

TOUR CODE

OASA



SOUTHERN AFRICA

Lions and falls and wine, oh MY!

14 days

Updated 11/13/2008

Day 1 *Arrival in Johannesburg*

Arrive in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Johannesburg is South Africa's financial centre and largest city. This "Place of Gold", as the Sotho word for Gauteng Province suggests, harbours the gold fields of South Africa. No one could have imagined the repercussions when an unemployed miner found a stone bearing traces of gold in 1886. This seemingly insignificant event led to the discovery of the world's richest natural treasure trove. People flocked to the area from all ends of the earth and the open pastoral landscape changed almost overnight. Today in the "New South Africa," Johannesburg continues as the country's -- indeed the entire region's -- economic powerhouse and is evolving into a very vibrant cultural melting pot.

PLEASE NOTE: The hotels indicated in this itinerary reflect our preferred properties in each location. We list these hotels primarily to provide a general sense of overall standard; the final hotel list (which supersedes this itinerary) is not 100% confirmed until approximately 30-45 days prior to departure. We reserve the right to make substitutions of a similar standard if necessary.

Overnight in Johannesburg (Sandton). Hotel Balalaika or similar. Dinner if required.

Day 2 *Johannesburg - Soweto - Tshwane (Pretoria) - Johannesburg*

This morning we have a tour of the city of Soweto.

Soweto unto itself is actually one of the largest cities in Africa with an estimated population of 2 million. It also has one of the most dubious histories of any city in Africa, as it was the site of some of the more infamous events during the struggle against apartheid. The name "Soweto" simply stands for South Western Township, due to its location outside Johannesburg. It was here that thousands of black workers were forced to live in order to provide labour for the gold mines.

We will see the good, the bad, and the ugly of Soweto -- from affluent neighbourhoods to shanty towns; the world's largest hospital, Baragwanath; and the former homes of Soweto's Nobel Laureates, Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. We also visit the excellent new museum dedicated to the victims of the 1976 Soweto Uprising.

En route to Tshwane* we will visit the extraordinarily powerful Apartheid Museum, an obligatory stop for visitors and residents alike. The large blown-up photographs, metal cages and numerous monitors with continuous replays of apartheid scenes will make you feel that you were in the townships in the 70s and 80s, dodging police bullets or teargas canisters, or marching with thousands of school children. One can easily spend the better part of a day in this museum; however, for the sake of timing on a busy day, we will be taking in the highlights only.

This afternoon we visit Tshwane (previously Pretoria), the administrative capital of the Republic of South Africa. Surrounded by hilly countryside, this relaxed capital is known for its colourful gardens and lush green parks. We will

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see Church Square, dominated by its statue of the Boer Republic's first President, Paul Kruger, and lined with buildings of architectural and historical interest. From here we will proceed to a panoramic view of the city at the Union Buildings, the administrative headquarters of the Government of South Africa and scene of Nelson Mandela's inauguration as the New South Africa's first democratically elected State President in 1994.

* Tshwane is the name of a pre-colonial local chief and means "we are the same". In 2005 the city council approved the switch from Pretoria to Tshwane as part of an effort to make place names more African.

Overnight in Johannesburg (Sandton). Hotel Balalaika or similar. Breakfast and dinner.

Day 3 <i>Johannesburg, South Africa - Livingstone, Zambia - Victoria Falls</i>
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Today we fly from South Africa to Zambia where we will spend three nights next to one of the world's most spectacular natural sights, Victoria Falls. Our arrival point is the town of Livingstone, once an important town in southern Africa during the first days of European settlement and the beginnings of colonial rule.

This area has actually been inhabited for hundreds of thousands of years. The first known name of the falls was "Shongwe"; the current name did not come into being until the Scottish missionary and explorer David Livingstone was brought to the falls in 1855 and named them after Queen Victoria. The falls and the nearby town of Livingstone are on the mighty Zambezi River, the fourth longest in Africa, forming the border with neighbouring Zimbabwe.

We will pass through the sleepy colonial town of Livingstone, the main street of which is lined with classic colonial buildings. These Victorian tin roofed houses with wooden verandas, many of which are decaying, are a typical example of English settler architecture. In 1905 settlers moved in to the higher ground at Livingstone to escape malaria. Livingstone became the capital of Northern Rhodesia in 1911, but the capital was moved to Lusaka in 1935.

