

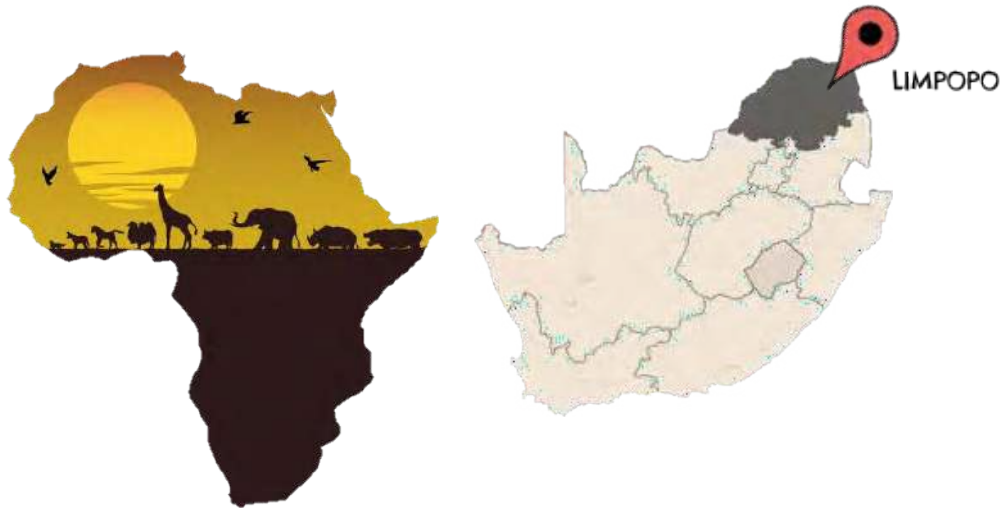


Bush School & Wildlife Orphanage



General information:

Geography



Languages

South Africa has 12 official languages, of which the following are the majority: English, Xhosa, Zulu and Afrikaans. Most of the children speak Northern Sotho (also known as sePedi).

Cultural awareness

South Africa is an increasingly modern country with many of its urban areas imitating first world cities anywhere in the world. The country's turbulent history and unique social development have resulted in a very diverse country, where the first and third world live right next door to one another.

Even if you have traveled in Africa before, bear in mind that you will experience aspects of daily life that are very different to being at home. Some things do take a lot longer to achieve here than most foreigners are used to. This can cause difficulties, distress and frustrations on both sides if not acknowledged. "Africa time" can be very frustrating for those who are used to a more structured way of life.

Electricity

220/240 volts, three-pin round plugs are in use, UK adaptors are available at most airports and you will find adaptors for European plugs in most of the shops, even in Hoedspruit.

Power at camp

Our project is not on the National Grid to have electricity. Fortunately, over the years we could invest in solar power but this energy is limited and only available when the SUN is up. You are able to charge your devices in the meeting area. This charging station works during daylight hours only from 7am to 4.30pm.

PLEASE NOTE NO HAIR DRYERS OR STRAIGHTENERS ALLOWED at camp!

Time difference

- The time difference is GMT + 02:00 hours.

Telephone

- The South African country code is +27

Money

Most retailers in South Africa accept both credit cards and debit cards. MasterCard and Visa are the two most well known cards. Our local project does not have credit card facilities. There are a few ATM's in Hoedspruit, which usually take all major credit cards.

Travelers' cheques can be changed around town, but we don't recommend it because sometimes the banks here charge you to change them, even though you have paid already and it takes a very long time to do the transaction.

You can also change foreign currency at the banks or at the Bureau de Change in Hoedspruit. We advise you to wait to be with our local team if you need to draw cash at the ATM. Like anywhere in the world, fraud and abuse toward credit cards have been recorded. Inform your bank that you will be traveling to South Africa and give them your contact details in the country so they can call you if they notice any suspicious transactions. Check your bank account regularly when traveling so you can notice quickly if your credit card has been copied.

The official currency is the RAND, the exchange rate is approximately:

- 1 USD = ± 14 RAND
- 1 EURO = ± 15 RAND
- 1 GBP = ± 17 RAND

You can check the rate here: <http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>

The volunteer fee includes food, coffee, tea, water and juice. You have the option to pay extra for soda or alcoholic drinks.

