

Wildlife & Waterfalls

Country(ies): Zimbabwe , South Africa

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: 12 seater quantum style minivan

Group size: Min: 4 | Max: 12

Days: 11 days

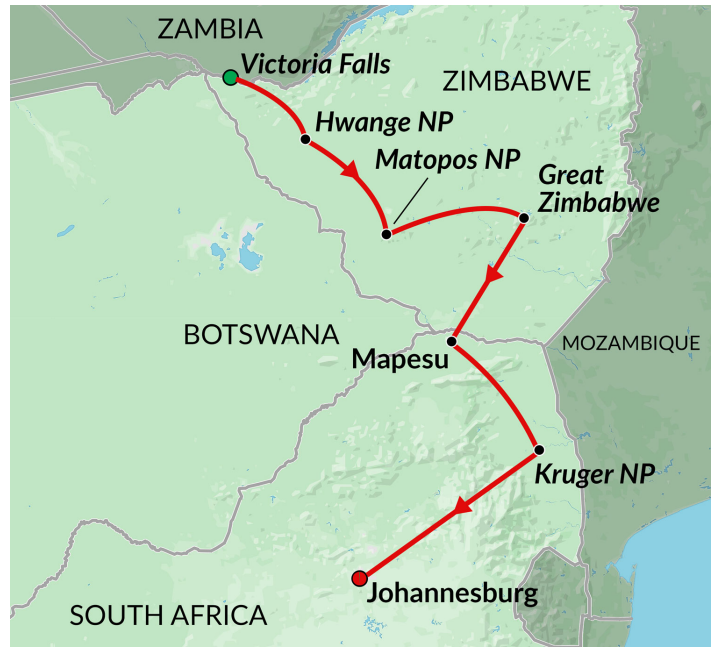
Start Location: Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

End Location: Johannesburg, South Africa

Meals: Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 10

Highlights:

Victoria Falls, Hwange NP, Painted Dog Centre, Motobo Hills, Matopos NP, Mapesu, Kruger NP, Panorama Route, Hazyview, Johannesburg



Itinerary

Day 1: From Victoria Falls to Hwange National Park

This morning, we bid farewell to the awe-inspiring Victoria Falls, leaving behind its thundering cascades and mist-laden gorges. Our journey takes us southwards, deep into the heart of Zimbabwe's premier wildlife destination: Hwange National Park. As the nation's largest and most celebrated wildlife reserve, Hwange promises an unparalleled safari experience.

Upon arrival, we'll settle into our comfortable accommodation, taking some time to relax and prepare for the adventures ahead. The anticipation builds as the afternoon approaches, signalling our very first game drive within the park. We'll set out in open 4x4 safari vehicles, perfectly designed to offer unobstructed views of the magnificent landscape and its inhabitants.

OVERNIGHT: Miombo Safari or similar

MEALS: Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 2: A Morning in Hwange National Park. Afternoon visit to the Painted Dog Conservation Centre

Awake to the evocative sounds of the African bush, a symphony of chirps, calls, and distant roars. Awaiting you is a freshly brewed cup of coffee or tea, the perfect start to another exhilarating day. Soon after, we'll embark on our morning game drive into the heart of Hwange National Park.

Hwange's sheer biodiversity is astonishing, boasting over 100 mammal species and nearly 400 bird species. As we traverse the varied landscapes, from open grasslands to dense teak forests, keep your eyes peeled for incredible sightings. You might witness the silent, graceful movement of elephants through the trees, spot kudu standing alert amidst the thickets, or even discover a pride of lions resting contentedly after a night of hunting. Every turn offers a new opportunity to encounter the park's magnificent inhabitants.

We'll return to our lodge late in the morning, allowing for some well-deserved relaxation during the warmest part of the day. As the afternoon unfolds, our journey continues with a visit to the nearby Painted Dog Conservation Centre. This is a truly vital project, dedicated to safeguarding one of Africa's most endangered carnivores: the African wild dog, also known as the painted wolf.

