

# SOUTH AFRICA

## 18 DAY ECO EXPLORER

### FULLY ACCOMMODATED

#### Johannesburg to Cape Town

#### 17 NIGHTS LODGE

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#### INCLUDED HIGHLIGHTS

- "Big Five" animal viewing
- Guided open vehicle game drives
- Kruger National Park
- Kingdom of eSwatini (Swaziland)
- Isimangaliso Wetland Park
- Royal Natal Park - Tugela Gorge walk
- "Barrier of Spears" - Drakensberg Mountains
- Wild Coast - Coastal hike to "Hole in the Wall"
- Mountain Zebra Park
- Addo Elephant National Park
- Tsitsikamma National Park
- Pristine beaches
- Garden Route – Fauna and Flora delight - Penguins
- Cape Agulhas (Southernmost Tip of the Africa)
- Cape Town
- African culture

#### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Drakensberg Horse Ride
  - Historic Robben Island (Nelson Mandela)
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Our aim is to show off the unique natural and cultural diversity of what is often referred to as "A World in One Country". Virtually the size of Europe, with over 3000 kilometres of unspoiled coastline, climatic zones ranging from searing hot deserts to cool crisp 3400m mountains - South Africa lives up to this reputation. Proudly boasting a multitude of fascinating ecosystems harbouring an infinite variety of fauna and flora as well as an equally amazing range of people and cultures - from the original Bushman to the most Western of ways, this truly is an unmatched destination.

We visit the highlights, but also wander off of the beaten track to indulge in the great outdoors and to show off an array of South Africa's hidden gems and lesser known attractions.

Overnight stops are at comfortable lodges or hotels, all are in truly unique surroundings - whether in pristine reserves, high in the mountains or on a remote beach, each is carefully chosen to show off a different aspect of this captivating destination.

The tour is enjoyed by those with a flexible attitude and adventurous mentality.



**DAY 1: JHB – KRUGER BUSH LODGE**

Heading north from Johannesburg - "The City of Gold", like many intrepid explorers have done before us, our journey takes us through the outskirts of the capital - Pretoria, and then out into the vast open plains of Africa.

Lunch today will be in the historic gold mining village of Haenertsburg. After lunch we descend into the Magoebaskloof, a spectacular lush mountainous area presided over by the Rain Queen – Modjadi.

The last stretch of our journey today takes us into the Greater Kruger – world renowned for its protected natural environment and vast free-ranging animal populations.

For the next two nights we get cosy at our well-appointed Bush Lodge, situated in a private reserve within the greater Kruger - where animals roam freely and unrestricted. This privately owned reserve allows us the freedom to explore the wilderness in open game drive vehicles in search of a variety of animals, both during the day and into the evening.

The lodge casually blends into the bush and offers crisp comfortable beds and stunning views over the surrounding wilderness, including a water hole regularly frequented by animals. Retire to bed whilst listening to a symphony of sounds from the African Bush.

**Meals: D (Lunch own expense)**

**Distance: 530 Km**

**Accommodation: Bush Lodge - twin-bedded units**

**Included Highlights/Activity:**

- Scenic drive down to the Lowveld region
- Private Game Reserve Accommodation

**Optional Activities:**

- None, all included

**DAY 2: KRUGER BUSH LODGE**

After a peaceful night's rest we start the day with an early riser light breakfast of fresh coffee and rusks (a traditional South African biscuit), before embarking on our morning experience within the wild African bush.

Guided by a qualified ranger we explore the wilderness, with heightened senses, always on the lookout for an animal encounter while also discovering the smaller treasures often hidden from the eye.

Before the heat of the day sets in, we return to the lodge for a scrumptious brunch, after which it's time to relax around the lodge and enjoy the serenity of the surrounding wilderness. A nearby waterhole attracts a variety of birds and wildlife that come to quench their thirst, displaying the pecking order ever so present. Unwind with a refreshing drink while game viewing from the deck.

With the heat subsiding in the late afternoon we embark on an open vehicle game drive which develops into an extensive night drive - in search of the nocturnal animals that come out after dark.

As dusk approaches we pull over and enjoy a sun-downer drink or two, whilst marvelling at the magnificent sun setting over the African bushveld.

**Meals: Brunch, D**

**Distance: Game Drive**

**Accommodation: Bush Lodge - twin-bedded tented units**

**Included Highlights/Activity:**

- Exclusive Private Reserve
- Morning and afternoon guided experience in Big 5 area

**Optional Activities:**

- None, all included



### **DAY 3: PANORAMA ROUTE - HAZYVIEW**

Rising with the African sun, a hearty breakfast is enjoyed before setting off to climb the escarpment and explore the many natural wonders and viewing points in this incredibly scenic region. First stop will be to view the impressive Blyde River Canyon – the world’s largest “Green Canyon”. After viewing the Canyon we continue on to visit the museum town of Pilgrim’s Rest where we enjoy a walk down through the main street whilst reliving the days of the early gold rush.

