



South Africa Basics

Official Name	Republic of South Africa		
Total Area	1,221,037 sq kms		
Total Population	44.6 million		
Capital Cities	Cape Town (legislative) Pretoria (administrative) Bloemfontein (judicial)		
National Symbols	Flower – Protea Animal – Springbok Tree – Yellowwood Bird – Blue Crane		
11 Official Languages	Afrikaans English Zulu Xhosa	Tswana Tsonga Sepedi Sesotho	Venda Swati Ndebele
Religion	Predominantly Christian		
Public Holidays	1 st January 27 th April 16 th June 24 th September 25 & 26 December Easter Monday (variable)	21 st March 1 st May 9 th August 16 th December Good Friday (variable)	
The Nine Provinces	Western Cape Eastern Cape Northern Cape North West Free State Kwa Zulu Natal Gauteng Mpumalanga Limpopo		
Time	Local time is GMT +2.		
Electricity	Electrical current is 230 volts, 50Hz. Round, three-pin plugs are standard.		
Money	South Africa's currency is the Rand (ZAR), which is divided into 100 cents. Money can be exchanged at banks, bureaux de change and the larger hotels. ATMs are widely available (there is a daily limit for cash withdrawals) and major international credit cards are widely accepted, except in petrol stations where cash is required. Travellers cheques and some foreign currencies are accepted at larger hotels and shops, but commission is charged, otherwise all commercial banks will exchange them.		

<p>Entry Requirements</p>	<p><u>Americans:</u> United States nationals need a valid passport, but no visa is needed for stays of up to 90 days.</p> <p><u>UK nationals:</u> British Nationals need a valid passport, but no visa is needed for stays of up to 90 days if passport is endorsed British Citizen including Guernsey, Jersey and Isle of Man, British Dependent Territories Citizen, or British Overseas Territories Citizen (Virgin Islands). Those whose passports state British National (Overseas) may stay up to 30 days without a visa. All others require a visa.</p> <p><u>Canadians:</u> Canadian nationals need a valid passport, but no visa is needed for stays of up to 90 days.</p> <p><u>Australians:</u> Australian nationals need a valid passport, but no visa is needed for stays of up to 90 days.</p> <p><u>New Zealanders:</u> New Zealand nationals require a valid passport, but no visa is necessary for stays of up to 90 days.</p> <p><u>Irish nationals:</u> Irish nationals require a valid passport, but no visa is necessary for a stay of up to 90 days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries exempt from South African visas http://www.home-affairs.gov.za/visa_schedule.asp • Countries subject to South African visa fees http://www.home-affairs.gov.za/visa_countries.asp
<p>Passport / Visa Note:</p>	<p>Passports must be valid for at least 30 days beyond the period of intended stay. An onward or return ticket is required, as well as sufficient funds and documents needed for further travel. Note that visitors to South Africa must have at least one blank (unstamped) page in their passport, each time entry is sought; these pages are in addition to the endorsement/amendment pages at the back of the passport.</p>
<p>Health</p>	<p>Travelers arriving in South Africa from infected areas require a yellow fever vaccination certificate; otherwise no vaccination is required. There is a malaria risk in the low-lying areas of the Northern Province and Mpumalanga (including the Kruger National Park) and northeastern KwaZulu-Natal, and precautions are advised when travelling to these areas. Tap water is safe in urban areas but sterilization is advisable elsewhere, as there are periodic outbreaks of cholera in the poor communities of rural South Africa, particularly in Northern KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo provinces. Medical facilities in South Africa are good, but medical insurance is strongly advised as private hospitals expect cash up front and public hospitals are best avoided.</p>
<p>Safety</p>	<p>Visitors to South Africa should be aware of the country's high incidence of crime. Although this tends to be concentrated in pockets throughout the country, for example in the township areas, opportunistic crime is fairly widespread. Travelers should always be aware of these risks and exercise the necessary precautions. Doors should be locked when driving and one should not walk alone at night in city streets, isolated beaches or remote areas. Be vigilant when using ATMs and do not display signs of wealth (e.g. mobile phones, money, expensive jewellery) on the streets. It is worthwhile noting that the South African authorities do give high priority to the protection of tourists.</p>
<p>Business</p>	<p>South Africa's multicultural status means that business etiquette may vary with different people, and according to individual sectors, though it is most often similar to dealings in Europe and the United States. Although there are 11 official languages, English is the primary language of business. It is best to dress formally for initial meetings. Generally South Africans are regarded as relaxed and informal with regards to introductions and the handling of business cards. Shaking hands is common for both men and women. The giving of gifts is uncommon and unnecessary. Business hours are generally 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday with an hour taken over lunch.</p>
<p>Communications</p>	<p>The international access code for South Africa is +27. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0044 for the United Kingdom). As of 8 January 2007, South Africa has changed to 10-digit dialing (so city codes must be included, e.g. 021 for Cape Town) and international dialing has changed from 09 to 00. GSM mobile phone networks providing 900 and 1800 frequencies serve the</p>

