CAPE TOWN LOOP – TOUR DOSSIER

TOUR CODE SCC40

CAPE TOWN LOOP

40 DAYS

Tour Starts – 08:00  Pre-Departure meeting – 18:00 day prior to departure

Cape Town Full Circle – An epic adventure through South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Zambia. Sit amongst giant sand dunes, encounter big game at Etosha’s waterholes, cruise through the Okavango delta in dug-out canoes, admire the spectacular Victoria Falls and take a safari in Kruger. After a break in Johannesburg complete the adventure on a trip through Mozambique, Swaziland and the famous coastline of South Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS
Cape Flats Township Tour
Fish River Canyon
Sossusvlei Sand Dunes - Namib Naukluft Park
Swakopmund
Spitzkoppe
Cape Cross Seal Colony
Etosha National Park
Windhoek
Kalahari Bushman Walk
Okavango Delta
Chobe National Park
Victoria Falls – Livingstone
Maputo, Mozambique
Swaziland – Mlilwane National Park
Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve – game drive
Durban and Wild Coast
Addo Elephant Reserve – game drive
Tsitsikamma National Park – forest walk
Knysna
Cango Caves & Oudtshoorn Ostrich Farm
Western Cape Winery

INTENDED ITINERARY

Whilst it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the tour and on occasion it may be necessary or desirable to make alterations to the published itinerary.

Duration: 40 Days
Countries visited: South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, Swaziland

NB. This tour is a combination of 25-day Overland Tour Desert Tracker (camping) and 14-day Small Groups Safari Kruger to Cape Town (accommodated & camping) with a 2 night break in Johannesburg (not included).

For more information on how to fill your 2 nights in Johannesburg see our Johannesburg Mini City Stay on page 104 of our brochure.
This morning before we leave the city we take a tour of the Cape Flats – Cape Town’s famous townships, visiting some of the local people and community projects in the area. The townships both illustrate South Africa’s tumultuous history and its hope for the future and make a fascinating visit. From here we head north through South Africa’s western and northern Cape provinces, a fertile area of winelands and wild flowers in the south that gradually turns drier and rockier as we head north towards the Namibian border. We set up our camp tonight at Gariep (Orange) River before sunset. There will be time tonight to settle in to life on the road, properly meet the rest of the group and enjoy our first night under the big African sky.

We enter Namibia and arrive at the awesome Fish River Canyon. One of the natural wonders of Africa, some 500m deep and over 160km long, this is the second largest canyon in the world, after the Grand Canyon, USA. Again, there are plenty of opportunities for keen photographers as we spend time around this area and visit the canyon’s infamous sharp river bend known as ‘Hell’s Corner.’

After a night near the canyon we continue north until we reach the Namib Naukluft Park, containing the world’s oldest desert and the highest sand dunes in the world. Some of Sesriem and Sossusvlei’s dunes are over 300m high and when the park opens first thing in the morning we head out to appreciate the sunrise and the morning rays shedding colours across this magnificent landscape. There is time to climb a dune if you’re feeling energetic and we continue the day deeper in the park, taking nature walks across the salt pans and flat valley floors while surrounded by the giant dunes. Bring your camera! The shifting colours of the sand throughout the day offer brilliant photographic opportunities.

Hitting the coast we head north past picturesque fishing villages until we reach the old colonial town of Swakopmund, Namibia’s main seaside resort, sandwiched neatly between the desert and the ocean. This is a delightful coastal oasis and a wonderful place to enjoy some unique adventure desert based activities. Try quad biking, sand boarding, or skydiving (weather permitting) if you’re into adrenaline activities. There’s also deep sea fishing to try. Alternatively take a coastal walk and indulge in Swakopmund’s welcoming café culture at your own leisure.

We leave Swakopmund and head north, stopping at Cape Cross, where, in 1486, the Portuguese mariner Diego Cão first set foot on the coast of southwest Africa. It is also, infamously home to some 80,000 seals, the largest of a number of seal colonies along this stretch of coast. The Cape Cross Seal Colony is impressive, if not just for its size, then for the immense noise and smell it produces! It also provides great photographic opportunities.

We now head inland to the beautiful Damaraland region and stop at Spitzkoppe to admire ancient bushman paintings still visible on the area’s peculiar rock formations.

We make our way north to Etosha National Park, a vast reserve of over 20,000 sq km surrounding a central salt depression or ‘pan.’ The pan is seasonally full of water but specially managed year-round waterholes sustain some 114 mammal and 340 bird species. We spend two nights here and camp near a floodlit waterhole. This
provides exciting night time game viewing for those who choose to stay up to watch. Observers frequently see a range of night visitors from elephant, giraffe and zebra to lion and hyena, at close quarters around the holes, making it one of the most memorable wildlife encounters in Namibia.

After two nights here we leave the wildlife to head to the capital Windhoek, a city steeped in German atmosphere, where, back in civilisation, you may choose to enjoy a flagon of ale at one of the local taverns.

Leaving Namibia we travel west into the Kalahari and cross into southern Botswana. We stop at the town of Ghanzi. Here, in this seemly barren terrain we take a fascinating Bushman Walk to discover the secrets of the land and learn how its people traditionally survive. After a night here we travel north to Maun for the next chapter of our journey. Maun is our gateway to the Okavango Delta, a natural wetland system spreading over some 1,600,000ha of northern Botswana. The Okavango River rises in Angola and flows south dividing repeatedly after crossing into Botswana into an intricate floodplain of channels that spread out into a broad flat inland delta – the only one of its kind in the world. Here we explore the channels and islands on foot and in mokoro (dugout canoe) in search of hippo, crocodile and a variety of birds amongst the giant lily pads and tall grasses. We camp for a night on a remote river island amidst the nocturnal sounds of the African bush - an unforgettable wilderness experience!

