

**SOUTH AFRICA**  
COUNTRY INFORMATION  
FACTS & ADVISE



### South Africa

South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa, is a country located at the southern tip of Africa. It is divided into nine provinces and has 2,798 kilometres (1,739 miles) of coastline. To the north lie the neighbouring countries of Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe; to the east are Mozambique and Swaziland; while Lesotho is an enclave surrounded by South African territory. South Africa is the 25th largest country in the world by area and the 24th most populous country with over 51 million people.

South Africa is a multi-ethnic nation and has diverse cultures and languages. Eleven official languages are recognised in the constitution. Two of these languages are of European origin: English and Afrikaans, a language which originated mainly from Dutch that is spoken by the majority of white and Coloured South Africans. Though English is commonly used in public and commercial life, it is only the fifth most-spoken home language. All ethnic and language groups have political representation in the country's constitutional democracy comprising a parliamentary republic; unlike most parliamentary republics, the positions of head of state and head of government are merged in a parliament-dependent President.

About 80% of the South African population is of black African ancestry: 21 divided among a variety of ethnic groups speaking different Bantu languages, nine of which have official status. South Africa also contains the largest communities of European, Asian, and racially mixed ancestry in Africa.

**Johannesburg** is the gateway to Southern Africa and offers first world infrastructure, hotels and a variety of world-class restaurants. Today Johannesburg is one of South Africa's largest cities. Soweto is an increasingly popular destination for travellers from around the world, and the Apartheid Museum is a worthwhile stop for any traveller wanting to learn more about South Africa's previous regime. Enjoy the buildings of the gold rush era and the sights from a top the Carlton Centre (Africa's tallest building). The Market Theatre precinct, Museum of Africa and Newtown (New Town), Sterkfontein Caves, Hector Peterson Memorial, Cradle of Humankind and the Nelson Mandela Bridge are particularly vibrant sectors of the city centre. By day, a walk around Newtown will give you a taste for the wide range of traditions and cultures the city plays host to. Travelers can also visit a gold mine or the Lesedi Cultural Village for traditional dances and food in authentic Zulu, Sotho, Pedi, Xhosa and Ndebele villages.

The Western Cape is renowned for cosmopolitan **Cape Town** and the world famous landmark Table Mountain, its vast Cape Winelands and the most exquisite coastline. With its magnificent natural beauty, its rich cultural heritage and its world-renowned wines, the Winelands Region is synonymous with all the best that the Cape has to offer. A must-visit is the World Heritage Site of Robben Island, and the Cape of Good Hope on a Peninsula Tour.

The **Garden Route** is one of the most scenic areas and stretches for two hundred miles from Heidelberg in the West to the mouth of the Storms River in the East. Certainly, anyone who has explored the Garden Route soon comes to understand why it is considered by many to be South Africa's "Garden of Eden". When travelling along the scenic roads, relax and enjoy the drive, stopping off at popular spots such as George, Wilderness, Sedgefield, Knysna, Plettenberg Bay, Nature's Valley, Storms River and the Tsitsikamma National Park. Mountains crowd close to a shoreline dotted with beaches and bays, and vividly coloured wild flowers delight the eye. Between Heidelberg and Storms River, the Garden Route runs parallel to a coastline featuring lakes, mountains, tall indigenous forests, amber -coloured rivers and golden beaches. A wide range of leisure options, spectacular scenery and a mild climate guarantee an unforgettable holiday experience when visiting the Garden Route.

Known as Big Game Country, the **Kruger National Park** has several luxurious private reserves within its borders, with breath taking scenery, affordable and luxury accommodation and lodging,

rich biodiversity and amazing wildlife encounters. Indulge in luxury and comfort in private reserves adjoining Kruger Park, and imagine open air dining or traditional cuisine under an African sky, superior personalised service, sensational game viewing and the adventure of a South African safari. The Sabi Sand Private Game Reserve, Timbavati Private Game Reserve, Thornybush Private Game Reserve and Kapama Private Game Reserve are the ideal places to experience your incredible African safari.