At the centre, you'll gain fascinating insights into the challenges these remarkable animals face, from habitat loss to human-wildlife conflict. More importantly, you'll learn about the inspiring, community-driven efforts underway to protect and ensure the future of these intelligent and highly social creatures. It's a humbling experience that highlights the critical importance of conservation in Zimbabwe.

OVERNIGHT: Miombo Safari or similar

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Journey to the mystical Matobo Hills. Exploring a unique landscape and its Inhabitants

After a delicious breakfast, we'll bid farewell to the vast plains of Hwange National Park and embark on a fascinating journey south towards the truly mystical realm of Matobo Hills. This remarkable area is also known as Matopos National Park, and it holds the prestigious title of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's celebrated globally for its otherworldly rock formations, profound spiritual history, and surprisingly diverse wildlife.

Matopos offers a dramatic contrast to the open savannas of Hwange. Here, the landscape is dominated by immense granite boulders, sculpted by aeons of erosion, often appearing to balance precariously atop one another in gravity-defying formations. Hidden within this ancient geological wonderland are numerous caves, many of which conceal millennia-old San rock art, offering a tangible link to the early human inhabitants of this region.

Beyond its geological and historical significance, Matopos is also a critical conservation area. It is widely considered one of the very best places in Africa to embark on an unforgettable tracking experience to see both white and black rhino on foot. This incredible opportunity is, of course, subject to local conditions and park regulations, ensuring the safety and well-being of both visitors and these magnificent, endangered creatures. The chance to approach these powerful animals in their natural habitat, guided by expert trackers, is an experience that truly connects you with the wild heart of Africa.

OVERNIGHT: Banff Lodge or similar

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 4: Journey to the Great Zimbabwe Ruins.

After a final, delicious breakfast, we'll set off eastward, embarking on a captivating journey toward one of Africa's most significant and enigmatic historical landmarks: the majestic Great Zimbabwe Ruins. This ancient site promises a profound glimpse into a rich, powerful past.

By early afternoon, we'll arrive at Great Zimbabwe, which was once the flourishing capital of the Kingdom of Zimbabwe. From the 11th to the 15th centuries, it served as a vital trading centre, connecting the interior of Africa with coastal ports and beyond. The sheer scale and sophistication of its architecture are truly astounding.

The stone structures of Great Zimbabwe are marvels of dry-stone architecture, built entirely without mortar, showcasing incredible craftsmanship and engineering prowess. As we explore, you'll discover distinct areas, each with its own story and significance. Marvel at the imposing Great Enclosure, with its massive curved walls and the iconic conical tower, whose purpose remains steeped in myth and mystery. Ascend to the Hill Complex, which is believed to have been the royal city and a spiritual centre, offering panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.

Wandering through these ancient ruins, you'll feel the weight of history and the echoes of a once-thriving civilization. The intricate stonework and the sheer audacity of the construction provide a humbling testament to the ingenuity of the people who built it. After a truly enriching exploration of this UNESCO World Heritage Site, we'll head just a few minutes away to our accommodation for the night, allowing you to reflect on the day's incredible discoveries.

OVERNIGHT: Norma Jeans Lake View Resort or similar

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 5: Mapesu Private Game Reserve

This morning, we'll depart from the historical heart of Zimbabwe, leaving behind the echoes of ancient civilisations as we set our course southward. Our destination is the wild frontier of our overnight lodge, nestled serenely near the Limpopo River within the vast Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area.

The journey itself is an adventure, taking us through remote and seldom-visited parts of Zimbabwe. This is a land of expansive open skies and undulating hills dotted with magnificent baobab trees, their silhouettes stark against the horizon. As we travel, the landscape undergoes a gradual but distinct transformation, shifting from the elevated highveld to the lower, warmer lowveld. The lush greenery slowly gives way to the semi-arid bushveld that characterises Zimbabwe's deep south, a testament to the diverse ecosystems of this incredible country.