After our return to Maun we make our way to Chobe National Park, situated in the northern corner of Botswana. The park is home to some of the largest elephant populations in Africa as well as lion and abundant birdlife, including the famous African fish eagle. Rising early we take a game drive, we rest during in the heat of the day and then in the late afternoon, we take a cruise on the Chobe River – a great opportunity to see hippo in the shallows and perhaps watch elephant come to the river to bath and drink.

Moving on from Chobe, we cross the river by ferry to Zambia and drive the short distance to the town of Livingstone near the mighty Victoria Falls. We set up camp at the Waterfront campsite on the banks of the Zambezi, and the campsite reception will give advice and information about the various optional activities available in the Livingstone/Vic Falls area including white water rafting, bungee jumping, abseiling, gorge swinging, canoeing, elephant and horse riding, scenic flights and river cruises – so you can plan your time accordingly. And don’t forget a visit to the Victoria Falls themselves. At various times of year the spray can be seen from up to 20 or 30 kilometres distance, hence the local name Mosi au Tunya – the ‘smoke that thunders’.

For the sake of practicality, meals in the Livingstone/Victoria Falls area are restricted to breakfasts. This allows you to take on half day or full day activities (some of which include lunch) without having to be back with the group at mealtimes. The Waterfront camp has a beautiful restaurant, overlooking the Zambezi which offers a good selection of reasonably priced meals and snacks throughout the day (we suggest you allow US$15 per day). Relax and enjoy these few days at your own leisure.

From Livingstone, we return to Botswana and spend the night back beside the beautiful Chobe River before we head south, crossing the vast grasslands of southern Botswana on the edge of the Kalahari. We travel via Nata and Francistown, desert frontier towns, before re-entering South Africa. Here we head for the country’s premier game reserve - Kruger. The fences between borders and private game reserves on the fringes of Kruger have been taken down to form the Greater Kruger with an area of over 24,000 sq km. This is home to a host of African animals in a space bigger than Israel. We spend two nights within the Kruger area. Here you will catch your last glimpse of Africa’s diverse wildlife - lion, elephant, buffalo and leopard, and some of the 500 species of bird that inhabit the park. The landscape is of mainly flat bush and savannah and we explore on game drives. There is also the option of taking an additional night drive in the Thornybush Reserve to view nocturnal predators.
DAY 25 - 26
Johannesburg
Bx1

We leave the Kruger behind and make our way to South Africa's commercial capital of Johannesburg where our overland section of the tour ends in the late afternoon/early evening. Here you will be saying goodbye to the tour leader and the overland group and have two nights in Johannesburg. These two nights accommodation are not included in the tour, allowing you free time to do and stay where you like. If you would like to stay at hostel, from where the next part of the tour leaves and would like to choose a half day trip out to see the city or visit Nelson Mandela’s township on your free day please look at our Johannesburg Mini City Stay on page 104 of the Acacia brochure.

DAY 27
Blyde River Canyon, Bourke’s Luck Potholes, Three Rondavels,
Private Game Reserve
Dx1
Twin Share/ en suite

Meeting up with your new group we leave Johannesburg this morning at 05:00. We leave early in order to have time to head through the scenic province of Mpumalanga, stopping at spectacular Blyde River Canyon and the Three Rondavels. Blyde River Canyon is the third largest canyon in the world and we descend into the canyon to view the perfectly rounded ‘potholes’ formed by the Blyde River in thousands of years of erosion. We also stop high on an escarpment to view the lowveld leading to the famous Kruger area. After descending the escarpment we join the lowveld and arrive at a bush camp in a private game reserve beside Kruger National Park. A recent development in Greater Kruger means fences between the park and surrounding private game concessions have been removed so wildlife can migrate freely throughout the area.

DAY 28
Kruger National Park
Bx1 Dx2
Camping with facilities

We rise early to enter into the world famous Kruger National Park. This is South Africa’s flagship park, with over 2 million hectares of unrivalled wildlife diversity as well as historical and archaeological sites. With cameras and binoculars at the ready, we explore the wilderness on game drives, and hopefully see some of the ‘Big 5’ - elephant, rhino, leopard, lion and buffalo. The Kruger is home to over 500 species of birds, 100 species of mammals and many reptiles. The impressive atmosphere of the park enables you to understand why it holds such a unique place amongst the world’s great game reserves. We also visit a historical village to learn more about early pioneers who once lived here. We spend our nights in camp, allowing us almost two days of game viewing. A typical day would be to leave camp early, drive for several hours and return late morning to rest camps for lunch. Then after a few hours rest we will go out again late afternoon to view wildlife in the lead up to sunset.

DAY 29 – 30
Mozambique – Maputo
Bx2 Dx2
Twin Share/ en suite

We leave South Africa and travel into Mozambique heading for the capital, Maputo. Formerly known as Lourenço Marques (after the Portuguese trader who first explored the area in 1544), Maputo is a blend of decaying colonial architectural grandeur with a strong African heartbeat, with evidence and influences of the ‘old world’, particularly in the cuisine and lively night life. As a port on the Indian Ocean, Maputo’s economy is centered on the harbour. The city boasts a museum of Mozambique history, a military museum, and the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Our Lady of Fatima. Away from the city there are numerous day trips that can be taken including excursions to pristine beaches, sailing trips on traditional dhows and game drives in the Maputo Elephant Reserve.

DAY 31
Swaziland – Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary
Bx1 Dx1
Twin Share/ en suite

Leaving Mozambique behind we enter the Kingdom of Swaziland, the smallest country in the southern hemisphere and the only African state to ruled by absolute monarchy. We camp in the Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary amongst zebra, warthog, eland, kudu, waterbuck, waterfowl and numerous species of bird. There is a
range of activities here - including walking and mountain biking. This evening you have the option of enjoying traditional Swazi dancing, singing and cuisine.

