

South Africa: Cape and Garden Route

Trip style: Walking with sightseeing

Destination: 📍 South Africa

Trip code: SAF13-WHW10

Grades: 1, 2

Carbon Footprint: 🌳 3616kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Our holidays to South Africa are packed with unforgettable highlights. Not only will you encounter wildlife's majestic Big 5 on thrilling game drives, but you'll also discover the Rainbow Nation's incredible biodiversity with a fynbos bush walk and a visit to the Featherbed Nature Reserve. And the adventure doesn't end there. Gaze down at Cape Town from atop the iconic Table Mountain, admire over 7,000 plant species at Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, and visit Robben Island – Nelson Mandela's prison for 18 years. Top it all by meeting the famous penguin colony at Boulders Beach and savouring top-notch wines and food at the country's finest wine estates.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Visiting Robben Island where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned
- Seeking out the Big Five at Gondwana Game Reserve
- Riding the Table Mountain Aerial Cableway
- Exploring Tsitsikamma National Park
- Sampling delicious South African food and wine
- Spotting adorable African penguins at Boulders Beach

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Local Tour Manager who leads walks and sightseeing
- 13 nights' touring accommodation across South Africa
- 13 breakfasts, 12 lunches & 13 dinners
- Wine tasting and Big 5 safari drives
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- All transport to and from walks
- Return flights from London Heathrow including baggage and transfers

TRIP SUITABILITY

This tour is graded level 2 which is leisurely and it is a walking with sightseeing tour. There is walking on most days though they are not long walks. We will be walking through villages and grass lands with uneven surfaces, and we also go on a cliff walk which is a boardwalk with some stairs. The tour is designed to suit all fitness levels; however, good mobility is essential.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Depart UK

Our with-flight guests depart the UK, flying into Cape Town.

Day 2: Arrival into Cape Town

Upon arrival at Cape Town International Airport, you'll be met by your Tour Manager and transferred to our waterfront hotel for a three-night stay. Later, there'll be a guided orientation walk-about on the V&A Waterfront. We will enjoy a welcome dinner with views over the ocean and the iconic Table Mountain.

Day 3: Robben Island & Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens

Distance: 2 miles (3km) Today we'll uncover the history of Cape Town with a journey to Robben Island, a poignant reminder of South Africa's past. A 40-minute ferry ride from the V & A waterfront takes us to the island where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for 18 years. Now a UNESCO Heritage Site the entire island functions as a museum. Tours are often led by ex-Political prisoners which provides a unique and personal perspective. You will tour the infamous prison and see Mandela's cell. There are other historic sites to visit and the natural beauty of the island with its inhabitants of penguins, seals, and sea birds. After lunch, we'll explore Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens at the foot of Table Mountain. It was established in 1913 and displays South Africa's unique flora. It features themed areas, vast forests and fynbos, a mix of fine-leaved shrubs, heaths (Ericas), proteas, bulbs, reeds, and other unique plants. There is also a tree canopy walk. The day concludes with a 14-dish tasting menu at Gold African Restaurant complete with live entertainment that celebrates local culture.

Day 4: Cape Town Highlights

Distance: 2 miles (3km) This morning we'll ascend to the summit of Table Mountain by aerial cable car. The modern cars have rotating floors, ensuring all passengers get unobstructed, panoramic views during the ascent and descent during the 5 minute ride. You will have stunning views of Cape Town, the Atlantic Ocean, Table Bay, and the Twelve Apostles range. At the top, you can choose from several short walking routes around this area of incredible natural beauty. In the afternoon, there'll be a guided walking tour of Cape Town, exploring its vibrant streets and iconic landmarks which reveal the colonial and apartheid history. We will visit Bo-Kaap a historic neighbourhood famous for brightly coloured houses and its rich Cape Malay culture. This culture is born from enslaved and political exiles from Southeast Asia. After a day of exploring, we'll dine in style amidst the coastal beauty of Camps Bay Beach, with an optional stroll along the Sea Point Promenade lined with swaying palm trees.

