EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Zululand and Kruger + Cape Escape (ZKC 2017)

WILDLIFE

TRIPDURATI
20
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Full On

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: ZKC

Trip Highlights - Zululand and Kruger + Cape Escape

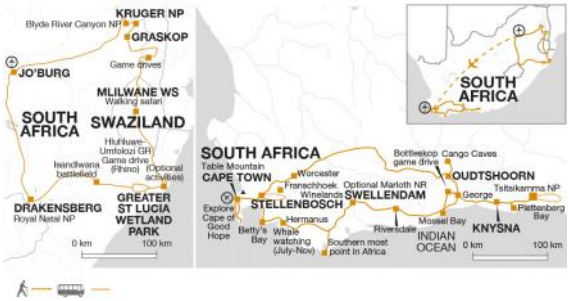
- ✓ Game Viewing - The big game of Africa from 4WD safari vehicles.
- ✓ Kruger - The most iconic National Park in South Africa, home to the Big Five.
- ✓ Hluhluwe-Umfolozi - The biggest rhino population in Africa.
- ✓ Mlilwane - A secluded wildlife sanctuary beneath the Nyonyane Mountains in Swaziland.
- ✓ St. Lucia - A remarkable wetland home to hippo, crocodile and a myriad of bird species.
- ✓ Mpumalanga - God's Window and the awe-inspiring Blyde River Canyon

Trip Essentials

Accommodation:	9 nights Standard Hotel 7 nights Standard Lodge 2 nights Standard Beehive Huts 1 night Simple Bungalow
Included Meals:	19 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners
Start Point:	Join trip: Johannesburg
End Point:	Trip ends: Cape Town
Transport:	4WD
Countries:	South Africa, Swaziland

Zululand and Kruger Wildlife + Cape Escape

On this trip we visit the great game reserves of South Africa and Swaziland. We search for the Big Five in the renowned Kruger National Park and track both white and black rhinos in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Reserve. We also visit the Zulu battlefields and discover the wetlands of Greater St Lucia. We fly to the iconic city of Cape Town, hike up the legendary Table Mountain and explore the ancient limestone Cango Caves. We also watch the penguins frolic on Boulders Beach and visit the heart of the winelands.



Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our 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.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Full On

These fast paced tours move on quickly from place to place and with lots of early starts and long busy days, they're packed with experiences.

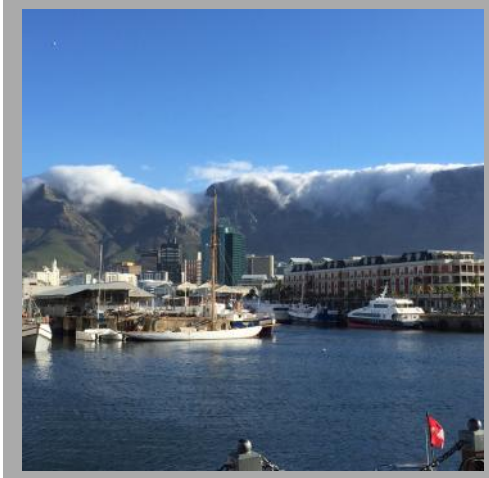
Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.



DAY 1 Join tour in Johannesburg; drive to the Drakensburg Mountains

Heading south-east out of Johannesburg our first destination is the Drakensberg Mountains. Drakensberg is the world's oldest mountain range and derives its name from the Afrikaans word for 'Dragon Mountains'. In the inevitable mist and the razor back ridges one can see a likeness to these mythical beasts. The hikes, the plunge pools and all-round silence make the Drakensberg Mountains a must-see. The Drakensberg itself comprises basalt massifs that have been cut through by crystal clear streams. The indigenous people that lived here called these mountains the Ukhlamba, or barrier of spears, because all of their peaks resemble upturned weapons. The old San bushman culture is reflected richly in the paintings that dot the cliff faces and overhangs, reminding all South Africans of their rich history. Depending on our arrival time this afternoon, we may have the opportunity to take a short walk.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2 Walk in Drakensberg World Heritage Site