**DAY 32 – 33**  
Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve, Durban  
Bx2 Dx1  
Twin Share/ en suite

We cross back into South Africa and make our way to its oldest game reserve, Hluhluwe-Imfolozi. The reserve’s hilly terrain ensures great vantage points for game viewing. If we are lucky we may come across some of the ‘Big 5’ and even the elusive nyala (antelope). The reserve is also known for its many white and black rhino which we may see on our drive. This afternoon we make our way down the coast, ending the first section of our tour on arrival in Durban in mid/late afternoon.

**DAY 34 – 35**  
Wild Coast - Chinsta  
Bx2 Dx2  
Guesthouse/hostel with en suite facilities

We leave Durban early and travel though one of the less visited areas of South Africa, the Wild Coast. Formerly known as the Transkei, this area is sparsely populated but rich in culture and inhabited mainly by the Xhosa people. We have two nights in beautiful Chinsta, the jewel in the Eastern Cape’s crown. Situated on the beach we have a full day to enjoy a range of optional typically available in the area – e.g. surfing, horse riding, canoeing, day safaris to a local reserve. This is a delightful place to relax and enjoy South Africa natural beauty.

**DAY 36**  
Addo Elephant Reserve  
Bx1 Dx1  
Camping with facilities

Today we continue our journey south, making our way to Addo Elephant Reserve. The park has undergone considerable expansion in recent years and from its humble beginnings of less than a dozen elephants, the park now boasts over 400 individual elephants! We game drive – in addition top elephants Addo contains lion, leopard, buffalo, rhino and as well as various bucks and antelope. Given the relative flatness of the park, coupled by well positioned waterholes, the likelihood of seeing a wide variety of wildlife is normally very good.

**DAY 37 - 38**  
Tsitsikamma National Park, Knysna  
Bx2 Dx2  
Guesthouse/hostel with en suite facilities

Our last port of call in Eastern Province is Tsitsikamma where you may like to take an optional hike along scenic mountain paths giving us great views over the Indian Ocean. There is the chance of spot wildlife in the dense forest and ocean alike. From the duiker, a small antelope, to dolphin and otter - the variety of wildlife attracted to this is a delight to everyone. The following day we enter the Western Province and the pretty seaside town of Knysna. There is a variety of many optional activities typically available here – or else simply relax, enjoy an oyster or two while trying some of South Africa’s famous wines.

**DAY 39**  
Oudtshoorn – Cango Caves, Ostrich farm  
Bx1 Dx1  
Guesthouse/hostel with en suite facilities

We venture inland today and visit the unique rock formations of the Cango Caves where one million year old stalagmites and stalactites compete for your attention. We also visit an ostrich farm to gain an insight in farming the largest bird on earth. The Oudtshoorn area has some 97% of the world’s ostrich population and you have the opportunity to ride and feed these comical creatures.

**DAY 40**  
Winelands, Cape Town  
Bx1

Today we visit a winery in the heart of South Africa’s famous wine region and visit a winery, to enjoy wine tasting and learn about the wine making process. Finally we continue to South Africa’s ‘mother city’, Cape Town, overlooked by Table Mountain, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and one of the world’s most picturesque cities, where our tour ends.
TOUR INFORMATION

TOUR STYLE
Southern Circuits (comprising of one Overland Tour and one Small Group Safari)

WHAT'S INCLUDED
Tour highlights, transport, accommodation as indicated, sleeping mattress, camping equipment where required, meals as indicated, camping equipment, services of an English speaking driver and tour leader (or one driver/guide if group size is less than nine from Johannesburg to Cape Town)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED
Accommodation in Johannesburg, visas, travel insurance, flights, airport transfers, sleeping bag, optional activities, laundry, tips to driver & local guides, passport & visa fees & items of a personal nature.

ACCOMMODATION
Cape Town to Johannesburg: Camping! We use 2-person dome tents with fly sheets, built in ground sheets, zip-up insect screens and thick foam sleeping mattresses. We mainly use designated campsites, which often have permanent wash and shower facilities, electricity points and sometimes even a small shop, bar or swimming pool.
Johannesburg to Cape Town: Accommodation is mainly in twin share chalets/ cabins/ guest houses with en suite. Many are situated in comfortable and in picturesque locations with facilities including swimming pool, restaurant and bar, allowing you to relax at the end of the day. Two nights are spent in campsites in Kruger and Addo National Parks, allowing us to enjoy the sounds of Africa under canvas. Here we use dome tents and shared bathroom facilities.

TRANSPORT
Cape Town to Johannesburg: 24-seater, self contained, custom-built safari truck with onboard tables, plug sockets, freezers, library, i-pod jack, safety features and 70-litre individual lockers.
Johannesburg to Cape Town: Minibus or microbus, open vehicle (Kruger),

MEALS
Meals as indicated. Most meals on tour are prepared by the tour leader and group members are required to assist. We use fresh produce wherever available and are able to cater for special dietary requirements, providing you advise us in advance. Some meals may be taken at local guesthouses, camps and restaurants at the tour leader’s discretion.

PARTICIPATION
Cape Town to Johannesburg: You will be travelling on an overland truck and the tour is participatory. Your help will be needed in setting up the camp each night and assisting (usually on a rota basis) with the various day to day campsite duties, such as shopping, cooking and keeping the truck and camp tidy. But don’t worry it’s not all hard work and it’s a great way to meet the local people and get to know your fellow travellers. Your contribution benefits the success of the tour. Most people find the greater their involvement, the greater their enjoyment of the whole trip.
Africa is an adventure destination and travelling here is not always predictable so be prepared to “expect the unexpected” in difficulties or delays which might come our way! However, you’ll soon find that the diversity of the African landscape, the wildlife and the communities we pass on our way, make the sometimes rough travel and long driving days worthwhile. Come with a sense of adventure and a flexible attitude and you will be sure to enjoy your Acacia overland tour across this amazing continent.
Johannesburg to Cape Town: Your tour leader will prepare meals and your assistance is welcomed but not compulsory. You may be required to put up your tents on the nights in Addo and Kruger National Parks.

