

The Republic of South Africa Travel Advice

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THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

Like a mighty bulwark in the southern seas, South Africa stands at the end of the Dark Continent, a cosmopolitan country whose natural wonders have few peers on earth. At its tip a fynbos covered peninsula snakes into the wilderness of two mighty oceans, a beacon as enigmatic and beautiful as the country it announces. To the east the warm Indian Ocean caresses a coastline of copper sands, forests and bush-fringed dunes, interspersed with seaside villages and major ports. To the west the icy Atlantic pummels a coastline of quaint hamlets and fishing villages leading to a semi-desert hinterland of gravel plains, dry river beds and bizarre rock formations. Between the two is a land of plenty, a kaleidoscope of contrasting cultures, where bustling cities and towns, glittering casino resorts and rustic villages lie on the doorstep of great game parks and nature reserves populated by a huge array of mammals, birds and insects. From the dunes of the Kalahari to the rainforests of Tsitsikamma, from the turrets of the Drakensberg to the sands of the Wild Coast, South Africa is a paradise of sights and sounds, with all the trappings of a first-world country. Urban five-star hotels and restaurants compete with ethnic country kraals for the custom of visitors from around the world. Xhosa and Zulu crafts sold on the pavements of Cape Town and Durban attract as much interest as the upmarket shopping malls of Johannesburg and Pretoria. This is South Africa, the pedestal of Africa, a place with a fascinating mix of cultures, where people come to savour nature at its best. Whether you're ascending the majestic flanks of Table Mountain, watching rhino in a game reserve or peering into the awesome amphitheatre of the Blyde River Canyon, you'll know that you've arrived – in the most spectacular land on earth.

Wie ein mächtiges Bollwerk in den südlichen Ozeanen, bildet Südafrika den Endpunkt des Dunklen Kontinents – ein kosmopolitisches Land, dessen prachtvolle Natur nur wenig Ebenbürtiges auf der Erde findet. An der Spitze ragt eine Halbinsel in das ungestüme Meer. Im Osten streichelt der warme Indische Ozean einen Küstenstreifen mit Sandstränden, Wäldern und bewachsenen Dünen, unterbrochen von kleinen Küstenorten und wichtigen Hafenstädten. Im Westen rotten die Bracher des kalten Atlantik an eine Küste mit malerischen Ortschaften und Fischerdörfern, die übergeht in eine Halbwüste mit Geröllebenen, ausgetrockneten Flußläufen und bizarren Felsformationen. Zwischen den Ozeanen erstreckt sich ein Land der Fülle, ein Kaleidoskop unterschiedlicher Kulturen, wo geschäftige Städte, schillernde Kasinos und rustikale Dörfer an der Schwelle zu riesigen Wildparks und Naturschutzgebieten liegen. Von den Dünen der Kalahari bis zu den Wäldern des Tsitsikamma, von den Felstürmen der Drakensberge bis zu den Sandstränden der Wildküste – Südafrika bietet eine paradiesische Vielfalt für Auge und Ohr und gleichzeitig alle Annehmlichkeiten der Zivilisation. Fünf-Sterne-Hotels und Restaurants in den Stadtgebieten wetteifern mit ethnischen Kraals um die Gunst der Besucher aus aller Welt. Straßenstände in Kapstadt und Durban rufen genauso Interesse hervor wie elegante Einkaufspassagen in Johannesburg und Pretoria. Dies ist Südafrika, die Bühne Afrikas, wo sich ein faszinierendes Spiel der Kulturen präsentiert, und wo Menschen hinreisen, um die Natur in ihrer ganzen Schönheit zu erleben. Ob auf dem Tafelberg oder im Wildpark, oder an Blyde River Cañon – es durchpulst Sie das Gefühl, angekommen zu sein – im großartigsten Land der Welt.

Welcome to a great golfing country!

South Africa as a whole and the Garden Route in particular is the new golfing Mecca of the world. IAGTO (the International Association of Golf Tour Operators) voted the Cape Garden Route as the Golf Destination of the Year - Africa, Indian Ocean & Gulf States for 2007, and it is easy to see why. You can play golf all year round. With mostly sunny weather it may even be a better option to come during the South African winter than to come during the busy summer period when the courses get really busy and the temperature may be too hot. With the exception of a few privately owned courses golf, accommodation, sightseeing and food are still very affordable. The variety of available combinations, whether you would like to play golf every day, or whether you would like to combine some great wine tasting, game viewing or general sightseeing, is endless. The standard of accommodation and the level of service in general are outstanding. The people of South Africa are very welcoming towards visitors and love to share their amazing country with you.

