

BIG FIVE®

TOURS & EXPEDITIONS

Enriching Lives Through Distinctive Journeys

Destination Information Guide

South Africa



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Welcome to the World of Big Five!

The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions and answers to some frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip.

Big Five Tours & Expeditions is pleased to welcome you on this exciting adventure. We take great care to insure that your travel dreams and expectations are well met. Our distinctive journeys allow you to experience the finest aspects each destination has to offer. We also aim to provide you with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the places you'll visit and the people you'll meet.



Cape Town ~ Elevation: 138 feet, Latitude: 33 59S, Longitude: 018 36E												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	70	71	68	64	60	56	55	56	58	61	65	69
Average Number of Days With Precipitation												
Days	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	6	5	6	9	12	13	14	13	11	9	7	7
Port Elizabeth ~ Elevation: 197 feet, Latitude: 33 59S, Longitude: 025 36E												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	72	72	70	67	63	60	58	59	61	63	66	69
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	1.3	1.4	2	1.9	2.4	2	2	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.2	1.6
Johannesburg ~ Elevation: 5576 feet, Latitude: 26 08S, Longitude: 028 14E												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	69	68	66	61	57	51	52	56	62	64	66	67
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	4.9	3.8	3.3	2.1	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.2	1.1	2.9	4.7	4.3

WEATHER

South Africa's climate is generally mild throughout the year. Summer is from October until March. Snow falls at higher mountain elevations. Mean annual rainfall of about 20 inches. KwaZulu Natal has a mostly subtropical climate with high humidity in summer. Southern Gauteng, Cape interior and the Free State regions experience hot summers with occasional thunder showers and frosty winters. Western Cape has a Mediterranean-type climate with warm, dry summers and cooler winters with winter rainfall.

TIME ZONES

South Africa is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) +2 hours; and Central European Winter Time + 1 hour; Eastern Standard Winter Time, USA + 7 hours. Daylight Savings Time is not recognized.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passports: For international travel, a passport valid for at least six months from date of departure, containing at least 3 blank pages are necessary.

Visas: Many countries require travelers to obtain visas prior to arrival. Big Five Tours & Expeditions has appointed Travisa to process required visas for our passengers. You can find the necessary forms from Travisa's website at: www.travisa.com. Please use account code JP1551, and follow the directions.

Important: Even if you do not need a visa prior to departure, please check your passport well in advance of departure to insure:

- 1) It is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.
- 2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa/entry stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

Please note: Pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.

Note: Remember to carry with you in a safe place photocopies of all important documents in the event your passport or other documents are lost or stolen. Also, it's a good idea to have a passport photo with you. As a tourist, you will need to produce your passport when checking in at hotels, changing money or travelers' checks and to prove your identity whenever requested by a policeman.

*"All non-South African passport holders are required to have at least two, entirely blank (unstamped) visa pages (i.e. pages facing each other not front and back) in their passport, each time entry is sought into South Africa. These pages are in addition to the endorsement/amendment pages at the back of the passport. **SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS PROHIBIT AIRLINES FROM BOARDING PASSENGERS WITHOUT THE REQUIRED BLANK VISA PAGES.**" Please note that the South Africa government is serious about this, and you may be denied boarding your flight or risk deportation on arrival in South Africa.*

AIRPORT FORMALITIES

Upon arrival, proceed through immigration and baggage claims and customs. Big Five personnel or their representatives will assist you with your baggage, escort you to your hotel, and assist with check-in formalities.

CUSTOMS

Visitors are allowed to bring in 400 cigarettes, 250 grams of tobacco and 50 cigars, one liter of spirit, two liters of wine, 50ml of perfume and 250ml of toilet water. Also gifts, souvenirs and all other goods to the value of R500. No one under 18 is entitled to alcohol or tobacco allowances.

Note: There is a flat-rate duty of 20% on gifts in excess of R500 and up to R10,000.

Green Channel: Only if you have no more than the duty-free customs allowance, or no goods for commercial purposes or no prohibited or restricted goods.

Customs charges: You will have to pay duty on items that are over allowed limits. You normally do this before you leave the customs hall.

Prohibited Items: As in most countries, penalties for possession, use or trafficking in illegal drugs are strict and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

U.S. CUSTOMS

Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. There are limits on some items. Regulations frequently change. For a list of exempt items and more information contact your nearest Customs office or write the U.S. Customs Service, Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044.

CANADA CUSTOMS

Returning to Canada, declare all of goods acquired while outside Canada, such as purchases, gifts, prizes or awards that you are bringing with you or are having shipped to you. Include goods that are still in your possession that you bought at a Canadian or foreign duty-free shop. For more information, within Canada call the Border Information Service at 1-800-461-9999, or visit CBSA Web site at www.cbsa.gc.ca.