By late afternoon, we'll arrive at our welcoming accommodation. You'll find yourself surrounded by characteristic mopane woodland and ancient sandstone formations, their rugged beauty hinting at geological timescales. The air is filled with the tranquil calls of wild birds, echoing softly in the distance, creating a truly immersive bush experience.

As evening descends, we'll gather to enjoy a relaxed dinner under a canopy of stars. The vast African night sky, free from light pollution, offers a breathtaking celestial display. With the day's journey behind us, there's a palpable sense of anticipation for the wildlife encounters that await in this beautifully preserved corner of southern Africa. It's a perfect setting to unwind and connect with nature, ready for the discoveries tomorrow will bring.

OVERNIGHT: Mapesu Wilderness Camp or similar

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 6: Ancient Art and Wilderness Tracking. Tracking in Mapesu Private Game Reserve.

Today, we embark on a fascinating journey that seamlessly blends ancient human expression with the raw, untamed African wilderness. Our first stop takes us to the remarkable Kaoxa Rock Art Shelter. Here, the sandstone walls are adorned with vivid paintings created by the San (Bushman) people, some dating back thousands of years. These incredible images depict animals, skilled hunters, and intricate spiritual symbols, offering a powerful and moving glimpse into the beliefs, daily life, and profound connection to nature of southern Africa's earliest inhabitants. It's a chance to step back in time and witness humanity's enduring artistic legacy.

In the afternoon, our adventure continues with an unforgettable guided tracking experience within the Mapesu Private Game Reserve. This isn't just a walk; it's an immersive lesson in reading the bush. Alongside your experienced guide and tracker, you'll learn to decipher the subtle signs left by the wild. From fresh tracks imprinted in the dust and expertly broken branches, to the alarm calls echoing in the distance, you'll begin to piece together the movements of the reserve's elusive wildlife.

With every step, you'll gain a deeper understanding of the intricate ecosystem. We'll be searching for signs of magnificent creatures like cheetah, the critically endangered rhino, or perhaps even the highly intelligent wild dog. The thrill of following these clues, knowing you're in the presence of such magnificent animals, makes for an incredibly rewarding and intimate wildlife encounter.

OVERNIGHT: Mapesu Wilderness Camp or similar

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 7: Phalaborwa – Kruger National Park

After an early and delicious breakfast, we'll begin our journey south towards one of Africa's most iconic wildlife sanctuaries: Kruger National Park. As we enter the park through one of its northern gates, the adventure truly begins. We'll enjoy a scenic drive through Kruger's incredibly diverse landscapes, keeping our eyes peeled for the first glimpses of its magnificent animal inhabitants along the way. This initial drive offers a wonderful introduction to the vastness and beauty of the park.

By late afternoon, we'll arrive at our comfortable lodge, perfectly situated just outside the Phalaborwa Gate. After checking in and taking some time to freshen up, the excitement builds once more as we prepare for an exhilarating sunset game drive. This evening's safari takes us into a nearby private reserve, offering an exclusive and intimate wildlife viewing experience.

As the African bush transforms under the golden hues of dusk, a magical atmosphere descends. This is a prime time to witness the transition from day to night, as many diurnal animals prepare for rest and nocturnal wildlife begins to stir. We'll be actively searching for these elusive creatures, perhaps catching sight of a leopard on the prowl, a civet foraging, or even the piercing eyes of a hyena in the fading light. It's a truly unforgettable experience, offering a different perspective on the incredible biodiversity of this region.

OVERNIGHT: Sefapane Lodge or similar

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 8: Morning Bush Walk and Journey to Timbavati. Sunset Game Drive in Greater Kruger

Our day begins with an invigorating morning bush walk in the Phalaborwa area. This immersive experience offers a unique, ground-level perspective of the African wilderness, far removed from the confines of a vehicle. Here, every snapped twig, every distinct scent, and every distant bird call tells a story, revealing the intricate narratives of the wild. Your expert guide will teach you how to interpret these subtle signs, offering a deeper connection to the natural world. After this profound walk, we'll return for a hearty breakfast.

