ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Kruger, eSwatini & Lesotho

COUNTRY(IES)	South Africa
TOUR TYPE	Small Group
TRANSPORT	Quantum Style Minibus & 4x4 game drives
GROUP SIZE	Min: 4 | Max: 12
DURATION	14 days
STARTS	Johannesburg, South Africa
ENDS	Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), South Africa
MEALS	Breakfasts - 13, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 11

TOUR ROUTE MAP **14 Days**



ROUTE: **Johannesburg** (Start) → **Kruger National Park** → **Mpumalanga** → **Kruger National Park** → **Eswatini** → **Umkhanyakude District Municipality** → **Saint Lucia** → **Maloti Drakensberg Park** → **Drakensberg** → **Malealea** → **Robert Sobukwe** → **Gqeberha** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Kruger National Park 4x4 game drive, Panorama Route - Bourke's Luck Potholes, Blyde River Canyon, God's Window, Game Drive in Kruger National Park, Game Drives (optional), Mountain Biking (optional), Hiking (optional), Game Drive in Hluhluwe-Imfolozi National Park, St. Lucia Boat Cruise, Visit to the Mandela Capture Site, visit Howick Falls, Hike with your guide in Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg Park, Waterfall & Bushman Paintings activity with your guide, Valley of Desolation sunrise tour, afternoon game drive in Addo National Park

Itinerary

DAY 1 Depart Johannesburg and head to Kruger National Park

Travel by road from Johannesburg to Greater Kruger and experience the steady change from metropolitan Gauteng to the lower, warmer landscapes of the northeast. Urban development becomes less dense as farmland and bushveld begin to dominate the scenery. The day is primarily devoted to transport, positioning you close to the wildlife reserves and nature experiences that form the focus of the following stages.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Johannesburg to Greater Kruger Park**
  Depart Johannesburg and travel east through Mpumalanga toward the Greater Kruger region. Pass coalfields, rural towns, and scenic bushveld landscapes. Arrive near Kruger National Park ahead of tomorrow's wildlife activities.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Nkambeni Reserve	Dinner	Extra day in Johannesburg - pre-tour, Arrival airport transfer in Johannesburg (free shuttle)

DAY 2 Exploring Kruger National Park on a 4x4 game drive

Head into Kruger National Park for two complete days of safari exploration across a wide range of habitats. Spending longer in the reserve allows different areas to be visited and provides opportunities to observe how wildlife activity changes with weather, light and time of day. Elephants, predators, grazing animals and birds may all be encountered, but specific sightings remain dependent on natural conditions throughout both days.

ACTIVITIES

- **Full Day Game Drive in Kruger National Park**
  Spend a full day on safari in Kruger National Park in an open 4x4 vehicle. Explore different habitats while searching for the Big Five and many other mammals, birds and reptiles.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Nkambeni Reserve	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 3 Travel along the Panorama Route

Travel along the Panorama Route and focus on its principal scenic landmarks, including Bourke’s Luck Potholes, Blyde River Canyon and God’s Window. The day is centred on geological formations and elevated viewpoints rather than wildlife viewing, with repeated visits allowing different perspectives as conditions change. The escarpment’s dramatic scale provides a clear contrast with the warmer, lower landscapes nearby.

ACTIVITIES

- **Travel along the Panorama Route**
  Explore the scenic Panorama Route along the dramatic escarpment. Visit key viewpoints including Bourke's Luck Potholes, the Three Rondavels, and God's Window. Enjoy sweeping landscapes and remarkable geological formations.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Nkambeni Reserve	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 4 Head to eSwatini (formerly Swaziland)