Internet and mobiles

International roaming exists with major networks and there is coverage throughout most of South Africa. We have a cell-phone booster in the office that boosts your signal so you can make and receive phone calls. We recommend purchasing a Vodacom SIM card if you want a local phone. Local SIM cards are very cheap; they only cost around 5 Rand. **(They may overcharge in the Johannesburg airport – do not pay more than 110 Rand!)**

→ Q: How do I keep in touch with home? Can I use the internet?

We also have Wi-Fi available at the campsite

Safety

South Africa does not have the reputation of being very safe, like many other countries in the world. However, our project is out in the bush and far from other people. It takes one hour to drive to Hoedspruit, and it is a very safe destination. (You should be more concerned about animals like snakes, spiders and scorpions!)

If you go anywhere else in South Africa, do not drop your guard. Remember those rules from back home - do not walk alone at night down a dark street, don't accept lifts from strangers, and take care of your belongings. Although South African people are very friendly, we advise you not to trust anybody and always think about your safety.

Measures against the Covid-19

Our local partner is following the national guidelines to fight against the spread of the Coronavirus outbreak.

For all of us to stay safe, we are limiting our movements and practicing social distancing. Hand sanitizers are available all around our camp and communal areas are disinfected once a day.

We are following the World Health Organization's recommendations to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus outbreak.

Johannesburg airport

When you arrive in the Johannesburg airport, which is a very safe place, some people will offer you their service to carry your luggage to the domestic airport, which is in the same building as the international airport. If you do want this service, only accept it from someone with an official airport jacket, as the airport has hired him or her for this purpose.

Weather

Usually the weather is very warm. In the summer it can get up to 40 degrees. In winter it is warm during the day (26 degrees), but nights can be cold (1 degree). Summer is from October to April and winter is from May to September

Preparation

Flights

The sooner you book your flight, the better the price, especially at peak times.

Q: How can I get from Johannesburg to Hoedspruit ?

By plane

- ✓ Go to: [AIRLINK](#) or [CemAir](#)

Rent a car:

- ✓ Contact Robyn on info@trophytoyota.com

Shuttle service

- ✓ Contact SafariLink on bookings@safarilinksa.com

In general, public transport is not recommended to overseas visitors

Arrival day

All arrivals and departures are on a **Saturday**. We will pick you up at the Hoedspruit airport or in town if it's more convenient for you. If you want to arrive on a Friday or a Sunday, you can arrange a private transfer from Hoedspruit to the camp; I can give you details for different transfer companies. If you cannot find a plane to arrive on a Saturday, then try to arrive on a Friday and spend a night either in Johannesburg OR Hoedspruit; I can provide you with information and then take the Ashton Shuttle on Saturday morning.

Passport

- Check if your passport is valid for your trip. You will automatically be given a 3-month (a 90 day) tourist visa upon arrival at the Johannesburg Airport. If you need to stay longer with us, you have to apply for a volunteer visa in your home country.
- You can check this link for more information:
<https://www.southafricavisa.com/evisa-requirements>

Travel insurance

- It is very important that you have travel insurance. We will ask for a copy of your insurance policy with their 24h/7 days contact details before your arrival:
<https://www.johoinsurances.nl/contact>

Vaccinations

- You do not need any specific vaccinations, but we would recommend taking an antimalarial treatment just in case (during the summer months) and a tetanus injection for safety of course.

Contact your doctor for advice and/or see website:

https://redplanet.travel/mdtravelhealth/destinations/south_africa

For more information concerning vaccinations before traveling, please click this <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/south-africa>

Get ready

Q: What do I need one month before my departure date ?

- ✓ Check your packing list and buy what you need to take with you.
- ✓ Photocopy important documents, passport, insurance documents etc.
- ✓ Be sure you have a valid credit card with you so that you can withdraw money from cash machines.
- ✓ Make sure everyone that you wish to keep in contact with has an email address for you and that they all know your travel plans.