## Getting into South Africa

### Passport and Visa information

All visitors to South Africa require a passport that must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the date of departure from South Africa, and that has at least two blank "visa" pages next to each other per entry. On arrival, tourists will receive an entry stamp valid for up to 90 days if they have an onward ticket or proof of sufficient funds to pay for one. If in transit, documentary proof for admission to the country of destination is required. If planning to visit other Southern African countries make sure to acquire a multiple entry visa. Many more foreign visitors than before now need visas, it is best to check visa requirements with your travel agent - or a South African Embassy in your country before departure.

### Travelling with children

Foreign children under the age of 18, travelling to South Africa need to produce the below on arrival. Foreign children who require a visa for South Africa do not need to carry additional documents for inspection at a port of entry since these would be processed together with their visa applications. Please bear in mind that when travelling to Namibia and Botswana certain documents will still be required including an unabridged birth certificate.

#### Child and both parents

- A valid passport for the child.

#### Child and one parent

- A valid passport for the child

#### Child and guardian

- A valid passport for the child

#### Child unaccompanied

- Copy of his /her birth certificate
- Parental consent letters
- Copy of the passport(s)/identity document(s) of the parent(s) / legal guardian(s)
- Contact details of the parent(s)/ legal guardian(s)
- Letter from the person who is to receive the child in the Republic, containing his / her residential address and contact details in the Republic where the child will reside
- Copy of the identity document / valid passport and visa or permanent residence permit of the person who is to receive the child in the Republic
- Where applicable- copy of an adoption order / copy of a death certificate of the deceased parent/ parents or legal guardian; or copy of a court order granting full parental responsibilities and rights or legal guardianship in respect of the child

### Arrival and Customs Information

Please be advised that regulations at most international points of arrival do not permit passengers to be met inside secured passenger areas (such as the customs area). If a representative is scheduled to meet you on arrival at an airport, you will be met immediately after you have passed through the secured passenger areas. Please note that the purchase of "national treasures" for export from any country is strictly illegal and that the onus rests entirely on the buyer. Under no circumstances should sheath knives or small arms be taken on safari.

Please be advised that passengers connecting to a domestic flight within South Africa immediately after an international arrival in Johannesburg, will need to claim their checked baggage in

Johannesburg, in order to clear through Customs. Bags that have not been cleared through Customs in Johannesburg will not be transferred onto domestic flights!

## Keeping Healthy in South Africa

It is important that you check with a qualified health professional for the most current information concerning your travel itinerary and personal health history.

Anti-Malarial precautions are an absolute necessity when visiting the game parks in the region. It is important that you check with a qualified health professional for the most current information concerning your travel itinerary and personal health history.

South Africa offers excellent medical facilities, and is the preferred country for treatment in the region. We do advise you to take out travel insurance to cover any possible medical treatment, and if necessary, emergency evacuation. All hospitals charge tourists as private patients and may require payment by cash.

The sun in the southern hemisphere is extremely strong - do wear an effective sunscreen and hat during the summer. It is advisable to avoid the noonday sun. Recommended SPF is 30.

Throughout Southern Africa it is safe to eat all foods and drink tap water in cities and towns. Purified water in flasks or bottled water is provided at game lodges throughout the region. It is also suggested that you bring a smaller traveller's kit with remedies for minor stomach ailments or motion sickness. You should include an adequate supply (in your hand luggage) of any prescribed medication you may require while traveling.

If you are entering South Africa from a yellow-fever zone you will need a valid international yellow-fever vaccination certificate.

Travellers with physical disabilities and those who require frequent or on-going medical attention should advise us of their health situation at the time of booking (or at the time such a situation occurs should this be after the reservation is made).

We do recommend that you take out comprehensive travel insurance to cover you in the event of a medical emergency.

## Tipping

Tipping is not compulsory. You are travelling on an independent itinerary and the cost of your program does not include gratuities. Tipping is a very personal matter and should only be considered when the staff have gone above and beyond for you. Should you feel you would like to acknowledge their service, please consider the following as a rough guide, per day.