Travel from the Greater Kruger area towards the Eswatini border and leave South Africa’s lowveld behind. Open savannah and bush gradually give way to more cultivated and undulating terrain as you approach the frontier. The day is centred on transport rather than organised activities, providing a direct connection between the safari region and the next country on the wider southern African journey.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Greater Kruger Park to Eswatini**
  Travel south through Kruger National Park before exiting toward the Eswatini border. The route winds through lush forests and rolling mountains. Arrive in the scenic Ezulwini Valley near the capital.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary or Hlane Royal National Park	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 5 A day to explore the Kingdom of eSwatini

Enjoy a completely free day in Eswatini and choose how you would like to spend your time. With no organised sightseeing planned, you can relax, explore nearby areas independently or simply enjoy the highland scenery and quieter pace of the country. The open schedule provides a useful break between overland travel days and allows you to make your own plans without a fixed programme.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Eswatini**
  Spend the day exploring Eswatini at your own pace. Optional activities include game drives, hiking, and cultural encounters. Enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of the Ezulwini Valley.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 6 Spend the night in the heart of Zululand St Lucia

Drive from Eswatini to St Lucia and cross the international border back into South Africa during the journey. The landscape becomes progressively lower and warmer as you leave the uplands and move towards the eastern coastal belt. The transfer is primarily practical, providing a direct connection to St Lucia without scheduled activities before arrival.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Eswatini to St Lucia**
  Re-enter South Africa and travel through historic Zululand toward the coast. Pass rural villages and diverse landscapes along the way. Arrive in the coastal town of St Lucia for your next experience.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Forest Lodge	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 7 Hluhluwe – Umfolozi Game Reserve and iSimangaliso Wetland Park

Spend part of the day on safari in Hluhluwe–Imfolozi before travelling to St Lucia for an estuary cruise. The game reserve provides opportunities to observe a broad range of animals in natural habitats, while the boat trip offers a different perspective from the water. Wildlife encounters remain dependent on conditions, but both areas are important conservation environments within KwaZulu-Natal and support exceptional biodiversity.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Hluhluwe in Imfolozi Game Reserve**
  Explore one of Africa's most important rhino conservation parks. Search for Big-5 wildlife while learning about the region's ecology. The reserve offers excellent chances for close-range sightings.
- **Boat Cruise on St Lucia Estuary**
  Enjoy a relaxing cruise along the St Lucia estuary. Look for hippos, crocodiles and abundant birdlife in this protected wetland system.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Forest Lodge	Breakfast

DAY 8 Kwa Zulu Natal Coast - Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park

Travel from St Lucia towards the Drakensberg and experience a substantial geographical change from coastal lowlands to South Africa’s mountain interior. As the drive progresses, flatter subtropical scenery is replaced by upland terrain and increasingly prominent peaks. The day is centred on transport, positioning you in the highlands for the walking and nature experiences that follow.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from St Lucia to Drakensberg**
  Travel through KwaZulu-Natal toward the dramatic Ukhahlamba Drakensberg mountains. Along the way, stop to view Howick Falls and the historic Mandela Capture Site. The journey ends at the foothills of this UNESCO-listed range.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Monks Cowl	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 9 UKhahlamba Drakensberg Park

Spend the day hiking within uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park and experience rugged peaks, basalt cliffs and broad mountain valleys in one of South Africa’s most dramatic highland regions. The walk reveals changing terrain, varied plant life and far-reaching views shaped by natural erosion. The high-altitude setting and open landscapes create an active day focused entirely on the park’s natural environment and mountain scenery.

ACTIVITIES

- **Hike the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park**
  Spend the day hiking among towering cliffs and sweeping valleys. Trails vary in difficulty, allowing everyone to enjoy the mountain scenery at their own pace. The area is known for its dramatic basalt formations and open vistas.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Monks Cowl	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 10 Head to the 'Kingdom in the Sky' - Lesotho

