



Travel-Information South Africa

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

International visitors traveling to South Africa must please ensure that their passport is valid for at least 6 months after their entry date. They also require three blank "VISA" page (**not endorsed page**) for **each** country that the guest intends to visit, plus one extra blank "VISA" page to accommodate any visa entries that may need to be inserted along the guests journey. (If there is insufficient space in the passport then entry will be denied). If a parent/guardian is travelling with a minor child/ren (**aged 18 years or younger**) then the parent/guardian must be in possession of a certified letter of consent from the non-accompanying parent or guardian.

Further visa information is available on the following website www.home-affairs.gov.za/visa_countries.asp. Please note we have provided this website as a guideline for further information, Terra Nova is not responsible for the content thereof.

CURRENCY

The currency unit is the Rand (ZAR), denoted by the symbol R, with 100 cents making up R1 (one Rand). Foreign currency can be exchanged at local banks and Bureaux de Change.

CREDIT CARDS

Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted throughout the country. American Express and Diners are less widely accepted.

BANKS

Most banks are open Mondays to Fridays 09h00 - 15h30 and Saturdays from 08h30 - 11h00.

The following banks offer foreign exchange services: First National, Nedbank, Standard Bank, and ABSA. Various automated teller machines (ATM's) are found in every large town. Several international banks have branches in the main cities.

The banks and the Bureau de Change at most airports offer the best exchange rates, but it is also possible to change money at hotel receptions.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The dates of certain public holidays change from year to year – refer below. If a public holiday falls on a Sunday, then the Monday is also declared a public holiday

01 January New Years Day

21 March Human Rights Day

Varies Good Friday

Varies Family Day

27 April Freedom Day

01 May Workers Day

16 June Youth Day

09 August National Women's Day

24 September Heritage Day

16 December Day of Reconciliation

25 December Christmas Day

26 December Day of Goodwill

SHOPPING

There are a variety of shopping centres, local handicraft markets and roadside stalls. Quality gold and diamond jewellery is high on the list of the most popular purchases. Leather goods, wooden carvings, sculptures, paintings, bead work and woven articles are also available for purchase.

Most major shopping centres and malls operate 7 days a week, but in smaller towns and rural areas you will find that shops are closed on a Sunday.

Trading hours are normally:

Monday - Saturday: 09h00 to 17h00

Sunday: 09h00 – 14h00

Suggested Shopping Complexes

Cape Town

Cavendish Square Claremont (15 minutes from the city centre)

Victoria Wharf Victoria & Alfred Hotel

Canal Walk Century City

Johannesburg

Sandton City and Sandton Square Adjacent to the Sandton Sun Hotel

Village Walk Sandton

Rosebank Mall Adjacent to The Grace Hotel

Sunstar Diamond Cutting Works 1147 Richard Road, Midrand

Tel: 011-315-8015

Durban

La Lucia Mall La Lucia (near Umhlanga)

The Pavillion Westville

Gateway Centre Umhlanga Rocks turnoff from the N2

VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT)

The VAT rate is 14% and is levied on most products and services.

Foreign tourists can have VAT refunded at a port of exit provided the value of each invoice for goods purchased exceeds ZAR 50.00 and the total value of all items purchased exceeds ZAR 250.00.

To qualify for a refund, visitors must be in possession of a valid passport, **valid tax invoices** and must produce the goods purchased. Please note that a receipt stating "for information only" is not accepted by the VAT authorities. The document must stipulate that it is a VAT invoice and show the amount charged. Goods are also not to be utilized/consumed whilst in South Africa and must be in original packaging.

LAUNDRY

Laundries are available at hotels/lodges around South Africa and laundry is charged per hotel rates.

POWER

All electrical appliances run on 220v. Outlets are round 3 pin, 15 amp plugs. Special adapters for video cameras, chargers and hairdryers are needed and can sometimes be supplied by some hotel receptions.

Various safari camps and lodges may not have 220v and may operate on solar powered 12v electricity.

Remember to bring spare batteries to have charged at the lodge while out on safari.

DRINKS POLICY

Drinks are usually excluded from the cost of your package unless otherwise specified in your itinerary.

DRIVING

In South Africa one drives on the left hand side of the road. The speed limit is usually 60-80 kph in built up areas and 120 kph on highways. Safety belts must be used at all times. Overseas visitors must carry a valid international driving licence. Should travellers not be in possession of a valid international driving licence before leaving their country of residence, they will not be permitted to hire a vehicle in South Africa. Talking on a cell phone whilst driving is an offence and if caught you will be fined.

Filling stations are conveniently situated throughout the country. Unleaded fuel is available. Most filling stations are open 24 hours a day. Please bear in mind that you are only able to pay for fuel in cash and filling stations are not self service.

LANGUAGE

There are 11 officially recognised languages, most of them indigenous to South Africa. English is one of these, and everywhere you go, you can expect to find people who speak and understand it. English is the language of the cities, of commerce and banking, of government and official documents. Road signs and official forms are in English. The President makes his speeches in English and at any hotel the service staff will speak English.

TIME

South Africa operates two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) throughout the year.