Although it is impossible to describe all aspects of South Africa (we suggest you pay a visit to your local bookstore for a selection of well researched guide books), we would like to give you a brief introduction on South Africa's nine provinces here.

WESTERN CAPE

The greater Cape Town area has been a preferred holiday destination for both local and foreign visitors alike for many years now. With its many golf courses, Table Mountain, historically important Robben Island, its many different cultures and beautiful scenery it is understandable why the Western Cape is so well visited.

Cape Town

Known to South Africans as the Mother City, beautiful Cape Town was the first area to be settled by Europeans in the 17th century. It is situated at the south-western tip of Africa in a natural bowl with the magnificent Table Mountain at its rear and the vast Atlantic Ocean in the front. This cosmopolitan city of parks, historic buildings, stylish malls and surrounding Winelands is an ideal place to spend a week or more. It is safer than most South African cities with a bustling street life of shops, cafés, market stalls and street artists. This vibrancy is set amongst historic buildings of old Cape Dutch and English architecture with the Castle of Good Hope dating back to 1666.

Winelands

The Cape Winelands is an enchanting region of dramatic mountains and fertile valleys, stretching across rolling fields. Here, farmers enjoy perfect conditions and produce some of the best wines in the world. There are literally hundreds of wine estates; all offering the chance to sample their unique blends in a picture-perfect setting.

Stellenbosch is the capital of the Winelands and the second town to be established by the Dutch settlers. It's full of old thatched and whitewashed Dutch buildings and historic national monuments.

Garden Route

Not named for cultivated gardens as many travelers expect, but rather for the magnificence of its wild, unspoilt coastline and natural "gardens", as described by the French explorer, Le Vaillant, in the 1780's. The Khoi San people called it Outeniqua, meaning "a man laden with honey", a reference to the scent from the wild flowers. The Outeniqua Mountains form the natural boundary between the Garden Route and the much drier Klein or Little Karoo north of the Garden Route. The magnificent forests at Tsitsikamma, sweeping beaches of St Francis Bay and beautiful Plettenberg Bay, the bustling town of Knysna and lovely Lake District of Wilderness and Sedgefield are your Garden Route.

South Africa's Cape Garden Route boasts a wealth of top-class golf courses, of which the courses at Fancourt in George are probably the most well-known, especially after hosting not only the Presidents' Cup in 2003, but also the Women's World Cup of Golf in 2005. Pezula on top of the Heads in Knysna is definitely not to be missed, and new editions like Simola (a Jack Nicklaus signature course), Oubaai (designed by Ernie Els) and the spectacular Pinnacle Point just add to the variety of impressive courses in this area.

Knysna

Knysna's Waterfront on the lagoon is the place to be, a seaside shopping Mecca. Enjoy fresh oysters at the Oyster Company or fresh fish at 34° South, while watching the world float by on the stunning lagoon. Discover the Thesen Harbour Town while enjoying a beautiful al fresco lunch at Ile de Pain, or a sumptuous dinner at Lush. Book a charter and sail or cruise the lagoon.

Nature's Valley

The scenic drive is worth it on its own, an additional reward is fresh fish at Rafiki's, on a deck on the beach, with a sundowner to end the day.

Plettenberg Bay

With its magnificent unspoilt Robberg and Lookout Beaches, Plettenberg Bay is a popular seaside town. Great whale spotting in winter with jet-setting polo playing in summer. Hike the Robberg trail or walk magnificent unspoilt beaches.

George

For steam lovers, take a ride on the famous Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe which travels from George to Knysna. This authentic steam train chugs along a charming scenic route on the rugged coastline and across the lagoon to Knysna.

EASTERN CAPE

The Eastern Cape is one of Africa's rare and unspoilt gems, offering great diversity. Discover superb beaches on its wild coast, the vast Karoo landscape with unforgettable star-studded night skies, charming, historic towns, and a warm welcome. Parks are being restocked with wildlife including the Big Five and the Addo Elephant Park has expanded its boundaries recently. Port Elizabeth, East London and Grahamstown are in the province, as well as Umtata in the Transkei. Qunu in the Transkei is the birthplace of Nelson Mandela, who is affectionately known as Madiba.

