirming that they consent to the child traveling.

- **Carry some cash, but not too much:** While credit and debit cards are widely accepted, a few places in South Africa take cash only. It's smart to keep a small stash of notes and coins for corner stores, market traders, and the tips you'll be expected to give throughout the day (more on tipping below).

  That said, it's not wise to walk around with large wads of cash, so keep the bulk of your money in the hotel safe or withdraw modest amounts from ATMs while you are out and about. Be wary of ATMs on the street; theft and card scams are common, so stick to machines inside malls or banks.

- **Buy a South African SIM card and use local Wi-Fi:** Public Wi-Fi is fairly easy to find in larger cities and more touristed towns, but if you plan to wander far from the main population centers, it's worth picking up a South African SIM card at the airport on arrival. A prepaid card costs as little as 50 ZAR (about US$2.78), but like most things in South Africa, it comes with a bit of paperwork. You'll need to "RICA" your SIM card, as required by the Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication-Related Information Act. This is a simple registration process that requires a photo ID and confirmation of your address in South Africa (a booking confirmation will suffice).

- **Be prepared to tip:** South Africa has a strong tipping culture. In many customer-facing industries, salaries are low and workers earn much of their income from tips. Restaurant staff will expect around 10%, but leaving 12%–15% will generate bigger smiles.

  You'll also meet South Africa's informal parking attendants. While larger cities and towns have pay-as-you-go street parking, in most places you can park at the side of the road for free… sort of. Ubiquitous car guards will offer to keep an eye on your car while you're away, and they come in a range of helpfulness levels.

- **Listen to the locals (but be ready for a little exaggeration):** Local advice is always important, particularly in countries with a reputation for crime and social problems. Just be aware that many wonderful attractions are found in areas that some South Africans, particularly older locals, may warn you to avoid.

  South Africans have a tendency to exaggerate the danger posed by crime. It's almost part of the national psyche and a favorite topic of conversation. You may need to do a bit of research to separate worthwhile warnings from the sometimes-inevitable scaremongering.

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Do I Need a Visa to Visit South Africa?

The good news is that not all visitors need a visa to enter South Africa for tourism or business. Citizens of many countries are on a visa exemption list issued by South Africa's Department of Home Affairs, meaning they are free to visit, in many cases for up to 90 days.

Many travelers don't need a visa

If you're traveling with a passport from the US, Canada, the UK, or many EU countries, you do not need a visa to visit South Africa as long as your trip is for tourism or business and lasts no more than 90 days.

Check the visa exemption list for the latest information for your passport. It's also wise to double-check the Republic of South Africa's website, the South African embassy or consulate site in your country (such as South Africa's US embassy), and your own government's international travel advisory site (like the US State Department) before you purchase your flight and again shortly before you depart.

Regardless of whether you hold a valid visa or are exempt from needing one, the immigration officer at your port of entry will decide whether you may enter the country, how long you may stay, and what conditions you must follow.