CLIMATE

South Africa enjoys a high number of clear, sunny days. Summer in South Africa lasts from October until March. Despite regional differences, South Africa's climate is generally mild throughout the year. Snowfall is limited to the highest mountain peaks and it is a relatively dry country with a mean annual rainfall of 502mm.

NATIONAL EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Department of Home Affairs (012) 810-8911
Medical Rescue Netcare 911 (011) 254-1911
Or ER 24 (011) 803-7707
Automobile Association 0800-010101 (Toll free)
Life Line 0800-012322 (Toll free)
Police 10111

RECOMMENDED READING

We recommend the following books specific to the South African region.

- Wild About Cape Town** – Duncan Butchart
- Wild About the Lowveld** – Duncan Butchart
- Long Walk to Freedom** – Nelson Mandela
- Vanishing Cultures of South Africa** - Peter Magubane
- Mandela, The End of an Era** - Charlene Smith
- Scramble for Africa** - Thomas Pakenham
- Complete Book of Southern African Mammals** - Gus Mills
- Creatures of Habit, African Animal Behaviour** - Peter Apps
- Safari Companion** – Richard D. Estes
- This is South Africa** - Peter Borchert
- Thabo Mbeki, Life and Times** - Adrian Hadland

Everyone should bring their own pair of BINOCULARS in order to get the most out of the safari

DRIVING IN SOUTH AFRICA

General Driving Information / Toll roads

- Road infrastructure is mostly excellent.
- Many of the national roads between the major centres are toll roads. One can pay either with credit card or cash at the toll points.
- While most national roads are tarred and in good condition, the more rural the road, the more likely it is to be potholed and poorly surfaced.
- Driving is a viable option with careful planning advised as South Africa is a huge country not easily traversed in a day.
- If you're not used to driving long distances, rather break the journey, as fatigue is a major contributing factor in motor vehicle accidents.
- All signposts are written in English.
- When asking for directions, you may be surprised to get the response "turn left at the next robot..." - a 'robot' is the South African term for traffic lights.
- Petrol/Fuel Stations are mostly open 24 hours and spread along all the routes. They are not self-help, but manned by attendants who can also check oil, water and tyre pressure if required. Gratuities for this service are at your own discretion.
- Many of these petrol stations have restaurants and restrooms – useful to freshen-up on the long drives.
- There are three types of fuel available, leaded, unleaded and Diesel. The car rental agent will be able to advise which fuel to use for the applicable hired vehicle.
- Petrol** prices are fixed and controlled by the government – they are **payable in Cash (preferably) or credit card (Caution: available at certain petrol stations only)**, or South African Petrol Cards – however these are available to local citizens only.
- When travelling through South Africa's neighbouring countries, petrol-stations are more scarce, so be prepared.

Rules of the Road / Traffic Enforcement

Drivers License

- An International Driver's Permit carried in conjunction with your national driving license is recommended and must be printed or authenticated in English.
- If your license does not have a photograph on it, then you must also carry your passport with you so that you can be identified as the legal holder of the driving license.
- Always make sure documentation is carried with you at all times when driving.
- Traffic officers will expect to see documentation if they stop you for any reason.

Rules of the Road

- In South Africa we drive on the left-hand side of the road, and our cars – rental cars included – are right-hand drive vehicles.
- Keep to the left and pass right
- All distances, speed limits (and speedometers) are in kilometres.
- There are strict drinking and driving laws - with a maximum allowable alcohol blood content of 0.05%. Translated that means about one glass of wine for the average woman and perhaps 1.5 or two for the average or large man.
- Four-way-stops are commonly found at the quieter intersections – the first vehicle to arrive has priority. On roundabouts, give way to the right, although this is often overlooked and it is wise to proceed with caution.
- Wearing of seat belts is compulsory. All occupants of a vehicle are required to wear seatbelts whilst travelling, if you are caught without you will be subject to a fine.
- Using hand-held phones while driving is against the law – use a vehicle phone attachment or hands-free kit, if you want to speak on your mobile phone.

Speed limit

- The general speed limit on national highways, urban freeways and other major routes is 120km/h (75mph).
- On secondary (rural) roads it is 100km/h (60mph).
- In built-up areas it is usually 60km/h (35mph) unless otherwise indicated.
- Check the road signs and obey the speed limit at all times
- Speed limits are maximum speeds. If it is raining, misty or the road is congested, reduce speed.
- Reduce speed near areas where there is pedestrian activity.

Safety

When driving anywhere in South Africa, try to apply the following safety precautions:

- Always drive with your doors locked and windows wound up, especially when stopped at traffic lights.
- Don't ever stop to pick up hitchhikers, however innocent, lost or appealing they look. If you are worried about someone's plight, stop at the next town and report it to someone there.
- Do not leave anything valuable on show in your car when you leave it unattended, and always lock your car when you leave it, even if you are only going to be gone for a few minutes.
- Try to always park in a busy, well-lit area.
- Take advice from your hosts where you are staying, and ask if there are any areas that tourists should avoid driving through
- Do not confront aggressive or abusive road users.
- If possible avoid travelling at night or in remote areas.

In Case of Emergency

Further to the general and emergency details in our Contact Documentation:

Police 10111

Ambulance 10117

If you are calling from a mobile you can also get emergency services by dialling 112.

Enjoy South Africa!

Terra Nova Tours

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