



TRAVEL GUIDE

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO TRAVEL TO SOUTHERN AFRICA?



SOUTH AFRICAN
TRAVELLERS

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Your guide to preparing for Southern Africa

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A specialist agency for travel in Southern Africa

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WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO TRAVEL TO SOUTHERN AFRICA?

THE GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE BEST SEASON FOR YOUR TRIP

Southern Africa fascinates with its diversity. From the endless dunes of Namibia to the private reserves of South Africa, from the wild plains of Botswana to the beaches of the Indian Ocean in Mozambique, each destination reveals a different atmosphere depending on the season chosen.

A safari in the heart of the southern winter offers a very different experience than a trip during the green season. Certain times of year are ideal for observing animals around waterholes. Others reveal more lush landscapes, spectacular light, or a more intimate atmosphere. The timing of your trip profoundly influences the overall experience.

Through this guide, South African Travellers shares its expert advice to help you better understand the seasons in Southern Africa and choose the best time for your trip. Safari, family vacation, honeymoon, road trip, or beach holiday: every itinerary deserves a tailored approach.

The goal is not just to know when to go. It's mainly about understanding which southern Africa suits you best.



WHO ARE WE?

AN AGENCY SPECIALIZING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

15 000+

travelers since 2007

19

years of on the
ground expertise

6

destinations in southern
Africa

★★★★★ 5,0

Google - 38 reviews

★★★★★ 4,8

Trustpilot 138 reviews

500+

partner lodges



Based in Cape Town since 2007, South African Travellers is a local agency specialising in tailor-made travel in Southern Africa.

Our team assists French, English and Dutch speaking travellers each year in creating unique itineraries through South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique and Eswatini.

Based in the very heart of southern Africa, we experience the destinations we introduce.

We personally select our accommodations, test new experiences and maintain close relationships with our local partners.

This on-the-ground presence allows us to share reliable advice, recommend carefully chosen accommodations, and design itineraries perfectly tailored to each traveller's expectations.

Behind every project is a passionate team, bringing together experts from France, Belgium, the Netherlands and South Africa.

UNDERSTANDING THE SEASONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

THE DRY SEASON IS IDEAL FOR SAFARIS.

The dry season generally runs from May to October in much of southern Africa. This is often the most popular time for safaris, particularly in South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.

For European travelers, this period coincides with the spring bank holidays, followed by the summer break in July and August. While Europe enjoys summer, the mornings are cool in the bush. The days often remain mild and sunny.

In Kruger National Park, Hwange National Park, or the Okavango Delta, conditions are very favorable for wildlife viewing. The vegetation is shorter. Animals move closer to rivers and watering holes. Big cats also become easier to spot.



This season offers a very "classic safari" atmosphere: golden light, dry grass, evenings around the campfire, and more accessible tracks. It's also a great time to travel with family, provided you pack warm clothes for the morning safaris.

Namibia is also a great place to explore at this time of year. Temperatures are more bearable in the Namib Desert, roads are generally passable, and skies are often clear.

This season is very popular. Botswana's finest lodges, Kruger's private reserves, and the most exclusive camps fill up quickly. For a trip in July or August, it's best to book well in advance.



THE GREEN SEASON, WILDER AND MORE SECLUDED.

The green season generally extends from November to March, with variations depending on the country. It corresponds to the southern summer. Temperatures rise, rainfall returns in many regions, and the landscapes are transformed.

Contrary to popular belief, it doesn't rain all day. In many areas, showers arrive more in the late afternoon. They then give way to spectacular skies and superb light.

For European travelers, this period coincides with the Christmas, New Year, and February winter holidays. While Paris, Brussels, and Geneva are in the depths of winter, Cape Town enjoys its most beautiful summer season. The beaches, vineyards, and terraces are particularly delightful.



In safari regions, the green season offers a different perspective on southern Africa. The landscapes become more lush. Migratory birds are plentiful. Some species give birth to their young. It's a magnificent time for photography.

In Botswana, Zimbabwe, or Zambia, the experience can be more intimate, with fewer travelers in some areas. However, some routes may become more difficult to access. Therefore, it's important to choose your stops carefully.

In Mozambique, this period can be wetter and hotter, especially between January and March. Some coastal areas may also be affected by cyclones. Therefore, itineraries should be planned carefully.