The Eastern Cape has a number of great golf courses most notably the St. Francis Links, Humewood, Port Elizabeth, the East London Golf Course and the Fish River Sun with more in the planning and development stage. A great combination with the malaria-free private and National game reserves.

KWAZULU NATAL

Rich in tribal history and home to the proud Zulu nation, KwaZulu Natal offers a complete experience from the "berg to beaches, bushveld to battlefields". Travel from the spectacular Drakensberg to the golden beaches of the warm Indian Ocean, from the world-famous game reserves of Hluhluwe and Umfolozi where the white rhino was saved from extinction, to the battlefields of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift where the glorious battles of the Zulu Empire were fought between the British and the Zulu's. Visit tribal villages, which offer a glimpse into Zulu culture and traditions. Numerous coastal resorts between Durban and the Wild Coast offer beautiful beaches, ideal for surfing, snorkeling, fishing, swimming and diving. KwaZulu Natal is the largest producer of sugar in South Africa, with fields of sugar cane stretching from north to south. To the north, the Elephant Coast (Maputaland) and St. Lucia, a World Heritage Site, are home to Big Five game reserves and lodges where elephant, lion, rhino, buffalo and leopard may be spotted. Whales and dolphins are sighted off the coast and in the north; the beaches attract rare and endangered turtles, which lay their eggs in the warm golden sands. A major attraction is the superb golf courses particularly along the North and South Coast. These include the famous Zimbali, Selbourne, San Lameer, The Wild Coast Sun and Umdoni golf courses, as well as the Links course at Prince's Grant near Stanger.

GAUTENG

The smallest province in South Africa, Gauteng is home to Johannesburg and Pretoria, the capital city of South Africa. Gauteng means "Place of Gold" in Sotho, and refers to the gold rush in 1886 when gold was discovered on the reef near Johannesburg. Johannesburg rapidly developed from a gold mining village into the commercial center of South Africa. Gauteng is also a large industrial hub, one of the largest in the Southern hemisphere.

Magaliesberg

A popular weekend destination it is the place to rise with the sun in a hot air balloon and drift over fields and valleys, or spend the day doing the Magalies Meander or the Crocodile River Ramble.

Pretoria

50 kilometers from Johannesburg, Pretoria is home to the magnificent Union Buildings designed by Sir Herbert Baker and famous for its beautiful Jacaranda Trees, which line the streets and bloom in October. Visit the beautifully restored Melrose House and the Sammy Marks Museum or spend a day with the family at the Pretoria Zoo famous for its White Lions. It's all happening around the Embassy belt at Brooklyn Circle and Hatfield. Meet the locals in popular bistros and restaurants and shop in the boutiques, art and décor shops.

Cullinan is where the world's largest diamond was discovered, visit Premier Diamond Mine and the charming historic village of Cullinan, outside Pretoria.

At **Kyalami**, the only Lipizzaner School outside of Europe has weekly shows, every Sunday.

FREE STATE

From the scenic Eastern Highlands with its magnificent sandstone cliffs to the golden maize fields, the Free State is known as “big sky country”. In the heart of South Africa, this is the ideal stop-over between the Cape and Johannesburg or KwaZulu Natal.

Bloemfontein

An easy four-hour drive from Johannesburg is Bloemfontein, birthplace in 1894 of J.J. Tolkien, who wrote *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*. If you are in “Bloem” (as we call it) on a Sunday, stop at the Terrace Restaurant at the Oliewenhuis Art Museum for tea in the garden to the tunes of the local orchestra. Stroll to Orchard House to see the Green House with its impressive orchid collection. Emily Hobhouse, the famous Victorian feminist is remembered by a memorial in Bloemfontein, for her tireless efforts to improve the plight of Boer woman and children who were confined in the British concentration camps during the Anglo Boer War, and there is also a memorial to those women and children who died.

Clarens

An artist's haven where canvases of local artists are displayed at the Square, an old building with sandstone walls and a rusted tin roof, which doubles as a restaurant and also stocks glass, ceramics and bronzes. Don't forget to browse the gift shop upstairs.