Drive from the Drakensberg into the Lesotho Highlands and experience the steady increase in elevation along the way. Rugged cliffs and rolling foothills gradually give way to wide mountain plateaus and sparsely populated upland scenery. The transfer provides a direct connection into Lesotho and introduces the country through its defining high-altitude landscapes before the next planned activities begin.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Drakensberg to Lesotho Highlands**
  Travel through Golden Gate National Park before crossing into Lesotho. The route climbs into the highlands, offering sweeping mountain vistas. Continue past Maseru toward remote high-altitude villages.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Malealea Lodge	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 11 Lesotho

Spend the day hiking in the Lesotho Highlands and explore a distinctive upland environment of plateaus, ridges and rural settlements. Walking allows a closer appreciation of the scale and character of the landscape than overland travel alone. The activity remains focused on the mountain surroundings and local setting, providing an active day in one of southern Africa’s most elevated regions.

ACTIVITIES

- **Hike the Lesotho Highlands**
  Explore the rugged mountain terrain on a guided hike. The trail reveals dramatic cliffs, deep valleys, and rural Basotho settlements. Experience the crisp highland air and traditional way of life.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Malealea Lodge	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 12 To South Africa - Graaff Reinet

Travel from the Lesotho Highlands to Graaff-Reinet and experience a substantial change in elevation and landscape. Mountain valleys and upland plateaus are replaced by the wide, drier country of the Karoo as you continue into South Africa’s Eastern Cape. No formal sightseeing is included during the transfer, allowing the scenery and gradual geographical change to provide the main interest.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Lesotho Highlands to Graaff-Reinet**
  Descend from Lesotho's mountains into the wide plains of the Great Karoo. The journey crosses remote farmland and the Orange River. Arrive in the historic town of Graaff-Reinet, known for its Cape Dutch heritage.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Profcon Resort	Breakfast,Dinner

DAY 13 Gqeberha / Great Addo Area

Begin at the Valley of Desolation and experience the dramatic rock formations and open Karoo landscapes before driving onwards to Addo. Once at the national park, head into the reserve for wildlife viewing across thicket, plains and other habitats. Elephants are strongly associated with Addo, but no particular animal encounter can be guaranteed. The day combines a major geological landmark with safari exploration in the Eastern Cape.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Valley of Desolation**
  Visit the Valley of Desolation for sweeping views over the Karoo plains. Sheer cliffs and volcanic rock formations create one of South Africa's most dramatic landscapes. Enjoy the early-morning light across the valley.
- **Drive from Graaff-Reinet to Addo**
  Travel from the Karoo to the coastal plains of the Eastern Cape. The route passes open farmlands and rugged hills before descending toward Addo. Prepare for an afternoon wildlife experience.
- **Explore Addo Elephant National Park**
  Enjoy a wildlife safari through Addo Elephant National Park, home to over 600 elephants and diverse species including buffalo, lion and various antelope. Experience one of South Africa's most important conservation

reserves.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Garden Court Kings Beach Hotel	Breakfast

DAY 14

Tour ends in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth)

Spend the day at leisure in Gqeberha, with no included sightseeing or transfers to follow. The free time can be used for rest, independent exploration or time beside the coast according to your interests. Beaches, promenades and city neighbourhoods provide several possibilities, but the schedule remains deliberately open so that you can enjoy a quieter pause within the wider South African journey.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in Gqeberha**
  Enjoy free time in Gqeberha at the end of your tour. Relax, explore the beachfront, or prepare for onward travel. Additional nights and airport transfers can be arranged.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
N/A	Breakfast	Extra day in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) - post-tour, Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) Transfer

INCLUDED

- 13 nights accommodation camping or lodges/hotels & camps
- All transport using a 12 seater quamtum style vehicle
- A range of inclusions as outlined in the itinerary
- Qualified crew
- National Park entrance fees
- Local guides for sightseeing tours and activities as per the itinerary
- Meals as outlined in the itinerary

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees if required
- Optional activities (see itinerary)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for guides and drivers
- Entrance fees and activities not mentioned in itinerary
- Any other items not mentioned above

Tour Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements , full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Extra day in Johannesburg - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Airport transfers are not included, but are available as an additional option. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Airport transfers are not included, but are available as an additional option. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) Transfer

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an airport transfer in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth) to your Overland tour with us.