SOUTHERN WINTER AND SOUTHERN SUMMER: WHICH TO CHOOSE?

The southern winter, from June to August, is often a favourite among safari enthusiasts. Temperatures are cooler. The climate is dry in many areas. Animals congregate around waterholes.

This is also a very convenient time for European families. It coincides with the long school holidays. It allows for extended trips without missing school, while still enjoying excellent safari conditions.

In South Africa, the austral winter is perfect for Kruger and private reserves. On the south coast, between July and October, it is also the peak whale season, particularly around Hermanus.



The southern summer, from November to March, offers a warmer, more vibrant, and more colorful atmosphere. It's a wonderful time to visit Cape Town, the Garden Route, the South African vineyards, and some of the beach resorts.

This season is very popular with travelers who want to escape the European winter. It simply requires more careful planning, especially if the itinerary includes tropical areas, remote tracks, or destinations prone to rain.

Ultimately, the best time depends primarily on your plans. For a safari heavily focused on wildlife observation, the dry season remains a reliable choice. For lush landscapes, spectacular light, and a more intimate atmosphere, the green season has a lot of charm.



THE CALENDAR OF SEASONS in Southern Africa



Southern Africa can be explored year-round, but each season offers a different experience. Whether you're looking for safaris, road trips, beach holidays, or cultural discoveries, the best time to visit depends primarily on the trip you envision. Here's an overview of the best seasons based on your destination and desired experiences to help you plan your Southern African adventure.

SOUTH AFRICA

WHEN TO GO TO KRUGER?

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
 28°C	 27°C	 26°C	 23°C	 20°C	 16°C
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
 17°C	 18°C	 22°C	 23°C	 25°C	 26°C

WHEN TO GO TO THE CAPE?

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
 27°C	 28°C	 26°C	 23°C	 20°C	 17°C
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
 14°C	 14°C	 17°C	 19°C	 22°C	 25°C

 Beautiful weather and clear skies ·  Warmth and possible showers ·  Safaris and wildlife viewing ·  Southern right whale watching ·  Spring blooms and landscapes ·  Migratory birds and birdwatching ·  Best times to travel

WHEN TO GO TO NAMIBIA?

JANUARY  31°C 	FEBRUARY  30°C 	MARCH  29°C 	APRIL  27°C  	MAY  24°C  	JUNE  22°C  
JULY  21°C  	AUGUST  24°C  	SEPTEMBER  27°C  	OCTOBER  31°C 	NOVEMBER  32°C	DECEMBER  31°C 

 Beautiful weather and clear skies ·  Green landscapes and desert blooms ·  Safaris and wildlife viewing ·  Road trips and wide open spaces ·  Best times to travel



MOZAMBIQUE

WHEN TO GO TO MOZAMBIQUE?

JANUARY  30°C 	FEBRUARY  30°C 	MARCH  29°C 	APRIL ★  28°C 	MAY ★  27°C 	JUNE ★  26°C 
JULY ★  25°C  	AUGUST ★  26°C  	SEPTEMBER ★  27°C  	OCTOBER ★  29°C  	NOVEMBER  30°C  	DECEMBER  30°C 

☀ Beautiful weather and clear skies · 🌧 Warmth and possible showers · 🌴 Beaches and relaxation · 🤿 Diving and snorkeling · 🐳 Southern right whale watching · 🌿 Lush landscapes
★ Best times to travel



WHEN TO GO TO ZIMBABWE?

JANUARY  25°C	FEBRUARY ★  25°C	MARCH ★  24°C	APRIL ★  23°C	MAY ★  20°C	JUNE  18°C
JULY  18°C	AUGUST ★  22°C	SEPTEMBER ★  27°C	OCTOBER  30°C	NOVEMBER  28°C	DECEMBER  26°C