We wake up to a hearty breakfast before having an opportunity to partake in a guided walk, where we will be able to experience the beauty of this mountain range first hand. The walk will usually take 4-5 hours and is of a moderate level of difficulty. Weather permitting, upon returning, our guide will have prepared a tasty 'al fresco' lunch enabling us to soak up the spectacular views of the Drakensburg. The afternoon is left open to either relax whilst enjoying a cool drink or perhaps continue our adventure with an unguided walk through the mountain valleys.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3 Visit battlefields; drive to Ulundi and on to St Lucia

Today we visit the famous battlefields. As anyone who has ever watched the film Zulu Dawn will know, the battlefields of Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana were the scenes of bloody and hugely significant events in the history of the Zulu nation. We will visit the battle sites of Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana to gain a perspective into the people and history of South Africa. Isandlwana is undoubtedly the most haunting of all the battlefields as the many white cairns reflect upon the arrogance of a Victorian empire and the victory of the Zulu people who call themselves 'the children of the stars'. The hill of Isandlwana stands a silent testimony to the determination and pride of the Zulu people. Isandlwana is truly haunting in the lessons it taught South Africa of colonialism and the folly of war. Rorke's Drift, a battle made famous in the film Zulu, is unique for the awarding of eleven VC's in a single engagement. We make our way to the Zulu Capital in Ulundi where we will overnight in traditional-style huts.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Game Drives at Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve

We rise early this morning to take advantage of the 'golden hour' on what is our first opportunity to experience a 'Big 5' safari. Umfolozi-Hluhluwe Game Reserve boasts the densest population of both white and black rhino in the whole of Africa. We will have a quick stop at one of the reserve's watering holes, where we can stretch our legs and freshen up before continuing on our journey through this ancient Zulu hunting ground. With over 500 species of birds recorded at this reserve it is also a paradise for any birdwatchers amongst us. In the mid afternoon, we depart for St. Lucia where there is the opportunity to experience the optional activity of a 'Hippo Cruise' on the Greater St. Lucia Estuary. The cruise meanders along allowing us to relax whilst viewing the hippos and crocodiles in their natural habitat as, once again, the sun drops from the African sky.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5 At St Lucia Wetland Reserve

Today is a day of leisure, where we have a choice of optional activities available in the area. There is the opportunity to continue our game viewing experience by taking an open game drive in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, which was the first World Heritage Site in South Africa. The word iSimangaliso means miracle and wonder, which aptly describes this truly unique place. The day includes a 'braai' lunch and an option of an afternoon swim or snorkel in the Indian Ocean at Cape Vidal. There is also the chance to amble to the St. Lucia beach for a relaxing dip in the ocean or spend time walking the local forest trails. In the evening we can enjoy an exhilarating night game drive when all the nocturnal wildlife start their day. From November to February we can join a guided turtle tour in the Wetland Park.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Drive to Swaziland

This morning we make our to Swaziland, during June to November we may have the opportunity to participate in the optional activity of whale watching along the way. We then drive north and enter Swaziland - a tiny, independent kingdom inhabited by the Swazi tribe who revere their king and take great pride in retaining their culture and traditions. Our journey takes us through some spectacular scenery in the Ezulwini Valley and past numerous traditional homesteads and curio stalls. In the late afternoon we enter one of Swaziland's best wildlife reserves, Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary. This secluded and beautiful sanctuary is a haven of tranquillity, located as it is in a natural bowl beneath the Nyonyane Mountains. For the next two nights our accommodation is in traditional dome-shaped beehive huts set in a wooded area. Though the camp has all the mod cons of showers, toilets, outdoor swimming pool and restaurant/ bar it is rustic in the best sense of the word. Warthogs and antelope share the camp with us and the restaurant overlooks a lake populated by water birds.

