

## The Garden Route - 9 days

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**Country(ies):** South Africa

**Tour type:** Shoestring

**Transport:** AC minibus/coach

**Group size:** Min: 4 | Max: 12

**Days:** 9 Days

**Start location:** Cape Town

**End location:** Cape Town

**Departs On:** Saturdays

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 7, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 4

**Highlights:** Cape Town, Cape Agulhas, Route 62 wine tasting, Oudtshoorn, Cango Caves, easy canoeing in Wilderness NP, Knysna Heads viewpoint, Sedgefield beaches, Tsitsikamma NP, Big 5 safari in Addo Elephant Park, Mossel Bay.

**Places Visited:** Cape Town, Cape Agulhas, Oudtshoorn, Knysna, Sedgefield, Tsitsikamma NP, Addo Elephant NP & Mossel Bay



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrival in Cape Town

Your tour starts with your arrival in Cape Town, the Mother City. You are transferred from Cape Town International Airport to your accommodation.

**OVERNIGHT:** Cape Town Backpackers or Deluxe Guesthouse

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 2: Free time In Cape Town

You have today to yourself and can explore beautiful Cape Town at your leisure. There are many interesting sites to visit in this historic yet modern city. Highlights include Robben Island, Table Mountain, the V&A Waterfront, Signal Hill, Camps Bay and Clifton beaches, Hout Bay and the Constantia wine region.

The city sightseeing bus tour is an excellent way to experience Cape Town and we highly recommend trying it out. We also offer assistance with booking optional group day tours- these include a Cape Peninsula Tour or a Cape Winelands Tour.

**OVERNIGHT:** Cape Town Backpackers or Deluxe Guesthouse

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 3: Hermanus and Cape Agulhas

Today we leave Cape Town and head towards Hermanus. This is a charming seaside town featuring markets, shops, and restaurants. It is also famous for its populations of Southern Right Whales, which can be seen during the whale season (July-November).

On our way to Hermanus, we make a stop at Betties Bay, where we are treated to the extraordinary experience of seeing a colony of endangered African penguins.

This morning part of the tour will be missed by guests who have chosen to do the shark cage diving activity today. They will head out in the early morning for this activity and rejoin us for the afternoon, when we visit Cape Agulhas. This is the southernmost tip of Africa and the place where the Indian & Atlantic Oceans meet.

**OVERNIGHT:** L'Agulhas Backpackers or Deluxe Guesthouse

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 4: Oudtshoorn and Cango Caves

Today we travel along the famous Route 62, the longest wine route in South Africa. Our destination is the town of Oudtshoorn, located in the Little Karoo, an amazing desert habitat also known as the Ostrich capital of the world.

We visit a winery for lunch and a wine tasting, before visiting the renowned Cango Caves. We take a guided adventure tour, where we are able to see the spectacular caves and underground rock formations.

**OVERNIGHT:** Oudtshoorn Backpackers or Deluxe Guesthouse

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 5: Wilderness National Park, Knysna, Sedgefield

Today we spend the morning out enjoying the wilderness. We drive over the Outeniqua Pass, which has lovely views and head into Wilderness National Park for a canoeing adventure on the Touw River. We paddle through the park for about 40 minutes, enjoying the scenic surrounds and abundant birdlife, before taking a short two kilometre hike to a waterfall and rock pools.

After this adventurous morning, we head for the famous town of Knysna, where we can take a breather and explore the restaurants and shops. We then visit the Knysna Heads viewpoint, from where we enjoy stunning views of the Knysna River estuary as it meets the Indian Ocean.

We then depart for the town of Sedgefield, where we have a relaxing end to the day with a walk or visit to the beautiful beaches.

**OVERNIGHT:** Sedgefield Backpackers or Deluxe Guesthouse

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 6: Bloukrans Bungee and Tsitsikamma National Park

Today we visit Tsitsikamma National Park. On our way, we make a truly memorable stop at the Bloukrans Bridge bungee - the highest bridge bungee jump in the world (216 metres). The thrill-seekers of the group will have a chance to experience this once-in-a-lifetime activity.