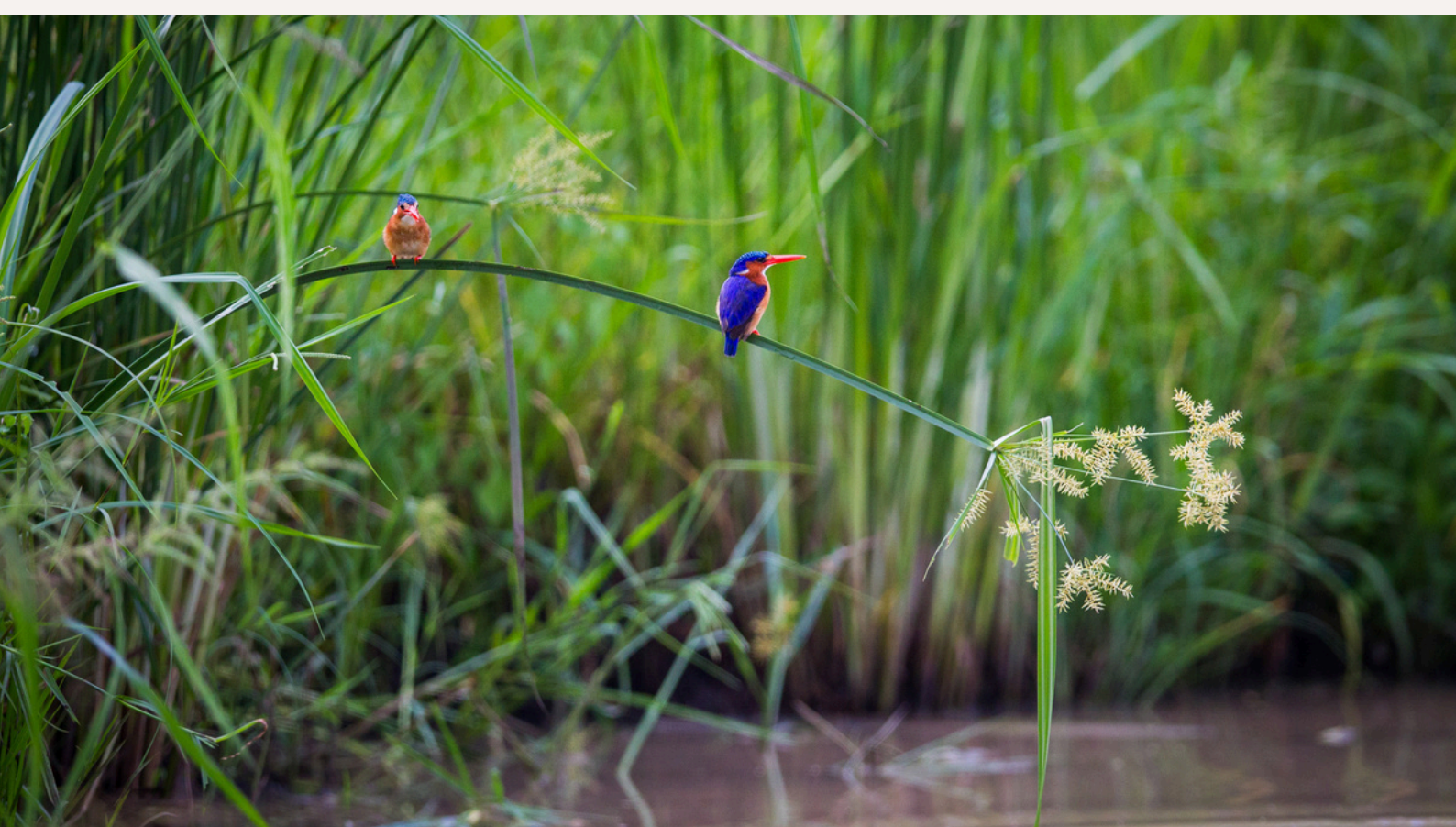
☀ Beautiful weather and clear skies · ☁ Possible heat and showers · 🦁 Safaris and wildlife viewing · 🛶 Water sports and Zambezi River cruises · 🌊 Spectacular Victoria Falls · 🐦 Migratory birds and birdwatching · 🌿 Lush landscapes · ★ Best times to travel



WHEN TO GO TO ZAMBIA?

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
 24°C  	 24°C  	 24°C 	 23°C  	 21°C  	 19°C 
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
 20°C  	 24°C  	 28°C  	 31°C 	 29°C 	 26°C 

 Beautiful weather and clear skies ·
  Heat and showers possible ·
  Safaris and wildlife viewing ·
  Canoe safaris on the Zambezi River ·
  Spectacular Victoria Falls ·
  Migratory birds and birdwatching ·
  Lush landscapes ·
  Best times to travel



WHEN TO GO TO BOTSWANA?

