

# ..... KINGDOMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA .....

DETAILED ITINERARY

SOUTH AFRICA, SWAZILAND & LESOTHO

Jan 08/24



Superb game viewing, fascinating tribal cultures, stunning scenery and visits to three southern African countries make this journey a truly unique adventure. Learn about the Swazi, Zulu and Basotho tribes. Travel through South Africa and the Kingdoms of Swaziland and Lesotho. Enjoy South Africa's most famous national parks teeming with wildlife.

Beginning in Hartbeespoort, we visit the De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Center before traveling to world-famous Kruger National Park in search of the "Big Five" - lions, leopards, elephants, buffaloes and rhinos.

Visit the Kingdom of Swaziland, with its mountainous grandeur, lush forests and game viewing in Royal Hlane National Park. Spend an afternoon with a female Swazi chief and learn about their culture, including the energetic Sibhaca Dance. Encounter the Zulu, visit St. Lucia Wetlands and Hluhluwe, famous for its success with rhino breeding.

## FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 25 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • Start in Johannesburg and finish in Cape Town, South Africa
- All meals included • Visit 3 African countries
- Learn about and enjoy cheetahs up close and at full speed at De Wildt Cheetah Center • Jeep Safaris in Kruger, Manyeleti Game Reserve, Hluhluwe Imfolozi (highest concentration of rhinos in the world) and Swaziland Royal National Park • Visit the Kingdoms of Swaziland & Lesotho • Participate in Swazi culture at Umphakatsi • Mlilwane Wildlife Bush Walk • See the Valley of Desolation in the Karoo National Park • Visit Ladysmith in the Free State and the battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War • Learn about Swazi, Zulu and Basotho tribes • Drive the Garden Route to Cape Town • Drive to the Cape of Good Hope • Enjoy South African wines in Stellenbosch • Enjoy the sites of Cape Town

## DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

**Sept 06 - Sept 30, 2024 - \$8995 USD**

## Activity Level: 2

**Comfort Level:** Some long drives and bumpy roads.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable hotels/lodges, all with private washrooms. Four nights are basic with generators and limited electricity.

**ELDERTREKS**



SMALL GROUP  
**EXOTIC ADVENTURES**  
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

In the Kingdom of Lesotho, visit a Basotho village and hike to the mighty Maletsunyane Falls. Drive into the “Karoo” and the town of Graaff-Reinet, known for its national monuments. Hike to the viewpoint of the awe-inspiring Valley of Desolation before overnighing in Karoo National Park. Drive through Tsitsikamma Coastal National Park and along the Garden Route, including a boat trip from Knysna to the Featherbed Nature Reserve. From Cape Town, visit Cape Point as well as Robben Island and enjoy the view atop Table Mountain, reached by cable car.

Our three-country journey concludes in stunning Cape Town, the perfect place to raise a glass of South African wine with a toast to this superb adventure.

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## **DAY 1 ARRIVE IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA**

Upon your arrival at the Johannesburg International Airport, you will be met and transferred to our hotel in Hartbeespoort. We meet this evening for dinner and orientation.

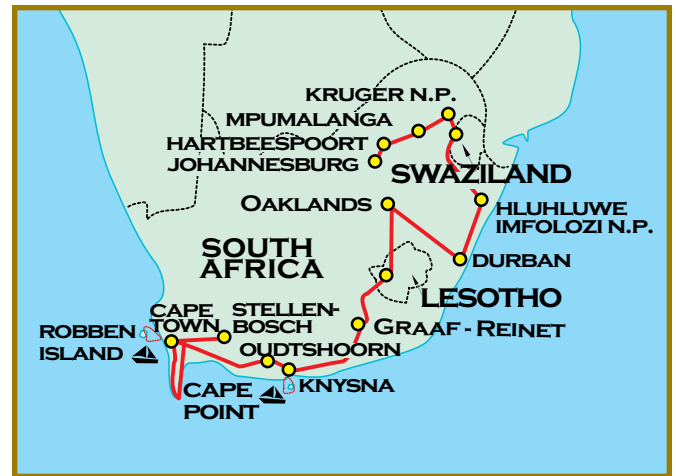
Overnight in Hartbeespoort.