GAME PARK VISITS
In order to maximise the quality of game driving and to comply with local authority rulings, some of our National Park visits and game viewing is carried out using services provided by local African ground handlers. While enhancing our experience it also allows us opportunity to contribute at a ‘grassroots’ level to local economies, from which local people benefit. These local services are included in the Local Payment.

BOOKING INFORMATION
When you make a confirmed booking for your tour you will be sent pre-departure information and related documents. Once you have paid in full you will receive a Travel Voucher giving full details of your joining point. Cape Town is well served by a variety of airlines. Your travel agent can advise on flights to and from the start and finish of your tour.

JOINING INFORMATION
Meeting point in Cape Town: The Backpack
Cnr Military Rd/New Church Street
Cape Town
Contact Details:
Tel: +27 (0)21 423 5555
Fax: +27 (0)21 423 0065
Email: accommodation@backpackers.co.za
Pre-departure meeting: 18:00 prior to day 1
Tour start time: 08:00 on Day 1
Tour end point in Cape Town: As above
Tour end time: Mid/late afternoon on day 40

EXTENDING YOUR STAY
We recommend you spend the night before Day 1 in Cape Town as there is a pre-departure meeting held in the evening prior to departure which it is important you try to attend. Cape Town is a beautiful city with plenty of activities on offer. If you wish to extend your trip at the beginning of end of the tour to enjoy the area we can help arrange any extra accommodation, usually booked on a direct pay basis. Please see the guide rates below. These are subject to change so please contact us for current rates.

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Johannesburg accommodation (two nights) is not included in the tour. If you would like to spend these nights in the hostel from where the next parts of the tour leaves and enjoy activities while you are there, look at our Johannesburg Mini City Stay on page 104 of the Acacia brochure.

WHAT TO BRING
Please try to keep your luggage to a minimum, bearing in mind that most airlines impose a 20kg luggage limit. A large soft holdall or backpack and a smaller day pack is ideal. On this tour you should bring a mixture of lightweight, cool clothing for the day and warm clothing (i.e. fleece, long trousers and hat) for mornings and evenings as it can be quite cool on game drives. Pack a light rain jacket. It is advisable to bring mosquito spray throughout the year. A small pair of binoculars and a camera with a good zoom is recommended for game viewing. Bring a sleeping bag for camping. A money belt/pouch, worn under the clothing is also a good idea. Please avoid bringing unnecessary valuables and use hotel safes wherever possible, to store your cash, passport and airline tickets.

VACCINATIONS/HEALTH
The table below indicates the vaccinations suggested for travel on this tour but should be treated as a guide only. You should seek professional medical advice from your GP or clinic at least six weeks prior to departure.

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C = Compulsory, R = Recommended, * = If travelling from infected countries a certificate of proof may be required.

VISA REQUIREMENTS
The table below indicates the visas required for travel to the countries on this tour but should be treated as a guide only. At least one month prior to travel seek confirmation from embassies or a visa specialist, that these requirements are still current. For UK citizens the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) offers free up-to-date travel info: www.fco.gov.uk For other nationalities a number of travel advice websites are listed on the Acacia website.

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MONEY MATTERS

PERSONAL EXPENSES
Naturally you will require extra money for your own personal spending on the tour, for snacks, drinks, souvenirs, tips and items of a personal nature. Everybody has different spending habits but as a guideline we suggest you budget US$15-25 per day. Also keep US$ cash for relevant airport taxes and visas needed, optional activities and any additional accommodation before or after your tour.

- Spending money is best carried as cash in US dollars, Sterling or Euro which can then be transferred into the Rand on arrival. Your guide can advise how and when you can change the rest of your money throughout the tour.
- Currencies are as follows: South Africa – Rand, Namibia – Namibian Dollar; Botswana – Pula; Zambia – Zambian Kwacha; Mozambique – Metical; Swaziland – Lilangeni. Please note that Rand is legal tender in Namibia at the same rate of exchange as the Namibian Dollar.
- ATM machines are found in Cape Town, Windhoek, Livingstone, Johannesburg, Durban and most large towns.
- Credit cards can be used to pay for larger optional activities although there may be a fee for their use.
- Travellers cheques can be difficult to cash but make suitable emergency funds.

It is recommended you bring your money in a mixture of ways and your guide can best advise on what to use where.

LOCAL PAYMENT
The Local Payment (LP) for this tour is split into two payments, the first to be paid to your tour leader on arrival in Cape Town and the second paid to your new tour leader in Johannesburg. These amounts are used to pay for running costs and excursions on the road. Please pay in US$ cash - travellers’ cheques and credit cards are not accepted.

TIPPING
As in many areas where tourism is an important contributor to the economy, it has become customary to give a small gratuity to local staff at the end of a tour for services rendered. This is at your own discretion.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES
In order to give you maximum flexibility on tour we offer a number of optional activities on the tour. To help budget, approximate prices are listed below (subject to change and availability).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Price (US$)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Lion Encounter</td>
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<td>N$2600</td>
<td>Swaziland</td>
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<td>Horse Riding</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>Quad biking</td>
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NB The above costs have been converted into approximate US dollars for convenience. Expect to pay for some of these in the local currency.