Today's lunch will be at your own expense at a venue literally on the edge of the escarpment and offering the most incredible views over the entire Lowveld.

Mid-afternoon we make our way down to the tranquil Greenfire Lodge Hazyview, a log cabin built spectacularly on stilts in the indigenous forest on the banks of the impressive Sabie River or “Fearful River” as dubbed by the locals. As well as a natural paradise this is also a working farm where coffee, limes and macadamias are produced and we will take the time to tour the workings on the property.

**Meals: B D (Lunch own expense)**

**Distance: 195 Km**

**Accommodation: Greenfire Lodge Hazyview - log cabins**

**Included Highlights/Activity:**

- **Panorama Route**
- **3 Rondavels**
- **Pilgrim’s Rest**

**Optional Activities:**

- **Gorge swing**

### **DAY 4: KRUGER NATIONAL PARK**

Waking with the birds, we depart from the lodge at sunrise and travel a short distance to enter the southern sector of Kruger National Park for a full day of game viewing.

Driving slowly through this iconic National Park - the size of Israel or Wales, we will spend the day in search of the many animal inhabitants.

From the high vantage point and comfort of our well-equipped vehicle the view is excellent. Our expert guide will take time to explain the behaviour of the many animals we see in this fascinating environment. Most of the day will be spent game viewing, however, we will stop regularly at various designated sites to stretch our legs and also to enjoy an own-expense lunch at one of the rest camps in the Park.

Late this afternoon we exit the Park and return to the comfort of our Greenfire Lodge Hazyview.

**Meals: Packed Breakfast Snacks, Dinner**

**Distance: +- 30km to and from the Park gate.**

**Accommodation: Greenfire Lodge Hazyview - log cabins**

**Included Highlights/Activity:**

- **Southern section of Kruger National Park**
- **Full day game drive**

**Optional Activities:**

- **None, all included**

### **DAY 5: eSWATINI**

Departing after breakfast we pass through the provincial capital Mbombela (Nelspruit), before leaving South Africa and crossing the border into the Kingdom of eSwatini (formerly known as Swaziland), a small landlocked country, rich in culture and natural beauty.

Our journey today takes us high into the mountains, past numerous traditional homesteads, and into an area of spectacular natural beauty. The area is home to many traditional craft industries and time permitting, we will visit one or more during our time here.



We will spend some time exploring this small country before arriving at our accommodation for the night and enjoying a locally cooked meal.

**Meals: B L D**

**Distance: 290 km**

**Accommodation: Forester's Arms**

**Included Highlights/Activity:**

- eSwatini
- Scenic drive

**Optional Activities:**

- None, all included

### **DAY 6 – 7: ST LUCIA**

Today we follow winding roads south through the Swazi countryside, before crossing back into South Africa. After completing the border formalities, we enter Zululand, a part of modern-day KwaZulu-Natal, and home to South Africa's largest ethnic group - the Zulu people. Formed in the early 1800's into the most powerful regional empire by King Shaka Zulu, the Zulus influenced a large part of southern Africa.

Once back in South Africa our journey continues to the bustling coastal town of St Lucia where we spend the next two nights. St Lucia itself is home to many animals including Hippo, Crocodile and bird species.

During our stay in St Lucia we will also visit the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, a Subtropical Coastal habitat with white beaches, tidal pools, offshore reefs and coastal dune forest. This unique combination of coastal reserve and Wetland Park offers an absolutely unique experience, where we drive through the park viewing rhino, buffalo and a multitude of other large animals, before going for a walk on a deserted beach where at any time you can take a dip in the warm Indian Ocean. The day is spent exploring the beach, rock pools, pristine dune forest and other natural habitats of this amazing Park.

During the evenings we enjoy our dinners at one of the many local restaurants (own-expense). Beware of the wandering hippos that also visit town at night for a bite to eat.

**Meals: B L, B L**

**Distance: 370 km day 6**

**Accommodation: Forest Lodge St Lucia**

**Included Highlights/Activity:**

- Scenic drive through Swaziland
- iSimangaliso Wetland Park

**Optional Activities:**

- Night drive in Wetland Park

### **DAY 8 – 9: DRAKENSBERG**

Departing St Lucia after breakfast, we continue travelling through the rolling hills of Kwa-Zulu Natal, an area famous for various battles between the Boers and Zulus, British and Zulus and the Boers and British. The area is filled with numerous historic sites that helped shape modern day South Africa.

This afternoon we reach the majestic Drakensberg mountain range that rises 3400m, known to the locals as "The Barrier of Spears".

After a full day we arrive at our accommodation, where we spend two nights in cozy cabins surrounded by breath-taking views.