JANUARY  32°C  	FEBRUARY ★  31°C  	MARCH ★  30°C 	APRIL ★  28°C 	MAY ★  25°C  	JUNE  22°C  
JULY  22°C  	AUGUST ★  26°C  	SEPTEMBER ★  31°C  	OCTOBER  34°C 	NOVEMBER  33°C  	DECEMBER  32°C  

☀ Beautiful weather and clear skies · ☁ Possible heat and showers · 🦁 Safaris and wildlife viewing · 🛶 Water safaris in the Okavango Delta · 🐦 Migratory birds and birdwatching · 🌿 Lush landscapes and green season · ★ Best times to travel





OUR EXPERT ADVICE

Southern Africa can be explored all year round. Each season reveals different landscapes, climates and experiences depending on the destination.

FOR THE BEST SAFARIS

June to October remains the most spectacular period for observing wildlife in Kruger Park, Hwange or the Okavango Delta.

FOR A CHRISTMAS TRIP

December is ideal for enjoying Cape Town, South African beaches and Mozambique, with a very pleasant summer atmosphere.

FOR A ROAD TRIP IN NAMIBIA

April to October, temperatures are pleasant and conditions are ideal for exploring Namibia's vast open spaces on a self-drive tour.

TO COMBINE SAFARI & BEACH

August to November is a great time to combine safaris in southern Africa with a beach holiday in Mozambique.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION **BEFORE DEPARTURE**



Planning a trip to Southern Africa often raises very practical questions. Do you need a visa? What vaccinations are required? Is it easy to pay by card? What type of luggage should you choose for a safari or a bush plane flight?

The good news is that a trip to Southern Africa can be easily planned when the information is clear. A few key points are all it takes to travel with peace of mind, avoid oversights, and fully enjoy each stage of your journey.

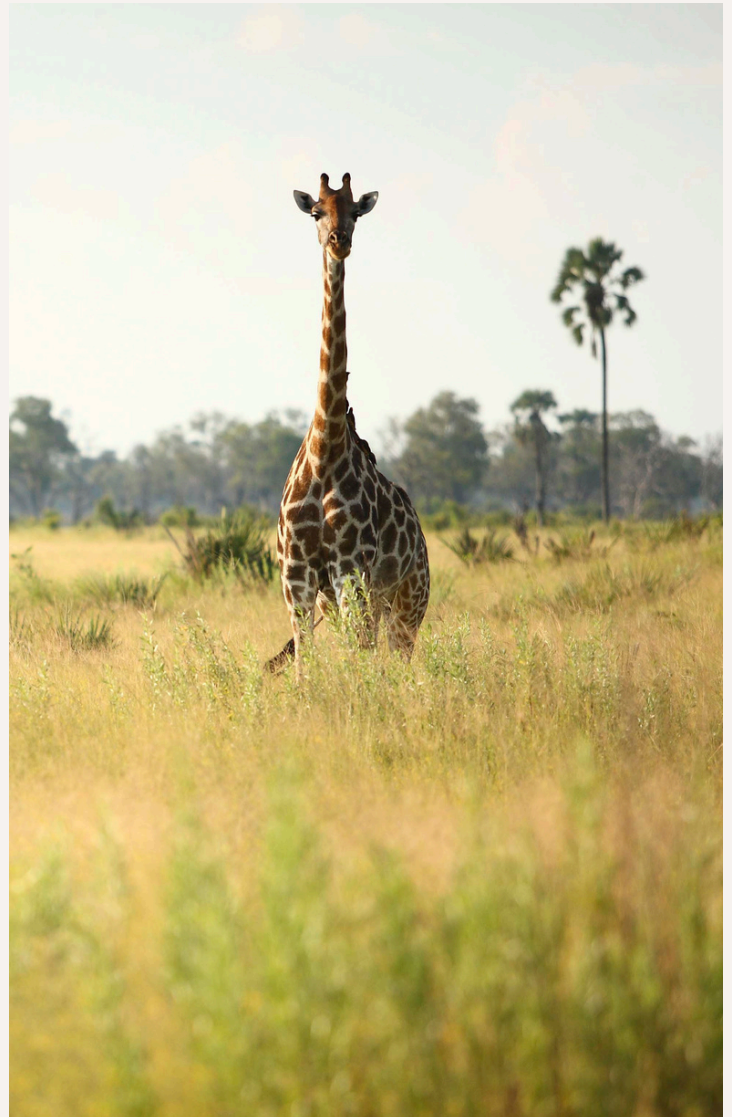
At South African Travellers, we support our travellers before departure to ensure their experience is smooth from the very first preparations.