Packing list:

Do not forget:

- ✓ Copy of your passport
- ✓ A copy of any prescriptions / your spectacle prescription
- ✓ Medical card
- ✓ Copy of your insurance
- ✓ Your home contact information

Clothing

You should pack for generally warm weather so you will need a hat, sunglasses, and high factor sun lotion. You should also bring a warm fleece jacket, because it can get very cold at night. You will be working with animals or building camps, so please do not bring your best clothes! Below are some suggestions:

- ✓ Sandals or flip flops (whatever you are used to)
- ✓ Walking shoes or trainers, you will need these for doing the bushwalks
- ✓ At least one pair of long trousers / jeans
- ✓ Shorts/ skirt
- ✓ Long sleeve shirt / t- shirts to protect you at night

You will receive 2 T-shirts from our local project upon arrival, which we ask you to wear during the week while the children are here. Laundry will be done 6 times a week (for free), so you do not need to bring too much clothing.

Accessories

- ✓ *Mosquito net for single bed*
- ✓ Camera you will want tons of memories and we would like to see your pictures too. Bring an extra memory card, USB-stick or external hard-drive to put your pictures on
- ✓ **Headlamp (highly recommended)**
- ✓ Batteries – can be bought locally
- ✓ Your mobile phone – you can buy a local SIM-card OR use the Wi-Fi
- ✓ A travel adapter plug – You will find the right one in Hoedspruit at a cheap price OR you can bring one from home

Health

- ✓ Personal prescription – bring enough with you
- ✓ Painkillers
- ✓ Small selection of plasters
- ✓ If you have contact lenses, bring extra pairs and enough solution

Personal hygiene

You can get most of your cheap toiletries in Hoedspruit, however we would advise you to bring enough medicines with you, if you need them.

- ✓ **Mosquito repellent**
- ✓ Shampoo
- ✓ Deodorant
- ✓ **Sunscreen**
- ✓ Toothbrush and Toothpaste
- ✓ Razors
- ✓ Shaving gel / oil
- ✓ Hairbrush
- ✓ Female hygiene products, etc

Where will I sleep?

We do have 4 main chalets for volunteers, each one offering a capacity of 3 to 5 single beds. Male and Female are not mixed in the same chalet unless specific requests.

You will be provided with sheets and blankets and do not need to bring some with you.

Your bed laundry will be cleaned and changed once a week. We do provide a mosquito net, but sometimes they get damaged, so please be aware that we advise you to bring one.

Each chalet is equipped with one bathroom including a toilet, a sink and a shower with hot and cold water EXCEPT for chalet 2 & the cabins.



What will I be doing within the project?

Each week we invite children from the local underprivileged schools to stay at our own accommodations. We take between eight or ten at a time, which provides a unique opportunity for them to benefit from a more individual learning experience.

As all the children come from underprivileged backgrounds we only charge them a minimal fee of R 20 for their stay.

You will be teaching these children. We believe that education is the only way to a better future, and therefore we have developed an educational program with special focus on the environment and wildlife. We have included lessons in life skills about relationships, substance abuse, safe sex, violence and respecting your environment.

Many of the children have not had the opportunity to learn about wildlife and therefore we encourage their participation in the care of the wild animals in our sanctuary. This is to stimulate a sense of responsibility for their heritage.

A very important aspect the project is the wildlife orphanage. We care for animals that are hurt, orphaned or too tame to be rehabilitated into the wild. We provide them with good facilities, care and love. They also serve as a great education medium for the children who assist in the daily care, cleaning and feeding of these animals.

Because we cannot always guarantee having children at the project location due to either the school holidays OR exam periods; During the test periods of the children participating in the project, volunteers take time to raise environmental awareness in various other schools and communities. This is a time to reach a wider audience of students from neighboring villages where poaching and environmental degradation is still a big issue. During this program, students learn about wildlife crime, the environment and waste management, and it is on these topics that the volunteer will work.



A day in the life of a volunteer

The day starts at 7am with coffee or tea, and then we all go on a dog walk with the children. After the morning dog walk, we have breakfast. After breakfast, there are many animal related jobs to be done, like cleaning the animal camps and preparing food for some of the animals.

The volunteers and the children, who rotate jobs daily, do these jobs.

When the animal related jobs are completed, we start the daily teaching program. This consists of lessons before lunch and lessons after. One or two volunteers lead each lesson, but many 1-to-1 sessions are included to help the children with subjects that they find most difficult.