MPUMALANGA

Mpumalanga (the place where the sun rises) is home to the Shangaan people, as well as to the lowveld, escarpment and bushveld. With its unique wildlife and superb scenery, the world-famous Kruger National Park and private game lodges and game reserves are major draw cards. The romance of the early pioneers and the gold rush lives on at Pilgrim's Rest, a quaint, historic village with many original buildings. From Sabie, it is an easy drive to the Mac-Mac Falls and Blyde River Canyon. With its sub-tropical climate, the area is famous for fruit, such as litchies, mangoes and bananas.

Dullstroom

The trout is a must in this trout fishing village! Get deli delights from Milly's, enjoy a bite at one of the many bistros.

Hazyview

Watch a mini-opera about the story of the local Shangaan people at the Shangaan Cultural Village. Stop over at Perry's Bridge Shopping Complex.

Nelspruit

Visit the nearby hamlet of Kaapsche Hoop, where wild horses roam in the mist and blue swallows rest en masse on their migratory journey. Hall's Gateway Farmstall outside town is jam-packed with dried fruits, jams, preserves, home bakes, fresh fruit and juices. Curios and trinkets too!

LIMPOPO

Limpopo Province is bordered to the North by Rudyard Kipling's “great grey greasy Limpopo River”. Wide open spaces, dramatic mountain ranges and sacred lakes create a diverse province which is home to the Venda, North Sotho and Tsonga peoples, and the legendary Prester John and mystical Rain Queen Modjadji who have been the inspiration for novels. The famous “upside down” Baobab tree is found to the north, and the Northern section of the world-famous Kruger National Park is a wildlife mecca. The Waterberg, Soutpansberg and Magoebaskloof offer hiking trails, waterfalls and crystal-clear pools. Malaria-free game viewing in the Waterberg, which is also the home to The Legend Golf Course designed by 18 of the world's best golfers and the extreme 19th par 3-hole set within the Waterberg conservancy.

Hoedspruit

The best biltong in South Africa at the Bosveld Butchery just outside town, and in town pop in to Mad Dogs Café.

Letsitele Garden Meander

Stunning private gardens may be enjoyed in this area. Have a morning cup of superb South African tea at a tea estate in the Letsitele valley and then marvel at the beautiful hand embroidery of the Karosswomen.

Magoebaskloof

The magic of Magoebaskloof is best revealed during the Azalea Festival, when the mountains and valleys are a bloom of color. Wonderful walks and waterfalls.

NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Extinct volcanoes and buried treasures such as diamonds and platinum are found in the North West Province, home of the Botswana people. Wildlife has been introduced in this malaria-free province and both Pilansberg and Madikwe Game Reserves offer the "Big Five". The famous Anglo-Boer War siege of Mafikeng took place here, and 1999 marked the centenary of this event. Hartebeespoort Dam and the Magaliesberg mountains are popular outdoor leisure areas and many curio and craft sellers offer their wares at roadside stalls. The North West Province also sites the magnificent Sun City complex graced with both the Gary Player Golf Course (Home of the annual Sun City Million Dollar Golf Tournament) and the Lost City Golf Course.

NORTHERN CAPE

The Orange River flows through the Northern Cape, which is a sparsely populated province of unspoilt scenic beauty and dramatic contrasts. A through route from Johannesburg to Cape Town is via Kimberley on the N12, and another option is the N14 from Johannesburg via Upington and Kakamas to Cape Town. The Northern Cape's diversity is reflected in the semi desert of the Kalahari to the north, the Karoo to the south, the coast to the west with its fishing villages and in the east the famous Big Hole, the largest man-made hole in the world, in the historic capital of Kimberley.

Kakamas

The spectacular Augrabies Falls is 35 minutes away. A 4x4 trail for enthusiasts is situated near the Riemvasmaak hot water springs.

Kimberley

Visit the famous Big Hole, site of the original diamond diggings, and the surrounding historic museum and shopping village, a toast to a bygone era. Take a trip down memory lane on a restored tram, from the City Hall to the Big Hole. The Freddie Tait Golf Museum at the Kimberley Golf Club is the first golf museum in Africa. Visit Robert Sobukwe House, where the famous PAC leader died in 1978.

Magersfontein

Outside Kimberley is the famous Magersfontein Anglo-Boer War battlefield where trench warfare was first used. Kimberley has numerous war memorials in the town.

One of the seven natural wonders of the world occurs here in Namaqualand when the wild flowers bloom from late July to September and carpet the landscape in a myriad of colors.