On day 9 we will conduct a day hike in the Tugela Gorge which is located in the Royal Natal National Park, part of Drakensberg World Heritage Site. From here we will have a spectacular view of the



towering cliffs of the Amphitheatre and the Tugela Falls, at 948m the falls are widely accepted as being the second highest in the world.

**Meals: B L D; B L D**

**Distance: 480 km on Day 8**

**Accommodation: Alpine Heath**

**Included Highlights / Activity:**

- Drakensberg Mountains
- Tugela Gorge hike

**Optional Activities:**

- Horse riding

#### **DAY 10: SOUTHERN DRAKENSBERG**

With tired legs, today we travel further south whilst hugging the Drakensberg Mountains and make our way into the Natal midlands, a lush farming area known to be one of South Africa's prettiest.

Our overnight stop tonight is on a working ranch. We arrive in the afternoon and will have time to learn more about farming in this area as well as the fascinating history that surrounds the farm and buildings on the property. For the adventurous there will also be an opportunity to assist with some of the farm work in the afternoon or early morning.

Tonight we enjoy a traditional dinner prepared fresh from the farm gardens.

**Meals: B L D**

**Distance: 340km**

**Accommodation: Flitwick Ranch**

**Included Highlights/Activity:**

- Scenic drive through Southern Drakensberg
- Local farm stay

**Optional Activities:**

- None, all included

#### **DAY 11 – 12: WILD COAST**

Setting off early, we pass through several small towns and follow beautiful roads towards one of the most exciting, truly off-the-beaten-track highlights of the tour – The Wild Coast.

Having formerly been an independent homeland, there has been little development in this area, resulting in endless unspoiled beaches, natural estuaries, rolling grassland, and a tapestry of traditional Xhosa villages.

We spend two nights on the Wild Coast at Coffee Bay allowing us a full day for hiking and exploring this rugged but stunningly beautiful area. The highlight of our stay will be a walk along the high cliffs, deserted beaches and rolling grasslands, to what is one of the most impressive landmarks along the South African coastline – Hole in the Wall. Hole in the Wall is an island, just offshore with a natural arch carved by centuries of wave-action. The adventurous can swim out for a closer look.

This afternoon we will have time to simply relax and to enjoy the “Robinson Crusoe” surroundings as well as the comforts of our accommodation.

**Meals: B L D; B L D**

**Distance: 400 km on Day 11**

**Accommodation: Ocean View Hotel**

**Included Highlights/Activity:**

- Scenic drive to the Wild Coast



- Private beach
- Hike along the coast

**Optional Activities:**

- None, all included

**DAY 13: WILD COAST - CRADOCK**

Departing from the Wild Coast we follow lesser known roads through the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa and make our way into the Great Karoo, to Cradock, a town in the upper reaches of the Great Fish River valley, filled with rich history dating back to the mid 1800s.

On arrival in Cradock we are met by a local guide who will take us on a colourful walking history tour, before we check into our accommodation for the night. We enjoy an evening surrounded by old fashion hospitality and history.

**Meals: B L D**

**Distance: 450 km**

**Accommodation: Tuishuise & Victoria Manor**

**Included Highlights/Activity:**

- Scenic drive in Eastern Cape
- Historic town of Cradock
- History tour

**Optional Activities:**

- None, all included

**DAY 14: MOUNTAIN ZEBRA PARK, ADDO ELEPHANT PARK - NELSON MANDELA BAY**

An early start, we aim to enter the Mountain Zebra Park as the gate opens - this Park is unlike any of the others we have previously visited, being in the semi-desert of the Great Karoo, and is home to not only the endangered mountain zebra, but also springbok, ostrich, cheetah, buffalo, black rhino, and an array of birdlife. We spend a few hours in search of animals, and to take in the spectacular views, before returning to the hotel for a sumptuous breakfast.

Once packed, we depart Cradock and head for the renowned Addo Elephant Park where elephants, buffalo and other animals can be viewed at close range in another unique environment, the succulent shrubs of the rhenosterveld. We will traverse this interesting National Park from the north to south. Exiting in the late afternoon we travel the short distance back to the coast and to our hotel literally on the beachfront of the stunning Nelson Mandela Bay. The location of our hotel allows for us to stroll along the beachfront and to visit one of a variety of restaurants to enjoy an own expense dinner.

**Meals: B L**

**Distance: 250 km**

**Accommodation: Hotel - Nelson Mandela Bay**

**Included Highlights/Activity**

- Mountain Zebra National Park
- Addo Elephant National Park
- Nelson Mandela Bay

**Optional Activities**

- None, all included

**DAY 15: GARDEN ROUTE - KNYSNA**

This morning we will have time for a stroll on the beach, perhaps a swim in the Indian Ocean or just a leisurely cup of coffee. After breakfast we then continue our journey into the heart of the spectacular Garden Route region. We will travel the length of this magnificent natural kingdom sandwiched between the ocean and the towering mountains, exploring the verdant and ecologically diverse vegetation



encountered here with the numerous estuaries, lakes and ancient forests. We stop regularly to explore the highlights including the Tsitsikamma Coastal National Park where we will enjoy a walk along the rugged coast and over the suspension bridge spanning the Storms River mouth.