Overnight: **Standard Beehive Huts**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 Game viewing and optional activities in Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary

Mlilwane is Swaziland's oldest protected area, owned and managed by a non-profit making trust, it is situated in the low foothills of the Nyonyane Mountains. The park has been rehabilitated to become Swaziland's most frequented reserve where one can enjoy the beauty of the surroundings and the abundant wildlife that grace these plains. Mlilwane has a large area of open grassland making game viewing and bird watching relatively easy and this morning we begin with a walk in search of zebra, wildebeest, nyala and warthog. The afternoon is left free to choose one of the optional activities available at the reserve, the absence of big cats allows us to partake in mountain biking or trail walking in a relaxed setting. The alternatives are to accompany our guide to the friendly local curios thus providing a real feel for the Swasi people and their culture, or relax and sit back to watch the local wildlife grazing outside our very own front door.

Overnight: **Standard Beehive Huts**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 Drive to Kruger National Park

After an early start we drive north re-entering South Africa and crossing the Crocodile River into the Kruger National Park. This two million hectare wilderness is amongst the world's first proclaimed game reserves and is justifiably South Africa's showpiece, boasting 147 mammal species. The park offers the 'Big 5' and over 500 recorded bird species along with scenery as diverse as riverine forest, granite outcrops, endless savannah and impenetrable mopani woodland. We take an open-vehicle game drive on our way to the camp area where we stay overnight. These camps areas benefit from modern infrastructure with toilet and shower blocks, restaurants and shops, as well as our accommodation.

Overnight: **Simple Bungalow**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Game viewing in Kruger National Park; drive to Graskop

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. We depart camp for our morning game drive searching for sightings of the extensive wildlife that make this national park their home. We stop at various watering holes where we may see buffalo or antelope taking an early morning drink and hopefully a pride of lions nearby. We finish the morning drive by having lunch at one of the park's restaurants. Our afternoon game drive takes us to the Sable River, which is a major water source for the park's wildlife and a fantastic spot for game viewing. We leave the park in the late afternoon, climbing in excess of 1,000 metres to our overnight stop at Graskop.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Join tour Cape Town

The airy uplands of Mpumalanga (formerly Eastern Transvaal) 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 before we make our journey back to Johannesburg. From here we take an evening flight to Cape Town.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Tour Cape Peninsula National Park

We spend the whole day enjoying a comprehensive sightseeing tour of the many points of interest on the Cape Peninsula. We drive to Hout Bay, an attractive fishing port once flanked by dense forest with a dramatic backgroup. Here you can take a short optional boat trip out to Seal Island. The island is home to about 1000 Cape fur seals and is guarded by the impressive 'Sentinel'; a towering mountain that guards the harbour. One of the highlights today is a visit to the Cape of Good Hope, first seen by a European in 1488 when Diaz sailed round it on his search for a sea route to the East Indies. A century later Sir Francis Drake described it as 'the fairest cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth'. But it was another century before the Dutch East Indies Trading Company established a permanent settlement to supply ships with cattle and water traded from the indigenous Khoi who reared livestock on the land around the coast. We climb up to a viewpoint and watch the reputed turbulent clash of the warm Agulhas current from the Indian Ocean meeting the cold Benguela current from the Atlantic. If you're feeling active, a short trail leads down to Cape Point. Boulders beach is worth a stop to see an amazing resident African penguin colony, one of the only places in the world where this sea bird resides! Then, passing perfect sandy beaches we return to Cape Town city.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12 Ascend Table Mountain; drive Stellenbosch

This morning we plan to ascend Table Mountain. You may choose to take a three to four-hour hiking trail up to the top accompanied by your Tour Leader (if the weather is clear). Alternatively, an aerial cableway runs frequently to and from the summit, although it does close for 2 weeks for maintenance each year roughly from the end of July. This is our first encounter with some of the unique and colourful flowers from the Cape Floral Kingdom. This plant kingdom has more indigenous plant species per square metre than anywhere else on earth. Views from the top are simply stunning. A network of trails criss-cross the plateau that provide a variety of vantage points. Later in the day we'll head out of Cape Town to stay for a couple of nights in Stellenbosch. The Stellenbosch region produces some of the finest 'New World Wines' that have been honed over several centuries by the Afrikaans wine growers. Should you wish to do so you will have the opportunity to sample some of their latest vintages.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 13 Exploring the historic town of Stellenbosch and the winelands