Once morning lessons are finished, we eat lunch and then the kids like to go swimming. One volunteer is required for 'lifeguard duty' but others can have some free time or swim with the kids if they want to.



After the swimming session, the kids get changed and then afternoon lessons start. Again, these lessons are led by a volunteer but other helpers will be needed in most lessons to give extra assistance to the children who find the subject difficult. When lessons have finished, the children will help with the feeding of the animals.

All of the meat-eating animals are fed in the afternoons and the children tend to be fascinated by watching them eat! Other children and volunteers use this time to visit the cheetah and wild dog or do enrichment with the animals to help keep their lives interesting.

Before dinner, the volunteers lead social talks with the children. These are informal discussions that address common issues that affect the children in their everyday lives. These include talks about respecting the environment, drug abuse, and safe sex. After the social talk we all eat dinner. Then, after dinner, we play an educational game with the children before they go



to bed. We have games like Pictionary and math bingo, which the kids all love to play. The winners from the games win a prize from the prize box. All of the kids win at least one prize during the week and are all very excited to see what they will win! On Wednesday evening we watch The Lion King with the children. It is fun for the kids to watch a movie, and it also brings up issues of conservation and the circle of life.

Once the game or movie has finished, the kids go to bed. After this, we sometimes play a few games of cards with the other volunteers, socialize, or have an early night, ready to do it all again tomorrow!

Although the days are long, it is great to be able to have such an impact on less privileged children and to make their weekas enjoyable as possible. From shy, quiet children on day one, the kids leave feeling confident and ready to get home and tell their family and friends about the amazing time they had and what they learned during their time.

Youth development / Yes 4 Youth program

- Aims to increase the opportunity to gain meaningful permanent employment for the youth
- Provides 8 unemployed youth with 12 months of remunerated work experience
- Focuses on time management, customer relations, organizational skills, basic business etiquette and social and life skill development
- The valuable work experiences enhance the interns Curriculum Vitae
- We support the interns upon completion by means of letters of reference

Why is our local partner in necessary?

South Africa's large underprivileged population results in overcrowding of schools, where individual classes sometimes exceed 60 children per class. This results in many children not even being able to understand the basics of education.

People who do not know or understand how essential the environment is for our own survival fundamentally cause continual abuse of the environment. Most children throughout the world live in villages, towns, or cities where the indigenous wildlife has for many years been eliminated. Although the wildlife is their heritage, many do not ever have the means or opportunity to even see a giraffe.

Human encroachment has drastically reduced the amount of suitable habitat for wild animals. Many baby animals are hand-raised by caring people, but when the animals reach maturity they usually come to a bad end. These animals either become dangerous, having lost their natural fear of humans, or get killed by coming too close to unfriendly humans. There are very few safe habitats left for these animals.

Who benefits ?

The children benefit from having a hands-on education supplement. Our partner works with the local schools to work with all of their children in Grade 8 (usually 13-16 year olds). Our educational program has been built with the local teachers so that we can supplement their work and help on the subjects where the pupils have the most difficulties. Having only a few children at a time, we can really make a difference by giving them personal education and general skills of life to help them in their future.

The orphaned animals benefit from having suitable care and accommodation. Many cases cause sadness, and not all survive. However, knowing that both volunteers and children did their best, and have given them at least a slim chance, makes it easier to bear.

The local community benefits from their children being better educated.

The environment benefits from more people caring and understanding it and its importance in our future.

The nation benefits from having a progressive supplementary education facility, a different tourist attraction, extra job opportunities, and insight into future careers such as eco-tourism, hotel and catering etc.

The international community benefits from being able to participate in a life enriching experience either as a volunteer or traveler.

International organizations benefit by being able to show they care for underprivileged people and the environment by sponsoring groups or projects.

Background of the south African children

Rural South African children have been living in villages, usually far from towns. Their facilities are very limited, with few schools and clinics. They have had no electricity in the past, and most of them have to walk considerable distances for water.

There are large numbers of people living in these rural areas and there is limited funding available to uplift them. The biggest problem is finding funds for these improvements.