VISA AND PASSPORT

Entry requirements vary depending on the country and nationality of the traveller. For French, Belgian, and Swiss citizens, South Africa and Botswana generally do not require a visa for short tourist stays.

In contrast, Namibia now requires a visa since April 2025, while Zimbabwe and Mozambique plan for a tourist visa on arrival or online depending on the case.

Zambia is now easier to enter for many European nationalities, with visa-free tourist entry for short stays, but conditions should still be checked before departure.



Passport validity requirements vary by destination. Some Southern African countries require your passport to be valid for at least six months beyond your travel dates, while others have different requirements. Your passport must also have sufficient blank pages. We recommend checking the specific requirements for each country on your itinerary before departure.

For families, some destinations may require additional documents for minor children, including a copy of a birth certificate or parental authorisation depending on the situation.

It is preferable to prepare these documents in both paper and digital versions.



HEALTH AND VACCINES

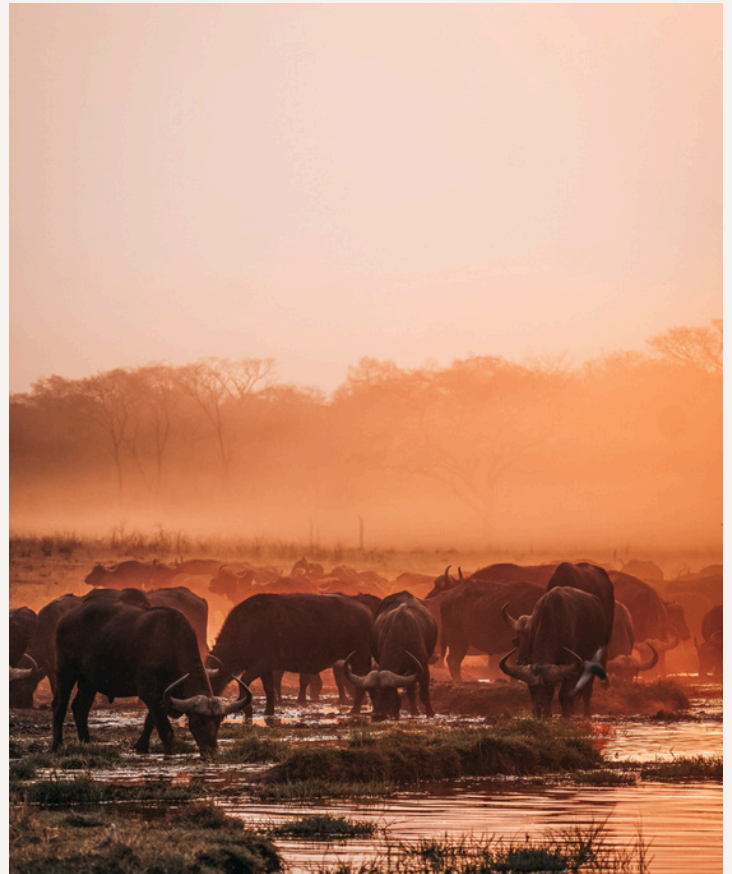
No specific vaccinations are generally required for a typical trip to Southern Africa from Europe, except when transiting through a country where yellow fever is present. However, it is still advisable to consult a doctor or travel medicine clinic before departure.

Malaria exists in certain areas, particularly around Kruger National Park in Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and parts of Botswana. The risk varies depending on the season, routes, and regions traversed.

Cape Town, the vineyards, the Garden Route, and much of Namibia do not present the same health risks as a safari in a tropical area. Therefore, travel advice should always be tailored to the specific trip, not to a destination as a whole.

A well-prepared travel medicine kit remains invaluable.

Sunscreen, mosquito repellent, covering clothing in the evening, sunglasses and personal prescription medication are among the essentials.