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## **DAY 2 DE WILDT CHEETAH AND WILDLIFE CENTER**

After a relaxing morning, we enjoy a stroll through the local market before heading to the De Wildt Cheetah Center where we will receive an introduction to this special place. De Wildt has an extensive community outreach and education program and a strategic breeding plan. The Trust conducts research on wildlife disease and nutrition, and in South Africa it has implemented a national plan for the conservation of free roaming cheetahs, as well as wild dogs, the second most endangered carnivore in Africa.

Overnight in Hartbeespoort.



Lesotho women - cultural village.



Enjoy wine tasting in Stellenbosch.



### **DAY 3 PRETORIA CITY SITES, MISTY MOUNTAIN, SOUTH AFRICAN NATURAL HERITAGE SITE, TO MPUMALANGA**

We will return to De Wildt Cheetah Center this morning where we enjoy a special treat - viewing cheetahs running full speed. Three cheetahs will each chase a small decoy designed by the sanctuary. The cheetahs accelerate and run in excess of 100 kilometers per hour. Afterwards, we make our way to Pretoria to enjoy the city sites before our journey through some of the most stunning landscapes in South Africa. We will enjoy lunch enroute to Mpumalanga and our final stop at a 280 hectare South African Natural Heritage Site, situated on the spectacular Long Tom Pass, Mpumalanga. Perched at an altitude of 1700 meters above sea level, Misty Mountain is uniquely set in mountainous countryside with majestic views across the escarpment and into the Lowveld. Later, we will enjoy a walk to witness the changing colors in this beautiful region and hopefully catch a beautiful sunset.

Overnight in Mpumalanga.

### **DAY 4 SAFARI CAMP - EVENING GAME DRIVE/SUNDOWNER**

Early in the morning we can observe a beautiful

sunrise right in front of our hotel if we are up early. After breakfast, we journey towards the Manyeleti Game Reserve, our base to the world famous Kruger National Park. On the Panorama Route, we travel to Bourke's Luck Potholes and the majestic Blyde River Canyon, the third largest canyon in the world. Enjoy the excitement of a sundowner in the wild after our sunset game drive on a private reserve. Dinner will be a delicious braai in a boma, under a canopy of African starlight.

Overnight at a safari camp.

**Please note:** Manyeleti Game Reserve is a private game reserve within 'Greater Kruger Park' area. 'Greater Kruger Park' consists of private game reserves on the western side and Kruger National Park on the eastern side. World-famous Kruger National Park is open to everyone with several large safari camps or villages designed for school groups, families and tourists. The abundance of wildlife is noticeably less around the large camps or villages in Kruger National Park. The private game reserves are typically less crowded and more exclusive. During your stay in 'Greater Kruger Park', you will be staying at Shalati Safari Camp for both nights but you will have safari experiences in both a private reserve (option of bush walks in the Manyeleti Game Reserve) and also a full day excursion in Kruger National Park, allowing you to explore more

remote parts of Kruger National Park. Where one stays and how one plans their safari(s) in 'Greater Kruger Park' can vary greatly and will play a large part in the safari you experience.

### **DAY 5 KRUGER NATIONAL PARK - FULL DAY SAFARI**

We get up before sunrise to search for the "Big Five" in the famous Kruger National Park. We set off after an early breakfast for a full day safari with a picnic lunch in the park. Make sure your camera is fully charged as we won't be returning until dusk. Keep your eyes open for elephant, lion, cheetah, rhino, buffalo, giraffe and other magnificent wildlife roaming South Africa's most famous game park.

After an exciting day on safari, we return to our lodge with time to relax. Depending on arrival time back to the camp, we may visit a Shangaan village for the remainder of the afternoon. We enjoy a visit to the local clinic, a trading store, school and a visit to the local herbal/spiritual doctor (nyanza/sangoma). Learn how she helps the villagers and their sickness by "throwing bones". (As an actual working village, some elements of the visit may not be available on the day of your visit.)

We return to our lodge in time to enjoy a sundowner before our dinner, once again under the beautiful African stars.

Overnight at Shalati Safari Camp.

