

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Cycle the Cape (CTC 2017)



TRIPDURATION
10
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Cycling Grade: Moderate

Trip Code: CTC

Trip Highlights - Cycle the Cape

- ✓ Cycle Cape Town - Ride on the slopes of Table Mountain
- ✓ Cape Peninsula National Park - Scenic coastal cycle from Cape Point and Cape of Good Hope
- ✓ Stellenbosch winelands - Cycle through stunningly beautiful vineyards and farmlands
- ✓ Redstone Hills - Cycle through the dramatic orange and red sandstone scenery
- ✓ Oudtshoorn- Down the dramatic Swartberg pass
- ✓ Tsitsikamma National Park - Dramatic forest covered Indian Ocean coastline
- ✓ Knysna - Ride through the Knysna Harkerville Forest
- ✓ Cape Agulhas - Cycle to the Southernmost point of Africa

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 4 nights Standard Hotel
3 nights Standard Guesthouse
2 nights Standard Lodge

Included Meals: 9 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Cape Town

End Point: Trip ends: Cape Town Airport

Included Bike: 24 gear Schwinn Messa mountain bike with front suspension

Transport: Bus, Bicycle

Countries: South Africa

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Cycle The Cape

Cycle with us through South Africa's Western Cape Province. We pedal along the rugged coastline of Cape Point and through the forested shorelines of the 'Garden Route'. In Stellenbosch we ride through vineyards and enjoy a glass of the locally produced wine. Along the way we explore the dripstone caverns of Congo Caves and visit Boulders Beach - home to a colony of African Penguins.

Why Book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

Cycling Information

On this tour we cycle 211 km over eight days (an average of 26 km per day) with a further 71 km of optional rides available. We cycle on minor roads and good tracks (45% dirt roads, 45% tarmac, 10% cycle paths). A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We have graded the route as moderate.



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.

Cycling Grade: Moderate

Medium length rides are suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. You'll be cycling mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

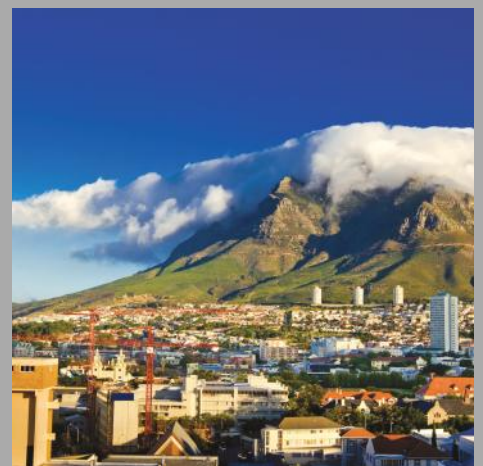
Your trip itinerary

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 Cape Town; optional introductory ride

Join the tour in the wonderful city of Cape Town. Cape Town embodies the feeling of energy and hope that South Africans feel for the future of their country - with its spectacular natural assets, modern high-tech city centre and mixed population. Cape fur seals can often be seen playfully frolicking in the harbour waters. This afternoon we have an optional first bike ride, most likely on the face of Table Mountain for spectacular views, then back to our hotel. This will be our first encounter with some of the unique and colourful flowers from the Cape Floral Kingdom, which has more indigenous plant species per square metre than anywhere else on earth! Please note if you wish to join the bike ride today you must have a morning arrival flight and be at the hotel ready to start cycling at 2 pm. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 12 kilometres with 200 metres total ascent (optional).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Drive to Cape Point Nature Reserve via Hout Bay; cycle to Kommetjie, or Simon's Town

The focus of our activities today is the area of the Cape Peninsula. The Cape of Good Hope was 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 in the land around the coast. In Hout Bay, weather permitting, we enjoy a boat ride to view Seal Island, where a population (7,000 approx!) of Cape Fur Seals have made their home. There might be whales or even pods of porpoises there too. From Hout Bay we drive over Chapman's Peak to Cape Boulders beach where we get a close up view of Africa's only resident penguin species, the African Penguin. From here we continue by bus for around three hours to Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope for lunch and a chance to explore this stunning wild place. After lunch we cycle back through the Nature Reserve and head out along the Atlantic seaboard to the seaside village of Simon's Town or Kommetjie, depending on the wind direction. Finally we transfer by bus back to our accommodation, with time to relax this evening. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 33 kilometres, with 250 metres total ascent.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Drive to Stellenbosch; cycle through wine farms to Jonkershoek Reserve