Type of Service	Number of guests travelling					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tour Director	205	410	615	820	1025	1230
Driver / Guide (Half day)	110	220	330	440	550	660
Driver / Guide (Full day)	165	330	495	660	825	990
Hotel Porters	40	80	120	160	200	240
Professional Guide	205	410	615	820	1025	1230
Ranger	205	410	615	820	1025	1230
Tracker	110	220	330	440	550	660
Lodge staff	165	330	495	660	825	990

**Please note:** Currency is in ZAR



*The above tipping guidelines are recommendations only and are not compulsory. Please use your own discretion in tipping, based on quality of service.*

### Restaurants

It is customary to add 10% to the bill in restaurants, if the service has been satisfactory.

### Taxis

Taxi drivers do not expect to be tipped but they appreciate the fare being rounded up.

### Porterage

If you are being transferred by an Akorn representative from the airport to a hotel, then porterage and tipping of porters is already included. You are not expected to tip the Akorn representative. Porterage and tipping of porters for transfers from one hotel to another is as above.

### Blue Train and Rovos Rail

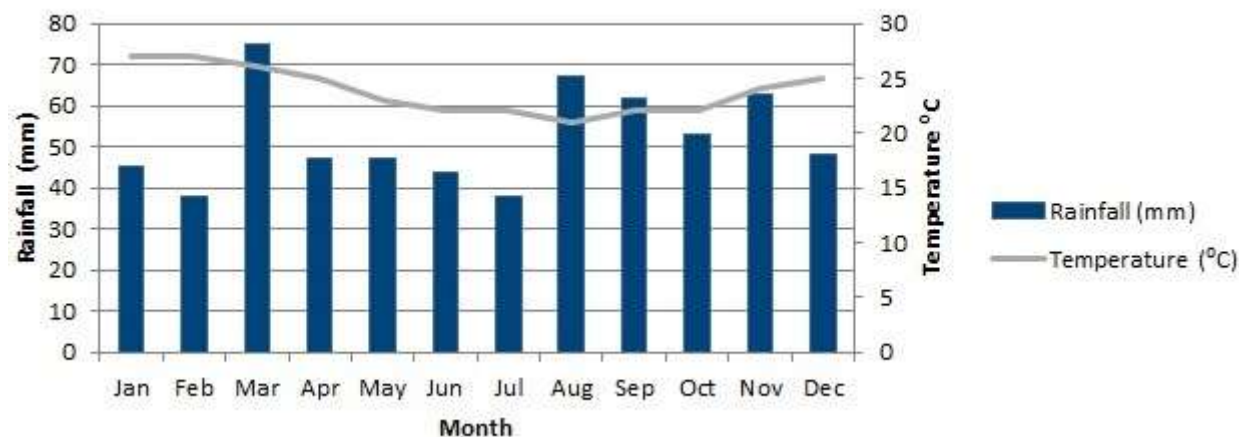
Tip at the end of your journey ZAR 205 per person per day. These gratuities may be placed in a central box or an envelope, which will be provided.