HEALTH

Visitors to Africa should be in generally good health. Talk with your personal physician about any shots or boosters recommended depending on your personal health profile and your itinerary. Tetanus and polio vaccines should be up to date. Be prepared to take precautions against sunburn with sunscreen and lip balm.

Yellow Fever: As of this writing, the South African Department of Health has issued a statement that all returning travelers from South Africa to Zambia and from Zambia to South Africa will now require proof of yellow fever vaccination. Previously, this was not required. **All in-transit passengers between the two destinations, irrespective of the time period in transit, will also require proof of yellow fever vaccination.**

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travelers over one year of age arriving within six days from infected areas. The yellow fever vaccination certificate only becomes valid 10 days *after* immunization. Also, travelers from more than 30 countries, including Angola, Bolivia, Brazil, and Peru, must have proof of vaccination.

Note: Most of southern Africa is not within the Yellow Fever endemic zone, according to CDC, but you must still comply with all other countries' entry requirements.

Malaria: Malaria risk, predominantly *falciparum* form, exists in low-altitude areas of the Northern Province, Eastern Transvaal (including Kruger National Park) and northeastern KwaZulu/Natal as far south as Tugela River. Risk is highest from October to May. Resistance to chloroquine has been reported. It's strongly recommended that visitors to these areas take anti-malaria tablets before entering these zones. Chloroquine plus proguanil (World Health Organization) *or* chloroquine plus pyrimethamine (South African High Commission) is recommended.

Rabies: Rabies is present. *Bilharzia* (schistosomiasis) is endemic north and east, and may be present elsewhere. Avoid swimming in fresh water. Swimming pools that are well-chlorinated and maintained are safe.

Hepatitis: *Hepatitis A* occurs and *hepatitis B* is hyper-endemic.

Health Care: Medical facilities are excellent. Health insurance is strongly advised for any foreign travel.

Please Note: If you are on medication, be sure to bring enough for the duration of the trip. Prescription medicines should always be carried in their original containers in your hand luggage.

Health insurance is strongly advised during any foreign travel.

U.S. residents: For the most current information, please check the latest regulations with your local health office or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax: 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or their main telephone number in Atlanta, 404-332-4559. Or, visit the CDC Internet home page at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

Canadian residents: Check the latest regulations with your local health office or the Public Health Agency of Canada visit the PHAC Internet home page at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>.

CLOTHING

*For general clothing information, please review the **Travel Handbook** in your pre-departure materials. See pre-departure information for general packing check list.*

South Africa's climate is generally mild throughout the year. Dress according to season and location. Cities in South Africa still tend toward a more European flavor so you will need proper attire for dining out in fine restaurants, especially in areas such as the Winelands. For tented camps, of course, the key is casual. In general, light-weight, fast-drying clothing is preferable. You might want to bring a jacket if you are traveling at higher elevations. For safaris in South Africa, dress for comfort and ease with cool, loose clothing for both men and women. Avoid camouflage-type clothing. Bright-colored clothes are not recommended on safari because we want to blend in with the background. Knit shirts, T-shirts, or cotton tops, jeans, khakis, and shorts are satisfactory. Bring along a couple pairs of long pants and a sweater or a jacket. Comfortable walking or athletic shoes are a must. And, don't forget your swimsuit. Most hotels, lodges and tented camps have beautiful pools.

LUGGAGE

*For general baggage information, please review the **Travel Handbook** in your pre-departure materials.*

FOR INTERNAL FLIGHTS: Flights within the country may have weight restrictions that may vary from 27 lbs to 44 lbs, depending on several factors, including type and size of aircraft, destination, etc. Specific weight limitations will be noted in your pre-departure information or itinerary.

NOTE: New precautions at Johannesburg Airport is experiencing increased incidents of thefts from passenger's checked luggage. Please be sure to follow the procedures below to reduce the risk of have items stolen from your luggage:

- ALL bags going through Johannesburg Airport **MUST** be securely locked, including side pockets of bags. Never put anything of value in an unsecured side pocket. Indeed, no valuable items should be put in checked luggage.
- **We strongly recommend 'shrink wrapping' bags that are checked in. This service is not expensive (about R35 per bag). This is also highly recommended for luggage to be**

stored. In addition, all stored luggage must be securely locked. It is worth the few extra minutes to follow this procedure. You can easily get your bags wrapped at the airport. There are wrapping services located near ticket counters.

MONEY

Monetary unit is South African Rand (R), with the international symbol ZAR. R1 = 100 cents Bank notes: R200, R100, R50, R20 and R10. Coins : 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, R1, R2, R5. Travelers must obtain permits from the South African Reserve Bank before they are allowed to leave the country with more than R500 in cash in their possession.

Credit Cards: Credit cards are widely accepted. American Express, however, is not as widely accepted as Visa and Mastercard. Clients travelling with American Express cards should also carry another credit card.

VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT)

The VAT rate is 14 percent and is levied on most services and products. Foreign tourists can have their VAT refunded at the port of exit, provided the value of items purchased is more than 250 South African Rands (R250). Only goods purchased from shops authorized under the export incentive scheme, and displaying VAT logo qualify for the refund. Visitors must be in possession of a valid passport, all necessary forms, and proof of payment documents to qualify.

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATIONS

South Africa has 11 official languages: English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Northern Sotho, Ndebele, Southern Sotho, Swazi, Tswana, Tsonga, Venda, Xhosa. English-speaking visitors should have no problem while traveling through the country.

ELECTRICITY

Standard power source is 200/230 volts AC 50Hz, using a 3-point round-pin plug, except in Pretoria (230v) and Port Elizabeth (200/250v). Bring an adaptor.

FOOD/DRINK

Tap water is considered safe to drink throughout the country. Milk is pasteurized and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat. South Africa is noted for its excellent fresh produce and meat. And, with almost 3,000 kilometers of coastline, seafood is plentiful and fresh.

Wine, of course is synonymous with the Cape. Upscale restaurants compare with the best in the world, serving meals accompanied by a 5-star wine list. Steak houses proliferate, as do pizza/pasta parlors and authentic Portuguese, Greek, German and Chinese eateries, McDonalds and KFC outlets. Some restaurants specialize in regional South African dishes such as Karoo lamb and venison, ostrich and crocodile dishes. Fresh seafood is always available. Traditional Cape cooking has a wonderful Malay influence while Natal is renowned for its hot and spicy Indian heritage.

Note: If you have food allergies or special/restricted dietary requests, please notify your travel agent or our office in advance, so that we may try to comply with your needs. Also, please advise your travel agent or our office if you have any mobility restrictions, so that we may inform our representatives accordingly. They will always strive to accommodate you to the best of their ability.

TIPPING

Tip Tipping should be done at your discretion and as a reward for good or exceptional service.

For general tipping guidelines please refer to:

www.cntraveler.com/travel-tips/travel-etiquette/2008/12/Etiquette-101-Tipping-Guide

SHOPPING

South Africa offers an astounding variety of things to buy, from the most sophisticated electronics to one-of-a-kind contemporary art pieces. The visual arts have a rich history in South Africa, and the contemporary art scene is no less exciting. From the traditional artifacts of ancient cultures to the cutting-edge work of today's practitioners, South Africa's art museums and galleries offer visitors a rich artistic feast. African arts and crafts are readily available in cities and towns, malls and open-air markets. At craft centers and roadside stalls all over the country you'll find fantastic pots, basket ware, beadwork, embroidery and carvings.

South African art from the Zulu tribe is unique, because it is generally not in the form of sculpture or paintings. Rather, their art exists in the embellishment of objects used in the home, such as platters, bowls, pails, utensils, and walking sticks. Art produced by the Zulu tribe has a strong sense of geometric design. The patterns usually relate to masculinity, femininity, fertility, or cattle.

SELECTED READING LIST

Many comprehensive and readily available guides are produced by Lonely Planet, Fodor, Insight, The Rough Guide, etc. Here are a few selections we thought might interest you. Barnes and Noble, www.barnesandnoble.com, and Longitude Books, www.longitudebooks.com, have collections of books, searchable by country

CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY

**Alan Paton, Umberto Adaggi (Photographer),
Designed by Timothy Hsu, Foreword by
Charles**

Paton's deeply moving story of Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo and his son Absalom, set against the backdrop of a land and people driven by racial inequality and injustice, remains the most famous and important novel in South Africa's history.

THE HEINEMANN BOOK OF SOUTH AFRICAN SHORT STORIES

Denis Hirson, Martin Trump (Editor)

The issue of apartheid pervades this vibrant collection of 27 South African short stories written between 1945 and 1992. Contributions from such celebrated writers as Bessie Head, Alex La Guma, and Nobel Prize winner Nadine Gordimer.

THE BOER WAR

Thomas Pakenham

Thomas Pakenham has constructed a narrative as vivid and fast moving as a novel. In many ways he challenges the accepted views of historians. He exposes the crucial role of two of the "Gold Bugs" (the richest of the Rand millionaires) in precipitating the war. He throws new light on the blunders of the British generals, Buller and Roberts, revealing a personal feud between the men comparable to the one between Lords Lucan and Cardigan that led to the Charge of the Light Brigade during the Crimean War. He writes movingly about the plight of the 100,000 black Africans who served both armies, and he explains the final political victory of the Boers—how they lost the war but won the peace—with far-reaching consequences for Europe and South Africa. Illustrated with over 200 color and black-and-white photographs and maps, this new edition of a definitive book makes an invaluable contribution to an understanding of South African history at a time of momentous change.

A HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Leonard Monteath Thompson

In the revised version of this acclaimed work, Leonard Thompson has added a new chapter, outlining the country's remarkable transition from a racist political order to a democratic one. A substantial new preface has also been added, and footnotes have been expanded. Above all, this penetrating exploration of South Africa's eventful history: from the earliest known human settlement of the region to the present day: focuses primarily on the experiences of the black inhabitants rather than on those of the white minority.

THE LAST EMPIRE: DE BEERS, DIAMONDS, AND THE WORLD

Stefan Kanfer

Chronicles the 19th-century diamond rush that transformed Johannes De Beers humble South African farmstead into an exotic Klondike. With a scholar's precision & a novelist's eye, the author recounts the rise of wild frontier towns like New Rush (now Kimberley) & Johannesburg, & their boisterous mix of plutocrats & prostitutes, gamblers & politicians. Shows the roots of the racial crisis in the developing land: the misery of black miners & the fortunes of white prospectors; the defeat of the African emperor Lobengula, & the rise of Cecil Rhodes, his legendary adversary, who ruled the Cape Colony & De Beers.

WILD SOUTH AFRICA

Alan G. Mountain, Lex Hes (Photographer)

This natural history tome explores a selection of South Africa's wilderness areas, reserves and national parks, each chosen for its truly wild, unspoiled character. Over 400 full-color photographs capture the significance of these often remote places in sweeping panoramas and close-up studies of their flora and fauna. *Wild South Africa* also explores key conservation issues. South Africa has a long history of indiscriminate and wide-scale destruction of wild animals and natural forests. More recently, human population growth

and development have pushed the wild places of South Africa into the remotest corners.

The country now faces a challenge in trying to balance the needs of nature and the demands of rapid development. It is only through a realization of how much there is to lose that South Africa's irreplaceable natural heritage will survive for future generations to enjoy.

**THE WASHING OF THE SPEARS:
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ZULU
NATION**

Donald R. Morris, Mangosuthu Buthelezi

Filled with colorful characters, dramatic battles, and an inexorable narrative momentum, this unsurpassed history details the 60-year existence of the Zulu Nation, from its brutal formation and zenith under the military genius Shaka (1787-1828) to its dissolution under Cetshwayo in the Zulu War of 1879.

**LONG WALK TO FREEDOM: THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF NELSON
MANDELA**

Nelson Mandela

This is an account of Nelson "Mandela's life from his 'country childhood' following his birth on July 18, 1918 to his inauguration as president of South Africa on May 10, 1994. Mandela traces the growth of his understanding of the oppression of the blacks of South Africa; his conviction that there was no alternative to armed struggle; his developing belief that all people, black and white, must be free for true freedom; and the effect that his commitment to overthrowing apartheid had on his family. Much of Mandela's memoir tells of his 27 years in prison.

**NO FUTURE WITHOUT FORGIVENESS
Desmond Mpilo Tutu**

The establishment of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a pioneering international event. Never had any country sought to move forward from despotism to democracy both by exposing the atrocities committed in the past and achieving reconciliation with its former oppressors. At the center of this unprecedented attempt at healing a nation has been Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whom President Nelson Mandela named as Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. With the final report

of the Commission just published, Archbishop Tutu offers his reflections on the profound wisdom he has gained by helping usher South Africa through this painful experience.

In *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Tutu argues that true reconciliation cannot be achieved by denying the past. But nor is it easy to reconcile when a nation "looks the beast in the eye." Rather than repeat platitudes about forgiveness, he presents a bold spirituality that recognizes the horrors people can inflict upon one another, and yet retains a sense of idealism about reconciliation.

**THE COVENANT
James A. Michener**

Adventurers, scoundrels and missionaries. The best and worst of two continents carve an empire out of the vast wilderness that is to become South Africa. For hundreds of years, their rivalries and passions spill across the land. From the first Afrikaners to the powerful Zulu nation and the missionaries who lived with both— all of them will influence and take part in the wars and politics that will change a nation forever.

**THE WINES OF SOUTH AFRICA
James Seely**

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the sweet white wines of Constantia were rated amongst the finest in the world. But as demand went up, quality went down and the market with it, so that Constantia became a memory. The growers and shippers concentrated on fortified wines in imitation of sherry and port. But now the term 'South African sherry' may no longer be used in Europe and that trade, too, has vanished. In the recent past, moreover, South African wines were shunned on account of apartheid. Now a new political age has arrived and with it wine-makers dedicated to quality, bringing out the unique character derived from the soils and the near perfect climate for grape growing enjoyed by so many different parts of the country. The choice is abundant and the wines are excellent. They are becoming widely available for the first time, and this book tells the complex and absorbing story, guiding the reader through a new and exciting range of very high quality wines.