We then head to Tsitsikamma National Park, a beautiful reserve featuring indigenous forests and bordered by the rugged coastline. Several activities are on offer here, including hiking, swimming, and crossing a suspension bridge across a river mouth. After our time in the park, we depart for Addo.

**OVERNIGHT:** Addo Backpackers or Deluxe Guesthouse

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 7: Game-viewing in Addo

Today we go out on safari in the African bush. Addo Elephant National Park is 28,000 hectares in size and is home to around 600 elephants. Besides these magnificent creatures, the park also houses lions, buffalo, black rhino, zebra, kudu, and warthog, amongst others. We spend a few hours exploring the park, encountering the animals in their natural habitat and observing their behaviours and interactions.

After this exciting and memorable experience, we head back to our destination for the night, which will be in either Mossel Bay or Wilderness.

**OVERNIGHT:** Wilderness Beach House Backpackers or Deluxe Guesthouse

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 8: Activities in Mossel Bay

Today we head to Mossel Bay, where a variety of exciting activities awaits us. We hike along the Cape St. Blaize

Trail, which meanders across the cliffs next to the sea. There are beautiful beaches to visit, and we also stop at the Diaz Museum Complex, where we learn about the history of Europe's first-known expedition to the tip of Africa.

Optional adventure activities are on offer for the adrenaline junkies, including a 10,000 foot tandem skydive and a sandboarding experience on South Africa's longest dune. In the evening, we head back to Cape Town/Stellenbosch.

**OVERNIGHT:** Cape Town Backpackers or Deluxe Guesthouse

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 9: Departure from Cape Town

The tour ends today in Cape Town. You are transferred to Cape Town International Airport for your onward journey.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Included

- 24hr airport arrival & departure transfers
- 8 nights accommodation in Backpacker Hostels or Deluxe Guesthouses/Hotels
- All transport in AC minibuses
- All activities and highlights as mentioned in the itinerary
- Experienced & qualified local driver/guide
- Local wine tasting
- Cango Caves adventure tour
- Canoeing and hiking in Wilderness National Park
- Hiking in Tsitsikamma National Park
- Game viewing safari in Addo Elephant National Park
- Meals: 7 breakfasts and 4 dinners

## Excluded

- International Flights (available on request)
- Visa fees if required
- Travel Insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for guides & drivers
- Entrance fees and activities not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional tours in Cape Town and elsewhere
- Any other items not mentioned above

# Options

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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 Cape Town - pre-tour

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$70.00

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.

## Single supplement - Backpacker lodges (SASHG9)

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$255.00

This option books a single en-suite room in all the Backpacker lodges throughout the tour. If you are a solo traveller and would like to share a room then shared dorm-room accommodation is available.

## Single Supplement - Guesthouse upgrade (SASHG9)

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$305.00

This option books a single room in all the upgraded accommodation staying in deluxe guesthouses and boutique hotels throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Accommodations most often used for the guesthouse upgrade are shown below. Alternative properties of a similar standard may be used on some dates.

Cape Town - Parker Cottage or Cape Town Hollow Boutique Hotel

Struisbaai / L'Agulhas - Mermaid Guest House  
Oudtshoorn - Hlangana Guest House  
Sedgefield - Dover on Sea  
Wilderness - Mes Amis  
Addo - Avoca River Cabins (same for both levels)

## **Extra day in Cape Town - post tour**

**Min numbers:** 1 person

**Price:** \$80.00

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.

# Tour Notes

## 1. Accommodation

As is typical on our Shoestring level tours, more than one level of accommodation is available on this trip. All options have been selected based on their cleanliness, service levels, setting and atmosphere. We also select places close to each other so often it is just a short walk between them. Included dinners are generally taken together at the backpacker lodge, though you are welcome to eat elsewhere if you prefer.