CLIMATE

Known to some as sunny South Africa, the country has a warm to hot climate, making it one of the best year-round destinations in the world. Most provinces enjoy a summer rainfall with occasional afternoon thunderstorms, which are spectacular to see. The Western Cape however has its rain during the winter while the rainfall in the Eastern Cape rain is distributed evenly throughout the year. Winter temperatures are often cool to cold and summers can be very hot, in excess of 35 Celsius in some places. Some areas have such mild winters, that visitors will never guess its winter at all.

The seasons

Summer:	mid-October to mid-February
Autumn:	February to April
Winter:	May to July
Spring:	August to October

PEOPLE

Diverse people and cultures combine to make the Rainbow Nation colorful. Population groups include the majority Nguni (incl. Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi); Sotho-Tswana; Tsonga; Venda; Afrikaners; English; Colored; Indians; Khoi and San; and immigrants from Africa, Europe and Asia. The majority religion is Christian, but freedom of worship is guaranteed by the Constitution. Most South Africans are multi-lingual and English is fairly widely spoken, notably in urban centers.

South Africans are generally polite, friendly and accommodating to tourists. Public behavior is very similar to what you might find in Europe. Men generally greet with a firm handshake, while women will do the continental kiss on the cheek.

Eating places are casual except when otherwise indicated. Eating is generally done the British way with the fork in their left hand and the tines pointed downward. Burgers, pizzas, bunny chows and any other fast foods are eaten by hand. It is generally also acceptable to pinch a piece of boerewors from the braai with your hands. Depending of what cultural group you find yourself with, these rules might change. Indians often eat breyani dishes with their hands, a white person from British descent might insist on eating his pizza with a knife and fork or a black person might eat pap-and-stew with a spoon. Be adaptable, but don't be afraid to also do your own thing; if really unacceptable, people will generally tell you so rather than take offence.

South Africans are proud of their country and what they have achieved. Although they themselves are quick to point out and complain to each other about the problems and shortcoming that still exists, they will harshly defend against any outsider from doing so.

It should be understood that familiar words have different meanings in South Africa, and the rules for what terms are polite or not are different. If you wish to refer to South Africans of solely African ancestry, "black" (the term used under apartheid) is still considered appropriate. It might help to practice thinking "black South African" instead of "African American". (Indeed, many black South Africans scoff at the term "African American", claiming that there is very little of Africa residing within the average "African American".)

The term "colored" is neither synonymous with "black", nor offensive; it refers to a cultural group with both white and black ancestors from the early colonial period.

White South Africans can quite simply be called "white" or "white South African". White South Africans in general speak either Afrikaans (derived from Dutch) or English, thus Afrikaners and English South Africans. A typical white South African considers himself as "African" as any person born in the United States considers himself American; most have family who has lived in South Africa for generations and the only continent they can call home is Africa. Avoid calling Afrikaners "Dutchmen," which is considered derogatory, or the Afrikaans language "Kitchen Dutch", they are fiercely independent and proud of their language, and do not consider themselves Dutch.

The fourth racial category left over from the apartheid system is "Indian" (from India), referring to people whose ancestors came from India during the British colonial period.

In general, it is wise to avoid racial or political remarks while in South Africa, because the country's very diverse cultural disposition means that "putting your foot in it" is easy. All South Africans have one thing in common – they are all proudly South African. South Africa is now in its third decade since the end of apartheid in 1990.

LANGUAGE

South Africa has 11 official languages. Most people other than rural black Africans speak English, although not many as a first language. Only about 9% of the population speaks English as a first language, although about 60% of the population can understand English. South African English is heavily influenced by Afrikaans. Afrikaans is also widely spoken, especially by the white and colored population. Often Afrikaans is incorrectly called 'afrikan' or 'african' by foreigners. Note this is very incorrect as 'African' for a South African corresponds with the native-African languages: Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi etc. (and, of course, there are thousands of languages in Africa so no single language can be called 'African') Afrikaans has roots in 17th century Dutch dialects, so it can be understood by Dutch speakers and sometimes deciphered by German speakers. Other widely spoken languages are Zulu (mainly in KwaZulu-Natal - South Africa's largest single linguistic group) and Xhosa (mainly in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape), as well as Sotho and Venda

A few words you may encounter are:

Eish:	wow! - As in, "eish, it's hot today" or "eish, that's expensive"
Lekker:	nice, enjoyable
Howzit:	How are you? (Generally, a rhetorical question)
Yebo:	yes
Boet or ou:	brother or man equivalent to dude or bro
Koppie:	a small hill (can also mean a cup)
Madiba:	Nelson Mandela
Molo:	Hello (in Xhosa)
Robot:	Traffic light
Tannie:	(auntie) respectful term for an older woman
Oom:	(uncle) respectful term for an older man
Tinkle:	phone call

Just now:	sometime soon (from Afrikaans "net-nou")
Now now:	sooner than just now! (From Afrikaans "nou-nou", pronounced no-no)
Braai:	barbecue.
Cheers:	we use this for saying good-bye, as well as saying thank you and for the occasional toast.
Heita:	hello
Sharp:	(usually pronounced quickly) OK
Sure-sure:	more pronounced like sho-sho - Correct, Agreement, Thank you

FOOD AND DRINK

FOOD

Thanks to the many immigrants, South African cuisine is just as diverse as its cultures, with influences from British, Dutch, German, French, Indian, Malay, Portuguese and of course all the indigenous tribes. In South-Africa's cities, many restaurants serve not only traditional African dishes, but also dishes from neighbouring African countries. There are also Chinese and Italian restaurants. In hotels, restaurants and nightspots, the standards of hygiene and food preparation are generally first class. It is safe to eat fresh fruit and salads. Restaurants cover a wide variety of cuisines and visitors are normally very impressed with the food. The country's many cultures makes for varied traditional fare, which is worth exploring.

Eating out in South-Africa is relatively cheap.

Some of the more unusual dishes you will encounter are:

- **Braaivleis:** Meat roasted over an open wood or charcoal fire, is very popular and generally done at weekend social events. The act of roasting the meat as well as the social event is referred to as a braai.
- **Biltong and Droëwors:** Seasoned meat or sausage that has been dried. Beef, game and ostrich meat is often used. A favorite at sports events and while travelling.
- **Pap:** A porridge made with corn meal. Slappap (runny porridge), is smooth and often eaten as a breakfast porridge, Stywepap (stiff porridge) has a doughy and more lumpy consistency and is often used as a replacement for rice or other starches. Krummelpap (crumbly porridge) is drier, resembles couscous and is often served at a braai covered in a saucy tomato relish.
- **Potjiekos:** A meat and vegetable stew made in a cast iron pot over an open fire. A favorite at braais.
- **Boerewors:** A spicy sausage. Boerewors Rolls are hotdog buns with boerewors rather than hotdogs, traditionally garnished with an onion and tomato relish.
- **Bunny chows:** Half a loaf of bread with the inside replaced by lamb or beef curry is a dish not to be missed when traveling to KwaZulu Natal.
- **Bobotie:** Meatloaf with a Cape Malay influence, seasoned with curry and spices, topped with savory custard.
- **Masonja:** For the culinary adventurer, fried Mopanie worms.
- **Morogo:** Wild spinach on its own or with potato. Sometimes served with pap.
- **Waterblommetjebredie:** Mutton and indigenous water lily stew.

DRINK

The legal age to purchase and drink alcohol in South Africa is 18. Almost all restaurants are licensed to serve liquor. Be very careful if someone offers you witblits or mampoer; those are the local names for moonshine or firewater. It's extremely high in alcohol content and packs a lethal blow.

Beer

Local beer production is dominated by SABMiller with Castle, Hansa, Lion, Black Label and Castle Milk Stout being most popular brands. Imported beers are also widely available. Prices can vary widely depending on the establishment.

Wine

South Africa has a well-established wine industry with most of the wine production concentrated in the Cape Winelands in the Western Cape and along the Orange River in the Northern Cape

Liquors

Amarula Cream is made from the marula fruit. The marula fruit is a favorite treat for African elephants, baboons and monkeys and in the liqueur form definitely not something to be passed over by humans. Pour over crushed ice and enjoy. The taste, color and texture is very similar to the world famous Bailey's Irish Cream. Cape Velvet is a favorite in and around Cape Town.