Following breakfast, we'll journey southward towards the renowned Timbavati region. This area is a pivotal part of the greater Kruger ecosystem, sharing unfenced borders with Kruger National Park itself. This crucial design allows wildlife to move freely across vast distances, ensuring healthy animal populations and natural migratory patterns. The anticipation builds as we approach this celebrated conservation area, known for its exceptional wildlife viewing opportunities.

By mid-afternoon, we'll arrive at our comfortable overnight lodge, nestled within the Timbavati/Greater Kruger area. After a seamless check-in, we'll quickly prepare for our exciting sunset game drive. As the golden hour casts its magical light across the landscape, we'll venture out in open safari vehicles, searching for the incredible array of wildlife that calls this area home.

This is a prime time for animal activity, and with a bit of luck, this could be the day you encounter the iconic Big Five – lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo. The thrill of spotting these magnificent creatures against the backdrop of a setting sun is an unparalleled experience. As darkness fully descends, we'll return to the lodge, where a delicious dinner awaits. The day will conclude with captivating storytelling around a crackling campfire, sharing tales of our sightings and reflections on another unforgettable day in the heart of the African bush.

OVERNIGHT: Timbavati Safari Lodge or similar

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 9: The Majestic Panorama Route. Waterfalls and Tranquil Hazyview

After a delightful breakfast, we'll embark on a truly spectacular journey along South Africa's world-renowned Panorama Route. This promises to be a day filled with some of the most dramatic landscapes, profound canyons, and breathtaking cascading waterfalls that the country has to offer.

Our carefully planned route will take us to several iconic viewpoints, each offering its own unique perspective on this geological wonder. We'll stand at God's Window, where, on a clear day, you can gaze across the vast Lowveld to the distant Drakensberg Mountains. Next, we'll explore the remarkable and curiously sculpted Bourke's Luck Potholes, a series of cylindrical rock formations carved by millennia of water erosion. Finally, we'll be treated to the sweeping, panoramic vistas of the Three Rondavels, towering, round-topped mountains that majestically overlook the immense Blyde River Canyon – one of the largest canyons in the world.

Along our scenic drive, we'll make sure to pause and explore the beauty of either the Lisbon or Berlin Falls, both exquisite examples of the region's abundant natural beauty, where water plunges gracefully into clear pools below. We'll also enjoy a relaxed lunch at a charming local spot, savouring the regional flavours amidst the stunning scenery.

By late afternoon, we'll arrive at our comfortable lodge, peacefully nestled in the tranquil surrounds of Hazyview. This charming town serves as the perfect base for our final adventures. After settling in and taking a moment to unwind, you can enjoy a quiet dinner, reflecting on the day's incredible sights. With the beauty of the Panorama Route still fresh in your mind, you'll be perfectly prepared for the exciting final stretch of your South African journey.

OVERNIGHT: Umbhaba Eco Lodge or similar

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 10: A Full Day Safari in Kruger National Park

Today is entirely dedicated to the exhilarating thrill of the wild as we embark on a full-day guided safari deep within Kruger National Park. Setting off early in an open 4x4 safari vehicle, we'll enter the park through one of the nearby gates, eager to begin our extensive search for the iconic Big Five: lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo, and rhino. Your experienced guide will expertly navigate the park's vast network of roads, utilising their knowledge of animal behaviour and the bush to maximise our chances of incredible sightings. Every rustle in the grass or distant call could signal an exciting encounter.

Midway through our adventure, we'll enjoy a well-deserved break at one of Kruger's designated rest camps. Here, you'll have time to stretch your legs, grab a bite to eat, and simply soak in the unique atmosphere of being surrounded by the wild. These camps often offer fantastic viewpoints and a chance to observe the smaller, often overlooked, creatures of the bush. Refreshed, we'll then continue our comprehensive game-viewing journey, exploring different habitats within the park, from dense riverine forests to expansive savannas, each attracting a unique array of wildlife.