Today we'll head out of Cape Town to explore the Stellenbosch region. 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 whitewashed manor houses. This is an image more reminiscent of a central European fairy tale than 'Darkest Africa'! A settlement was first established in Stellenbosch in 1679 following the discovery of a river running through a fertile, green valley by Simon van der Stel, then Governor of the Cape. Grapes were planted in the fertile valleys and soon Stellenbosch became the centre of the wine industry. It now produces some of the finest 'New World Wines', wines that have been honed over several centuries by the Afrikaans wine growers. We cycle today from Lazerac to Jonkershoek Nature reserve firstly along tarmac roads and then on gravel tracks through the forest, before returning to Lanerac. After enjoying a cycle ride through the stunning scenery you may like to reward yourself by sampling some of the latest vintages with an optional wine tasting. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 18 kilometres, with 250 metres total ascent. There is the option to extend the cycling for another 7 kilometres (150 metres additional total ascent).

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**

Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Drive and cycle through Red Stone Hills to De Poort

We start early on our incredibly scenic five hour drive along Route 62 to the 'Little Karoo'. En route we pass through the heart of the verdant Breede River Valley, the largest of the Western Cape's fruit and wine producing valleys. As we continue eastwards along the world's longest wine route, passing through Barrydale and Ladismith the scenery changes dramatically to the stark and arid landscapes of the Little Karoo. At Calitzdorp, we turn off the main road into the beautiful Red Stone Hills at the foot of the Swartberg Mountains. Here we take to our bikes and explore on gravel tracks with some steep sections, marvelling at the dramatic panorama of ancient red and orange sandstone the area is famed for. There is also the option to extend the cycling with some more challenging riding through steeper hills. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 18 kilometres, with 400 metres total ascent, plus an optional extra 7 kilometres (150 metres additional total ascent).

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**

Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

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 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **5** Cycle Swartberg Pass; optional visit to Cango Caves

After a hearty country breakfast in view of the magnificent surrounding mountains, we board our coach and head to the top of the dramatic Swartberg Pass. Once at the top we mount the bikes for the steep, exhilarating cycle down the pass, enjoying the fresh air, magnificent views and birdlife. The towering mountain walls provide welcome cool and an extraordinary backdrop for our cycle as we move through from one distinct ecological area to another. The Swartberg Pass is one of 34 that were built by Andrew Gebbes Bains in the middle of the 19th century to open up the interior and extend the trade routes down to the coastal areas. Our journey then takes us to the world famous Cango Caves. Here we have an optional guided tour of the natural chambers and an insight into how the area has changed through the ages. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 19 kilometres, with 200 metres total ascent. There is the option to extend the ride with an additional 27 kilometres climb up Swartberg pass (840 metres additional total ascent). Please note: in high summer this ride can be very hot and exposed. Your Tour Leader may substitute another route if necessary.

Overnight: **Standard Lodge**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **6** Drive to Plettenberg Bay via George to Knysna; cycle through the Knysna Harkerville Forest

Driving south and east today through George, we return to the coast and arrive at Knysna. Knysna was originally a harbour, as well as a forestry and mining centre. Today it is noteworthy as an artists' retreat and adventure activity base. After some exploration and lunch here, we drive to our accommodation at Knysna to check-in, to avoid cycling in the heat of the day. Afterwards we go off road to explore through part of the Harkerville National Forest with an exciting cycle ride in the cool of the late afternoon. There is also the option this afternoon for a refreshing coastal cycle ride from our accommodation around the estuary in Knysna. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 12 kilometres, with 200 metres total ascent. Optional additional 18 kilometres cycle ride (200 metres total additional ascent).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **7** Drive to Tsitsikamma NP; cycle Bloukrans and Nature's Valley Passes

This morning we drive for an hour out to Tsitsikamma National Park and the Storm's River mouth. The Tsitsikamma NP is a pristine marine and forest reserve stretching for 50 kilometres from Nature's Valley across to the mouth of the Groot River. We can take time for a 4 kilometre (hour and a half) walk this morning across the suspension bridge over the river and up to the look out point to for impressive views of the bay. There is also the possibility for an optional boat cruise up the river, before we stop for lunch at Storm's River village. In the afternoon we drive the short way to the forestry village of Coldstream, where we take to our bikes and ride through the magnificent Tsitsikamma Forest along the Bloukrans and Nature's Valley Passes. The fairly flat winding forest paths and fun descents through the forest passes are a real highlight of the trip. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 37 kilometres.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **8** Drive to Witsand, cycle to Malgas Pont, drive Swellendam