Note: We subcontract our airport transfers, so your transfer representative will not have any information about your tour with us, or be able to assist you beyond the transfer itself.

Options available while on tour (SAOVBF)

Min numbers: 1

These options are availabile while you are on the tour from local activity providers who your booking will be with. Prices are given as a guide and are subject to change.

South Africa

- **Addo National Park**
  - Sunset or Evening Game Drive (excl Conservation fees) | R530 to R630
- **Greater Kruger**
  - Morning Bush Walk (incl Conservation fees) | R1050 to R1150
  - Evening Game Drive (incl Conservation fees) | R980 to R1080

Lesotho

- **Malealea**
  - Pony Trekking excursion (Waterfall Trek or Bushman Painting) (min 2 pax) | R350 to R580

Important Notes

1 Accommodation

We use good quality hotels, lodges and camps rated at the local 2 to 4-star level, with the majority of rooms en-suite. In some places more basic properties with separate bathrooms, or permanent safari tents may be used. We aim always to use accommodation that is in keeping with the local area so there is a good variety. Local star ratings may vary slightly from international standards. Accommodation is based on twin or double rooms, chalets, bungalows or safari tents. All couples will be given a private double room. Friends booking together will also share a room.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

Note - Accommodation providers are subject to change without notice. The properties listed are our preferred options, but sometimes due to availability or other issues with the property, we may substitute another property of similar standards.

2 Transport

Our 12-seater Quantum vehicle has been specifically chosen and designed with your comfort and optimal viewing pleasure in mind, making it the ideal choice for small group safaris. Capable of accommodating up to 12 clients, it ensures a more intimate and personal travel experience.

Step inside and you'll find spacious individual seating, providing ample room to relax during your journey. We understand the importance of a comfortable environment, which is why the vehicle is equipped with climate control air-conditioning, maintaining a pleasant temperature regardless of the outside conditions.

Crucially, the Quantum features large windows throughout, offering truly unobstructed views of Africa's breathtaking landscapes and the incredible wildlife you'll encounter. Whether you're scanning the horizon for distant herds or observing an elephant just metres away, these expansive windows ensure you won't miss a moment of the action. It's the perfect blend of comfort and functionality for an unforgettable African adventure.

3 Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. As one of our Southern Africa small group tours, this tour is limited to a maximum of 12 passengers.

4 Local Options

On all our Overland tours we strive to strike a balance between including plenty of meals, tours and activities and being accessible and affordable.

The main tour price covers all your accommodation, transport, meals and a range of tours and activities.

In addition, there are further **Locally Available Options** on this tour. These have been chosen to give you more of a taste of what is available in the region and sometimes to offer an adrenaline rush during a relatively sedate tour. All these local options are offered and operated by professional local activity providers and Encounters Travel is not responsible for your booking or time while taking any of these options. Prices for these options may be given on our website, but please bear in mind that are given as a guide only and may very seasonally and can change from time to time. Availability is subject to seasonal daylight hours and our time-keeping that day.

Please check the Options section for more information and prices.

5 Destination Guides

Kwa Madwala Reserve

Kwa Madwala, meaning ‘place of rock’, is an independent wildlife conservancy covering 4,000 hectares of the Lowveld just south of the mighty Kruger National Park. It is relatively new, started 10 years ago, and has a well-managed eco-system supporting lion, elephant, rhino, leopard and a wide variety of other general game as well as a diverse birdlife. The focus is not only on the big game here, but also the small and the rare. Due to the small size of the reserve, guests can expect to get close to most species on a game drive. Kwa Madwala has also initiated a Leopard Conservation Project to provide a safe haven for leopards in the area, and to gradually increase their numbers.

