

# Travel Tips

## Southern Africa



### Currency

South Africa's currency is ZAR / South African Rand or Rand.

The Rand (ZAR) is readily accepted in Namibia, Botswana, eSwatini (Swaziland) and Lesotho. It is best to use US \$ in the countries of Zimbabwe and Zambia, even though major currencies such as GBP, EUR, AUD & CAD are accepted.

If it is necessary, or you would like to exchange your cash money, then it would be best to do so on your arrival at the airport.

The currency of other southern African countries:

- Namibia - Namibian \$
- Botswana - Pula
- Zimbabwe - Any currency except Zimbabwe \$
- Zambia - Kwacha
- eSwatini (Swaziland) - Emalangeni
- Lesotho - Loti

### Funds

We recommend the use of Mastercard or Visa credit & debit cards or normal bank cards, as ATM (Automated Teller Machines) are conveniently available throughout the region and these cards are accepted at all formal shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. Always take the same precautions you would when using these card machines at home. Most importantly, never let anyone offer you any assistance when drawing cash at an ATM.

It is always safest to stow your traveller's cheques, cash and bank cards separate when travelling.

It would be ideal to always have about ZAR 1500,00 in cash per person available whilst travelling in Southern Africa.

If available, always make use of your room or hotel safe, to store additional credit / debit cards and the bulk of your money.

Write down your traveller's cheque and credit / debit card numbers, as well as the customer service number of the issuing bank(s), which you could then keep in a safe place in case you need to contact the issuing bank(s).

If you need to exchange monies, always try make use of foreign exchange outlets which are available in all the airports and big shopping centres. Avoid banks, as they follow slow tedious foreign exchange procedures. Never use street vendors.

Banks in the region normally open Monday to Friday from 09h00 - 15h30. Saturday from 08h30 - 11h00. Closed Sundays and Public (Bank) Holidays.

# Taxes

There is a 15 % VAT (Value Added Tax) charged on most goods purchased in South Africa. VAT may be claimed back before your departure on goods purchased such as souvenirs, jewellery, clothing, electronic items, etc. No claims are possible for goods purchased in other southern African countries or for services rendered.

VAT claim applications are obtainable at the “VAT Claim Office” at all international airports, harbours, major border posts or at the various “VAT Claim Offices” in the cities of your departure. Enquire about where to find these offices at your accommodation establishment, local tourism information centre or your guide / tour manager.

VAT refunds less commission is paid out in the form of a temporary debit card at the tax office on the duty-free side of your departure point, if you produce and / or your claim complies with the following:

- If the total combined VAT paid on all items purchased, exceeds R250.00.
- Produce your travel ticket (air ticket, etc).
- Produce your passport.
- Supply VAT invoices for all goods purchased.
- Hand in your completed VAT claim application.
- You might be asked to produce the goods that you have purchased, such as expensive jewellery, etc. It is therefore best to get approval for your claim at the TAX / CUSTOMS office before you check in for your international departure flight, etc, as the actual payment is done at the tax office on the duty-free side.

One can withdraw or spend these funds after 90 days from departing South Africa.

# Travel Documents

One needs a valid passport before travelling to any southern African country. Your passport must have at least 2 x fully open blank pages and must be valid for at least 6 months.

No Visas are required for South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, eSwatini (Swaziland) or Lesotho when travelling from the US, Canada, European Union, Britain or Australia. You must obviously hold a passport for the respective countries.

Visas can be obtained at the point of entry to Zimbabwe and Zambia. Please note that those visiting these two countries must show their entrance visa, if obtained in advance or they can purchase either a single-entry visa (only visiting Zimbabwe or Zambia) or KAZA visa (visiting Zimbabwe / Zambia & Botswana, returning to Zimbabwe / Zambia for your departure). Safari4Africa will inform you of the cost involved if or when you book a package to travel to these destinations (not included in any of our packages). The current rate is US \$ 30,00 per single-entry visa or US \$ 50,00 per KAZA visa. Under the new regulations ONLY unsoiled US \$ are accepted as payment. Mastercard or Visa credit / debit cards may be accepted IF the payment system is online. This is Africa!

If possible, travel with certified photocopies of all your documents. Keep separate from originals and in a safe place.

Report a lost passport and / or visa as soon as possible to your country`s embassy or consulate and to the local police.