Tea and Coffee

The local Rooibos tea, made from an herb from the Cederberg Mountains is a favorite for many South Africans. You will find coffee shops in most shopping malls, such as Mugg & Bean and House of Coffees. Coffee shops similar in

concept to Starbucks, like Seattle Coffee Company and Vida e Caffè (Portuguese themed), are becoming commonplace.

WATER

High-quality tap (faucet) water is available almost everywhere in South Africa, treated so as to be free of harmful micro-organisms, and in any area other than informal or shack settlements, is both palatable and safe to drink. In some areas, the water is mineral-rich, and you may experience a bit of gastric distress for a day or two until you get used to it. Bottled mineral water, both sparkling and still, is readily available in most places. Drinking water straight from rivers and streams could put you at risk of waterborne diseases - especially downstream of human settlements and should be avoided. A strong risk of bilharzias exists for still-standing water. The water in mountain streams, however, is usually pure and wonderful. In the Cape, particularly, the water contains humic acid, which stains it the color of diluted Coca-Cola, this however is absolutely harmless, and it just looks a bit weird in the bath.

ACCOMMODATION

Establishments in South Africa can have themselves graded by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa on a 5-star basis. Many establishments make use of this service and you will see the star grading displayed on most advertising material.

- 1 star - Clean, comfortable and functional.
- 2 star - Good: Quality furnishings, service and guest care.
- 3 star - Very good: better furnishings, service and guest care.
- 4 star - Superior: Excellent comfort and very high standard furnishings, service and guest care.
- 5 star - Exceptional: Top of the line quality and luxurious accommodation to match the best international standards. Flawless service and guest care.

WILDLIFE

One of the main reasons travelers visit South Africa is to experience the outdoors and see the wide range of wildlife. When driving in a wildlife reserve, always keep to the speed limits and stay inside your car at all times. On game drives or walks, always follow the instructions of your guide. Ensure that you wear socks and boots whenever you are walking in the bush; do not wear open sandals. A good pair of boots can stop snake and insect bites and avoid any possible cuts that may lead to infections.

In many areas you may encounter wildlife while driving on public roads, monkeys and baboons are especially common. Do not get out of the vehicle to take photos or otherwise try to interact with the animals. These are wild animals and their actions can be unpredictable.

Sometimes you might find yourself in the open with wild animals (often happens with baboons at Cape Point). Keep your distance and always ensure that the animals are only to one side of you, do not walk between two groups or individuals. A female baboon may get rather upset if you separate her from her child.

Always check with locals before swimming in a river or lake as there may be crocodiles or hippos. Most major beaches in KwaZulu-Natal have shark nets installed. If you intend to swim anywhere other than the main beaches, check with a local first. Note that shark nets may be removed for a couple of days during the annual sardine run (normally along the KwaZulu-Natal coast between early May and late July). This is done to avoid excessive shark and other marine life fatalities. Notices are posted on beaches during these times.

SUN PROTECTION

As many activities in South Africa are outdoors and we have a warm sunny climate and you should wear sunscreen and a hat whenever you are out of doors during the day, particularly between 10am and 4pm, regardless of whether there is cloud cover or not. Even if you have a dark complexion, you can still get sunburned if you are from a cooler climate and have not had much exposure to the sun. Sunglasses are also recommended wear, as the glare of the African sun can be strong.

MOBILE PHONES

Travellers are advised to carry mobile phones. Mobile phone reception is generally good in major towns and cities but can be intermittent in more remote spots. Travellers should ensure that international roaming is activated on their mobile phone prior to embarking. Should your mobile phone not work in South Africa, rental mobile phones

are widely available and may be rented from kiosks at major airports. Provided your mobile phone is not dedicated to your service provider back home, you can purchase a starter pack on arrival at the airport for about R110, insert the new smart card with your new South African telephone number and you are on your way. Additional prepaid cards can be purchased and loaded in; the shop assistant will assist you and explain everything to you. When you return home you discard the SA smart card and revert to your original smart card. The nationwide emergency number for the police is 10111, and the nationwide number for ambulance service is 10177. It is not necessary to dial an area code for these numbers. Callers from mobile phones may not necessarily be connected immediately to the nearest emergency service. The rate of response varies from area to area, but is generally slower than response to 911 calls in the United States.