MONEY AND BANK CARDS

International bank cards are widely accepted in major cities, hotels, lodges, and restaurants in South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana. However, it's still advisable to travel with two cards, ideally Visa and Mastercard, and to check spending limits before departure.

In more remote areas, cash remains important. This is particularly true for tips, markets, some petrol stations, or small everyday expenses.

In Zimbabwe and Zambia, the US dollar is often very useful in tourist areas, especially around Victoria Falls. It's best to bring small bills, which are easier to use locally.

Before leaving, it is recommended to notify your bank, activate payments abroad and keep your bank's assistance number handy.

WHAT SHOULD I PACK IN MY SUITCASE?

The ideal suitcase depends on the season and the itinerary. During the southern winter, from May to October, mornings can be very chilly in the bush, sometimes close to freezing in certain desert or safari areas. A fleece, a warm jacket, and closed shoes are essential.

During the southern summer, from November to March, light and breathable clothing is recommended. A waterproof jacket can be useful in areas prone to rain.

For safaris, neutral tones are best. Bright colors should be avoided, as they can disturb wildlife. A hat, good sunglasses, a headlamp, and binoculars are among the small details that greatly enhance the experience.

If the trip includes bush plane flights, particularly in Botswana, Zambia, or Zimbabwe, soft-sided luggage is often mandatory and weight is limited. Hard-sided suitcases are generally unsuitable.



DRIVING AND TRANSPORTATION

Driving is on the left in several southern African countries, including South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. The first few kilometers may require a little attention, but travellers generally adapt quickly.

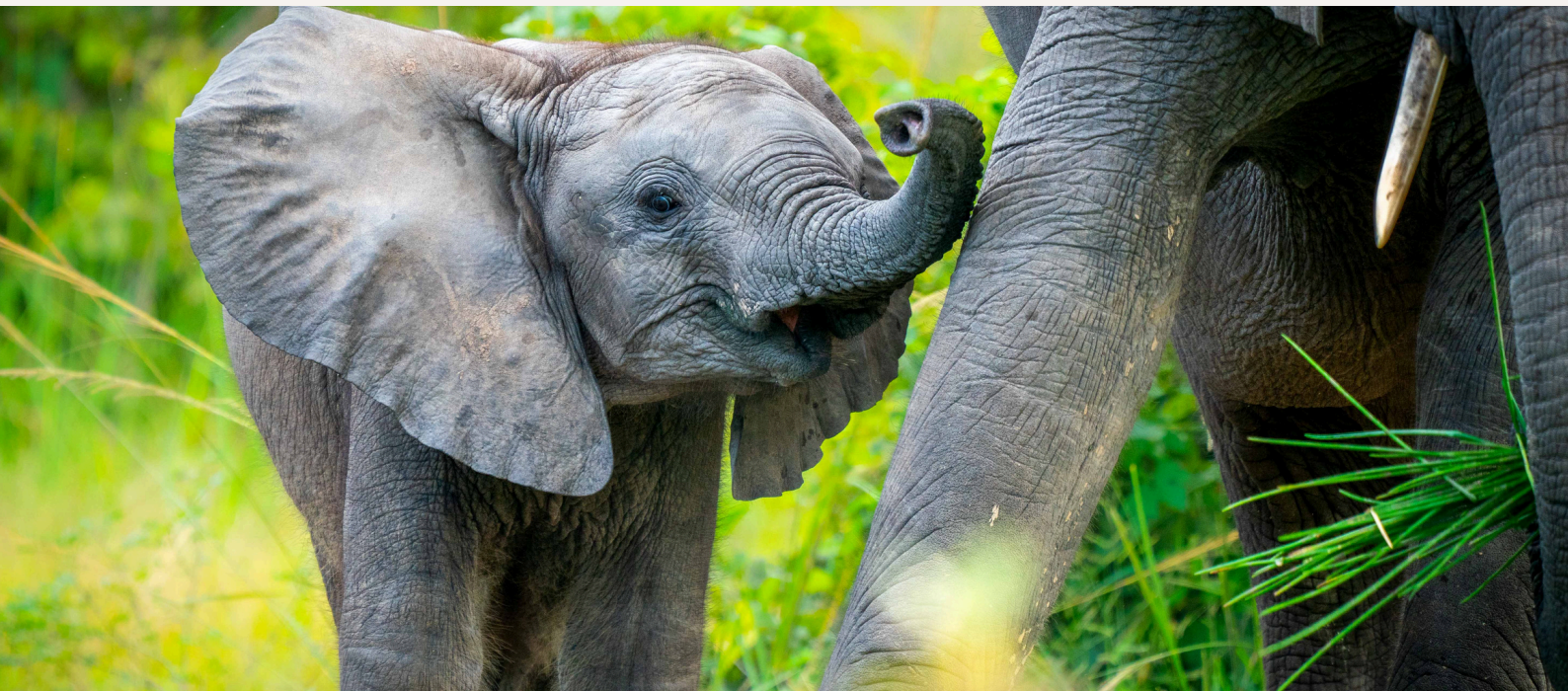
South Africa is ideal for a self-drive tour, with a generally good road network. Namibia offers a more adventurous experience, with long gravel tracks and wide open spaces. It's essential to drive during daylight hours, maintain a safe following distance, and fill up your tanks as often as possible.

In Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, some secondary roads and park tracks can be more challenging. A 4x4 is often recommended, and even essential depending on the area and season.

Domestic flights and bush planes also make it possible to reach isolated regions more comfortably, particularly in the Okavango Delta or certain remote reserves.



TRAVELING DIFFERENTLY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, ETHICAL SAFARIS, AND MORE AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

Travelling in Southern Africa is much more than going on safari after safari or collecting the most beautiful landscapes. It's about taking the time to observe, understand, and discover territories where nature remains profoundly wild and where encounters play an essential role.

Today, more and more travellers want to give more meaning to their travels.

Traveling differently doesn't mean giving up comfort or wonderful experiences. Rather, it's about making more informed, more respectful, and often more enriching choices.

Southern Africa lends itself particularly well to this approach. Between reserves committed to conservation, community initiatives, and accommodations involved in protecting their environment, travellers now have the opportunity to contribute positively to the destinations they discover.

As a certified Travelife Partner, South African Travellers supports its travellers towards more responsible and respectful experiences in the territories visited.



ETHICAL SAFARI AND WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Watching a leopard cross a track at dawn. Hearing elephants in the bush. Following a lion's tracks with a ranger at sunrise. A safari in southern Africa is one of those experiences that leaves a lasting impression.

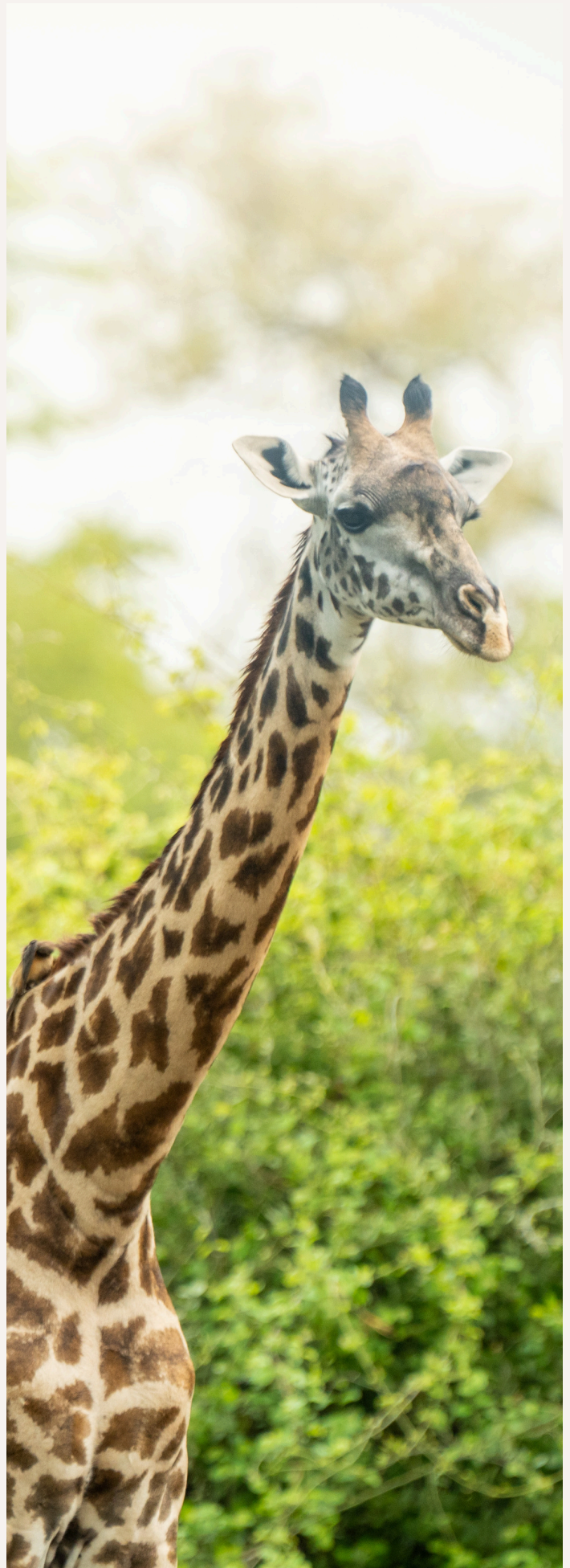
But how can we know if an experience is truly respectful of wildlife?