There has been an improvement of roads, schools and clinics for many years, even long before apartheid was abolished, and although slow, progress has been made. The new Government has accelerated this progression of improving their lives, but it will take many years.

Most villages have schools, clinics and now electricity. Most still have no running water or sanitation available at the houses. The population is rapidly growing, with families having an average of 8 children per household. The existing schools are overcrowded, with up to 160 children per class.

Wild animals in or near the villages have been eliminated for many generations by persistent hunting. Traditionally the men will hunt for food, and the children are brought up to believe that any wild animal should be killed. Many animals are also killed for traditional medicine and beliefs in magic.

These children's problems

Many children have never had the opportunity to see the natural wild animals that are their heritage. Because of the large number of people living in the villages, employment, health and education is of a very low standard. There are too many people to be supported by too few.

Because of the overcrowded classes, the children don't get the education they could in smaller classes. It is hard to stay concentrated in a big crowd, so the children are sometimes 'switched off' during school time. Many have not grasped the very basics of education.

Because education is poor, many of these children await a future of unemployment and it's difficult to get the children motivated enough to plan for their future.



Why do they need education?

- By educating the children about nature conservation and animal welfare, we can give them the chance to make a difference and become an example to others.
- By educating these children about social behavior, life skills and communication, we give these children more self-confidence and awareness of the opportunities in life.
- Education enables people to make informed decisions in life.

Why is it so important to take them into the bush?

The environment is their heritage. It is important for our future generations to understand the vital necessity of looking after nature.

- Interaction with the environment is the best tool for education.
- It is easier to learn something and to remember when you see, touch, feel, smell and taste it. By being educated in the bush the children have the opportunity to use all their senses.
- It is easier to inspire compassion and care for animals when they see and interact with them, they have no experience of the natural environment and by having this experience they can pass on their knowledge to the next generations.
- The education they receive with our project should assist them in obtaining gainful employment either in conservation or tourism.



Background of African animals

Africa has a huge diversity of wildlife and ecosystems but much of this has been destroyed by human encroachment. Hunting and poaching have also played a big role in the diminishing numbers of animals, and added to this is the continual killing for traditional medicines. The only reason why some animals are alive today is because they are protected in private and national game reserves.

Wildlife in the rural and agricultural areas has been eliminated for many years, and very few have survived or adapted to the cities and farms. Every species has a role to play in the world's ecosystem. Removal of any species threatens the survival of others that depend upon it. Eventual destruction of the animals and their habitat could result in the destruction of humans themselves.

ORPHANED ANIMALS

Most animals are shy and have associated humans with destruction. As a result, many animals, although they exist, are rarely seen. Orphaned wild animals have been habituated to humans, and although they cannot be released, can be seen and experienced by the children. Whilst humans care for humans who are maimed or injured, very few care for animals in the same condition. At the orphanage, animals can at least have a life, and at the same time play a role in education.

Orphaned animals also play a role in providing necessary research that will enable us to understand their needs for survival in the wild. This information is freely available to assist those who have wildlife sanctuaries. Orphaned animals instill compassion in people who interact with them. Only by caring will people understand them and look after them.

Help the animal by educating people

- If people are educated, they will understand the spiritual and vital importance of our environment. If we can provide education to children, the animals will benefit in the future.

Risk assessment for South Africa

We have a duty of care to all our volunteers and this guide has been developed to ensure that we follow these guidelines.

Essentially, it is necessary to consider and document the hazards, determine the level of risk associated with these hazards, itemize procedures taken to minimize/control the risks, consider the level of risk after instigating control measures, and determine the nature of any further action needed.

Health

Risk: LOW

Nothing can spoil a holiday more than feeling off-color, and nothing can dull the pleasure of your holiday memories more than getting ill far from home. There are a number of health issues that you should be aware of, particularly if you're from the northern hemisphere.

However, while there are risks anywhere, South Africa has a relatively salubrious climate and our levels of water treatment, hygiene and such make it a pretty safe destination.

Inoculations

If you're an adult, you won't need any inoculations unless you're traveling from a yellow-fever endemic area (the yellow fever belt of Africa or South America), in which case you will need certification to prove your inoculation status when you arrive in South Africa. It is recommended that you have the required inoculations four to six weeks before you travel to South Africa (a yellow fever inoculation certificate only becomes valid 10 days after inoculation - after which it remains valid for 10 years).