To the north and east of Cape Town are the Cape Winelands, whose rugged mountains, rise sheer from rolling green valleys, neatly planted with vineyards and dotted with white washed manor houses. This is an image more reminiscent of a central European fairy-tale than Darkest Africa. Stellenbosch is one of the most beautiful and heritage-rich towns in southern Africa. Entering the town via historic Dorp Street is akin to stepping into the pages of a history book. A settlement was first established here in 1679 following the discovery of a river running through a fertile, green valley by Simon van der Stel, then Governor of the Cape. There is an opportunity to stroll through this historic town and take in the distinct architecture that reflects South Africa's rich and diverse history. You can choose to explore on your own following self-guided trails or take an optional guided tour. If you are feeling energetic, you may like to take a walk on the Helderberg Mountains just behind Stellenbosch.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 14 Scenic drive to Oudtshoorn, stopping in wine country on route

We start early on our scenic journey into the Little Karoo as there are several points of interest worth visiting en route. Located in the heart of the verdant Breede River Valley (the largest of the Western Cape's fruit and wine producing valleys), Worcester is home to

the Karoo National Botanical Garden - a haven for rare or endangered plants. While our drive through the centre of town gives views of the fine Victorian town buildings. We continue our drive through the stark and arid landscapes of the Little Karoo heading east through Barrydale & Ladismith. Finally, we reach our accommodation close to Oudtshoorn in the traditional centre of South Africa's ostrich farming industry.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15 In Oudstshoorn, exploring the Cango Caves

We head off early this morning to experience the stunning variety of landscapes of this region and start off by exploring the massive limestone caverns of the Cango Caves where guided tours of varying durations run regularly throughout the day (optional). The caves are an underground wonderland of extraordinary structures millions of years old. The combination of dripping rainwater and limestone has led to the creation of some of nature's most breathtaking natural structures. A local European farmer, by the name of van Zyl, first discovered the caves late in the 18th century. Although, in times past, the local Khoisan sheltered in the cave complex's entrance but they never ventured any further into the cave complex. When van Zyl, with a single candle, entered the cave complex and its first massive chamber and spoke, he realised from his muffled voice that there was something far bigger and grander than his candle light could show. Ever since then the caves have been enjoyed and explored by professionals and amateurs alike. In the afternoon we offer an optional visit to a local Ostrich Farm where you can see Zimbabwean Blue, Kenyan Red and also South African varieties of this bird, along with the beautiful white ostriches which are very rare.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 16 Drive to Knysna, walk on pensinula looking for Seals and Dolphins

After leaving Oudtshoorn we travel over the protea-covered on the dramatic Outeniqua pass through the Outeniqua Mountains. These mountains form a very formidable barrier between the dry interior and the lush coastal strip known as the 'Garden Route'. Knysna was originally a harbour, forestry and mining centre. The setting will give you a real appreciation of how skilful maritime captains of old were to pilot their vessels in, and out of the lagoon. Knysna's lagoon is the foundation of the town's wealth. It was here that ships could shelter and victual and valuable raw material like wood could be transported to other centres of industry. It was also home to the reputed illegitimate son of King George III, George Rex. He is considered the main driving force in establishing Knysna as a commercial town. Today it is noteworthy as an artists' retreat and adventure activity base and has twice been voted South Africa's favourite town. Later today it may also be possible to take an easy walk on the magnificent Robberg Peninsula. Named after the seal colony found there by Dutch sailors. From here the views of the coastline are fantastic and it is easy to understand why our early ancestors used this peninsula as a home. From the peninsula have a really good chance of seeing seals, dolphins and the Southern Right Whale. During June to late November, the whales come into calmer and warmer waters to calve and nurse their young.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 17 visiting Tsitsikamma National Park, optional walks and short treks

