



# THEMBA TRAVEL

## USEFUL INFORMATION

*Before you go, this is what you need to know.*

### PASSPORTS & VISAS

For all international travel, the visitor to South Africa must have a valid passport.

You don't need a visa to enter South Africa if you're a British passport holder staying for less than 90 days. Nationalities of other countries should check their visa requirements. Please refer to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office website for current information. <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

#### **What do I need to check with my passport to travel to South Africa?**

Please note that all foreigners who wish to visit South Africa must have a passport valid for at least 6 months after his/her intended return date. The passport must have four blank (unstamped) visa pages to enter the country. It is preferred these are facing pages. Your international carrier can deny boarding if you do not have the blank (unstamped) visa pages. Travellers should ensure enough pages for visas and immigration stamps to enter South Africa and other countries to be visited.

These blank pages cannot be endorsement or amendment pages. As a general precaution, all travellers are advised to carry a photocopy of their passport's photo/bio information page and keep it separate from their passport.

It must also be machine-readable.

#### **Do I need vaccinations to visit South Africa?**

South Africa does not require travellers to be vaccinated. We suggest asking your doctor for up-to-date vaccination advice for South Africa, and it's a good idea to be up to date with the recommended vaccinations for your home country. Another place to check the recommended vaccinations is the [Travel Health Pro website](#).

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U.S. citizens (US passport holders) travelling to the Republic of South Africa for 90 days or less for tourism or business purposes do not need visas. U.S. green card holders (non-US passport holders) require visas to visit South Africa. Nationals of other countries must check the list of visa-exempt countries to see if they need to apply for visas.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

We want you to embark on your trip feeling comfortable and have the correct travel insurance in place. Getting the best cover to suit your plans will give you reassurance from where you book to when you travel, but we know that the coronavirus pandemic is making that choice harder. Most travel insurers have either withdrawn cover or introduced exclusions in their products since the start of the outbreak.

Insurers now regard Covid-19 as a 'known event'. Rather than a one-off disruption, like a hurricane or volcanic eruption, they consider it an ongoing situation. This makes it difficult for the insurance market to provide cover.

## TRAVELLING WITH MINORS

The South African Government has scrapped the requirement of producing an unabridged birth certificate for tourists entering the country.

There are often additional requirements if the child has only one parent or neither parent. You should check the Entry requirements section of the [FCDO travel advice](#). Before taking a child outside the UK and Ireland, you must have the permission of everyone with parental responsibility. You'll automatically have parental responsibility if you're the child's mother, but you'll still need the permission of anyone else with parental responsibility. You might be asked for evidence at the UK or foreign border. A letter is usually sufficient, and this should include the other person or people's contact information and details about the trip.

## MEDICAL CARE

Medical services in South Africa are readily available. Visitors are advised to secure medical coverage on their medical insurance before arriving in the country. All establishments will have the contact details of doctors and dentists in the area.

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Visitors are advised to bring along supplies of specialised medication they may require. Otherwise, over-the-counter medication may be purchased at pharmacies and emergency pharmacies. With high temperatures in the Summer (December - February), don't forget to use sunscreen and drink plenty of water in the African sun.

## **MALARIA**

Malaria is widespread in many tropical and subtropical countries. The illness is caused by a parasite spread by the Anopheles mosquito, which generally bites after sunset.

You can't be vaccinated against malaria. Mosquito bite avoidance is essential as no antimalarial is considered adequate. It's important to discuss your requirements with your doctor, as some antimalarials have side effects or may be incompatible with certain medical conditions.

Make your doctor aware of all the destinations you'll visit so the correct antimalarial can be prescribed. Taking the tablets as directed, including after you've returned home, is essential to cover the disease's incubation period.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

South Africa has good roads, but public transport can sometimes be a problem, especially away from major centres. City bus services are good, but finding taxi services in smaller places can take time and effort. Travellers can also decide on car hire. Uber, taxis are available at airports/hotels and restaurants and on-call.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

Every country has its regulations and enforcement levels relating to health and safety standards. These do not always match the very high standards we are used to in the UK. The health and safety of our customers are of paramount importance, and we work closely with our partners to assess risk and ensure the continued improvement of services to our clients. We will provide you with information that may be beneficial before your travelling and are on hand to advise while you are away. Please contact us if you have any concerns before departure or while on your trip.

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## SECURITY

Valuables, including traveller's cheques, should be locked away from your hotel or lodge. All hotels/lodges have safe deposits. Use traveller's cheques or credit cards rather than carrying large amounts of cash on your person. The streets in the cities are not dangerous, but it is unwise to walk alone after dark or away from well-lit streets, especially carrying bags and cameras. Use taxis at night and only those booked through a reputable taxi company. Always keep your car doors locked. It is not advisable to resist if confronted. When in the cities, take the same precautions you would go anywhere in the world.

## TRAVEL EMERGENCIES

If you have lost your passport or wallet, please contact the local police department and file a report. Once you have done this, contact one of your country's Embassies or Consulates in South Africa.