By late afternoon, as the sun begins to dip towards the horizon, we'll return to our lodge. You'll have plenty of time to relax and reflect on a day filled with incredible sightings and unforgettable moments in the African wild. The sounds, sights, and sheer scale of Kruger National Park will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression, providing memories to cherish for years to come.

OVERNIGHT: Umbhaba Eco Lodge or similar

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 11: Tour concludes in Johannesburg

After breakfast, we'll start our return journey to Johannesburg. This drive allows time to reflect on the diverse experiences of the past days.

We've moved from the power of Victoria Falls to the wildlife of Hwange National Park and the Painted Dog Centre. We explored the ancient art and unique formations of Matobo Hills, and the historical significance of Great Zimbabwe Ruins. We experienced the remote beauty near the Limpopo River and the tracking opportunities at Mapesu. Finally, we enjoyed the safari drives in Kruger National Park, alongside the stunning Panorama Route.

We'll arrive in Johannesburg by late afternoon or early evening, where your tour concludes. We trust you'll leave with lasting memories of Southern Africa's wilderness and history.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Included:

- 10 nights accommodation either hotels/lodges/guesthouses and tented camps
- Transportation in a Quantum style minivan and 4x4 safari vehicles
- Qualified Crew
- Local guides for sightseeing tours and activities as per the itinerary
- National Park entrance fees
- Hwange National Park game drives
- Hwange Painted Dog Centre
- Game drive in Matopos National Park
- Visit to the Great Zimbabwe Ruins
- Visit to Kaosa Rock Art Shelter
- Endangered Wildlife Tracking Experience
- Sunset Safari Sefapane Lodge in 4x4 safari vehicles
- Morning Bushwalk in Kruger
- Panorama Route - Bourke's Luck Potholes, Blyde River Canyon, God's Window
- Meals as outlined in the itinerary

Excluded:

- International Flights (available on request)
- Visa fees if required
- Optional activities (see itinerary)
- Travel Insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for guides & drivers
- Entrance fees and activities not mentioned above
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Single room supplement accommodated (SAOVWW)

Min numbers: 1

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. Room shares are not available on this tour, so if you are single traveller then you will need to add this option to your booking.

Note: The price shown is a low season price. Slightly higher prices may apply during high and peak seasons - the exact price for your dates will be shown on the online booking form and is always available on request.

Extra day in Johannesburg - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Airport transfers are not included, but are available as an additional option. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Departure airport transfer in Johannesburg

Min numbers: 1

This option adds a departure airport transfer in Johannesburg to your Overland tour with us. You will need to also book at least one night of post-tour hotel accommodation with us in order to book this transfer.

Note: We subcontract our airport transfers, so your transfer representative will not have any information about your tour with us, or be able to assist you beyond the transfer itself.

Arrival airport transfer in Victoria Falls

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an arrival airport transfer in Victoria Falls to your Overland tour with us. You will need to also book at least one night of pre-tour hotel accommodation with us in order to book this transfer.

Note: We subcontract our airport transfers, so your transfer representative will not have any information about your tour with us, or be able to assist you beyond the transfer itself.

Extra day in Victoria falls post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Airport transfers are not included, but are available as an additional option. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Historical Bridge Tour

Min numbers: 1

Journey through over 100 years of history on this engaging, theatrical, and educational tour. You will learn about the history of a remarkable structure, from its design and prefabrication in England to its construction in Africa. This engineering masterpiece was central to Cecil John Rhodes' vision of a "Cape to Cairo" railway, and its history is both entertaining and tragic.

Victoria Falls Helicopter Flight

Min numbers: 1

Experience an exhilarating 12-minute helicopter flight over the majestic waterfalls. You'll enjoy breathtaking aerial views of cascading water and the lush surroundings.

Victoria Falls Sunset Boat Cruise

Min numbers: 1

Enjoy a two-hour sunset boat cruise on the Zambezi River. You will be provided with local drinks and snacks during the trip. Please note that a park fee of \$10 USD is not included and is payable on site.

Victoria Falls Guided Tour

Min numbers: 1

Explore the majestic Victoria Falls National Park, Zimbabwe, with a knowledgeable guide. This tour takes you to up to 16 different viewpoints, offering a comprehensive look at the falls.