Kruger National Park

Established in 1898 to protect the wildlife of the South African Lowveld, this national park of nearly 2 million hectares is unrivalled in the diversity of its wildlife and a world leader in advanced environmental management techniques and policies. Approximately 145 mammal species including the ‘Big Five’, a list of over 500 bird species, some of which are not to be found elsewhere in South Africa, and 336 tree species occur in the park.
When the first tourist cars visited the park in 1927, they made their own camps in thorn-bush enclosures and had to carry weapons to protect themselves from predators. During the Second World War the park was closed to the public, and reopened in 1946 under new management. Today it is one of the most famous safari destinations in the world with all the facilities that one would expect from a world class holiday destination, but it has retained the untamed, unspoilt environment where you can experience Africa just as you imagined it.

Panorama Route

The Panorama route in Mpumalanga follows the edge of Blyde River Canyon, and includes some breathtaking views of the Three Rondavels, Bourke's Luck Potholes and the Pinnacle. Blyde River Canyon is the third largest canyon in the world, and got its name in 1840 ('blyde' meaning 'joyful') from the Voortrekkers who passed through on their way to Lorenzo Marques (now Mozambique).

It is one of the most spectacular canyons in Africa and its cliffs rise between 600 m-800 m from the riverbed.

Possibly the best view in the whole of the Blyde River Canyon is of the "Three Rondavels - three huge rock spirals rising out of the far wall of the canyon. Their tops appear to have a hut-like rounded roof. They are named after the Swazi Chief Maripi's wives - from the lowest to the highest, they are Magabolle, Mogoladikwe and Maserote.

Where the Blyde River and the Treur River meet, water erosion has formed one of the most remarkable geological phenomena in the country, known as 'Bourke's Luck Potholes'. Over thousands of years, surreal cylindrical rock sculptures created by whirling water have formed a series of dark pools which contrast artfully with the streaked white and yellow lichen covered rocks.

Following the road and the Treur River south, there are further viewpoints; Wonder View, God's Window and the Pinnacle.

Johannesburg

Johannesburg is the largest and most populated city in South Africa, and the second largest city in Africa, after Cairo. Gold was discovered in the mineral rich Witwatersrand in 1886 by an Australian prospector, George Harrison. This discovery started a major gold rush as fortune hunters came to the area from all over the world. A huge labour force of contract workers sprang up to work in the mines and within three years Johannesburg became the largest settlement in South Africa.

It is now the economic and financial core of the country, and although mining is no longer practiced within the city bounds, the headquarters of most of the mining companies can be found here.

Johannesburg is also known as the world's largest human-made forest, with over 10 million trees planted throughout the city.

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6 Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please contact us if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

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7 Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000

partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see our website or booking conditions for more information.

8 Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.
The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

9 Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and

information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

https://x.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

10 Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? World Nomads Travel Insurance offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.

11 Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current official government travel advice for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's 'Travel Aware' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.

travel aware
gov.uk/travelaware

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12 Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can’t fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon’s efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.

- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

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13 Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please contact us.

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14 Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

South Africa: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Namibia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Botswana: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted or travelled through an infected area.

Zimbabwe: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Zambia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Malawi: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Tanzania: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Kenya: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Uganda: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Sudan: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area. A certificate may also be required for those departing Sudan.

Morocco: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

Tunisia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

Malaria: Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

Yellow Fever: This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vacinnation is often required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this US CDC information about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate organised in advance and with you and to hand during the trip.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.
If you are travelling on an Overland tour or your trip includes wildlife safaris then please bear in mind that you may be travelling on bumpy roads and/or rough ground for several hours at a time. This can be very uncomfortable or painful if you have a bad back, and make such conditions worse. Please contact us if you have any concerns.

Health Declaration: As many of our Africa tours travel through very remote regions, where medical facilities are limited, we are asking all of our travellers 65 years and over who are joining one of our Africa Overland Adventures to complete the attached medical questionnaire. The information provided to Encounters Travel and our local operational partners will be held to the strictest confidence and will be used only to the extent to provide necessary emergency medical care and/or evaluate physical health and fitness for travel.