No visit to the Garden Route would be complete without a visit to the magnificent Tsitsikamma National Park. Tsitsikamma is a marine and forest park, stretching for some 80 km, from a lagoon at Nature's Valley to the mouth of the Groot River. The lush forest and the sheer cliffs provide an ideal setting for a short walk in the forests to the suspension bridge that spans the mouth of Storm's River. The rugged coastline with crashing waves and the forest covered cliffs are simply spellbinding. While you are here, you must definitely sample the excellent local seafood available in the area.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 18 Game drive in Boteilierskop reserve, drive to Swellendem

This morning we have an early start to drive to Botelierskop Private Game Reserve to take a 3 hour game drive. You will be accompanied by a local guide in your open 4x4 safari vehicle in the 3000ha reserve to view African wildlife in its natural habitat. There are around 1800 animals in the reserve including rhino, buffalo, giraffe, zebra, eland, bontebok and black impala. There are also orphaned elephants and in the lion sanctuary a small number of orphaned lions. Following the game drive we will continue to follow the garden route to the farming region of Swellendam, a lovely old town with numerous Cape Dutch buildings.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 19 Along the 'Whale Route' to Cape Town

On our penultimate day we follow the acclaimed Whale Route along the dramatic south coast to Cape Town. Our first stop is wild and dramatic Cape Agulhas, the southernmost point in Africa. It is also the point where the Atlantic Ocean officially meets the Indian Ocean. We then drive on to the small seaside resort of Hermanus that is regarded as one of the premier spots for whale-watching in Africa, if not the world! Every year, between June and December, Southern Right whales spend a few months every year in the Cape, mating and calving. Hermanus is one of the best places to see them as they come very close inshore and the cliff top coastal walk offers many convenient viewing points.The calving and mating is a spectacle not to be missed. Hermanus is the only place in the world to employ a whale crier. He keeps everybody informed of the whereabouts of the whales by blowing his kelp horn. The whale crier is as much a part of the whale watching as the whales are. Finally, we return to Cape Town via Betty's Bay and Gordon's Bay coast affording spectacular views across both Walker Bay and False Bay. Please note: Final timings of today's itinerary are flexible and depend on seasonality and the likelihood of spotting whales. Out of whale season we may arrive in Cape Town earlier in the day.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 20 Tour ends Cape Town

Most of today is left free for personal exploration before the flight to London this evening. You may choose to visit the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens. The gardens lie on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain and consist of landscaped gardens of indigenous plants and trees. The gardens are a living display of floral beauty and features 4700 of the estimated 20000 species of indigenous South African flora, and close to 50 per cent of the Peninsula's floral wealth! You may opt to take a boat trip to visit Robben Island, if you haven't already visited on Day 1. It has had a dark history serving as a prison. It is here that Nelson Mandela served most of his prison sentence under the South African government. It is now a worthy and powerful symbol of the optimism and hope for the future of South Africa. If this all sounds far too strenuous, you could just soak up the vibrant and colourful atmosphere at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront and just wander or do some last minute shopping! You may want to take a short city tour with your tour leader.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

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, characterful park lodges, and we spend one night in a permanent tented camp. 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. In St Lucia we stay at a local style lodge within the wetlands area. Our most unusual accommodation is our beehive huts in Mlilwane - a traditional Swazi design but with en suite facilities! In Kruger we stay in a tented camp in the heart of the National Park, a great base for our exploration of these iconic gamelands.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 19 breakfasts, 1 lunch,3 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

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.

South Africa

Lunch £: 6.00

Dinner £: 12.00

Swaziland

Lunch £: 10.00

Dinner £: 15.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

South Africa

Bottle of Beer £: 1.20

Water £: 1.00

Swaziland

Water £: 1.00

Other Sightseeing & 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.