INSURANCE
It is a booking condition of Acacia that you have full travel insurance valid for the duration of your tour to cover you for medical emergency and repatriation to your home country. Your guide will ask you for a copy of this when you join the tour. It is also important that you leave a copy of your insurance with the person nominated as your emergency contact. We can recommend a respected, specialist travel insurance provider for this tour. Please contact Acacia for more information.
Country Information – SOUTH AFRICA

Facts

Capital: Pretoria (official), Bloemfontein (judicial), and Cape Town (legislative)
Size: 1,219,090 sq km / 470,693 sq miles
Population: 44,344,136 (Sept. 05)
Groups: African/Black, White (mainly of Afrikaner and British origin), Coloured, Indian/Asian
Languages: English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Pedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, Tsonga (all 11 are official languages)
Local time: GMT + 2
Seasons: Western Cape: warm (September-April), cold and wet (May-August); East coast: humid all year; Northern provinces: wet (September-April), dry (May-August)
Currency: 1 South African Rand = 100 Cents
Telephone: Country code 27, international access code 09
Electricity: 220 V / 230 V / 250 V / 50 Hz, the plug fits a 15A socket with three round pins

South Africa is a country rich in minerals, with abundant wildlife and spectacular scenery; a land of beauty with a social and political structure that is anything but! A country having three capitals - Pretoria the Administrative, Cape Town the Legislative, and Bloemfontein the Judicial. Having by far the most developed and sophisticated economy on the continent, South Africa is essential to many of the neighbouring countries as an avenue for exports, and a provider of electricity and high tech products. A good network of roads and an abundance of high quality camp sites (as well as beautiful scenery) makes travelling in and around South Africa an easy and very rewarding experience.

Points of Interest

Cape Town

Founded in 1666 as a place where trading ships going round the Cape of Good Hope could stock up, Cape Town today is South Africa’s tourist destination No.1. It is one of the most beautiful cities in the world with plenty of sights and outdoor activities. The natural beauty of the place is defined by mountains (esp. famous Table Mountain) and sea (and not only one, it is here the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean meet). The ‘Mother City’ has also has one of the most diverse populations including descendants from such diverse people as Indonesian, Malay, French, Dutch, British & German settlers, the local Khoisan (Bushman & Hottentot) tribes and the Bantu tribes from the north. It is one of the most tolerant and relaxed cities in Africa.

Places of interest in and around Cape Town:

Table Mountain – Cape Town’s trade mark towers 1086 metres above sea level and is accessible by cable car or by several trekking routes (Platteklip Gorge being the most frequented one)
The Castle – Cape Town’s oldest remaining building
Bo-Kaap – the old Malay quarter is a predominately Muslim area coined by Malay slaves who were brought in by the Dutch; take a walk among the colourful houses
Victoria & Albert (V&A) Waterfront – this complex of shops, restaurants and bars attracts over 20 million visitors every year; it also has a massive oceanarium where you can dive with sharks and the (still working) port
Robben Island – 11 kilometres from the coast, this World Heritage Site features a former prison of Nelson Mandela where he spent 18 years
Company Gardens – the remains of the original fruit and veg gardens to provide the ships, these gardens now host many interesting museums
Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens – situated at the eastern side of Table Mountain, these gardens contain a wide variety of mostly indigenous flora with the mountain as a backdrop; in summer concerts are held here every Sunday afternoon
Beaches – Cape Town has a great many beaches on both the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean: the 4 beaches at Clifton, Camps Bay and Bloubergstrand on the Atlantic and Muizenberg, Kalk Bay and Fishhoek on the Indian Ocean, to mention just a few.

Townships – the townships of Guguleu, Langa and Kayelitsha offer great insights into Cape Town’s black communities.

Cape Peninsula – a day tour around the Cape Peninsula will lead you to Hout Bay Harbour with its Cape Fur Seal colony on Duiker Island, to Boulders Beach with its jackass penguins and to the Cape Point Nature Reserve where the south-western most point of Africa is to be found.

Winelands – the world-renowned wine region around Stellenbosch has some of the oldest and most beautiful wineries in South Africa. Visit the beautiful buildings and sample some excellent wines.

Johannesburg

Looking at the modern façade of South Africa’s capital it is hard to imagine that it is merely over a hundred years old. It started to boom after gold was found in the area and therefore is still referred to as the gold capital of the world. Besides its great shopping and nightlife, Johannesburg is a good base for daytrips.

Things to do within Johannesburg city are the views from the top of the Carlton Centre, Museum Afrika, the Market Theatre precinct, Hillbrow and Houghton Gold Reef City (a replica of Johannesburg as an old gold mining town), tribal dancing, street theatres and amusement parks.

You can also go on a Soweto township tour where you visit a township, the Hector Petersen monument, apartheid museum and a local shebeen (pub).

At the nearby Lion breeding park you can see cheetah, zebra, giraffe and cuddle lion cubs.

Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga – the ‘land of the rising sun’, is also nicknamed the Panorama Region for its many natural sights. It stretches east from Johannesburg towards Swaziland and Mozambique. Most visitors to South Africa pass through Mpumalanga on their way from Johannesburg to Kruger Park.

Places of interest in Mpumalanga:

Pilgrim’s Rest – a quaint and atmospheric gold rush town

Bourke’s Luck Potholes – named after gold digger Tom Burke, these are big cylindrical potholes carved out of the bedrock of the rivers Treur (joy)and Blyde (sorrow) over millions of years; they also mark the beginning of the Blyde River Canyon

Blyde River Canyon – the third largest canyon in the world (after the Grand Canyon, USA and the Fish River Canyon, Namibia)

God’s Window – here cliffs plunge over 700 metres and offer spectacular views over the Lowveld with its rock formations, canyons and waterfalls

Three Rondavels – famous rock formation resembling three local huts

Kruger National Park

Kruger National Park is where the greatest diversity of wildlife in Africa can be experienced. Kruger Park stretches 352 kilometres from north to south along the Mozambique border. At 24,000 sq kilometres, it is South Africa’s largest game reserve; it contains 5 river systems and 16 different ecosystems with 457 types of trees and shrubs and 1,500 smaller plants. It is home to 147 mammal species, 500 species of birds, 116 reptiles, 34 amphibians, 49 fishes and countless insects. No wonder the park is visited by almost 1 million people each year, most of whom come here to see the famous ‘Big 5’ (lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino).