## Talk the talk

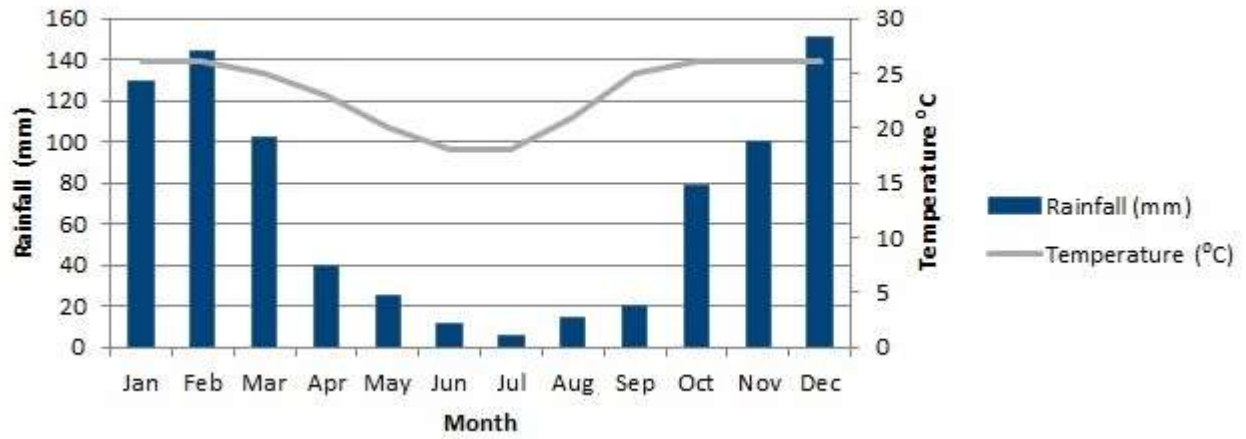
English	Afrikaans
Welcome	Welkom
Hello	Haai (inf), Hallo, Goeie dag (frm)
How are you?	Hoe gaan dit met jou?
I'm fine thanks, and you?	Goed dankie, en met jou?
What's your name?	Wat is jou naam?
My name is...	My naam is....
Pleased to meet you	Lekker om jou te ontmoet
Good morning	Goeiemôre
Good afternoon	Goeie middag
Good evening	Goeienaand
Good night	Goeienag / Nag
Goodbye	Totsiens
Good luck	Sterkte
How much is this?	Hoeveel kos dit?
Please	Asseblief
Thank you	Dankie