### **Backpacker Lodges:**

The standard level of the tour is based on staying in good quality backpacker style lodges. These have a friendly, social vibe, and are ideal for younger travellers looking for a bit of an atmosphere. They often have a bar or bonfire area for socialising. Although available at a budget price, the standard of backpacker lodges in South Africa is generally very high. The standard tour price is based on staying in private en-suite twin/double rooms. These can often surprise you with the level and quality of accommodation provided. Discounts are available on request if you would prefer to stay in mixed dorm rooms (4-12 beds) or private twin/double rooms with shared bathrooms.

### **Deluxe Guesthouses / Boutique hotels:**

If you would prefer some more comfort then we offer an upgrade option to stay in some really lovely deluxe guesthouses and small boutique style hotels instead of the backpacker lodges. These provide a more private, quieter and luxurious experience and can be fabulous places to stay, full of character and with beautiful gardens, friendly hosts, and great views. Accommodations most often used for the guesthouse upgrade are shown below. Alternative properties of a similar standard may be used on some dates.

Cape Town - Parker Cottage or Cape Town Hollow Boutique Hotel

Struisbaai / L'Agulhas - Mermaid Guest House

Oudtshoorn - Hlangana Guest House

Sedgefield - Dover on Sea

Wilderness - Mes Amis

Addo - Avoca River Cabins (same for both levels)

### **Addo National Park**

At Addo both levels stay in a working citrus farm near the park (Avoca River Cabins) which has a unique location and style of accommodation and is a nice upgrade if you've chosen the Backpacker level.

### **Notes:**

- Single, twin and double rooms are available in all locations. Single travellers wishing to stay in a private room in the backpacker lodges or in the upgraded guesthouses will need to pay a single room supplement.
- Heating or air conditioning is not provided as standard in most backpacker lodges, guesthouses or small hotels, just because it is not normally needed in South Africa! However, fans or extra blankets are always available on request if you need them.
- 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

The transport used for this tour is an air-conditioned minibus or small coach, depending on the final size of the group. Smaller vehicles can comfortably seat 8 adults including the driver/guide and larger ones up to 14 adults including the driver/guide. Seats in the 14-seater minibuses can be compared in size to an airplane seat – if that

setup is uncomfortable for you then please enquire about a private tour where different vehicles can be used.

Some game safaris may be carried out using 4x4 jeeps/safari vehicles - see your tour itinerary for details. These may be open-roofed or enclosed. You must not leave the vehicle or lean out through windows without express permission from the guide.

### 3. 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 Small Group, Shoestring 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.

**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.

### 4. Group Size / Tour Leaders / Guides

#### **Group size & makeup:**

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. Despite this being a 'Shoestring' level tour, the maximum group size is just 12 people, with the minimum number set at 4. We do share this tour with other operators and agents and this means that guests can join the group from all over the world. Most travellers come from the UK, America, Canada, Australia & New Zealand and various European countries. Average ages are mid 30s. Due to the active and group nature of the tour we set a minimum age of 14, and no maximum age - as long as you are relatively fit and young at heart you are welcome to join!

#### **Tour leaders:**

A fully qualified driver/guide will run the tour and do both the driving and guiding. This is different to some countries where we may have a separate driver and guide, but common practice in South Africa. The guides have a wealth of knowledge about the places you'll be visiting and travelling past, and many travellers note them as one of the highlights of their tour.

### 5. Tour Style

This is an active tour and is best suited to travellers who like to keep on the move and see and experience a lot of a country in a relatively short time. You must be able to comfortably walk, carry luggage, get in and out of the vehicle frequently, etc.

There are some easy and short hikes, and a gentle canoeing experience included in the itinerary. These can be missed out if you wish. There are also opportunities for the more adventurous in the group to get their adrenaline fix, with the tour passing the highest bridge bungee jump in the world from Bloukrans Bridge and time available to have a jump if you love that type of excitement! Those not jumping will continue to Tsitsikamma National Park and the group will rejoin together later in the day.