Kruger National Park was established in 1898 to protect the wildlife of the South African Lowveld. Today, it is part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park connecting it with the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique in the east and with Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe in the north. To the west, it is linked to numerous private game reserves with Klaserie, Sabi Sands, Timbavati and Manyeleti being the most known ones. Recently all the fences separating the private game reserves from the national park have been dismantled, creating an area known as the ‘Greater Kruger’.

But Kruger does not only offer great wildlife in beautiful landscape, it also has cultural heritage sites showing that man has lived in the Lowveld for centuries: bushman rock paintings and the archaeological sites of Masorini and Thulamela Hill.

Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve

Situated north of Durban, this is one of the oldest and most prominent game parks in the country. It comprises three reserves: the former Zulu Royal hunting grounds of Hluhluwe and Imfolozi - both founded in
1895 - and the linking Corridor Reserve, proclaimed in 1989; together they cover 96,000 hectares divided by the Umfolozi (meaning 'zigzag') River. Besides being home to the 'Big 5', this game park is known for being a haven for **black and white rhinos** with one fifth of world's black and white rhinos living here.

**Durban**

Best known for its beaches at the warm **Indian Ocean**, Durban offers warm **sub-tropical weather** all year-round and the perfect surf conditions make just even more a perfect holiday destination. Home to one of the **largest Indian communities** outside India, it is also a good place for Indian food. Try the locally developed bunny chow! Things to do in Durban include: Golden Mile beachfront, Indian Market, Traditional Healer’s Market, Campell Museum, Apartheid Museum, Ushaka Island and plenty of casinos and shopping malls. Since Durban is conveniently located in the heart of **Zululand**, is also a great base for experiencing Zulu culture.

**Wild Coast (formerly Transkei)**

 Formerly a homeland and birth place of Mandela, this secluded area has become South Africa's prime insider holiday destination. This rugged, remote and fairly unpopulated stretch of coast between East London and Port Edward offers rolling hills, jagged cliffs and a **wild, unspoilt coastline**. Best of all – it is still a well kept secret! The best places to visit along the Wild Coast are Chintsa (old spelling Cintsa) with its beautiful beach and Coffee Bay with the spectacular 5-day hiking trail to Port St. Johns.

**Addo Elephant Park**

This 121 sq kilometres big park near Port Elizabeth started off as a **conservation project** in 1931 for **elephant**. Today, there are about 400 elephants sharing their terrain with black rhino, lion, spotted hyena, kudu, jackal, Cape Buffalo and the unique flightless dung beetle.

**Tsitsikamma National Park**

South Africa's third most frequently visited National Park is located right in the centre of the Garden Route. The ancient Khoisan called the area ‘Tsitsikamma which means ‘place of much or clear water’ and accordingly it became **South Africa's first marine national park**, comprising the 80 kilometres of magnificent Indian Ocean coast between Plettenberg Bay and Jeffrey’s Bay. This mountainous region with valleys and deep river gorges leading down to the sea has **spectacular sea and landscapes**. One of the country’s most renowned walks passes through the park, the famous **Otter Trail**. It is 42.5 kilometres long and takes about 5 days to complete. Other activities in Tsitsikamma include the **Bloukrans Bridge Bungy Jump (with 216 metres the highest in the world)**, the Tsitsikamma canopy tour, the Storms River gorge cruise and scuba diving.

**Garden Route**

Stretching **between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth**, this **most scenic stretch of coastline** is named after its wealth of forests. It is one of South Africa's most visited places as has plenty of attractions. It has also become a main destination for **adventure sports** with almost every place along the route offering a wide variety of sports possibilities.

Places of interest along the Garden Route:

- **Oudtshoorn** - the centre of the Klein Caroo and definitely the **ostrich capital of the world**. Due to a large demand of ostrich feathers at the end of the 19th century, a large ostrich industry started to boom here. Today, the ostriches are mainly bred for their meat and leather. One of the highlights here is to visit an ostrich farm where you can also ride one of these large birds. Other places of interest are the **Crocodile and Cheetahland** and the **Cango Caves** which are full of fascinating stalagmite and stalactite formations. Nearby is the spectacular **Swartberg Pass**. The most fun way to explore Oudtshoorn and its surroundings is on a mountain bike tour.

- **George** – South Africa’s sixth oldest town is located right in the middle between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth and therefore often called the capital of the Garden Route. The famous Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe train to Knysna departs from here

- **Knysna** – a laid back resort on a scenic lagoon. Its most striking feature are the Knysna Heads between which the sea pours into the lagoon at the mouth of the Knysna River. It is also famous for oysters and artists

- **Plettenberg Bay** – called ‘Bahia Formosa’ (beautiful bay) by the Portuguese explorers, ‘Plett’ is a fast developing holiday destination for well-heeled South Africans and foreigners alike. It is surrounded by nature and marine reserves and its beach is perfect for any type of water sports
**Country Information - NAMIBIA**

**Facts**

- **Capital:** Windhoek
- **Size:** 824,292 sq km / 318,261 sq miles
- **Population:** 2,030,692 (Sept. 05)
- **Groups:** Owambo, Kavango, Herero, Damara, Nama, Caprivian, San (Bushmen), Baster, Tswana (80%), Mixed + European (20%)
- **Languages:** English, Afrikaans, German, Ovambo, Herero, Kwangali, Nama/Damara, Lozi, Tswana
- **Local time:** GMT + 2
- **Seasons:** Dry (April-October), short rains (October-December), long rains (January-March)
- **Currency:** 1 Namibian Dollar = 100 Cents
  also South African Rand
- **Telephone:** Country code 264, international access code 00
- **Electricity:** 220 V / 50 Hz, round pins with ground plug