## Weather

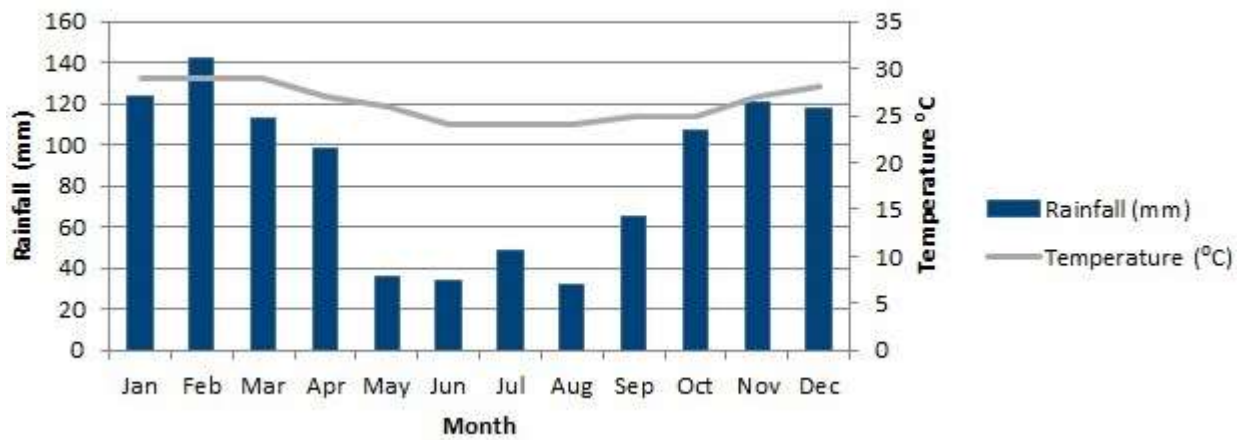
### Climate Graph for Eastern Cape



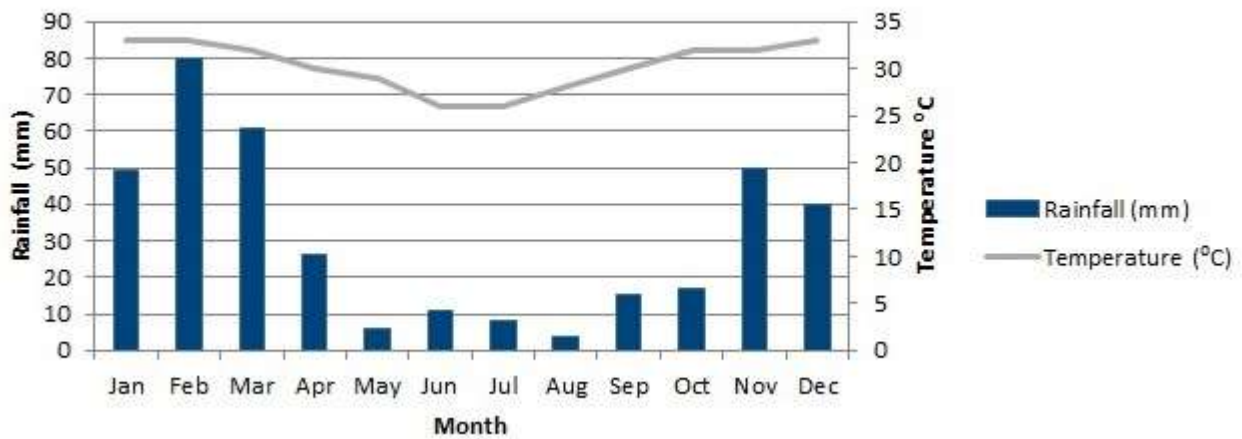
## Climate Graph for Gauteng



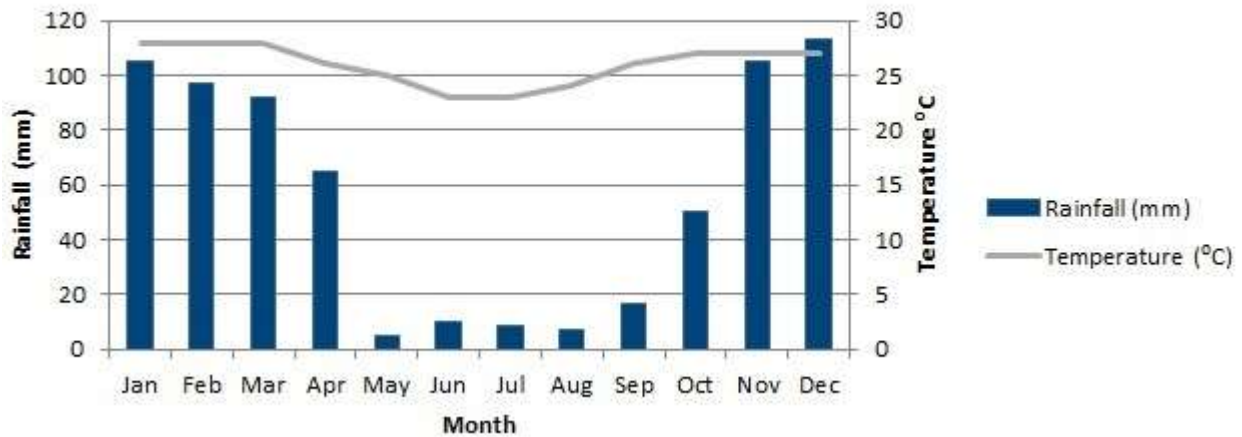
## Climate Graph for Kwazulu-Natal



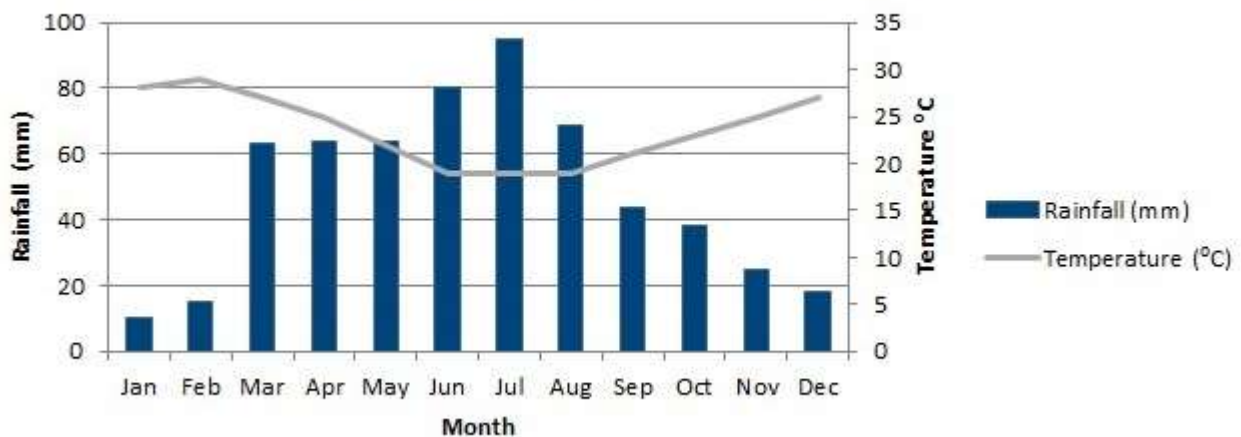
## Climate Graph for Limpopo



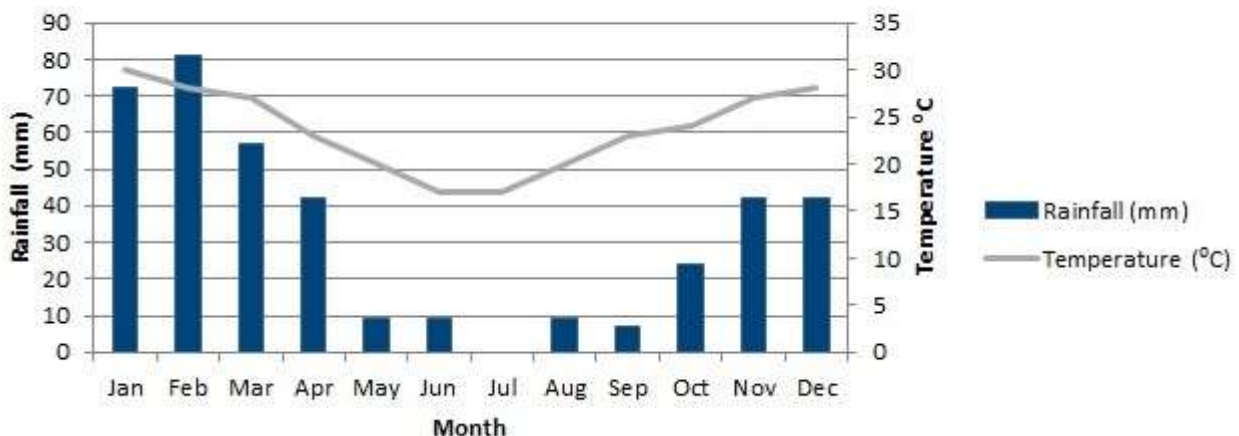
## Climate Graph for Mpumalanga



## Climate Graph for Western Cape



## Climate Graph for Northern Cape



### Winter

May – August

### Summer

September – April

South Africa is a big country just south of the tropic of Capricorn, but it is the topography and surrounding oceans that influence its climate, rather than the latitude. Although the climate varies from region to region, it is generally mild and sunny throughout the year. On the whole it is a dry country with a mean annual rainfall of 502mm. Snowfall is limited to the highest mountain peaks. Summer temperatures average between 15 °C and 32°C (59°F - 89°F). Winter temperatures

average between 0°C and 18°C (32 °F – 64°F). KwaZulu-Natal has a sub-tropical climate with high humidity in summer.

The southern Gauteng region has hot summers with occasional thundershowers and frosty winters, while the eastern part of this region (known as the Lowveld) enjoys mild winters. The Cape interior and the Free State have similar weather conditions to the southern Gauteng region.

## What to Pack

Casual, comfortable wash and wear clothing is most useful. Smart casual attire is required in city hotel restaurants and golf clubs. All hotels offer extremely quick laundry turnaround, usually within a couple of hours. It is certainly not necessary to bring a separate change of clothing for each day and evening, and it is recommended that you keep luggage to a minimum for your own comfort and ease of transport, especially if you are using light aircraft transfers.