# Health

South Africa and surrounding countries are all relatively hygienic. Private medical assistance is of a very high standard if you have medical travel insurance or can afford to pay cash.

If you are on medication, make sure you carry enough medicine for the duration of your tour or safari and you carry with your prescription(s).

Wherever you travel, it is always handy to carry your own small medical kit that contains some basic items. Example: Headache tablets, anti-diarrhoea tablets, anti-nausea tablets, sun protection - min. SPF 50, plasters, antihistamines, insect bite cream, Insect repellent etc.

Consult your local doctor or clinic about the following vaccinations and/or illnesses:

- DTP - If you have not been vaccinated before, 1 injection every 15 years.
- Hepatitis A - One vaccination will give one year's protection. It is best to have 2 weeks before departure.
- Yellow Fever Card - It is compulsory to have a Yellow Fever vaccination, only if you wish to visit South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, eSwatini (Swaziland) or Lesotho and you come from any central or north African country.
- AIDS - Always be careful, mainly transmitted via unsafe sex or direct contact with blood from a HIV infected person. Avoid getting tattoo`s or body piercing done in southern African countries.
- Malaria - It is present during southern Africa's summers (October to April), in the areas in and around the Kruger National Park and the northern parts of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa, eSwatini (Swaziland), Victoria Falls and Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe, Victoria Falls and Kafue National Park in Zambia, Chobe National Park and the Okavango Delta in Botswana, as well as the northern region of Namibia. This is one of the reasons why most of our tours or safaris to these regions fall in the winter months. It is only the female Anopheles mosquito that carries the malaria parasite. She is active from dusk to dawn in the summer months. It would be advisable to take a course of anti-malaria tablets, please discuss this with your doctor. However, from experience we find that most visitors to southern Africa are over concerned about malaria, this should not be the case as millions of people live and work in malaria areas without taking anti-malaria medication and they never have problems, especially when following these basic precautions:
  - Use mosquito repellent (Bug spray, a cream or roll-on).
  - Ladies, when exposed at night, do not wear too much perfume.
  - When outside at night, cover those sensitive parts of your body or apply repellent. Example: To your ankles. You don't have to dress up like an Eskimo on a warm summer night.
  - Do not leave your room lights on at night, as this will attract insects unnecessarily.
  - If available and comfortable, keep your room AC or fan on at night.
  - Never leave your room doors or windows open, unless they have a gauze screen for protection (you never know what else could crawl in).
  - If necessary and therefore available, make use of the mosquito net in your room.
- Important, if you are not feeling well and you have similar symptoms to the flue such as a headache or fever, etc within 7 - 21 days of visiting a malaria area, then consult a doctor and mention to him / her that you have visited a malaria area.

## Languages

South Africa has 12 official languages; English and Afrikaans are the most common languages spoken. English is also commonly spoken throughout Southern Africa. Afrikaans will be understood by either the Dutch or Flemish speaking tourist.

## Local Time

GMT + 2 hours.

## Food & Water

A large variety of quality foods and fresh produce are available in stores throughout the region. Meals served in restaurants, bars and hotels are of excellent quality.

Avoid buying food on the streets. Only eat clean or properly prepared food. Tap water is clean, but it would be best to drink bottled water which is readily available.

All included meals as specified on each tour or safari itinerary are based on the hotel's or restaurant's buffet or set menus. In general, beverages are not included, unless specifically stated.

Dietary requests and preferences should be provided at the time of booking.

Although Safari4Africa cannot make any guarantees, every effort will be made to honour special dietary requests. We recommend that the tour member also makes their dietary requests known to their guide / tour manager at the start of each tour or safari, and on arrival at each hotel / restaurant.

## Accommodations

Do not leave luggage or handbags unattended at any accommodation establishment.

Store valuables in your room safe or the accommodation establishment's safety deposit box.

Keep your room locked at all times and if someone knocks, first check who it is before opening the door.

Do not leave your room keys lying around.

Hand your room keys in at the front desk / reception, whenever you leave the accommodation establishment.

## Minimum Age

The minimum age for a tour member on our Unforgettable African Safari escorted small group tour is 18 (eighteen) years old.

We recommend a minimum age of 12 (twelve) on any of our other private, personalised, or golf tours, as the minimum age for game drives in Kruger National Park and other game reserves that the tour member may visit is 12 (twelve) years old.