## THE BEST TIME TO VISIT

South Africa has excellent weather all year round, so visiting depends on what you want. January - March are hot months that reach temperatures from 27 to 35 degrees.

The best game-watching time is June to October when the vegetation isn't as thick, and game viewing is easier but pleasing all year round at private reserves.

The Southern right whales can be seen off the coasts from about mid-June to the end of October, and the humpback whales from August to December. Hermanus is best known as the whaling town and celebrates whale season in September.

Spring and Autumn are best for hiking because summer can be sweltering. If you want to lounge on the beaches, midsummer is the best time, but remember that everyone else will be there too. The beaches of KwaZulu-Natal are warm and sunny, even in midwinter. Diving is generally best from April to September, and so is surfing, but such activities are more expensive than during these periods.

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The flower season is at its best in August and September. For those who enjoy Birding, the paleo-arctic migrants arrive in November, and the intra-Africa migrants usually by mid-October.

## BEACHES

It is the beautiful beaches that attract locals and internationals. The Blue Flag program recognises communities working to promote swimmable, drinkable, fishable water. A Blue Flag tells you a beach or marina is managed sustainably, is accessible, and has high-quality services and safety procedures. Blue Flag beaches also actively monitor water quality.

During the 2023 season, 51 beaches, four marinas and two tourism boats in South Africa will have Blue Flags flying after they successfully demonstrate their ability to meet 33 criteria related to water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management, and safety and services. As in previous years, the Western Cape achieved the highest number of sites with 8 blue flag beaches.

## CONVERSIONS

Distances are given in kilometres (1 mile = 1.62 kilometres). Temperatures are given in degrees Celsius (Centigrade) (20 degrees Celsius = 68 degrees Fahrenheit).

## CURRENCY

The main unit of currency is the South African Rand, divided into 100 cents.

## DRINKING WATER

South Africa has very high standards for water quality. The SANS 241 drinking water standard compares well with the best in the world. The drought from mid-2017 to mid-2018 in the Western Cape made locals aware of and appreciate their water sources, and they are still in the habit of using water sparingly. We encourage travellers to use water flasks and avoid plastic bottles. RECYCLE empty bottles.

## DRIVING

South Africans drive on the left and give way to the right. Drivers must have a valid licence with a photo or an international driving permit.

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## **ELECTRICITY**

Currently, the country is battling with what is called loadshedding. The state power utility, Eskom, blames an ageing fleet of coal-fired stations that consistently break down. These stations generate little more than half their capacity - as power demand consistently outstrips supply. Depending on what stage 1-6, the country is on, determines how many times the electricity goes off daily. It usually goes off for 2 hours at a time. In major hotels and shopping centres, it stays on due to generators. Smaller operators/accommodations/suppliers might experience this.

We do ask travellers to be aware of this. A three-point round-pin adaptor is required for razors and hairdryers.

## **ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS**

South Africa has various accommodation options, including beautiful guest houses, hotels, luxury boutiques and self-catering accommodations, which our clients can access. We are about connecting travellers to the area's people and culture. The unique local experiences are designed to benefit the community. In most locations, we stay in simple tourist-class hotels and guesthouses (i.e. 2-3 stars). On many trips, you'll also experience a night with a local family at a homestay.

## **HOMESTAYS**

On our leisure trips, we also include a homestay for a night or two to get a feel for local life. Facilities are often basic but homely, and what better way to immerse into a culture than by sharing a roof and a meal with a local family.

## **BASIC**

For travellers who want exceptional value and to make the most of their stay. You want time and the flexibility to choose where and how you want to spend your time and money. Keeping many of the activities optional, we aim to make travel possible for those on even the most shoestring budgets. Basic accommodation is simple, clean, and centrally located to give you a good night's rest and a great trip price. If you are happy to share facilities, this is a great option.

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Our basic options are Ideal for couples, small groups of friends and families on a budget. We also offer basic accommodation to our student groups as part of the Educational Expeditions.

## COMFORT

For those who want a little more comfort, we hear you. We can provide more soft and comfortable spaces in small apartments and boutique-style hotels. Your comfort option is your choice.

## OUR LOCAL GUIDES

We create opportunities for youth and women guides from the local area. They are well-trained and certified and know the area well. They will get you from A to B, show you the sights, and let you know the unique secrets of the area. Your guide will treat travellers respectfully, and we encourage travellers to do likewise. They are knowledgeable and will recommend the food, attractions worth a visit or local language tips.

## ACTIVITIES TO ENJOY

There is much to do in South Africa, and it caters to all visitors. These might include orientation walks, street tours, and visits to local markets. From solo travellers to families to groups, we can suggest activities of your liking.

Always check your itinerary to see what is included. Do check the itinerary of your tour to see which meals are included. If you want to seek and find your food, your guide can assist you with whatever craving you have.

## FOOD

South Africa boasts a variety of different foods at affordable prices. We try to cater for specific dietary requirements, but some meals and food activities are set in advance and may be challenging to adjust. Do advise us well ahead of your trip of any dietary requirements at the time of booking so that we can ensure you'll enjoy this trip.

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