Day 5: Cape Peninsula Adventure

Embark on a full-day exploration of the Cape Peninsula including the Good Hope Nature Reserve and Boulders Beach. Along the way, we may spot Cape Mountain Zebra, Bontebok, Eland, Baboons, Ostriches, and other bird species. Traversing picturesque winding coastal roads, we head to Boulders Beach home to a colony of the endangered African Penguin. This colony began with the release of only two breeding pairs in a successful conservation project. Today there are an estimated 2,000 – 3,000 birds. They are viewed in their natural habitat from wooden walkways, which is the only place of the world where you can get close to a land-based colony of

these birds. Returning to the V & A Waterfront we will enjoy dinner and sharing the highlights of the day.

Day 6: Transfer to Wellington

We bid farewell to Cape Town as we head inland to Wellington, a picturesque town nestled at the foot of the Groenberg Mountains, important in the wine growing industry. En route, we'll stop at renowned wine estates in Stellenbosch and Franschhoek to enjoy tasting experiences and town walks. Stellenbosch is South Africa's second oldest town with beautiful Cape Dutch buildings and oak-lined street. Franschhoek has French Huguenot roots and is known as the gourmet centre. Both towns' vineyards produce a wide range of South African wines including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz, and the unique Pinotage, alongside whites such as Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, and Sauvignon Blanc. Franschhoek is also known for its sparkling wines. For the next two nights here we will be staying on a wine estate.

Day 7: Wellington Wine Walk

Distance: 3 miles (5km) A full-day wine walk in Wellington offers stunning mountain scenery, miles of vineyards, fynbos, fruit orchards, and olive groves. Today offers easy walking on diverse terrain, moving from valleys through vineyards and into the surrounding foothills where landscapes include pine forest and fynbos-covered slopes. There'll also be an opportunity to sample local olives and Buchu tea, a group of aromatic shrubs unique to the Southwestern Cape. Afterwards, we'll return to our beautiful wine estate accommodation.

Day 8: Route 62 Exploration

Today we travel along the scenic Route 62 to Oudtshoorn. Experience fertile valleys nourished by the Breede River and the towering peaks of the Swartberg mountains. Our first stop is the town of Robertson with its many Victorian buildings, jacaranda-lined streets, and beautiful gardens. We will take a rest stop at Affie Plaas Farm Stall where you can explore the local produce and grab a tea or coffee and one of their delicious pastries. The landscape transforms to become drier and more arid as we head towards Barrydale. We will stop for lunch at one of the town's popular farm shop cafes, followed by free time to explore its charming quirky shops and art galleries. Continuing on Route 62, we drive through classic Klein Karoo vegetation and dramatic red-hued mountain passes, on our way to Calitzdorp, the Port Wine capital of South Africa. With a hot, dry climate similar to Portugal's Douro Valley, wine estates here produce exceptional fortified wines using traditional Portuguese grape varieties. We will visit one of the estates where you can sample rich, complex ports with notes of nuts, caramel, and spice. The last leg of our journey takes us to Oudtshoorn, famous as the home of ostrich farming. On arrival we will check into the hotel and stretch our legs with a walk around the town.

Day 9: Oudtshoorn Adventures, on to Plettenberg Bay

Our day begins with a fascinating exploration of the intricate formations of the Cango Caves. This system of caves is estimated to be around 20 million years old and one of the oldest accessible networks of caves in the world. We'll also tour Cango Ostrich Farm where expert guides will teach us about these unique birds with an opportunity to feed and pet them. Back on the road again, we'll take a short rest stop in the town of Wilderness before arriving in Plettenberg Bay. After checking into our hotel, we'll enjoy a late afternoon beach walk accompanied by the soothing sounds of the ocean and a South African sunset.

Day 10: Robberg Nature Reserve & Tsitskamma Storm River Mouth

Distance: 2 miles (3km) Driving south, we enter the breathtaking landscapes of Robberg Nature Reserve. A dramatic peninsular jutting out into the Indian ocean it offers great walks and the chance to spot marine life including seals, and with luck, the rare blue duiker, the smallest antelope in the Western Cape. Our adventure continues to the Tsitsikamma Storm River Mouth section of the Garden Route National Park. This is a protected area with stunning coastline where the Storms River meets the Indian Ocean. A must-do is a walk over the river suspension bridge for the outstanding views. We'll return to Plettenberg for a relaxing evening.