All children under 18 (eighteen) years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

Please take note that some countries in southern Africa have adopted practices to prevent international abductions of children. If a person under the age of 18 (eighteen) will be travelling with an adult other than his / her parents, or with only one parent, a notarized letter written by the parents, or non-travelling parent, granting authorisation to travel, including the dates of travel should be carried, as well as a certified copy of the child's unabridged birth certificate.

# Clothing

Spring, Summer and Autumn (September to May) - Generally the Southern African countries have great weather. Warm to very hot days and it can get cool at night, thus pack some warm clothes. Never forget your swimming costume.

Winter (June, July and August) - It can become cold during the day with very cold nights. Days can be pleasantly warm, thus also pack light clothes.

Always pack sunglasses, a pair of comfortable walking shoes and a hat.

Some establishments stipulate “smart casual” requiring jacket and tie or cocktail dresses for the evening.

On safari - neutral colours, such as browns, beiges and khakis are recommended.

- Western Cape Province (Cape Town) - Winter rainfall (June, July & August).
- Western Cape Province (Garden Route) - All year round rainfall.
- The rest of the region (southern Africa) - Summer rainfall (October to April).

Most accommodation establishments provide laundry services. Complimentary daily laundry service is provided at safari camps which are only accessible by small charter planes. This service is made available because checked luggage on all chartered flights is limited to a soft bag with a maximum weight of 15 kg (33 lbs).

Safari4Africa small group touring vehicles allow for one piece of luggage, plus a carry-on and handbag per person. This is similar to the luggage limitations on a general economy class international flight, which is one checked bag with a maximum weight of 23 kg (50 lbs), plus a carry-on bag and small handbag per person. This excludes golf tours, as we make provision for an extra golf bag per golfer.

Please also take note that most local airlines only allow 20 kg (44 lbs) for one checked bag, plus a carry-on bag and small handbag per person.

# Voltage

Electricity supply is 220 volts.

Round, two point and three point plugs are used. It is advisable to purchase a multi-plug at one of the shops at the airport on your arrival, as the so-called international plugs purchased overseas are NOT compatible to our very unusual three point sockets.

# Photographic & Other Equipment

A digital camera with plenty of memory is ideal. The modern cell / mobile phones have great cameras, but a zoom lens would still be best for wildlife photography. A camera UV / skylight filter is advisable for photography enthusiasts.

The disposable batteries required to power most photographic equipment are readily available. However, it would be better and easier if you brought with a sufficient supply.

Binoculars will improve your game viewing considerably.

A small torch (flashlight) is recommended, especially to find your way around some of the camps at night.

## Shopping

Shops normally open all week from 08h30 - 18h00. In the bigger centres the opening hours are most likely to be longer.

## On the street

Keep mobile phones and wallets tucked away and avoid ostentatious display of expensive jewellery, cameras and other valuables.

Avoid counting money in the open.

Stick to well-lit and busy streets, especially at night.

Do not leave purses or bags on chairs, under tables, on the back of chairs or on restroom hooks unattended.

Never leave your luggage / baggage unattended.

## Itinerary & Sightseeing

When on tour and especially on safari in Africa always be prepared to depart early, as some days require an early morning starting time for sightseeing purposes in order to complete the touring during daylight hours or to avoid afternoon heat in tropical and desert climates.

Always check the opening and closing times for monuments and places of interest that you wish to visit and bear in mind that they may be closed on religious holidays and national celebrations.

## On the beach / At swimming pools

Never leave your possessions unattended.

Although topless bathing is becoming more acceptable, most South Africans and southern Africans are generally very conservative people, so nude or topless bathing outside such demarcated bathing areas is usually found to be offensive.

## National Parks & Reserves

Please familiarise yourself with the visitors "Rules and Regulations", they are displayed at the entrance gates and on pamphlets that are issued on your arrival. This is for your own safety and the safety of the wildlife.

## Communication

All accommodation establishments have telephones that clients can use.

It would be advisable to apply for international roaming with your service provider before departure, as this region has excellent cell / mobile phone coverage.

Wi-Fi is readily available at most lodges, hotels and restaurants in Southern Africa.

## Useful Phone Numbers

- National Tourism Information and Safety Line: +27 (0) 860 868 747
- Emergency Number from a mobile phone: 112
- Police Emergency Number: 10111
- Ambulance / Fire: 10177