1. Accommodation

This tour ensures comfortable and engaging accommodation throughout your journey, blending authentic safari experiences with relaxing lodge amenities. You'll stay at properties such as Miombo Safari Camp in Hwange, offering a pool and waterhole views, and Banff Lodge in Matobo Hills, known for its lush gardens and excellent dining. Near the Limpopo River, Mapesu Wilderness Camp provides luxurious Serengeti-style tents with en-suite facilities. In the Kruger region, Sefapane Lodge boasts multiple pools and a spa, while Timbavati Safari Lodge offers traditional rondavels and a true bushveld feel. Finally, Umbhaba Eco Lodge in Hazyview provides a tranquil base with an outdoor pool and comfortable rooms, ensuring a restful retreat after each day's adventures.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

Note - Accommodation providers are subject to change without notice. The properties listed are our preferred options, but sometimes due to availability or other issues with the property, we may substitute another property of similar standards.

2. Transport

Our 12-seater Quantum vehicle has been specifically chosen and designed with your comfort and optimal viewing pleasure in mind, making it the ideal choice for small group safaris. Capable of accommodating up to 12 clients, it ensures a more intimate and personal travel experience.

Step inside and you'll find spacious individual seating, providing ample room to relax during your journey. We understand the importance of a comfortable environment, which is why the vehicle is equipped with climate control air-conditioning, maintaining a pleasant temperature regardless of the outside conditions.

Crucially, the Quantum features large windows throughout, offering truly unobstructed views of Africa's breathtaking landscapes and the incredible wildlife you'll encounter. Whether you're scanning the horizon for distant herds or observing an elephant just metres away, these expansive windows ensure you won't miss a moment of the action. It's the perfect blend of comfort and functionality for an unforgettable African adventure.

3. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. As one of our Southern Africa small group tours, this tour is limited to a maximum of 12 passengers.

4. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

5. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

6. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

7. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

<https://x.com/encounterstravel> (yes, without the 'e')

8. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient

cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? [World Nomads Travel Insurance](#) offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.

9. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.



10. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

11. Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please [contact us](#).

12. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

South Africa: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Namibia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Botswana: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted or travelled through an infected area.

Zimbabwe: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Zambia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Malawi: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Tanzania: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Kenya: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Uganda: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Sudan: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area. A certificate may also be required for those departing Sudan.

Morocco: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

Tunisia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

Malaria: Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

Yellow Fever: This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination is often required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this US CDC information about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information

detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate organised in advance and with you and to hand during the trip.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have. If you are travelling on an Overland tour or your trip includes wildlife safaris then please bear in mind that you may be travelling on bumpy roads and/or rough ground for several hours at a time. This can be very uncomfortable or painful if you have a bad back, and make such conditions worse. Please contact us if you have any concerns.

Health Declaration: As many of our Africa tours travel through very remote regions, where medical facilities are limited, we are asking all of our travellers 65 years and over who are joining one of our Africa Overland Adventures to complete the attached medical questionnaire. The information provided to Encounters Travel and our local operational partners will be held to the strictest confidence and will be used only to the extent to provide necessary emergency medical care and/or evaluate physical health and fitness for travel.

We will request this from you approximately 30 days before your trip starts, so that your GP can sign your form based on your current health conditions. Please don't submit this several months in advance, as it is important for us to know you are fit for travel just before the trip departs.

13. Passports and Visas

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities. Encounters Travel will not be held responsible if travellers are denied entry because they are not in possession of the relevant visas. We therefore recommend you re-check requirements with the relevant embassy/consulate around 4 weeks before travel.

You should also be in possession of a valid onward or return flight ticket, or proof of other means of transport enabling you to leave the country that your tour passes through or finishes in. In addition you should carry proof of sufficient funds to cover you during your time in the country (eg. credit card).