Hepatitis B inoculations are recommended for children up to the age of 12 who have not completed the series of injections as infants. Booster doses for tetanus and measles can also be administered.

Medical facilities

Medical facilities in cities and larger towns are world-class, but you will find that in rural areas the clinics and hospitals deal with primary health needs, and therefore do not offer the range of medical care that the large metropolitan hospitals do. Trained medical caregivers are deployed around the country, so help is never far away. Hoedspruit has a doctor's office and a military hospital, and the next private clinic is in Tzaneen, which is about 90 kms (1 and a half hours) from our location.

The Sun

We have a warm sunny climate and you should wear sunscreen and a hat whenever you are out of doors during the day, particularly between 10am and 4pm, regardless of whether there is cloud cover or not. Even if you have a dark complexion, you can still get sunburned if you are from a cooler climate and have not had much exposure to the sun. Sunglasses are also recommended wear, as the glare of the African sun can be strong.

MALARIA

Q: Do I need to take malaria tablets?

Many of the main tourist areas are malaria-free, so you need not worry at all. However, the Kruger National Park, the Lowveld of Mpumalanga and Limpopo, and the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal do pose a malaria risk in the summer months. Many local people and some travelers do not take malaria prophylaxis, but most health professionals recommend you do. Consult your doctor or a specialist travel clinic for the latest advice concerning malaria prophylaxis, as it changes regularly.

Always use mosquito repellent, wear long pants, closed shoes and light long-sleeved shirts at night, and sleep under a mosquito net in endemic areas (the anopheles mosquito, which carries malaria, operates almost exclusively after dark). It is advisable to avoid malarial areas if you are pregnant.

What happens if a volunteer gets sick?

You will be taken to and checked by an English-speaking doctor in Hoedspruit. Based upon his assessment with our project manager a decision will be made as to the next steps to take to ensure the volunteers health and well being. This may include:

1. Provision of medicine and rest
2. Further medical checks
3. Being admitted to a local hospital
4. In serious cases we work with the insurance provider regarding repatriating the individual.

Climate

Risk: Low

A subtropical location, moderated by ocean on three sides of the country and the altitude of the interior plateau, account for the warm temperate conditions so typical of South Africa - and so popular with its foreign visitors.

South Africa is famous for its sunshine. It's a relatively dry country, with an average annual rainfall of about 464 mm (compared to a world average of about 860mm). While the Western Cape gets most of its rainfall in winter, the rest of the country is generally a summer-rainfall region.



At the same time, temperatures in South Africa tend to be lower than in other countries at similar latitudes - such as Australia - due mainly to greater elevation above sea level.



On the interior plateau the altitude - Johannesburg lies at 1 694 meters - keeps the average summer temperatures below 30 degrees Celsius. In winter, for the same reason, night-time temperatures can drop to freezing point, in some places lower. South Africa's coastal regions are therefore warmest in winter. There is, however, a striking contrast between temperatures on the country's east and west coasts, due respectively to the warm Agulhas and cold Benguela Currents that sweep the coastlines.



Being in the southern hemisphere, our seasons stand in opposition to those of Europe and North America, so, yes - we spend Christmas on the beach!

SUMMER

Over much of South Africa, summer (mid-October to mid-February) is characterized by hot, sunny weather - often with afternoon thunderstorms that clear quickly, leaving a warm, earthy, uniquely African smell in the air. The Western Cape, with its Mediterranean climate, is the exception, getting its rain in winter.

AUTUMN

- Autumn (fall) in South Africa (mid-February to April) offers in some ways the best weather. Very little rain falls over the whole country, and it is warm but not too hot, getting colder as the season progresses. In Cape Town, autumn is fantastic, with hot sunny days and warm, balmy nights, which many people spend at outdoor cafés.