Day 11: Knysna Adventure & Gondwana Game Reserve

Today we'll discover the ecological wonders of Knysna with a thrilling Featherbed Eco Experience, exploring pristine natural landscapes and coastal habitats by ferry, 4 x4 and walking with a nature guide. Afterward, we head to Gondwana Private Game Reserve for an exhilarating afternoon game drive and hopefully spot one or more of Africa's Big 5 - lion, leopard, rhino, elephant, and buffalo in a stunning landscape of rolling hills. For over 20 years the reserve has been about safeguarding, rewilding, and restoring habitats in three biodiversity hot spots. We spend the evening in the malaria-free reserve which actively contributes to the restoration and conservation projects.

Day 12: Morning & Afternoon Game drives in Gondwana

Enjoy two game drives at the best times of the day after breakfast and after lunch. The park safari drivers use radio communication to share wildlife sightings with each other ensuring that guests can locate key animals like lions and rhinos. We will also walk some of the Fynbos trail which reveals the incredibly diverse Cape Floral Kingdom. This is characterised by evergreen, fine-leaved shrubs, Proteas, Ericas, reed and bulbs.

Day 13: Morning game drive, on to Hermanus

Distance: 3 miles (5km) We'll begin the day with another thrilling game drive, capturing the magic of the African bush as the sun rises over the savannah. Later, journey to Hermanus, renowned for its stunning coastal scenery and seasonal whale-watching opportunities. Along the way we will have a rest stop at the small town Albertinia, famous for its numerous Aloe plantations. We stop at the factory shop where there are amenities like a café, and you may be interested in checking out the vast range of aloe-based health, wellness and skincare products. You can also see various aloe species and learn about aloe tapping. We travel on to our lunch stop at Swellendam, an historic town nestled at the foot of the Langeberg Mountains and known for its charming Cape Dutch architecture. It has a rich history being the third oldest town in South Africa. (founded 1743) On arrival in Hermanus we'll embark on a scenic cliff path walk along a rugged coastline that offers some of the best land-based whale watching opportunities in the world. Hermanus is famous for seasonal Southern Right and Humpback whales (June-Dec) and the Bryde's Whale a species you can see all year round.

Day 14: Hermanus Exploration

Distance: 4 miles (6km) Today we take a short drive to the natural beauty that is Fernkloof Nature Reserve, located in the mountains above Plettenberg. We will embark on invigorating walks amidst fynbos-covered slopes home to over 100 recorded bird species including the Orange-breasted Sunbird, Cape Sugarbird, Cape Rockjumper, Victorin's Warbler, and Cape Siskin, plus raptors like the Jackal Buzzard and Verreaux's Eagle, alongside

forest birds such as Rameron Pigeons and Flycatchers. The reserve also provides stunning views of the Indian Ocean. Our next stop is Pearly Beach a tranquil coastal town with pristine white beaches, rocky outcrops, clear waters, and rolling fynbos dunes. Taking a leisurely stroll along the beach, exploring rock pools, taking a dip, or just sitting and looking out to sea, provides a relaxing end to our day. Return to Hermanus and in the evening we will have our farewell dinner and talk over the highlights of our tour.

Day 15: Departure Day

Bid farewell to the beauty of the Western Cape as with-flight guests transfer to Cape Town International Airport for your overnight flight back to the UK.

Day 16: Arrival into the UK

Arrive back in the UK

Commodore Hotel, Cape Town

Located on the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, The Commodore Hotel offers a stylish and elegant setting with sweeping views of Table Mountain, Cape Town Harbour, and Robben Island. Modern rooms are decorated with a nautical theme and come with free Wi-Fi, TV, plus tea and coffee making facilities. The hotel also has a relaxing restaurant and bar area, as well as a swimming pool and spa.

Val Du Charonn, Wellington

The award-winning Val du Charron Wine and Leisure Estate boasts unrivalled mountain views and a rich winemaking history dating back to 1699. Its wines are enjoyed worldwide but you can savour them from the comfort of your own stylish en-suite room complete with a balcony overlooking the vineyards. When it comes to dining, the Val du Charron boasts two excellent restaurants where you can enjoy South African specialities paired with a glass or two of the estate's top-tier wines.