Should your tour be re-entering a country, please ensure that you have a multiple entry visa that allows this. Some countries have a visa on arrival service which can be more convenient and cheaper. However, for peace of mind and to speed up the border crossing process, Encounters Travel advises that you to get your visas prior to your trip if possible.

14. Tipping

In general tipping in restaurants is expected and is around 10% for good service, more if you have received exceptional service, and, feel free not to tip at all if you received poor service. Tipping taxi drivers etc is really at your own discretion and not always expected. If in doubt please ask your guides. It is expected to tip porters and car guards etc. Ask your guides how much is appropriate in local currency. The recommended amount for Serengeti and Masai Mara guides is around USD5-7 per client per day.

Our guides do work hard but they are also paid at (and often above) industry levels for this work. Our Crew can be tipped if you feel that they have done a good job and/or gone above and beyond the call of duty. The best way to arrange tips is to elect one person in the group to collect the money. On Small Group & Shoestring tours we recommend around USD 3-5 per person per day per guide as a fair tip. On longer Overland tours we recommend USD1-2 per day per person, per guide as a fair tip. So if you have 2-crew on a tour, we would recommend that 2 envelopes are used and each crew member's name written on one. Place what you feel is fair into each envelope and the elected person can give these to the crew at the end of the tour. If you do not feel that the crew deserve a tip, please, do not tip them. You must remember that tipping is only for exceptional service and is not at all compulsory or expected.

15. International Flights and Airport Transfers

International Flights: We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people living in different places and with varying travel plans, except on some Escorted Tours and package promotions, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

The vast majority of our tours are designed such that you can arrive and depart at any time on the first and last days of the set tour itinerary, with your arrival and departure airport transfers included in the tour price. However, on our **Overland tours**, you should not arrange your onward international flights or other travel for the day the tour is due to end (unless the final day does not involve any travelling and finishes after breakfast). Similarly, many of our Overland tours depart their first port of call on the first morning, and you will therefore need to plan for any flights to arrive at least one day beforehand.

Airport Transfers: Arrival and departure airport transfers are included on most of our Small Group, Shoestring (excluding the 5 & 6-day Garden Route tours where Airport Transfers are not included, however a pickup from a Central Cape Town location is included on day 1 of the tour) and Tailor-made tours but available as extra options on all our African Overland tours, as long as you have accommodation booked with us on that day. If you add extra accommodation before and/or after the tour that you do not book with us, then you will also need to arrange your own airport transfers.

Departure Taxes: Various countries may require that you pay an Airport Departure Tax when departing on an international flight. Please note that all departure taxes must be paid in hard cash currency and US Dollars are normally the best currency to use for this. Departure taxes can vary from US\$10 - US\$60 depending on the departure point.

Flight inclusive packages: We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

16. What to take

LUGGAGE ALLOWANCES: Most international airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 23kg per person of luggage to go in the hold of the plane. Domestic flights often have smaller allowances around 15kg. As airline rules vary we recommend that you take no more than 20kg of luggage if your tour just includes international flights, and no more than 15kg if there are any domestic flights included in your itinerary. Please ask us for details if you are unsure about luggage allowances on your tour. Any excess baggage fees will be your responsibility to cover. Most airlines allow between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage so we suggest that you take no more than 5kg unless you have confirmed that your airline(s) will allow more than this.

OVERLAND AND SAFARI TOURS: Please keep in mind that these are adventure tours in an adventure vehicle (truck or 4x4) and luggage should not include any solid Samsonite style suitcases. On our accommodated overland tours most of our trucks have lockers for the luggage (locker sizes: 37,5 cm high, 32 cm wide, 80 cm deep). Only a soft bag will fit in these lockers. A suitcase is far more difficult to store and make secure in our vehicle and this is part of the reason we ask for a backpack or tote bag to be used as your luggage. The other reason is that you need to walk from the truck to the accommodation and often over sand or uneven terrain. Your luggage on our Overland tours is limited to ONE backpack and ONE daypack weighing no more than 20kg. As a general rule, if you cannot lift your own luggage - you've got too much stuff! Most people make the mistake of bringing too many clothes. A quick reminder - **suitcases are not suitable on our overland tours** – especially huge Samsonite-style cases! **Small** wheeled cases are OK for safari tours.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST: Kit for all weather conditions including: • 2/3 shorts/skirts • 1 jacket/anorak • Tracksuit/pullover • 2 pairs of long pants/jeans • 2 pairs of walking shoes/boots/trainers • 1 pair of sandals • 3 or 4 T-shirts/short sleeve shirts or sundresses • 2/3 Long Sleeve Shirts • Smart casual change of clothes • Swimwear • Underwear & socks • Sun Hat – preferably that covers the back of your neck. • Raincoat • Kikoi/sarong