WINTER

- Winter in South Africa (May to July) is characterized in the higher-lying areas of the interior plateau by dry, sunny, crisp days and cold nights. So it's a good idea to bring warm clothes. The hot, humid KwaZulu-Natal coast, as well as the Lowveld (lower-lying areas) of Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces, offer fantastic winter weather with sunny, warmish days and virtually no wind or rain. The Western Cape gets most of its rain in winter, with quite a few days of cloudy, rainy weather. However, these are always interspersed with wonderful days to rival the best of a British summer. The high mountains of the Cape and the Drakensberg in KwaZulu-Natal usually get snow in winter.

SPRING

- Nowhere in South Africa is spring (August to mid-October) more spectacular than in the Cape provinces. Here the grey winter is forgotten as thousands of small, otherwise insignificant plants cover the plains in an iridescent carpet of flowers. The journey to see the flowers of the Namaqualand in the Western and Northern Cape is an annual pilgrimage for many South Africans.

WHAT IS THE BEST TIME OF THE YEAR TO TRAVEL?

That depends on what you want to do. The flowers are obviously best in August and September. The best time for game viewing is late spring (September and October). The Southern Right Whales hang around off our coasts from about mid-June to the end of October. The diving is best in most of the country outside of summer (i.e., from April through September), and so is the surfing - but that certainly doesn't limit either activity to those times.

River rafting is better in the Cape at the end of winter, and in KwaZulu-Natal in the height of summer (late November to mid-February). In Mpumalanga and Limpopo, it's less time-dependent. The "shoulder" seasons - spring and autumn - are best for hiking, as summer can be hot over most of the country. In the Drakensberg, summer thunderstorms are dangerous, while there is a good chance of snow in winter. In the Cape, the winters are wet, so hiking can be a bit hard-core.

If you're a birder, the Palearctic migrants arrive around November and the intra-African migrants usually by mid-October. Of course, if you want to lounge around on the beach, midsummer is the best time - though everyone else will be there too. And - big bonus - the beaches of northern KwaZulu-Natal are warm and sunny even in midwinter.

Food, drink and hygiene

CAN I DRINK THE WATER? YES

Risk: medium

High-quality tap (faucet) water is available almost everywhere in South Africa, treated so as to be free of harmful microorganisms, and in any area, other than informal or shack settlements, is both palatable and safe to drink straight from the tap. In some areas, the water is mineral-rich, and you may experience a bit of gastric distress for a day or two until you get used to it. Bottled mineral water, both sparkling and still, is readily available in most places.



Drinking water straight from rivers and streams could put you at risk of waterborne diseases - especially downstream of human settlements. The water in mountain streams, however, is usually pure and wonderful. In the Cape, particularly, the water contains humic acid, which stains it the color of diluted Coca-Cola - this is absolutely harmless, and the water is wonderful. You may also find this coloring in tapwater in some areas. It's fine - it just looks a bit weird in the bath.

South African cuisine

Risk: low

For the more daring diner, South Africa offers culinary challenges from crocodile sirloins to fried caterpillars to sheep heads. All three are reputed to be delicious. For the not quite so brave, there are myriad indigenous delicacies such as biltong (dried, salted meat), bobotie (a much-improved version of Shepherd's pie) and boerewors (handmade farm sausages, grilled on an open flame).

Those who prefer to play it altogether safe will find that most eateries offer a familiar global menu - anything from hamburgers to sushi to pad Thai to spaghetti bolognese.



Meals with our local partners

It seems that more and more people have special dietary requirements these days, such as gluten free, lactose free, vegetarians, vegans etc.

You might **choose not to eat** some types of foods for different reasons. The reasons may be to do with religion, culture, where you live in the world, beliefs about what is food - and sometimes you cannot eat some foods because they make you sick.

Our local partner will cater for you if you are vegetarian or vegan, but please understand that gluten free and organic products are very expensive and difficult to source locally. We would strongly advise you to provide and/or bring any food replacement needed for any intolerance or allergy you may have.



Thank you for understanding and your cooperation. Please remember to specify your request when completing your booking.

SOUTH AFRICA WINE

Risk: low

South African wines are among the best in the world, and with the top estates located in the scenic Cape, wine tourism represents one of the country's growth industries.