### **DAY 6 TO SWAZILAND, MLILWANE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, BUSH WALK, SWAZI CHIEF VISIT**

Today, we travel into the Kingdom of Swaziland. Lunch will be enroute. In the late afternoon, we visit the Umphakatsi Chief's homestead, which is a hands-on experience run by the female chief, Inkhosikati. Your guide, who will hand the women in your party traditional Swazi cloths to wrap around their waists, greets us at Mlilwane's main gate. The Inkhosikati has a vibrant, energetic and infectious manner and not only talks us through how the huts and traditional items are made, but also teaches us the Siswati words for them.

Continue to Mlilwane Camp for check in, dinner and overnight.

### **DAY 7 KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND, ROYAL**

Watchful eyes of a leopard.



## NATIONAL PARK

This morning we take a safari walk to explore this tiny kingdom. Afterwards we head to Hlane Royal National Park, where we will enjoy a light lunch before embarking on an afternoon rhino drive. Hlane is famous for its abundant rhino population. This is easily one of the best opportunities to see rhinos at very close range. The juvenile rhinos can be very curious and can often approach our vehicles. We explore these former royal hunting grounds by vehicle after lunch. Later in the afternoon, we return back to Mlilwane Reserve.

This evening we gather around the campfire for an evening of traditional Swazi dancing.

Overnight in Mlilwane.

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## DAY 8 RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA - ZULULAND

This morning we travel back into South Africa and into the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, the heartland of the Zulu people. We journey further south to the town of Mkuze where we stop for a light lunch followed by a visit into the Lebombo Mountains, where we visit a traditional Zulu homestead and experience

rural Zululand as it is today.

Overnight in Hluhluwe.

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## DAY 9 MORNING SAFARI IN HLUHLUWE IMFOLOZI PARK

Today we venture off on a morning safari in one of the oldest game reserves in South Africa - Hluhluwe Imfolozi. From your open game drive vehicle with an experienced game ranger, we search for the "Big 5", as well as an abundance of other African wildlife. The park is one of the best places to view rhinos. After lunch we will continue our wildlife exploration with an afternoon safari.

Overnight in Hluhluwe.

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## DAY 10 HLUHLUWE TO KLOOF, DURBAN WITH ST. LUCIA BOAT CRUISE

Today we make our way to the coastal town of St. Lucia, gateway to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park (UNESCO). iSimangaliso Wetland Park (previously known as the Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park) is one of the jewels of South Africa's coastline, with a unique mosaic of ecosystems - swamps, lakes,



Zulu village

beaches, coral reefs, wetlands, woodlands, coastal forests and grasslands - supporting an astounding diversity of animal, bird and marine life. The St. Lucia Estuary is the largest estuarine system on the African Continent and boasts the largest concentration of hippos in South Africa.

The best way to explore the St. Lucia Estuary is aboard a luxurious double decker passenger boat. During the popular 2-hour boat cruise on the estuary, we will have an opportunity to enjoy up-close sightings of hippos, crocodiles, and some other wildlife alongside the mangrove shoreline like waterbuck, kudu, buffalo, and possibly elephant or rhino. The cruise is also good for bird watching and we will look out for the more prominent species of waterbirds including the iconic African fish eagle.

Afterwards, we travel down the coast to South Africa's 3rd largest city, Durban, before heading slightly inland to Kloof where we will be staying at a botanical garden.

Overnight in Kloof.

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## **DAY 11 EXPLORE DURBAN CITY**

Today, we will do a city orientation tour. We stroll through South Africa's oldest botanical gardens with a passionate horticulturalist, discovering their unique collection of cycads, orchids and secret to invisibility.

Unlock the trendy suburb of Glenwood on foot and track down the public portfolios of local street artists. Meet Mama Nkosi, otherwise known as the dancing curator of one of the largest collections of traditional art as she reveals Indigenous beliefs and tribal culture. After some time to explore the art and culture of Durban, we will have lunch and sample some of the popular flavors and taste sensations of Durban (ever tried a bunny chow?).