	country. Mobile service providers offer very cheap 'pay-as-you-go' Sim cards, which are a good option for visitors staying for some time. Internet cafes are widespread. Card and coin operated pay phones are also widespread.
Duty Free	Travelers to South Africa do not have to pay duty on 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars and 250g of tobacco; 2 litres wine and 1 litre spirits; perfume up to 50ml and 250ml eau de toilette; and other goods to the value of R3,000. All other goods brought in from abroad by South African residents must be declared on arrival. These will be subject to import duties. For goods to be re-imported, travellers must complete a DA65 or NEP-form that is issued on departure. Prohibited items include meat and dairy products, all medication except for personal consumption, flick knives, ammunition, explosives
Useful Contacts	<p><u>Tourism</u> South African Tourism, Johannesburg: +27 (0)11 895 3000 or www.southafrica.net</p> <p><u>South Africa Embassies</u> South African Embassy, Washington, United States: +1 202 232 4400 South African Embassy, London, United Kingdom: +44 (0)20 7451 7299 South African High Commission, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 744 0330 South African High Commission, Canberra, Australia (also responsible for New Zealand): +61 (0)2 6272 7300 South African Embassy, Dublin, Ireland: +353 (0)1 661 5553 .</p> <p><u>Foreign Embassies in South Africa</u> United States Embassy, Pretoria: +27 (0)12 431 4000 British High Commission, Pretoria: +27 (0)12 421 7733 Canadian High Commission, Pretoria: +27 (0)12 422 3000 Australian High Commission, Pretoria: +27 (0)12 423 6000 Irish Embassy, Pretoria: +27 (0)12 342 5062 New Zealand High Commission, Pretoria: +27 (0)12 342 8656/7/8/9.</p>
South African Airports www.airports.co.za	<p><u>Cape Town International Airport (CPT)</u> Location: The airport is situated 13 miles (20km) east of Cape Town. Time: GMT +2. Contacts: Tel: +27 (0)21 937 1200 Transfer to the city: Door-to-door minibus services are available for the journey to the city, taking approximately half an hour (R150). Many hotels operate courtesy buses. Taxis are available, but you are advised to use only Touch Down Taxis, the authorised airport taxi company. Car rental: Car rental companies represented at the airport include Hertz, Avis, National Alamo, Budget, Imperial and Tempest. Facilities: ATMs, bars, restaurants and currency exchange facilities are available throughout the airport. There are several shops, including duty-free in the International Departures' section. A VAT refund service is available by the International check in desk. Hotels reservations and tourist information are available in the International Terminal. There is a Vodacom shop in International Arrivals where visitors can buy local SIM cards for their mobile phones. Parking: Short- and long-term parking, as well as valet parking, is available. Departure Tax: None.</p> <p><u>O R Tambo International Airport (ORTIA) (JNB)</u> Location: The airport is 14 miles (22km) east of Johannesburg. Time: GMT +2. Contacts: Tel: +27 (0)11 921 6262 Transfer to the city: An airport bus departs regularly to the city centre. Authorised shuttle buses and taxis are available; these display the ACSA logo on their vehicles. Car rental: Car rental companies represented at the airport include Sizwe, Avis, Budget, Imperial, Tempest, Europcar and Khaya.</p>