Optional Excursions

St. Lucia - Boat trip on Lake St. Lucia R220; Full day Cape Vidal excursion (includes lunch) R695; St. Lucia night drive to spot turtles (Nov-Mar) R950; Whale watching (June-Nov) R960 pp; Night game drive in St Lucia Wetland Reserve R485.
Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary - Mountain bike hire approx. £12 per hour; guided walk £10.
Kruger National Park - Night drive £15.

Cape Town - Robben Island (3.5 hour tour) £22; Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens £3; Table Mountain cable car - £7.
Cape Peninsula - Seal Island boat trip £5.
Stellenbosch - Guided tour available £5; Wine tasting £2.
Cango Caves - Guided tour of caves £7 depending on duration; Ostrich Farm £6.
Hermanus - Whale watching £50.
Plettenberg Bay - Whale watching £44.
Tsitsikamma NP - Canopy trail £42.
Oudsthoorn - Wildlife ranch £9.
Knysna - Robberg Nature Reserve walk £3; Township Tour £24.

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 very important that you book the 9am ferry for day 20 of the tour. If there are spaces it is possible to book this excursion locally, but this is subject to availability.

Tipping - 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 £20-£25 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.

Foreign Exchange

South Africa

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.

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.

Swaziland

ATM Availability: Cash can be conveniently drawn on credit/debit cards from ATM's in most South African towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are usually accepted in large shops and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: We do not recomend to take travellers cheques as these are quite difficult to exchange.

Local Currency: Lilangeni but South African Rand is accepted

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged. Please note that the banks and Forex Bureaus do not accept US Dollar notes pre-2002. Take your money in a combination of cash and travellers cheques and take an ATM card.

Where to Exchange: On arrival.

Joining your Trip

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 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 on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

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, 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 please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

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.

Important Information

Travel 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. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

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

follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety
We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination.

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.

Visa Information

South Africa: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. 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. Travel via South Africa (including transits): From 1st June 2015 South Africa will enforce new immigration regulations effecting all children aged under 18 years that are travelling to, from or via the country. The new laws state that parents and/or guardian maybe 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 for full requirements: http:/outhafricahouseuk.com/visas/vis_forcit.html and your airline for up to date requirements.

Swaziland: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. 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 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.

Vaccinations & Protection

South Africa

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. 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 http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Swaziland

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 Swaziland if you have travelled from or via a country where yellow fever is endemic. We recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid, polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Special Note: Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before 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 http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

South Africa

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.

Swaziland

Can be visited all year round. Most rain falls in the summer months (October-April). The climate during this period is generally hot and humid in the lowlands with temperatures sometimes up to 40°C. Winters (June-August) are much drier and colder, but still pleasant for travel. The high veld has a temperate climate. Average daily sunshine hours are high throughout the year. 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.

Clothing

Clothing should generally be lightweight for the day. A few warm fleeces and long trousers are strongly recommended as nights can be very cold, especially from May to August and in the highlands of Swaziland. A waterproof and windproof jacket are also recommended, particularly between October and April. Avoid brightly coloured clothing for game viewing. Take a swimming costume. Please note that it is forbidden to wear camouflage clothing in Swaziland.

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/

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes or lightweight boots for the treks, trainers or sandals for relaxing/travelling.

Luggage: On Tour

Take a tough soft bag or holdall (or rucksack with detachable frame) suitable to be carried by 4WD vehicle. Total allowance: 44lb/ 20kg maximum (due to weight restrictions on our vehicle). Also take a daypack for items needed during any short walks and game drives (20-30 litre).

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

South Africa

Population: 50,586,757

Size of Country: 1,221,037

Major Language: Afrikaans, English

Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: +2

Swaziland

Population: 1,185,000

Size of Country: 17,364 sq km

Major Language: English, Swati

Religion: Christian

Time Difference to GMT: +2

Electric Supply & Plugs

South Africa

3 Pin Round

Swaziland

3 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants,

allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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