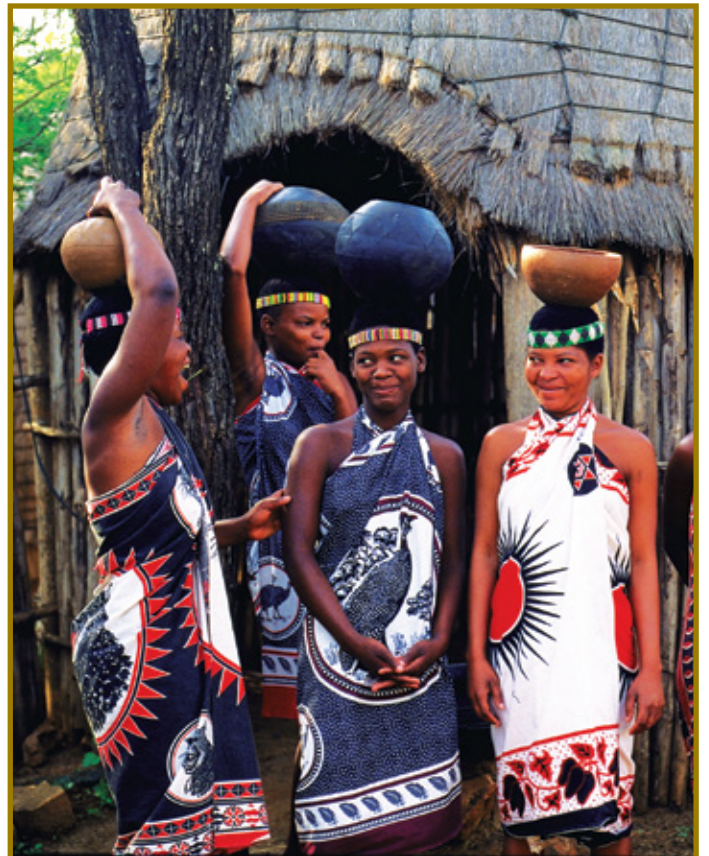
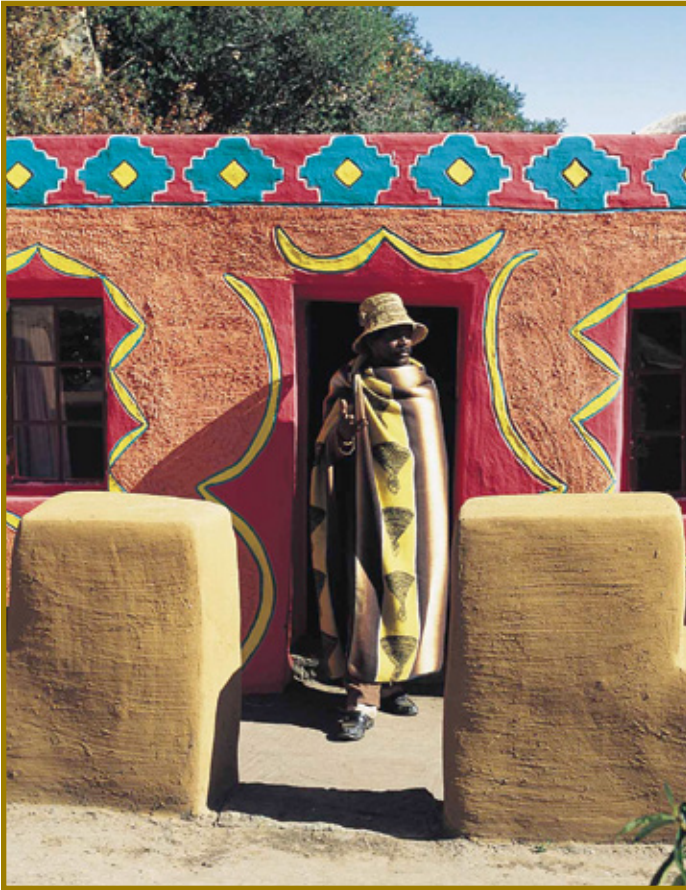
After lunch, we drive through the city center as your guide briefs you on historical anecdotes, and visit Moses Mabhida Stadium. This striking landmark and tribute to the Soccer World Cup, is carved into the Durban landscape and from the heights of the SkyCar, visitors can obtain panoramic views over the city. (Operation of SkyCar TBA post Covid.)

The coastline stretches out in front of the stadium. Popular beaches exude surfer vibes and offer the chance to mingle with the locals, while further along the Golden Mile is the home to an impressive array of marine life, uShaka Marine Park. To the north, the village of Umhlanga glistens in the sun, a shining jewel of beaches, walkways, restaurants and shops.