## 6. Local Options

On all our Shoestring 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, most 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 are given on our website, but please bear in mind that are given as a guide only and may vary 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. Options running on the first couple of days of the tour (in Cape Town and the Shark cage diving) should be reserved with us before you travel but then paid for in Cape Town.

## 7. Destination Guides

### **Oudtshoorn – Ostrich Capital of the World**

The town of Oudtshoorn is situated in the Western Province of the beautiful South Africa and is known and loved by many local holidaymakers around the country. Originally the area was occupied by Bushmen and this can be seen by the large number of rock paintings which can be found in the caves surrounding the Swartberg Mountains. The first farmers settled in the area during the 1700's and the first large permanent structure – the Dutch Reformed Church – was built in 1839 and the town started growing around this church.

The town of Oudtshoorn is especially known for its ostriches and many ostrich farms surround the town. The ostrich craze in the Karoo started with the fascination the town's people had with the feathers as they were used as a fashion accessory. Ostrich feathers were obligatory items of high fashion just before world war one. The great feather boom began around 1870. At its height there were more than 750 000 domesticated ostriches in the little Karoo area and feathers were being exported at the rate of about 450 000kg's a year. Then came world war one and then austerity became a way of supporting the war effort. Many farmers went bankrupt in this time. In later years the industry revived with the demand for ostrich leather, biltong, eggs and feathers. At present there are about 90 000 ostriches in the Little Karoo

### **Cango Caves**

The Cango Caves is one of South Africa's most beautiful hidden treasures. Just 17km outside of the Klein Karoo town of Oudtshoorn, the Cango Caves are one of the Garden Routes most exciting and beautiful tourist attractions. Here, guests can explore the unseen beauties of South Africa and will be astounded by the sheer size and length of the caves. The Cango Caves are primarily dripstone caverns which lie in a limestone ridge which runs parallel to the Swartberg Mountains. Together the chambers and tunnels of the Cango Caves extend over 4km, placing them among the largest caves in the world. The largest chamber, Van Zyl's Chamber, was named after an explorer who apparently came across the caves in the 1770s, however there is no record of a man named Van Zyl being in the

area during that time and there is evidence that the caves have been known to man since the Stone Age; recent finds – of some tools left behind in ancient hearths in the Cave mouth – prove that humans have lived and sheltered here for at least 80 000 years.

The Cango Caves was the first tourist attraction in South Africa to employ a full-time tour guide, ensuring that each person who visited the caves could do so with a professional. In fact, you can only visit the caves today as part of a tour group. The standard tour will take you to the main chambers and front parts of the cave, however adventure tours can be embarked on which take guests into the narrower and in depth parts of the Cango Caves.

### **Knysna**

Today's highlight is the Knysna Lagoon, a perfect spot for water sports or simply relaxing and admiring the striking beauty of The Heads. The town of Knysna, voted South Africa's favourite holiday town, nestles in the 4 lagoon basin. It is protected by The Heads - two towering sandstone cliffs flanking a deep channel through which the tides flow. There are spectacular views and a cosy restaurant at the Eastern Head and the Western Head is a privately owned nature reserve – Featherbed Bay.

The Knysna Lagoon is one of the few places in the world that supports an oyster hatchery and the town is well-known for its fresh oysters, as well as its beer, made locally at Mitchell's Brewery. Rich in history, Knysna's museums are well worth visiting: the Millwood House Museum, and the Angling Museum in the Old Gaol. There are many other attractions, from the lush surrounding rainforests, the nearby Buffalo Valley Game Reserve, Featherbed Nature Reserve and Noetzie beach to a wide selection of restaurants and craft markets. The forest, one of the largest areas of indigenous trees left in South Africa, is very dense and in some areas impenetrable.