After settling in to our hotel, we will have a leisurely walking tour of the Zambian side of the falls. Though water levels may be low at this end of the falls from August to January, there are still some incredible views down the gorge. One special vantage point is the Knife Edge Bridge which affords views of the Eastern Cataract; the Main Falls, the Boiling Pot, where the river turns into the Batoka Gorge; and the famous Zambezi River Bridge, commissioned by Cecil John Rhodes. The bridge was completed in 1905 but Rhodes never lived to see it completed.

NOTE: Due to variable flight schedules and weather considerations, the order of Victoria Falls area sightseeing activities may vary at the discretion of your Tour Leader.


Overnight at Victoria Falls, Zambia. Zambezi Sun or similar. Breakfast and dinner.

Day 4 <i>Victoria Falls, Zambia: Day Trip to Chobe Park, Botswana</i>

Today we make an early morning excursion into Botswana to visit Chobe National Park, located only 1.75 hours away from Livingstone. Our journey includes a private 5-minute boat crossing at the point where four counties (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia) meet on the Zambezi River. We complete Customs and Immigration formalities and continue with a fifteen-minute drive to the lodge that we will be using as a base for today's activities.

Our safari starts with a cruise on the Chobe River (shade and refreshments available) that takes us close to the waterfowl and wildlife on the river. Large flocks of birds, big pods of hippos and very large crocodiles can be viewed from the safety of your boat.

Our lunch (included today) is served back at the lodge overlooking the river.

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After lunch we board open (covered) safari vehicles and head off into the park to view some of the 70,000 local elephants, buffalo herds, sable, wildebeest, giraffe, and with luck, some resident lion and hyena. The game drive meanders its way back to the park gates for Customs and Immigration formalities and the crossing of the Zambezi River into back into Zambia and the road transfer back to our hotel, arriving at about 18:00.

Overnight at Victoria Falls, Zambia. Zambezi Sun or similar. Breakfast and lunch (dinner on your own).

Day 5 *Victoria Falls: Zambian Village & Leisure Time*

This morning we visit an authentic Zambian village. The chief has invited visitors into his village to get a glimpse of how his people have lived for generations and to learn a little about their traditional customs and beliefs. The Chief's guides and the people of the village are more than happy to show visitors their huts and take you inside, explain how they are built and decorated, introduce you to various craftsmen and women at work. This is a working village, not a purpose built tourist attraction, and it is a privilege to be welcomed in.

This afternoon is free for optional activities. Elephant back safaris, river cruises, canoe trips, scenic overflights, or trips into Livingstone to visit the David Livingstone and / or Railway museums can be arranged with the assistance of your Tour Leader.

Overnight at Victoria Falls, Zambia. Zambezi Sun or similar. Breakfast and dinner.

Day 6 *Victoria Falls, Zambia - Johannesburg, South Africa*

Today we fly from Livingstone / Victoria Falls to Johannesburg.

Overnight in Johannesburg (Sandton). Balalaika Hotel or similar. Breakfast and dinner.

Day 7 *Johannesburg - Kruger Park Area*

This morning we fly from Johannesburg to the Lowveld region and the vicinity of Kruger National Park and transfer by road to our lodge either within Kruger park proper or in one of the private game reserves adjacent to Kruger Park. Approximately 10 years ago, many private game reserves bordering Kruger have removed fences allowing animals free movement between the National Park and the private reserves.

This afternoon we enjoy a game drive in open safari vehicles. Kruger is South Africa's largest game reserve and the first to initiate the setting aside of this area as a reserve in the 1890s. The Kruger Park is an enormous area of flat veld, broken by rivers and comprised of mixed vegetation and terrain. The park, officially founded in 1926, supports more species of wildlife than any other African reserve -- over 137 mammal species, 49 fish species, 112 reptile species, and nearly 500 bird species! With some luck we may see and photograph lion, leopard, cheetah, elephant, zebra and many other wonderful African animals.

Overnight at a private luxury lodge (Thornybush Lodge OR Lukimbi Safari Lodge). All meals.

Day 8 *Kruger Park Area*

This is "Big Game" country, and the area is world-renowned as the best venue for close up sightings of Africa 's great

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cats - lion, leopard and cheetah. Today our open vehicle game drives with professional rangers and trackers allow you to experience wildlife at its finest.

Our days at Kruger will be divided into morning and afternoon game drives with a break for lunch back at the lodge in between.

Overnight at a private luxury lodge (Thornybush Lodge OR Lukimbi Safari Lodge). All meals.

Day 9 *Kruger Park Area*

We have another full day of game viewing activities in a luxury setting in the African bush.