The rest of the afternoon is free to relax and enjoy the garden.

Overnight in Kloof.





## **DAY 12 DRAKENSBURG ESCARPMENT, OAKLANDS**

This morning we travel to Howick, where we visit the capture site of Nelson Mandela and the Apartheid Museum. Enroute we stop at Howick Falls which is approximately 95 metres/310 ft in height and is known by the local Zulu community as 'Place of the Tall One.' Following our visit, we make our way to the Free State and the Drakensberg region. We have time this afternoon to explore the beautiful farm environment of our overnight accommodation. Overnight in Oaklands.

## **DAY 13 DRAKENSBURG REGION, LADYSMITH**

We rise to take in the beautiful morning sun as it warms up the Drakensberg escarpment and greets us for our full day excursion to Ladysmith where we enjoy the rich history of the region, which is captured in the architectural styles of old buildings. It is here we learn more about the battles before we visit the actual battlefields from the Anglo-Boer War. Overnight in Oaklands.

## **DAY 14 TO THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

We travel towards the Kingdom of Lesotho and stop at a Basotho village situated at the entrance to the Golden Gate National Park. The museum introduces visitors to the South Sotho (Basotho) nation, from its inception through to the present. After the tour we make the lengthy journey to our overnight accommodation. Overnight in Semonkong.

## **DAY 15 SEMONKONG**

After breakfast we will learn about local life in Semonkong town. Stroll the streets and meet the

local people, accompanied by an informative local as a tour guide. Visit the market and brewery before enjoying a traditional lunch at a locally owned restaurant. In the early afternoon, the group may visit the home of Mé Masetho and view an assortment of traditional Basotho blankets. Learn all about the designs and different meanings of these patterns of the 'likobo' (blanket). Note that this activity may be omitted.

This afternoon, we have the opportunity to head out in 4x4 vehicles to visit a nearby beautiful waterfall. Overnight in Semonkong.

## **DAY 16 RETURN TO GRAAFF-REINET, SOUTH AFRICA VIA THE ROMA PLATEAU**

Today we have a long drive. We set off early after breakfast and drive to the Roma Plateau before we cross the border and return to South Africa, stopping for a late lunch in Burgersdorp. From here, we continue our drive to Graaff-Reinet where we will stay for the next two nights. Overnight in Graaff-Reinet.

## **DAY 17 GRAAFF-REINET, VALLEY OF DESOLATION IN THE GREAT KAROO**

This morning we spend time exploring the town of Graaff-Reinet by foot, arguably one of the most charming and historic towns in all of South Africa. After lunch we visit the Valley of Desolation for sundown. A steep and narrow road leads into the mountains that surround the valley. A circular hiking trail leads to wonderful views of Graaff-Reinet and of the endless expanse of the surrounding Karoo. This trail is very rocky and clients should wear comfortable walking/hiking shoes.

Overnight in Graaff-Reinet.





## **DAY 18 TSITSIKAMMA NATIONAL PARK, THE GARDEN ROUTE**

We continue our journey through the Eastern Cape today, traveling to the coast. We drive through the local sheep and farming region, enjoying breathtaking countryside views before making our way to Tsitsikamma National Park. On arrival at the park, there is time to take a hike or walk on the beach.

We then travel along the stunning Garden Route, with indigenous forests, freshwater lakes, wetlands, hidden coves and long beaches. The narrow coastal plain is well forested and is mostly bordered by extensive lagoons that run behind a barrier of sand dunes and superb white beaches. The region has some of the largest patches of indigenous forest in the country, including giant yellow wood trees, wild flowers, as well as commercial plantations of eucalyptus and pine. We continue to Knysna, one of the most beautiful cities on the Garden Route.

Overnight in Knysna.

## **DAY 19 KNYSNA - FEATHERBED NATURE RESERVE**

Today we enjoy a eco-experience in Featherbed Nature Reserve. Our journey includes a return ferry trip, 4x4 nature drive and a guided walk, including spectacular viewpoints and ancient sea caves while learning about the history and flora and fauna of the reserve, ending with a sumptuous buffet lunch at the Food Forest Restaurant.

Overnight in Knysna.