We will request this from you approximately 30 days before your trip starts, so that your GP can sign your form based on your current health conditions. Please don't submit this several months in advance, as it is important for us to know you are fit for travel just before the trip departs.

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15 Passports and Visas

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities. Encounters Travel will not be held responsible if travellers are denied entry because they are not in possession of the relevant visas. We therefore recommend you re-check requirements with the relevant embassy/consulate around 4 weeks before travel.

You should also be in possession of a valid onward or return flight ticket, or proof of other means of transport enabling you to leave the country that your tour passes through or finishes in. In addition you should carry proof of sufficient funds to cover you during your time in the country (eg. credit card).

Should your tour be re-entering a country, please ensure that you have a multiple entry visa that allows this. Some countries have a visa on arrival service which can be more convenient and cheaper. However, for peace of mind and to speed up the border crossing process, Encounters Travel advises that you to get your visas prior to your trip if possible.

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16 Tipping

In general tipping in restaurants is expected and is around 10% for good service, more if you have received exceptional service, and, feel free not to tip at all if you received poor service. Tipping taxi drivers etc is really at your own discretion and not always expected. If in doubt please ask your guides. It is expected to tip porters and car guards etc. Ask your guides how much is appropriate in local currency. The recommended amount for Serengeti and Masai Mara guides is around USD5-7 per client per day.

Our guides do work hard but they are also paid at (and often above) industry levels for this work. Our Crew can be tipped if you feel that they have done a good job and/or gone above and beyond the call of duty. The best way to arrange tips is to elect one person in the group to collect the money. On Small Group & Shoestring tours we recommend around USD 3-5 per person per day per guide as a fair tip. On longer Overland tours we recommend USD1-2 per day per person, per guide as a fair tip. So if you have 2-crew on a tour, we would recommend that 2

envelopes are used and each crew member's name written on one. Place what you feel is fair into each envelope and the elected person can give these to the crew at the end of the tour. If you do not feel that the crew deserve a tip, please, do not tip them. You must remember that tipping is only for exceptional service and is not at all compulsory or expected.

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17 International Flights and Airport Transfers

International Flights: We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people living in different places and with varying travel plans, except on some Escorted Tours and package promotions, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

The vast majority of our tours are designed such that you can arrive and depart at any time on the first and last days of the set tour itinerary, with your arrival and departure airport transfers included in the tour price. However, on our **Overland tours,** you should not arrange your onward international flights or other travel for the day the tour is due to end (unless the final day does not involve any travelling and finishes after breakfast). Similarly, many of our Overland tours depart their first port of call on the first morning, and you will therefore need to plan for any flights to arrive at least one day beforehand.

Airport Transfers:

Arrival and departure airport transfers are included on most of our Small Group, Shoestring (excluding the 5 & 6-day Garden Route tours where Airport Transfers are not included, however a pickup from a Central Cape Town location is included on day 1 of the tour) and Tailor-made tours but available as extra options on all our African Overland tours, as long as you have accommodation booked with us on that day. If you add extra accommodation before and/or after the tour that you do not book with us, then you will also need to arrange your own airport transfers.

On our **Sebatana Package**, airport transfers for arrival and departure are included, however these transfers operate on a schedule, so a short wait may be required after landing before the transfer departs to the accommodation. To coincide with the transfer departures, your arrival flight should land in Johannesburg before 11am on day 1 and depart after 6pm on day 8. If your flights arrive/depart outside of these times, we would recommend adding an additional night to your trip.

Departure Taxes: Various countries may require that you pay an Airport Departure Tax when departing on an international flight. Please note that all departure taxes must be paid in hard cash currency and US Dollars are normally the best currency to use for this. Departure taxes can vary from US$10 - US$60 depending on the departure point.