- Shorts & Cotton T-shirts
- Swimming costume
- Good comfortable walking shoes (hiking boots are not required unless you have booked a walking safari)
- Casual lightweight cotton, khaki or neutral coloured clothes for safari
- Fleece or sweater and a warm jacket for game drives or cool evenings
- Wide brimmed hat/cap
- Personal toiletries, sun barrier creams; lip balm and insect repellent
- Binoculars, camera and accessories
- Sunglasses
- Rovos Rail guests pack elegant wear for ladies and jacket and tie for men

For travel to South Africa in summer months, lightweight clothing made of a natural, "breathable" fabric is recommended with a warm sweater or jacket for cooler evening temperatures. In winter, warmer clothing is suggested, especially for evenings and you will want to pack an extra sweater or hooded warm-up jacket, a warm hat and gloves.

All luxury hotels and most game lodges offer a same-day laundry service (at additional charges). This is a good reason not to pack too many clothes.

A luggage storage facility is available at O. R. Tambo International Airport. Please note that storage is charged per bag, per day which needs to be paid up front and in cash (ZAR).

### **Please take note of the below baggage restrictions at OR Tambo International Airport**

- Only regular-shaped bags will be allowed to be checked in. This means that the bags must have at least one flat surface to be accepted
- Round or irregular-shaped bags will not be allowed
- Bags with long straps will not be allowed

Passengers who try to check in bags that don't conform to these rules will have the option of having their baggage wrapped with one flat side at airport-approved baggage wrapping stations.

## Religion & Etiquette

According to the 2001 national census, Christians accounted for 79.8% of the population. Muslims accounted for 1.5% of the population, Hindus 1.2%, traditional African religion 0.3% and Judaism 0.2%. 15.1% had no religious affiliation, 0.6% were other and 1.4% were unspecified.

There are an estimated 200 000 indigenous traditional healers in South Africa, and up to 60% of South Africans consult these healers, generally called *sangomas* or *inyangas*. These healers use a combination of ancestral spiritual beliefs and a belief in the spiritual and medicinal properties of



local fauna and flora, commonly known as *muti*, in order to facilitate healing in clients. Many peoples have syncretic religious practices combining Christian and indigenous influences.

South African Muslims comprise mainly of those who are described as Coloureds and those who are described as Indians. They have been joined by black or white South African converts as well as others from other parts of Africa. South African Muslims claim that their faith is the fastest-growing religion of conversion in the country, with the number of black Muslims growing six fold, from 12,000 in 1991 to 74,700 in 2004.

There is also a Hindu minority from India.

## Money

### Currency

The monetary unit of South Africa is the Rand, divided into cents and abbreviated as R and c. Notes currently in circulation are to the value of R200; R100; R50; R20 and R10. Coins are in denominations of R5; R2; R1; 50c; 20c; 10c and 5c. All currency must be declared on entry. We suggest that you exchange money only at authorized facilities (such as banks and hotel desks). Generally, you should limit the amount of money you convert into local currencies and exchange only what you think you will spend before leaving any foreign country. Be aware that only paper currency will normally be accepted for exchange.

### Banking hours

Monday to Fridays 9:00am - 3:30pm

Saturdays 8:30am - 11:00am

Sundays and Public Holidays all banks are closed.

### Credit cards

All major credit cards are accepted at most establishments, although visa and master card are the most widely accepted.

### Tax

Value Added Tax (VAT) of 15% is levied in South Africa. Overseas visitors taking goods out of South Africa are able to reclaim the VAT, which they paid on these goods. Reclaiming VAT is only applicable for goods that you are able to produce at the airport and not for any services whatsoever. When purchasing your products you should request a tax invoice. The shop's VAT number must appear on this invoice. As you are checking in at the airport ready to depart from South Africa, you should approach the customs official who will compare your invoices with the goods purchased. Once your invoices have been approved and stamped, the VAT Reclaim Office will refund you the appropriate amount. VAT Reclaim Offices are found at Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town Airports.