## **DAY 20 TO OUDTSHOORN - OSTRICH FARM, CANGO CAVES**

We travel inland to Oudtshoorn, where we visit an ostrich farm. We also visit the Cango Caves situated at the head of the picturesque Cango Valley, in

a limestone ridge parallel to the Swartberg Mountains, where you will find dripstone caverns, with their vast halls and towering formations.

Overnight in Oudtshoorn.

## **DAY 21 TO CAPE TOWN**

Today we drive to one of the most beautiful cities in the world, Cape Town, enjoying the scenery enroute.

Overnight in Cape Town.

## **DAY 22 TABLE MOUNTAIN, ROBBEN ISLAND**

We begin our day by ascending the famous Table Mountain by cable car. From the top we have spectacular views in every direction including over the city, Robben Island, the beaches of the Atlantic Ocean, mountain ranges, ravines and the Inland plains.

After our descent we will take a tour of the Bo-Kaap area, with visits to the Malay quarter and the District Six Museum. This afternoon is spent on Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years. It is a World Heritage Site and symbol of freedom and perseverance of the human spirit.

Overnight in Cape Town.

Please Note: Both the Table Mountain and Robben Island excursions are weather dependent. The cable car does not operate in windy conditions and the 7 km ferry ride to Robben Island does not go when the sea is too rough.

## **DAY 23 COASTAL DRIVE TO CAPE POINT, GOOD HOPE NATURE RESERVE**

We travel along the Atlantic Seaboard via Sea Point, Clifton, Camps Bay and Llandudno to Hout Bay, a

quaint village and fishing harbor with magnificent views of the mountains and beach. On through Chapman's Peak, one of the world's most breathtaking coastal drives, to Cape Point and the Good Hope Nature Reserve, which has fantastic fynbos vegetation, birdlife, endemic antelope species, zebra, historic lighthouses and shipwrecks. Cape Point is perceived to be the meeting point of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

After lunch, we continue our journey to historic Simon's Town, a village with charming Victorian architecture, a naval base and a large penguin colony at beautiful Boulders Beach. Our day ends after a visit to the well known Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

Overnight in Cape Town.

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### **DAY 24 STELLENBOSCH, WINE TOUR**

This morning after breakfast we set off for Stellenbosch, the second oldest settlement in South