This afternoon we travel to the vibrant town of Knysna. Surrounded by indigenous forests, fynbos and lagoons, this little town is a gem in a natural Garden of Eden. On arrival we have time to explore and to enjoy an own-expense meal at one of the many little restaurants.

**Meals: B L**  
**Distance: 280 km**  
**Accommodation: The Rex Hotel**

**Included Highlights/Activity**

- Tsitsikamma National Park
- Coastal hike

**Optional Activities**

- Local dining experience

#### **DAY 16: CAPE AGULHAS - SOUTHERN TIP OF AFRICA**

Departing from Knysna we follow the coast through several small towns as we make our way down to Cape Agulhas – the most southerly point on the African continent. Here we will conduct a short walk down to the beach to experience first-hand the theoretical meeting point of the cold Atlantic and the warm Indian oceans.

A picnic style lunch is enjoyed by all with the crisp clean ocean breeze, before leaving this treasure and retiring to our accommodation in Arniston. An afternoon walk down to the huge sea cave, Waenhuiskrans, is recommended.

**Meals: B L D**  
**Distance: 380 km**  
**Accommodation: Arniston Hotel / Cabins**

**Included Highlights/Activity**

- Cape Agulhas
- Waenhuiskrans

**Optional Activities**

- None, all included

#### **DAY 17 - 18: CAPE TOWN**

A relaxed morning drive takes us on the "Whale Route" through Hermanus – known across the world for excellent land based whale watching. We then hug the coast around the Hottentots Holland Mountains toward Betty's Bay where we visit a small colony of African Penguins.

This afternoon we travel one of the most scenic coastal routes in the world, along the edge of False Bay, before making our way towards the "Mother City", Cape Town.

Mid-afternoon we will arrive at the Mojo Hotel, located in Sea Point and our accommodation for the night. The hotel is conveniently located close to award winning restaurants, galleries, vibrant nightlife and the ocean promenade.

Our tour will officially come to an end after breakfast on Day 18 of the tour.

Cape Town is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities in the world, rich in culture, award winning wines, world class restaurants, fashion and people from all walks of life, guests are encouraged to spend some extra time to explore the 'Mother City', and we would be happy to assist in making arrangements.



**Meals: B; B (Lunch and dinner on Day 17 are own expense)**  
**Distance: 280 km on Day 17**  
**Accommodation: Mojo Hotel – interior rooms**

**Included Highlights/Activity:**

- Scenic drive to Cape Town
- Coastal roads

**Optional Activities:**

- Parasailing
- Boat cruises
- Robben Island
- Table Mountain

The tour ends at 09h00 on Day 18. Clients may extend their stay by booking post-tour accommodation at the MOJO HOTEL. If arranging an onward flight on this day, please allow time for an airport transfer and for check-in procedures (up to three hours).

## **DEPARTURES**

This tour departs from Johannesburg every Tuesday.

At time of going to print the above itinerary was correct, but we continually strive to offer our clients the best available tour options, and as such we reserve the right to change aspects of the itinerary at our discretion. During the validity period of the published itinerary, conditions may change, roads may be improved or deteriorate, contracted camps and accommodation facilities may change standards, optional activities might become available or be discontinued, new border posts open or existing ones become congested, etc. We are continuously monitoring all of the factors that contribute to a successful tour, and will make amendments to the published itinerary if circumstances so demand, or if we believe that the change will enhance the tour.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

This tour is fully accommodated and all linen and towels are supplied. Clients will do a fair amount of walking, so a small daypack is advisable. Being reasonably fit will add to your enjoyment. Seasonal malaria precautions may be necessary and can be purchased locally.

A valid passport is required by everyone. The tour will visit South Africa and eSwatini. It is the client's responsibility to ensure they have the appropriate visas required for this trip, to all the countries we visit. Some nationalities may need to obtain visas before departure as they cannot always be obtained on arrival.

The price includes all transport, accommodation, meals as per the itinerary, tea and coffee at the lodges, group equipment, permits, entry fees and two crew. The price does not include alcohol, bottled water and soft drinks, meals where stipulated, curios, tips and optional excursions.

Before departure, clients will be required to enter into an agreement and indemnity pertaining to our booking conditions and general information.

It is compulsory for clients to have their own comprehensive personal travel insurance that includes cover for (but is not limited to) any medical emergencies as well as Covid 19 related cancellations or deviations prior or during the tour.