Knysna was originally founded by George Rex in the 19th century as a port for the timber trade. The forest was nearly decimated as a result of logging but escaped devastation due to far-sighted conservation policies introduced in the 1880s. The herds of forest elephants that once roamed the forest have not been so lucky, they have all disappeared and one lone female is said to remain today. The beautiful and elusive Knysna Loeries can still be seen in the area, as well as a large variety of other birds and a few small antelope.

### **Tsitsikamma National Park**

'Tsitsikamma' is a khoi word meaning 'place of abundant or sparkling water' – an apt name considering the abundance of bubbling natural rivers and streams decorating the region. The Tsitsikamma region stretches from the sweeping Bloukrans River in the west all the way to the Eerste Rivier in the east. Bordered on the north by the majestic Tsitsikamma Mountains and the tepid Indian Ocean on the south, the sought-after destination is flanked by incredible natural scenery every direction you look.

The lush park covers an 80km stretch of sweeping coastline with popular holiday destination Nature's Valley resting on the western end and the world-famous Storms River Mouth at its epicentre. The protected area is covered in a thick blanket of indigenous forest along with the odd commercial plantation and an abundance of natural Fynbos. Deep river gorges fork between the plateau as they rush down towards the sea, resulting in a dramatic spectacle of tumbling waterfalls and deep kloofs. A mild all-year-round climate affords visitors the opportunity to engage in a myriad of fun outdoor activities encouraged by the region's bustling tourism industry, while a high rainfall ensures the natural greenness that the area is renowned for. With exceptional hiking trails and unparalleled coastal scenery, Tsitsikamma is a top destination for eco-tourists and avid adventurers.

The Otter Trail is a hiking route along the Garden Route coast and is not only the most popular route in the Tsitsikamma National Park, but is widely regarded as one of the finest in the world. Stretching from Storms River Mouth to Nature's Valley, the full trail takes a total of five days and exposes hikers to some of the most exquisite natural beauty, including imposing coastal mountains, dense gallery forest and sweeping white-sand beaches.

### **Addo Elephant Park**

The Addo Elephant Park is situated about an hour outside of the city of Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape and is recognised as one of South Africa's most popular national parks and game reserves. It is sanctuary to over 550 elephants in just 120 000 hectares. It is also the third largest national park in South Africa and is the only one to incorporate a marine area into its conservation strategy.

The history of the park is an uncomfortable one. In 1919 the administration of the Cape Province decided to cull the elephant population in the Addo region and hired a Professional hunter, Major Jan Pretorius, to destroy the entire herd that inhabited the area at the time. It took him a year to kill 120, before he was stopped due to public outcry. Only 16 traumatized Addo elephants remained, wounded, frightened and unable to coexist with humans. In 1931, when only 11 elephants were left alive in the area, it was proclaimed a National Park. The elephants, however, were

still hostile - destroying crops and attacking anyone who came near them. Finally, in 1952, one of the farmers of the area suggested that a fence be erected around the park. This kept the Elephants secure and out of the surrounding farming area. Black rhino was reintroduced in 1961- the first in the Cape for a hundred years. Today the Park is a sanctuary to over 450 elephants, Cape buffalo, a variety of antelope species, as well as the flightless dung beetle, found exclusively in this area. Addo elephants are unique in that although they belong to the same species as the African Elephant, they are smaller with more rounded ears and the females generally have no tusks. The marine section extends to invite guests to observe the southern right whales, dolphins and sea life in the Indian Ocean coast next to the park.

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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.

## **10. 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.

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 vaccination may be 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 a [World Health Organisation map](#) of areas where the virus is present in monkeys and therefore a potential risk to humans. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary.

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.

## 11. 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.

## 12. 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.

## 13. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected.

Financial failure insurance is also provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of your tour. Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

## 14. 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). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

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.*

## 15. 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).

## 16. 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](http://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstravl](http://www.twitter.com/encounterstravl) (yes, without the 'e')

## 17. 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.



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**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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