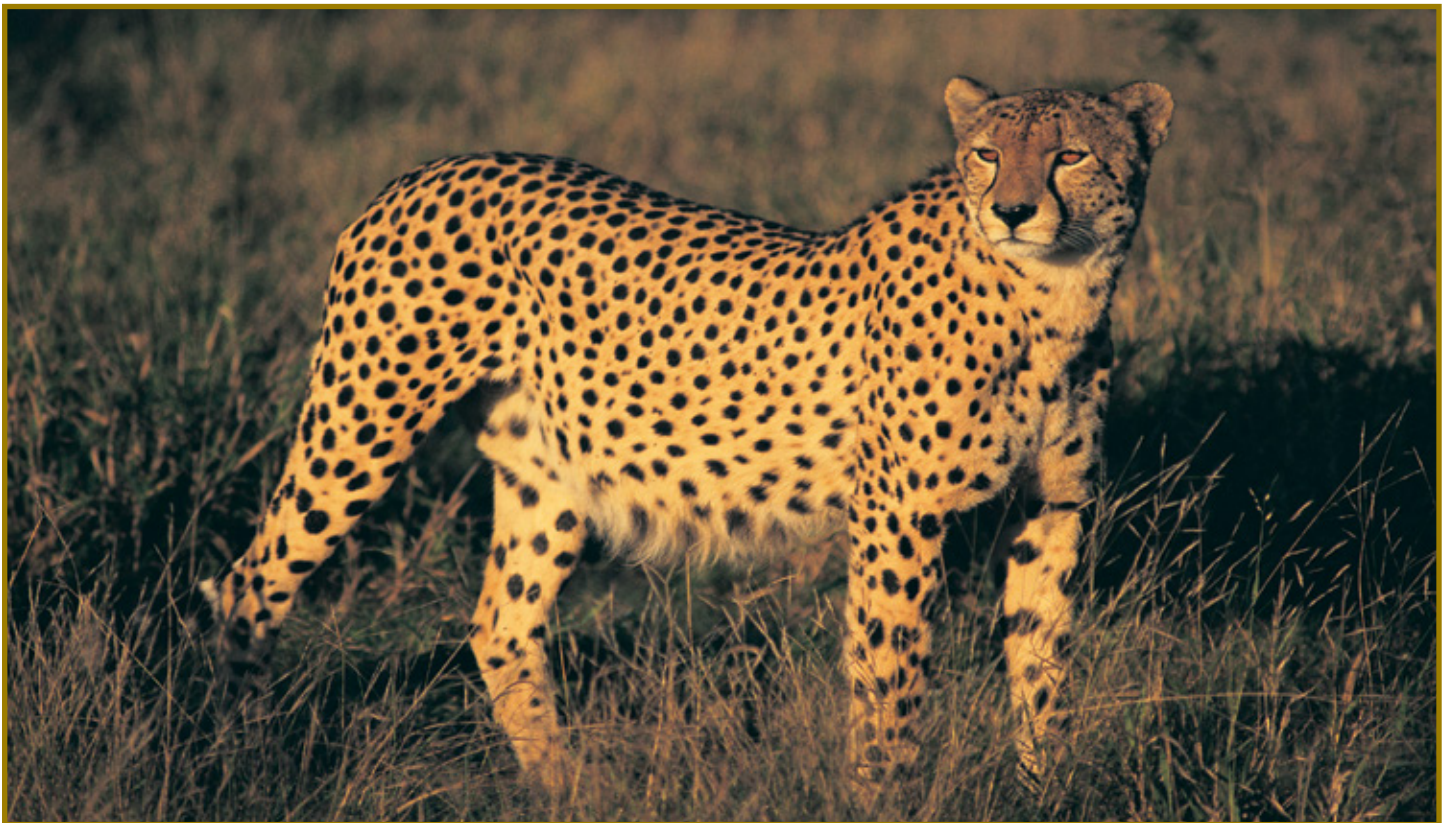
Africa after Cape Town. Its oak lined streets and famed Cape Dutch architecture make it one of the most charming towns in the country. We continue from here to Paarl, where we stop at the impressive Afrikaans Language Monument, that offers awe inspiring views of the Winelands and the Hottentots Holland Mountains, before enjoying lunch and a wine tasting at one of the nearby wine estates. We continue to Franschhoek, where we enjoy another wine tasting, before returning to Cape Town. Tonight we will enjoy our group farewell dinner.

Overnight in Cape Town.

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### **DAY 25 DEPART CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA**

Today we say goodbye to Cape Town and Africa and transfer to the airport to connect with our international flights homeward.









## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### 1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. They allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

### 2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (portage), national guide, bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

### 3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

### 4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit museums, National Parks and Reserves and have talks and discussions on many aspects of history, culture and nature. But this is only a portion of the educational experience. We believe that it is equally educational to meet local people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments are spent sipping a cold drink in a street market.

### 5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All local transport is included in the land price of the trip. We travel by mini-van, safari vehicles, ferries, boat and on foot.

### 6. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

We always stay in good accommodations — hotels, lodges and safari camps have a private bath or shower.

### 7. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

We are visiting all three countries during their spring and fall seasons. This adventure covers a great deal of ground, therefore the weather varies greatly. In general, expect sunny days and cool nights in South Africa and The Kingdom of Lesotho and a warmer tropical climate in The Kingdom of Swaziland. Temperature highs range from 69 to 95°F (20 - 35°C) during the day during Feb/March with lows from 59°F to 80°F (15 - 27°C).

During October the highs range from 69 to 78 °F (20 - 26°C) and the lows range from 50°F to 74°F (10 - 23°C).

### 8. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you require it) is due at time of booking and will reserve your place on the tour. Payment of the full land cost is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and are outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section of our brochure.

### 9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is not required for this adventure but is recommended. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

*\*Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

### 10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

### 11. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals during the itinerary are included, starting with dinner on day 1, and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We eat a variety of local and international foods prepared in a wide range of settings. In many cases, we simply order a number of dishes and share, allowing you to sample new foods and decide what you enjoy best.

### 12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over enroute, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

### 13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions about the trip, please do not hesitate to contact our office for additional information. A Trip Kit containing further details on the destination will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.