Your clothing should be easy to wash and dry and should preferably not need ironing. Avoid synthetics, which can be very uncomfortable in hot weather. Many people underestimate how cold Africa can be – remember that jersey/jacket! There are also nights that are warm but you must still wear clothes that cover arms and legs from mosquitoes. Take a set of casual but smart clothes for the occasional evening out in a restaurant or club. If you wear glasses (or contacts) it is also advisable to bring a spare pair.

While on wildlife safaris it is important to wear dull coloured clothing - olive, mushroom, brown, khaki, stone are ideal.

You should avoid white (stands out too much), black or blue (attracts tsetse flies), and camouflage (illegal in many countries for civilians)

Additional Items: • Towel & facecloth • Baby wipes/ Wet Wipes • Personal toiletries • Sleeping bag • Torch & enough spare batteries • Camera & spare batteries and memory cards • Water bottle. (A 2-litre Coke bottle works well...) • Penknife • Insect and Mosquito repellent • Suntan lotion, sun block & after sun lotion • Sunglasses • Watch • Biodegradable laundry detergent • Passport (plus a copy of your passport & visas) • Extra passport photos • Vaccination certificate • Money • Travel plug • Neck pillow • Small sewing kit • Plastic bags • Clothes line and pegs • Small scrubbing brush • a small padlock for your luggage locker in the truck • Small basic First Aid kit (painkillers, band aids, after-sun lotion, eye drops, anti-diarrhoea tablets etc.)

DAY PACKS: Please check the itinerary for your specific tour if you will need a little daypack. For example on our Cape Town to Vic Falls overland tour you will need a smaller bag, big enough to bring basic equipment (toiletries and clothes) for 2 nights. The daypack is for your Okavango Delta Excursion, where you cannot bring your entire luggage.

17. Meals on Overland tours

Due to the nature of the overland trip, the majority of your meals will be cooked by our crew and eaten beside the vehicle. Meals will not normally be eaten within the accommodation. The reason we run our trips in this way is that we feel it fits in better with this type of trip and it also helps to keep our prices competitive with other companies offering similar tours.

Breakfast: As breakfast is served very early in the morning (if there is driving or activities to be done) it is a simple but filling breakfast: Tea and coffee, breads and spreads, cereals, yoghurts, fruits and on occasion, when there is time for a later breakfast, we'll will serve a hot breakfast of scrambled eggs, porridge, bacon or beans.

Lunch: Lunch is generally served at a picnic spot next to the road en route to a destination. As the tour leaders only have approximately 45 minutes to get everyone off the truck, prepare lunch and then get everyone back on the truck again, lunches consist of sandwiches and salads (rice salad, pasta salad, tuna salad and green salad) which are quick and easy to prepare but which are quite filling. They do have meal plans which they should stick to, to ensure that there is variety on a day to day basis.

Dinner: This is when your crew get time to prepare a delicious meal and they focus on a substantial protein, vegetable and carbohydrate dinner. We serve traditional cuisine consisting of braais (BBQ), potjie (stew), bobotie (mince), spaghetti and fish and chicken dishes. All meals (on both accommodated and camping tours) that are included in the itinerary are prepared at the full service adventure truck. This is a unique adventure in itself where you get to dine under the stars with your new found friends and experience the real sights and sounds of Africa!

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Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