Twice daily game drives in open 4x4 vehicles are led by highly trained and experienced rangers and trackers. Game walks are also offered, allowing guests a better chance to see some of the smaller creatures of the bush as well as an opportunity to learn more about the flora and fauna of the region and to have a chance to follow animal tracks in more detail.

Overnight at a private luxury lodge (Thornybush Lodge OR Lukimbi Safari Lodge). All meals.

Day 10 *Kruger Park - Cape Town*

Today we fly to Cape Town (via Johannesburg), one of the world's most isolated and beautiful cities.

Although Cape Town's beauty is already legendary, it is fast becoming famous for its friendly, gay community located in what is often referred to as "De Waterkant Gay Village." Beyond the vibrant gay life, however, Cape Town, perched almost at the very tip of the continent, makes an ideal base for exploring the Cape Peninsula and Wine Country.

Overnight in Cape Town. Protea Hotel Victoria Junction (4*). Breakfast and dinner.

Day 11 *Cape Town: Cape Peninsula Tour*

Today we tour Cape Town, one of the world's most spectacularly located cities. Cape Town is the seat of the Parliament which holds a six-month session here each year. We will see the Houses of Parliament, the Malay Quarter with its narrow streets and minarets and the Castle of Good Hope, South Africa's oldest building. We move on to the District Six Museum to view a moving collection of stories, pictures and memorabilia highlighting the colourful life of this suburb which now stands empty, thanks to the destruction of homes and forced removal or residents during the height of the Apartheid era.

We continue our tour of the Cape Peninsula, including a visit to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve and Cape Point. The Nature Reserve is a wildflower, bird, and animal paradise on 77 sq km (30 sq miles) of the Cape Peninsula. The reserve is also home to eland, springbok, bontebok, baboon, and zebra. Within the reserve are Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope, the most southwesterly point on the African continent.

We head north again up the Indian Ocean side of the peninsula, passing through Simonstown, founded by the Dutch in 1741 as a naval depot and named for Simon van der Stel, Governor of Cape Colony from 1679 to 1697. In 1814 the town became the headquarters of the British South Atlantic squadron. Today Simonstown is famous for its distinctly English architecture and atmosphere, and the southernmost train station on the continent.

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We complete our loop around the peninsula, past the well-watered eastern slopes of Table Mountain, Constantia, Bishops Court and the campuses of the University of Cape Town.

Overnight in Cape Town. Protea Hotel Victoria Junction (4*). Breakfast.

Day 12 *The Cape Winelands*

We will start our day with a gondola trip to the top of Table Mountain, a sandstone plateau rising up above the city. The top is approximately 3km wide and at its highest point, Maclears Beacon, rises to 1085m / 3,580 ft. Over the centuries it has become one of South Africa's most famous landmarks. The steep cliffs and rocky outcrops of the mountain play home to a number of plants and animals. The mountain is home to approximately 1,470 species of plants; more than the entire British Isles!

We then head for the Cape Winelands. The vineyards were originated at Constantia by Jan van Riebeeck in 1685, and were advanced in 1688 by Huguenot refugees who brought their vine seedlings and skills with them from France. The Cape's different soils and climatic variations allow a wide variety of wines to be pressed, from exquisite sweet whites, through dry whites to fruity reds. Along our meandering route today, we will see the wine estates, with their delightful Cape Dutch houses, with thatched roofs and decorative gables.

We will stop at one of the area's leading wine estates for a tour and tasting. We will also enjoy a relaxed lunch at a wine estate. We also visit Stellenbosch, South Africa's second oldest settlement. You will notice some of the finest examples of traditional Cape Dutch architecture along the town's oak-lined streets. After some time to wander this charming town, we return to Cape Town.

This evening we'll take a safari through Cape Town's gay entertainment district.

Overnight in Cape Town. Protea Hotel Victoria Junction (4*). Breakfast and lunch.

Day 13 *Cape Town: At Leisure*

Today is free to enjoy the "Fairest Cape". You may choose to take an optional excursion to Robben Island, site of the famous (or infamous) prison in which Nelson Mandela and other Apartheid Freedom Fighters were incarcerated for many years. Accompanied by a local site guide, you tour the island and the former prison facilities and learn much about life on the island, its now famous former inmates and staff, and about this dark period of South African history.

You may also visit the South African Museum, located in the historic Company Gardens in central Cape Town; visit the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, or just relax and enjoy the beach. Your Tour Leader can help you plan your day. Later we reconvene for a farewell dinner.

Overnight in Cape Town. Protea Hotel Victoria Junction (4*). Breakfast and dinner.

Day 14 *Departure*

Departure from Cape Town.

Breakfast.

BON VOYAGE!

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