Having the world's oldest desert, the highest sand dunes, and one of the most notorious coasts to shippers (the 'Skeleton Coast'), Namibia is one of the world's newest independent republics. Previously known as South West Africa, Namibia was a German protectorate up until WW1, when it came under the administration of South Africa. The German heritage is still very evident in the architecture and place names (Luderitz, Swakopmund) and in the dress of the Herrero tribe womenfolk, who still copy the dress of the German missionaries wives of the 19th Century. The country has large stocks of diamonds, copper, uranium, tin, silver and other minerals, and these, plus the more traditional stock raising and fishing underpin the economy. Namibia appears to the visitor huge and empty. The largely desert-like landscape offers some stunning scenery. The Fish River Canyon in the south, Etosha National Park in the north and the dunes of the Namib-Naukluft desert in the middle are the main points of interest.

**Points of Interest**

**Fish River Canyon**
Fish River Canyon is the largest canyon in Africa and the second largest in the world (after the Grand Canyon in the USA). It is 161 kilometres long and 27 kilometres wide and its sheer drop is up to 550 metres deep. The vistas from the many view points are spectacular. The actual Fish River does not flow every year, but when it does, it appears suddenly and with force. During the winter months it is reduced to a few pools. Then is the best time to descend into the canyon to hike the strenuous 86 kilometres long Fish River Canyon Hiking Trail. Starting at the main northern lookout point, it takes about 5 days to complete and ends in Ai-Ais, most famous for its hot springs which contain chloride, fluoride and sulphate and which are about 60º hot.

**Etosha National Park**
Etosha is one of the biggest game parks in Africa. While the whole Etosha area spans 22,270 sq kilometres, the flat depression within the park, the Etosha Pan, is about 5,000 sq kilometres big. No wonder that the local Ovambo people call it Etosha – meaning 'huge white area' or 'place of dry water'. In the dry season, the pan is an inhospitable, lifeless place with the salt crystals reflecting the light and causing mirages. During the rains, however, it changes completely. Birds, especially flamingos, flock to it and the adjacent land starts to bloom. There are 144 mammal species in the park including the 'Big 5' and game viewing at one of the many water holes can easily turn into a biblical scene. You will also find flood-lit water holes near the camps for great night game viewing.

**Namib-Naukluft Park**
Namibia's largest National Park is a whopping 23,000 sq kilometres big which makes it the fourth largest nature conservation area in the world. It lies within the Namib Desert which stretches from the Orange River on the southern border with South Africa up north beyond the Kunene River into Angola. The Nama call it quite appropriately Namib – meaning 'vast'. Within its borders, the landscape varies greatly from mountains, canyons and deep gorges to desert plains, lagoons and high dunes. The main areas are Sossusvlei, the lagoon at Sandwich harbour, the Namib Desert Park and, further north, the Naukluft Park with the Naukluft Mountains.

**Sossusvlei + Sesriem canyon**
Sossusvlei is a dusty clay pan overlooked by hundreds of towering sand dunes up to 300 metres high. The dunes vary from pale apricot to vivid reds and bright orange. The most famous one is undoubtedly Dune 45. It is best to climb it in the early hours and watch the sunrise from the top.
Sesriem canyon is a small canyon which used to be an important water source for the early explorers and settlers. They used to lower buckets into the Tsauchab River with six thongs from where the Afriikaans name ‘Ses Riem’ derives. You can take a walk in the canyon where you will find a variety of bird, insects and lizards.

Swakopmund

Namibia’s second biggest town looks like it has been cut out of Germany and pasted into Namibia. The German architecture wedged between the desert and the Atlantic sea is a bizarre view and the wild mix of its inhabitants is even more confusing. However, Swakopmund has a relaxed atmosphere with promenades, palm trees and gardens. There is plenty to do here. Walk around town and take a look at the pier, the lighthouse, the former train station, tour the Hansa brewery or visit the Ethnology and Natural History Museum. For night time entertainment, head to one of the many bars and restaurants or gamble at the casino.

Swakopmund has also become Namibia’s adventure capital and there is an array of activities on offer: sand boarding, quadbiking, camel rides, offroad driving, sky diving and desert horse riding. Not far from Swakopmund, in the middle of a lunar-like landscape, is the Goanikontes Oasis where you can view the very peculiar welwitschia tree (Welwitschia mirabilis). This ancient plant (some of the specimen are 2,000 years old) is unique to Namibia; it only has two leaves – if one of them dies, the whole tree dies.

Windhoek

Namibia’s capital Windhoek (meaning ‘windy corner’ in Afriikaans) is an interesting mix of modern city and colonial past. It lies 1,650 metres above sea level and is Namibia’s biggest city with 15,000 inhabitants. The German influence is still visible and German widely spoken. Worth visiting are the well-known Christuskirche (a German Lutheran church), the Alte Feste (old fort) which hosts the State Museum, and the Tintenpalast (ink palace) which is home to the parliament. If you happen to be there in October or April, you might experience German culture in form of the Oktoberfest (beer festival) or, respectively, the Windhoek Carnival.

Country Information – BOTSWANA

Facts

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
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Although vast, semi arid and empty, Botswana has prospered since independence and is comparatively well off in relation to its neighbour’s - especially those to the north. The economy relies on mining (Botswana supplies de Beers with over 50% of its diamonds), cattle ranching and tourism. Although relations with South Africa have been strained, Botswana is heavily reliant on that country for its rail, air and sea links. The Okavango Delta in the north west of the country is a major attraction, the water levels rising and falling annually with the rivers originating in the Angolan highlands. Perennially short of water, the word for Botswana's currency unit (one of the strongest currencies in Africa) is the same word for rain.