Flight inclusive packages: We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more

flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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18 What to take

LUGGAGE ALLOWANCES: Most international airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 23kg per person of luggage to go in the hold of the plane. Domestic flights often have smaller allowances around 15kg. As airline rules vary we recommend that you take no more than 20kg of luggage if your tour just includes international flights, and no more than 15kg if there are any domestic flights included in your itinerary. Please ask us for details if you are unsure about luggage allowances on your tour. Any excess baggage fees will be your responsibility to cover. Most airlines allow between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage so we suggest that you take no more than 5kg unless you have confirmed that your airline(s) will allow more than this.

OVERLAND AND SAFARI TOURS: Please keep in mind that these are adventure tours in an adventure vehicle (truck or 4x4) and luggage should not include any solid Samsonite style suitcases. On our accommodated overland tours most of our trucks have lockers for the luggage (locker sizes: 37,5 cm high, 32 cm wide, 80 cm deep). Only a soft bag will fit in these lockers. A suitcase is far more difficult to store and make secure in our vehicle and this is part of the reason we ask for a backpack or tote bag to be used as your luggage. The other reason is that you need to walk from the truck to the accommodation and often over sand or uneven terrain. Your luggage on our Overland tours is limited to ONE backpack and ONE daypack weighing no more than 20kg. As a general rule, if you cannot lift your own luggage - you've got too much stuff! Most people make the mistake of bringing too many clothes. A quick reminder - **suitcases are not suitable on our overland tours** – especially huge Samsonite-style cases! **Small** wheeled cases are OK for safari tours.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST: Kit for all weather conditions including: • 2/3 shorts/skirts • 1 jacket/anorak • Tracksuit/pullover • 2 pairs of long pants/jeans • 2 pairs of walking shoes/boots/trainers • 1 pair of sandals • 3 or 4 T-shirts/short sleeve shirts or sundresses • 2/3 Long Sleeve Shirts • Smart casual change of clothes • Swimwear • Underwear & socks • Sun Hat – preferably that covers the back of your neck. • Raincoat • Kikoi/sarong

Your clothing should be easy to wash and dry and should preferably not need ironing. Avoid synthetics, which can

be very uncomfortable in hot weather. Many people underestimate how cold Africa can be – remember that jersey/jacket! There are also nights that are warm but you must still wear clothes that cover arms and legs from mosquitoes. Take a set of casual but smart clothes for the occasional evening out in a restaurant or club. If you wear glasses (or contacts) it is also advisable to bring a spare pair.

While on wildlife safaris it is important to wear dull coloured clothing - olive, mushroom, brown, khaki, stone are ideal.
You should avoid white (stands out too much), black or blue (attracts tsetse flies), and camouflage (illegal in many countries for civilians)

Additional Items: • Towel & facecloth • Baby wipes/ Wet Wipes • Personal toiletries • Sleeping bag • Torch & enough spare batteries • Camera & spare batteries and memory cards • Water bottle. (A 2-litre Coke bottle works well...) • Penknife • Insect and Mosquito repellent • Suntan lotion, sun block & after sun lotion • Sunglasses • Watch • Biodegradable laundry detergent • Passport (plus a copy of your passport & visas) • Extra passport photos • Vaccination certificate • Money • Travel plug • Neck pillow • Small sewing kit • Plastic bags • Clothes line and pegs • Small scrubbing brush • a small padlock for your luggage locker in the truck • Small basic First Aid kit (painkillers, band aids, after-sun lotion, eye drops, anti-diarrhoea tablets etc.)

DAY PACKS: Please check the itinerary for your specific tour if you will need a little daypack. For example on our Cape Town to Vic Falls overland tour you will need a smaller bag, big enough to bring basic equipment (toiletries and clothes) for 2 nights. The daypack is for your Okavango Delta Excursion, where you cannot bring your entire luggage.