Transportation

Risk: Medium

From OR Tambo International Airport, you will catch another flight to Hoedspruit Eastgate airport. For bookings go to [AIRLINK](#) or CemAir

✓ Contact SafariLink on bookings@safarilinksa.com

You can also hire a car at the airport and drive to Hoedspruit. Contact us to get the directions from Johannesburg tour local project. You can hire a car through Trophy Motors to receive a volunteer rate: info@trophytoyota.com



In general, Public transport is not recommended to overseas visitors.

Crime, security

Risk: Medium

Crime in the Limpopo Province is very low and like anywhere else in the world, can be a problem, but you really need not do much more than take all the usual sensible precautions. Know where you're going before you set off, particularly at night, watch your possessions, don't walk alone in dodgy areas, and lock your doors at night. And, like anywhere else in the world, there are some areas of major cities that are dodgier than others. It is easy to avoid these and still have a good time.

When walking through areas that are considered risky, avoid wearing visible jewelry or carrying cameras and bags over your shoulder. Keep cell phones (mobile phones) and wallets tucked away where no one can see them. Check beforehand that the areas you plan to visit are safe by asking hotel staff or police. It is not advisable to use local commuter and metro trains as attacks on foreigners have occurred. Other sensible advice is not to hitchhike, not to accept or carry items for strangers and not follow people or accept invitations from people you don't know.

Carjackings

Those who choose to drive private cars, either borrowed or hired, should be aware that car hijackings do occur, although precautions can be taken to avoid this. Drivers should always be on the alert when they come to a halt at traffic lights or stop streets, as well as when they are arriving at or leaving premises. Doors should be locked at all times, and while the temptation is to keep windows open in sunny weather, they should be kept closed.

Plan your travel route beforehand. Make sure that you do not leave valuables in clear view of people on the side of the road. Articles such as cellular phones and handbags, laptops left on seats are favored targets of smash and grab thieves.

ATMs and con artists

Watch out for con artists. A favored target is the automated teller machine (ATM). **Under no circumstances** allow a stranger to assist you in your transaction! Should your card become stuck in the ATM, enter your PIN three times whereupon the machine will retain your card. You can then approach the bank to release it, or call the helpline number that can usually be found at ATMs for assistance. When possible ask our local partner's management to assist you when drawing cash at the ATM.

Check your bank account regularly while traveling to make sure your card hasn't been copied so you can stop further abuse. It is advised to inform your bank that you are traveling to South Africa so they can check on the authorization request for any debit on your credit card. You should give them your telephone number so they can call you if they have suspicious transactions on your credit card account.

Lost passports

- Should you lose your passport, report the loss as soon as possible to your country's embassy or consulate, and to the local police.
- Make sure you bring a copy of your passport for us to have here, and/or leave one at home so it can be sent to you.

Political risk

Risk: low

The history of South Africa's electoral politics dates back to the mid-19th century. Historical familiarity with electoral procedures and the development of a strong party system helps to strengthen modern electoral politics.

General elections under universal suffrage have been held without any troubles. Good electoral administration has included a strong commitment to conflict mediation procedures, using the skills generated through trade union-based collective bargaining in earlier decades. Electoral reform to enhance parliamentary accountability constitutes the main policy challenge in this sphere today.

Local laws, customs

Risk: Low

Stay out of jail

Bear in mind that committing a criminal offense in any foreign country is always more of a problem than doing so at home. You're probably not planning to, but there are a few actions, which could land you in one of our not-too-luxurious jails. These include smuggling, bilking, and trading in, or using, recreational drugs – with the exception of tobacco and alcohol. Poaching is probably far from your mind but, just in case you're tempted to "harvest" a rhino horn as a souvenir, remember our game scouts are armed.

Specific local laws

- The local laws are very similar to those elsewhere in terms of drugs, discrimination, religion etc. (but perhaps not as rigorously enforced in some places)
- If a volunteer is arrested we will work with the local consular staff accordingly.

Overall current risk assessment

Risk: Low

Emergency procedure

In an emergency, all volunteers will be evacuated by the safest way, to an area or country that has been assessed as being saved by the embassy of the volunteer's country. They work with the local authorities, local consular staff and colleagues in Hoedspruit to ensure that all volunteers are safe at all times.

**AFRICA IS WAITING FOR
YOU SEE YOU SOON!!**