

Travel to South Africa

One of the most mysterious and alluring places to put on your world travel itinerary, is Africa. There are 43 countries to choose from in Africa, but for this article we will focus on traveling to South Africa.

Before you take your trip to South Africa, you will need a visa. Most nationalities get up to 3 months entry on arrival. Check with your travel agent if you need to pre-arrange a visa. South Africa's two major international airports are at Cape Town and Johannesburg. There are direct major flights from most major cities.

According to WikiTravel, you need to make sure you have 2 blank pages back to back in your passport and that it is valid for at least six more months or you will be sent back! Make sure you have a return ticket available or they will send you back. If you need to pick up a ticket at the airport have the flight number and details handy and speak with the customs guy, they should check your story out and let you in (be firm). Be wary of arriving with a damaged passport as new security measures might trip up your entry.

Of course South Africa is located on the southern tip of the Continent of Africa. It has borders with the countries of Namibia, Swaziland, Mozambique, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. An interesting note is that Lesotho is a country that is entirely surrounded by South Africa.

South Africa also borders on the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. There are many beach areas for tourists, with camps and outings planned for you and your family. There is always the option of just relaxing on the beach with great services from a wide variety of hotels.

The warm waters of the East Coast of Africa where the Indian Ocean lies, there are excellent fishing and diving opportunities. On the West Coast where you find the South Atlantic, you may be surprised to find penguins, whales, and seals. One big attraction if you're really brave is being lowered into the ocean inside of a cage where great white sharks can get a good look at you. I don't know anything about this from personal experience.

Most of the interior of South Africa is mountainous or scrubland. In the northwest you find the Kalahari Desert. Going from these areas into the southern portions of the country are like going from night to day. The southeast has a tropical climate and has lush fauna and flora. It's beautiful there. The southwest is more of a Mediterranean Climate. Expect to get wet during winter months and to be hot and dry all summer. Prepare for a windy climate in the extreme southwest. Bring clothing like windbreakers in the summer and rain gear in the winter.

Another site to see while you are traveling in South Africa is the Kaapval Craton. This rock has been around for a long, long time. Scientists have dated this rock formation at over 2.6 billion years old. It also contains some of the richest minerals of anyplace in the world. Asbestos, gold, platinum, and of course diamonds come from Kaapval Craton.

A hiking trip up to Table Mountain is a great experience if you visit Capetown. The hike takes about two and a half hours. There are also several paths that are easier than the hike up Table Mountain, that can reward you with great views as well. Then there is always the ever-popular cable-car that avoids the hiking and walking altogether. I know my choice.

If you like to learn about history, you can take one of the township tours that take you into areas where blacks were forced to live under Apartheid. It is advised that you take a tour to visit any of the townships. The tours are safe. Driving through them alone may not be.

Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens is on the other side of Table Mountain and is a great place to visit if you like beautiful plants and flowers. This is one of the most unforgettable and beautiful botanical gardens in the world. The rich plant life of this continent gives them the advantage of being close to many plants you may never see elsewhere.

Okay, forget the sightseeing tour, what about the food? If you are a meat lover, you will love South Africa. They use meat heavily in their dishes here. South African wines are another sumptuous taste you can enjoy while traveling in South Africa.

What about the languages? English is widely used here. Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu, Venda, Swati, Tswana, Ndebele, Tsonga, and Southern and Northern Sotho are all official languages in Africa in addition to English. In addition to that, depending on who you ask, you may begin to think you are lost. Each language also has it's own name for the country.

We hope we have added some useful information and ideas for your trip to South Africa.

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About the Author

Robin Darch, has a website, <http://www.travel-worldwide.net> to help you find all the information you need about world travel related topics such as choosing a good travel agency, how to get good rates on airline travel, cruise line deals, and much more.