## Time Zone

GMT + Two (2) hours

## Shopping

A range of traditional South African souvenirs is widely available, from handicrafts to animal skins. Zulu beadwork is available in many forms and makes excellent gifts. Beads were worn as symbols of status and also used as a means of communication, often as love letters. The colours and arrangements of the beads spell the message (red = passion/anger; black = difficulties/night; blue = yearning; deep blue = elopement; white/pale blue = pure love; brown = disgust/despondency; green = peace/bliss). Elaborately beaded items including garments, pouches, belts and pipes are widely available.

Township art is increasingly available on the roadside in cities and towns and often takes the form of functional items (baskets, candlesticks, hooks, magazine racks, etc.) made from wire and waste metal. Soapstone and wooden carved animals and weavings are also available on the roadside of tourist routes. These are usually mass-produced, so check the quality very carefully. As you would expect from a country rich in gold and diamonds, there is an excellent selection of jewellery and the opportunity to watch goldsmiths in action. Many visitors take the opportunity of the exchange rate's effect on the prices of clothing, golfing equipment, etc.

**Shopping hours:**

Mondays to Fridays 8:30am - 5:00pm

Saturday 8:30am - 1:00pm

Sundays and Public Holidays most shops are closed.

There are some shops in the larger shopping centres that are open on Saturday afternoon and Sunday mornings:

**Cape Town**

Cavendish Square - Claremont (15 minutes from City Centre).

Canal Walk - Century City (10 minutes from City Centre).

Victoria Wharf - Victoria and Alfred Waterfront

**Johannesburg**

Sandton City & Adjacent to Sandton Sun and Towers Intercontinental

Sandton Square - and Michelangelo Hotel

Village Walk - Sandton

Rosebank Mall - Adjacent to Park Hyatt and The Grace

Hyde Park - Hyde Park

As a courtesy to our clients, our office will, if requested, help refer you to a shop that carries the merchandise you are looking for. This is not intended as our endorsement of the shop nor responsibility for merchandise (or shipping arrangements) purchased from the shop.

**Local Food & Drink**

South Africa has an excellent culinary reputation that includes its own award-winning wines that are produced in the Cape Province. There are gourmet restaurants in every major city, as well as those serving authentic Portuguese, Greek, German, and Chinese.

Some restaurants specialize in South African dishes, such as succulent Karoo lamb or venison. Traditional "Cape cooking" has a delightful Malaysian influence, while KwaZulu Natal is renowned for spicy Indian heritage. Fresh local seafood is popular throughout the country.

**We suggest you try**

Some traditional Afrikaans food that is a must to try when visiting is: *Biltong* (dried red meat), *Droëwors* (dried red meat in a sausage), *Boontjie Bredie* (delicious bean stew), *koeksisters* (doughnut-type pastry), Malva Pudding and *Melktert* (translated literally as milk tart).

**Communication and electrical supply**

To assist you should you need to be reached while traveling, a complete listing of hotel contact information will be provided with your final tour materials.

Sending an email, fax or placing a long distance call is not difficult in South Africa. Most hotels offer IDD telephone services in each guest room. Please note, however, a substantial service charge will be applied to each call made. Many of the upmarket hotels also offer a business centre or service, where you can send faxes or emails. Once again, these services do come at a fee. Postcards are available at most hotels, gift shops and most major tourist sites. Most hotels will

offer a postage service for outgoing letters and cards and will provide the guests with information on overseas destination rates.

South Africa's electrical system is 220/230 volts A/C 50 cycles. Most hotels and lodges have hair dryers and plug adaptors in the bedrooms. If you bring electric appliances, take along an international converter kit complete with a set of adapter plugs. Outlets in South Africa require a three-pronged adapter plug with 3 round prongs. Adapters can be brought from home as not all will be provided. Be aware, however, that overnight recharging may not be possible where generator use restricts the availability of electricity.

### Contact numbers

- Office hours (8:30 – 17:00) - Tel: 27 (0) 11 438 4600
- 24 hour emergency number - Tel: 27 (0) 82 900 3503
- Email: [southafrica@akorndmc.com](mailto:southafrica@akorndmc.com)