This morning we drive to a stunning viewpoint overlooking the coast at Knysna Heads, before continuing to the seaside town of Mossel Bay for lunch. In the afternoon we travel along the world renowned 'Garden Route' into the wheat fields of the Overberg to Witsand, across to St Sebastian Bay. We cycle on a quiet gravel backroads through picturesque rolling rural farmland to Malgas Pont, the only remaining manual pont in Africa. This carries vehicles over the Breede River. After crossing the river we drive to Swellendam, enjoying views of the impressive Langeberg Mountains. Please note that the route cycled may be reversed dependant on head winds that day. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres, with 350 metres total ascent.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY **9** Cycle to Cape Agulhas; return Swellendam

The destination for our last cycle ride is the wild and dramatic Cape Agulhas, the southernmost point in Africa, where the warm Agulhas current from the Indian Ocean meets the cold Benguela current from the Atlantic in a turbulent clash. We start by driving to Bredasdorp and take to our bikes for the rest of the way. The cycle route to Cape Agulhas takes in fantastic open sheep and livestock

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farmland and indigenous fynbos and other vegetation and will take most of the morning to complete on some good flat gravel surfaced and tramac roads. (Please note that the route cycled may be reversed dependant on head winds that day). In the afternoon we head to the coast for a swim at the beach, walks along the coast, or a visit to a local fishing village, which has been declared a national monument. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 44 kilometres, with 200 metres total ascent.

Overnight: **Standard Guesthouse**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Drive via Hermanus to Cape Town where tour ends

On our final day we follow by bus the acclaimed 'Whale Route' along the dramatic south coast back to Cape Town. The small seaside resort of Hermanus is regarded as one of the premier spots for whale-watching in Africa. Every year between June and November Southern Right whales spend a few months in the Cape, mating and calving. Hermanus is one of the better places to see them as they come quite close inshore and the cliff-top offers many convenient viewing points. If time allows we may make a short stop en route here before driving to Cape Town via Betty's Bay and Gordon's Bay. Out of whale season we may arrive in Cape Town earlier in the day, where the tour ends at the airport at 1 pm.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

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.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 9 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 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

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

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

Table Mountain Cable Car - GBP 18

Stellenbosch Wine-Tasting - Approx. GBP 5

Cango Caves - GBP 7

Tippling - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tippling - 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, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow GBP 15 for tipping.

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.

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.

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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. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

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. British 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.

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

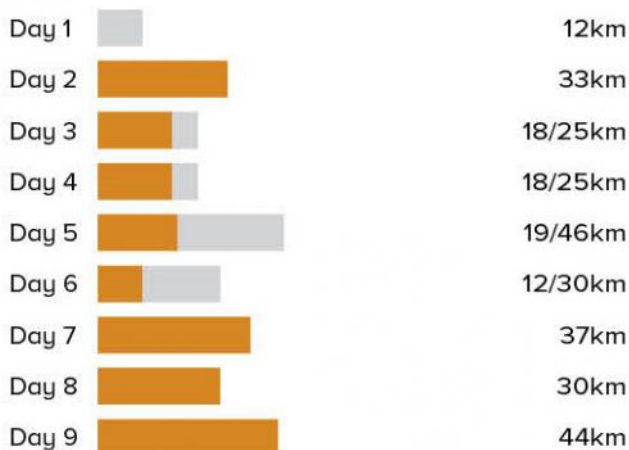
South Africa

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.



Preparing for your Trip

DAILY DISTANCES



Optional Rides

Bike Details

Your included bike is a 24 gear Schwinn Messa mountain bike with front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A water bottle holder is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour and can transport your day bag if you prefer to cycle without this. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

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.

Clothing

In general pack for warm and hot weather. However, you must bring a warm sweater or jacket for cycling on cool days and for wearing during the evenings. We recommend you bring padded cycle shorts, cycle gloves and quick drying cycle shirts. In case of rain, waterproofs are essential.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

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

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On Tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike. Remember you are

expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

It does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company.

Luggage allowance on trip: 15Kg

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

Electric Supply & Plugs

South Africa

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 & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of 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 Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. 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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