De Opstal Country Lodge, Oudtshoorn

Nestled in a charming valley surrounded by indigenous flora, De Opstal is a beautifully restored farmhouse that blends rustic charm with modern comforts. The historic farm buildings, including the original homestead, stables and milking parlor, have been tastefully converted into cozy en-suite guest rooms while retaining their authentic character and vintage details.

Bayview Hotel, Plettenberg Bay

With an enviable location on Plettenberg Bay, the Bayview Hotel offers stunning views of Keurbooms River, Lookout Beach, and the Tsitsikamma mountains. Comfortable rooms come with all mod cons, perfect for relaxing after a day of exploring the beautiful Garden Route. In the hotel's buffet restaurant, you can expect hearty country-style cooking using the very best local produce.

Kwena Lodge & Villas, Gondwana Game Reserve

With décor and design inspired by the ancient nomadic San people, Kwena Lodge combines cultural experience with the comfort of a luxury stay. Dine indoors under thatched rooftops or al fresco on the striking deck overlooking waterholes teeming with wildlife. Unwind in style with amenities like the infinity pool surrounded by private loungers, a poolside bar with cozy seating areas, and a secluded tented bush spa offering luxurious treatments in two tranquil rooms.

Windsor Hotel, Hermanus

Perched on the shores of Walker Bay, the independently owned Windsor Hotel offers an unbeatable vantage point for a front-row seat to one of the world's most spectacular wildlife shows. The hotel sits in a prime position in the seaside village of Hermanus, an acclaimed whale watching spot. All rooms feature en-suite bathrooms, with ground floor options opening onto private patios - perfect for admiring the incredible marine life displays just steps away.

Safety information - SHARED WITH ALL WW

Please inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders must consider both group and individual safety at all times. Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you: Please listen to any safety instructions and other directions from the leader. Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor. Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you. Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any medication including aspirin, paracetamol, antihistamines and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit (see Suggested Kit List). In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services.. Please then call our emergency number (sent in your final dispatch) and let us know there is a problem.

Dietary requirements - SHARED WITH ALL WW

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs. If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

Vaccinations & health information for South Africa

This information is subject to change. In all cases, we highly recommend you consult your GP both for up to date details and for more information on what is appropriate to your situation. As a rule, travellers should be up to date with their routine vaccinations and boosters as recommended in the UK - including, for example, the MMR and diphtheria, tetanus, polio vaccines. It is recommended for most travellers to have: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis A. Some travellers may require: Typhoid, Rabies, Hepatitis B.

Passport & Visa information for South Africa

Passports Technically, your passport should be valid for at least 30 days beyond your intended date of exit from South Africa, in line with South African immigration regulations. However, some immigration officials still request that a passport should have at least 6 months validity on the date of entry to South Africa. To avoid problems at the airport on arrival, you're advised to ensure your passport meets this requirement. Your passport should have at least 2 blank pages if you require a visa to enter the country. If you do not need a visa, one blank page will be sufficient.

Visas Visas are not required for UK, Australian, Canadian and USA passport holders. Other countries should consult the embassy for advice.

Packing list - South Africa

South Africa in Cape Town and the garden route has a Mediterranean climate with warm summers and relative mild winters, but the area is known for unpredictable rain and chilly evenings so packing layers is the best way to go. Being prepared for sun, wind and rain are key. Essentials Walking shoes with good ankle support and grip (heavy boots are not required) Waterproof jacket or poncho Clothing that can be easily layered Insulated jacket/top for chilly nights Walking clothing Walking socks (plus spares) Sunhat Gloves/mitts and warm hat for outside in the evenings Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity) Headtorch or hand torch High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30) Sunglasses Rucksack (15-30 litres) Mobile phone Insect repellent Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.) Passport Visa (if applicable) Copy of your travel insurance policy Recommended Collapsible walking poles if you prefer to use them Swimwear and travel towel Optional extras Small mat to sit on during rest stops or picnics while walking