A simple rule can serve as a guide: the more an activity encourages natural observation, the more respectful it generally is of animals. Conversely, when an experience involves touching, feeding, walking, or posing with a wild animal, it is legitimate to question its operating conditions.

The most committed reserves and lodges favour remote observation and often participate in conservation or species protection programs.

In regions like Kruger Park, the Okavango Delta or certain South African private reserves, safaris are based primarily on respecting the natural behavior of animals.

This approach sometimes requires more patience, but it also offers the most beautiful emotions. Seeing an animal roam freely in its natural environment remains one of the most powerful experiences that southern Africa has to offer.





TRAVEL AT THE PACE OF LOCAL CULTURES

Southern Africa is more than just safaris. Behind the wide open spaces lie rich cultures, living traditions, and communities that fully contribute to the identity of these destinations.

Discovering a craft market in Botswana, chatting with a local guide in Namibia, or sharing a meal at a family-run vineyard in South Africa often adds a more human dimension to travel.

These encounters allow us to better understand the territories traversed and to discover a more authentic southern Africa, far from the clichés.

Choosing local guides, favouring regional crafts or staying in establishments involved in their community is also a concrete way to support the local economy.

This approach fosters more sincere exchanges and often creates the most memorable experiences of the trip.

BEST PRACTICES FOR more sustainable tourism

01

PRIORITISE COMMITTED ACTORS

Choose certified accommodations and agencies that are making concrete commitments to more responsible tourism.

02

OBSERVE WITHOUT DISTURBING

Always respect observation distances and the instructions of guides during safaris.

03

AVOID INTERACTIONS

Be wary of activities that offer the opportunity to touch, feed, or photograph wild animals up close.

04

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Favor local guides, regional artisans, and businesses located in the communities you visit.

05

TRAVELLING WITH A WATER BOTTLE

A reusable water bottle can significantly reduce plastic waste.

06

PRESERVE RESOURCES

Reduce your water and energy consumption in the lodges, especially during periods of drought.

07

CHOOSE RESPONSIBLE SOUVENIRS

Opt for local crafts and avoid products made from protected species or sensitive materials.

08

RESPECT LOCAL CULTURES

Always ask for permission before photographing a person or cultural event.

09

TAKE YOUR TIME

Slowing down allows you to better understand destinations and to have more authentic experiences.

WHY TRAVEL WITH South African Travellers ?

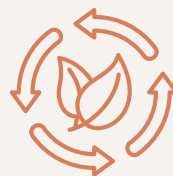


OUR SECRETS FOR an unforgettable trip



LOCAL EXPERTISE

Based in Cape Town for over 15 years, we design tailor-made trips thanks to our perfect knowledge of the area.



TRAVELIFE COMMITMENT

As certified Travelife Partners, we favour partners committed to more responsible tourism.



CUSTOMISED TRIPS

Each itinerary is built according to your desires, your pace and your way of discovering southern Africa.



ROADBOOK & TRAVELKEY

All your travel information gathered in one convenient and accessible space.



DEDICATED ADVISOR

A single point of contact will assist you before, during and after your trip.



24/7 ASSISTANCE

Our team remains available during your stay to assist you at any time.



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