	<p>Facilities: Facilities at the airport include bureaux de change, banks, a post office, shops, restaurants and bars, Internet access, mobile phone rental, viewing decks, a medical clinic and a prayer room. Parking: Short- and long-term parking is available. Departure Tax: None.</p> <p><u>Durban International Airport (DUR)</u> Location: The airport is 10 miles (16km) southwest of Durban. Time: GMT +2. Contacts: Tel: +27 (0)31 451 6758 Transfer to the city: An airport bus service is available to connect to the city, and a coastal town service carries passengers to the outlying resorts. Taxis are also available. Car rental: Numerous car rental companies are represented at the airport, including Avis, Khaya, Budget, Europcar, Hertz, Imperial and National. Facilities: Facilities at the airport include ATMS, a bank, lounges, a post office, restaurants and bars, and shops. Disabled facilities are good; those with special needs should contact their airline in advance. Parking: Parking is available. Departure Tax: None.</p>
<p>Climate</p>	<p>The South Africa summer season runs from October through to March and the central winter period falls between May and July. Although South Africa’s climate is affected by regional differences, the climate is generally mild throughout the year with predominantly summer rainfall. On the whole, South Africa ranks high on the sunshine index.</p> <p>The Western Cape region (including Cape Town) is the only area that has a mild, Mediterranean climate with dry summers and winter rainfall. In summer the weather in Cape Town is warm and dry, but the idyllic sunny weather can be punctuated by strong south easterly winds. Winters are characterised by heavy rain, particularly on the mountain slopes, strong north-westerly winds, and low temperatures.</p> <p>The main game viewing areas of Mpumalanga, Limpopo and KwaZulu Natal, experience predominantly summer rain fall periods with hot, sometimes humid weather. Winter days are mild with evenings and early mornings being chilly. Due to high summer temperatures, spring and autumn are usually the best times to plan a comfortable safari experience.</p>
<p>South African “Lingo”</p>	<p>Information provided by South African Airways and adapted by Green Route</p> <p><u>Babalas</u> - Pronounced “Bubba-luss” There is simply no word in the English language to adequately describe the feeling – so we’ve created one. Your tongue feels like sandpaper, someone is driving a nine-inch nail through the back of you skull and foggy images from the night before are crawling into memory. You slurred your life story to some degenerate at a bar, you sang “It’s Raining Men” several dozen times, and somehow, somewhere, you acquired a traffic cone. That’s right, you have a “babalas”. A nice big hangover.</p> <p><u>Braai</u> - Pronounced “Brye” After soccer, rugby and cricket, our top sport is the “braai” – otherwise known as the barbeque. It’s our favourite pastime and a huge source of merriment for the boykies (a slang name for the men). South Africans abroad have even been known to brave the blizzard and “braai” in London’s below-freezing conditions. Mad? Not as mad as missing a good “braai”.</p> <p><u>Crash</u> Why appoint a designated driver when you can just crash? No, it’s not as bad as it sounds. To “crash” means to spend the night at someone’s house. It beats a head-on collision any day of the week. Drive Alive, do not drink and drive!</p> <p><u>Dwaal</u> Spend enough time in Cape Town or Durban and you may find yourself in a state of sleepy hypnosis brought on by fresh sea air or magnificent mountain vistas. If this happens, don’t be concerned. It is a</p>

common garden variety “dwaal”. Some call it a daydream; others: The Thousand Yard Stare. Whatever you call it, when you are caught staring at a total stranger; the safest response is: “Sorry, I was just in a dwaal”.

Kief

They say that Eskimos have sixty-four words for snow, which makes perfect sense. Their countries boast vast expanses of frozen water and lots of polar bears. In South Africa we have a similar phenomenon. We have countless words to express that which is good, or cool, or exciting, or beautiful; among them, “kief”. Sunny weather; sandy beaches; exotic wildlife; beautiful people - we’ve got more positives than a 12 volt battery. And we can’t help talking about it.

Madiba

Pronounced “Muh-deeba”

More serene than the Dalai Llama, more forgiving than Ghandi, more eloquent than Churchill . . . To us he is our history’s miracle; our national treasure; our most bankable export. You may call him Nelson Mandela, but he is our grandfather: “Madiba”

Mission

No, this has nothing to do with charity work. That’s “missionary”. Being on a “mission” could be as important as delivering high-level documents to Government or as menial as grabbing a cup of coffee.

Platteland

Pronounced “Pluh-te-lund”

The Afrikaans translation of the “flat land” is what we call parts of South Africa that are, you guessed it, flat.

Skollie

Pronounced “Skoh-lee”

A good-for-nothing. Ne’er-do-well, slob, slacker or loser. In other words, your average Mr. Wrong.

Vloek

In other countries it is pronounced “fluke”

You know the concept. When you oversleep, spill coffee down your front, leave your passport at home, miss the turn-off to the airport and STILL MAKE YOUR FLIGHT, that’s a “vloek” – pure dumb luck. It’s the kind of thing that happens once in your lifetime and often in everyone else’s. Incidentally, “vloek” also describes what you do when you race to catch your plane. It’s a verb, meaning “to curse”.