Points of Interest

Okavango Delta Reserve

The 16,000 sq kilometres big Okavango Delta is the largest inland delta in the world and known to the locals as ‘the river which never finds the sea’. Most of the Okavango River, which originates in the highlands of east-central Angola, terminates here. These natural wetlands are a massive inland system of natural reed filled water channels, lagoons and islands. The delta consists of 4 parts: the Inner Delta, the Eastern Delta, Moremi Game Reserve and the Okavango Panhandle. Most people use Maun as a base for their visit. The delta is best explored by mokoro (traditional dug out canoe) where so-called ‘polers’ guide you through the labyrinth of channels, standing like gondoliers at the rear of the boat. An alternative is to fly over the reserve
for a bird's eye view. The Okavango is a **birder's paradise**, home to huge numbers of waterfowl and raptors, but you also find elephant, zebra, buffalo, wildebeest, giraffe, hippo, crocodile, lion and kudu here.

**Chobe National Park**
This park, 11,000 sq kilometres in size is located in the north where Botswana meets Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Its main attraction are its 25,000 elephant population – part of a huge 'superpopulation' that exist across the northern belt of Botswana and the north west of neighbouring Zimbabwe. In this area elephant numbers are thought to total 120,000 - the **highest concentration of elephants in the world**. The Chobe River, its floodplain and nearby leek forest marks the heart of the park and its here that animals come to drink and bathe. Besides elephant, you will also come across antelope, buffalo, crocodile, lion, hippo and a number of birds including the African fish eagle. They are best spotted at the end of the day during **game viewing boat cruises**. In the southern part of Chobe lies the Savuti region which is particularly good for game watching; ancient **San rock paintings** can also be found here.

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**Country Information - ZAMBIA**

**Facts**

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Formerly Northern Rhodesia, Zambia is made up of a highland plateau (approximately 1000 metres above sea level) which rises toward the east and which - in the north, along the border of Zaire - houses enormous reserves of copper, cobalt, coal, zinc and lead, the mining of which is of extreme importance to the economy. Tourism is of increasing importance with the magnificent Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River marking the border with Zimbabwe. The game parks of Zambia, although not so well known as those of Kenya and Tanzania, are large and well stocked with wildlife of all types. The long standing leader Kenneth Kaunda was defeated in elections in 1991, the country's first multi-party elections in 19 years, and today Zambia is one of Africa's newest democracies - although it is struggling to maintain living standards at a time when earnings from its mineral exports are dropping.

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**Points of Interest**

**Victoria Falls**
‘Mosi-oa-Tunya’ - the smoke that thunders is what the locals call Victoria Falls, one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World and a World Heritage Site. The **waterfalls** are 1,708 meters wide and drop between 90 metres and 107 metres into the Batoka Gorge and an average of 550,000 cubic metres of water plunge over the edge every minute. Even from as far as 70 kilometres away this spectacle can be seen. Batoka Gorge also forms the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. David Livingstone first came here in 1855 and reported about ‘Scenes so lovely, they must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight’.

Today, visitors come here not only to look at the waterfall, but also to experience it in different ways. From Livingstone (named after the explorer), you can book activities like white water rafting, river boarding, jet boating, bungy jumping, microlighting, helicopter flights, sunset cruises and elephant back safaris.

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**FOOTBALL'S COMING TO AFRICA**

In line with the 2010 Football World Cup, in Cape Town, Acacia’s keeping its eye on the ball. We’ve got together with the charity Footballs for Fun to spread some goodwill and love for the beautiful game across the continent. In 2008 all our trucks will carry footballs which can be bought and donated to children in the local towns along our route. The footballs are a perfect ice breaker and a game with locals is a great way to make friendships despite language differences.
And all the profit (at least £2 from each ball) goes straight back into Africa, helping support a selection of AIDS charities and children’s homes. Make a difference, get kicking and buy a ball when you’re next on one of our trucks.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL
We believe that you get the most out of a journey by respecting the culture and people of the places you visit. On our tours we try to travel in a way that benefits the communities we pass through and minimises negative impact on the environment. This can be from ensuring the campsites we use are clean when we leave and dressing respectfully in conservative areas to getting involved with local charity projects. We ask that you are open to this when you travel with us. Being proactive in responsible travel helps develop cross-cultural understanding and friendships with the local people, and will greatly enhance your experience in Africa.

PHOTOS & STORIES SEARCH
If you’ve ever thought you can take better pictures than the brochures or have a great travel story and want to see yourself in print, then we’re looking for you. If you’ve captured a great moment on tour, whether it’s of the wildlife, local people, landscape or life on the road why not enter our monthly photographic competition starting in 2009. Not only do we give away a monthly prize, you may also see your photos published in a future brochure or on our website. We are also on the lookout for stories of life on the road, the funny, exhilarating, moving or simply unforgettable things you did on tour. We publish the best stories on the Tales from the Road section of our website. Send your photos or stories to acaciaontheroad@googlemail.com

Photos should be in digital format & good resolution (max 6 pics per person) and labelled with the location of where the photos were taken. Meanwhile if you have a story or anecdote about your tour (up to 400 words) it needn’t be word perfect, we’d love to hear about it.

Legalities: You, the photographer/author, retain copyright of all images & words submitted but we reserve the right to use of them for Acacia brochures, promotions & advertising.

For information on our Acacia Small Group Safaris, Adventure Tours, Comfort Class Safaris, Short Breaks & City Stays, Voluntours, Dive Tours, New Horizons and Access Tours or to contact us please visit www.acacia-africa.com

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