SMOKING

The law prohibits smoking in most public spaces, including airports, railway stations shopping malls and theaters. Most restaurants have designated smoking and non-smoking areas.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

What to pack

Most of the time you'll be most comfortable in light, summer-weight clothes but do pack a warm jacket, socks, good walking shoes and a rain jacket. Pack sunscreen, lots of it, a hat and sunglasses. Make sure you have at least one cool shirt with a collar for sun protection. Stock up on insect repellent (preferably DEET-based) Tabbard and Peacefull Sleep is commonly used mosquito repellents and can be bought almost anywhere. If you are going to be in a malaria area, ensure you have a cool, long-sleeved shirt and cool long pants for evenings. Should you be watching game, you should try to wear reasonably neutral colors but, really, you don't have to look like an extra on the set of Out of Africa. You don't need formal clothes, but you will need something pretty smart for exclusive hotels and the Blue Train. Always carry a few basic items from Plasters, head ache pills and something for upset tummies. If you've forgotten anything, don't panic you should be able to buy whatever you need, probably at a good price. And pack a camera – you'll want to save your wonderful memories.

Local laws and customs

Drug taking and smuggling is an offence and the punishments can be severe. South Africa has introduced legislation which bans any discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Poaching is probably far from your mind but, just in case you're tempted to "harvest" a rhino horn as a souvenir, remember our game scouts are armed. Except for designated beaches, nude sunbathing is illegal. Thong bikinis for ladies and swimming trunks for men (speedos if you really must, but be prepared to be laughed at and don't be surprised if people say Yebo Yah when walking past you, in reference to a Vodacom TV advert a couple of years ago) are acceptable.

Time Zone

South Africa does not change its clocks during the year, and there are no regional time differences within the country. South African Standard Time is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean (or Universal Standard) Time, one hour ahead of Central European Winter Time and seven hours ahead of the USA's Eastern Standard Winter Time. Do keep in mind that it is summer in South-Africa when it is winter in the northern hemisphere, and vice versa!

Insurance

You are probably aware that travel insurance should be an integral part of your travel arrangements. Your existing house hold insurance policy may well have All Risks cover which should include international cover and where you can specify various important and expensive items for example jewelry, cameras and so on. We strongly recommend you consult your insurance agent beforehand and ensure that you have adequate cover for traveling abroad.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION

Medical facilities in cities and larger towns are world-class, but you will find that in rural areas the clinics and hospitals deal with primary health needs, and therefore do not offer the range of medical care that the large metropolitan hospitals do. Trained medical caregivers are deployed round the country, so help is never far away. In remote areas, air evacuation is sometimes the only option for medical emergencies.

There are a number of health issues that you should be aware of, particularly if you're from the northern hemisphere. For more information, service, alerts and advice visit www.travelclinic.co.za

Medical insurance

We recommend that you obtain comprehensive travel and medical insurance before travelling. We strongly urge you to consult with your medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies

overseas and whether it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. You should check any exclusion, and that your policy covers you for all the activities you want to undertake especially extreme adventure sports or wildlife activities. Remember that failure to declare a medical condition could render a policy invalid.

Medication /prescriptions

If you are on a prescription or if you take a specific medicine, take enough away with you, as you may not be able to get replacements. Carry your medical prescription clearly stating what medication you are taking just in case you have to purchase more during your vacation. In this day of illegal drugs, it is wise to carry them in the manufactures box/container so if stopped by a customs official he can clearly see the name and know that these are not illegal drugs. Always carry a doctor's certificate for any prescribed medication so you don't have any problems at customs.

Spectacles and contact lenses

If you have prescription spectacles, carry a copy of the prescription for easy replacement should you lose or break them. If you wear contact lenses, consider using disposables for a short holiday, especially if you're planning to river raft, dive or such. Also bring spectacles, as the dry dusty environment of some game farms may irritate your eyes.

Malaria

While most of South Africa is malaria-free, malaria risk exists throughout the year in the rural low-altitude areas of Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces, including Kruger National Park and neighboring game reserves. Risk also exists in the coastal lowlands of KwaZulu-Natal north of the Tugela River (including Zululand, but excluding the urban areas of Richards Bay). In all risk areas the risk is much lower from June to September. Visitors should consult a physician regarding appropriate precautions including advice on the use of malaria prophylaxis. Additional recommended defenses against malaria are:

- Using a DEET-based mosquito repellent (Tabbard and Peacefull Sleep are commonly used)
- Covering your skin with long-sleeved clothing, especially around dusk as the anopheles mosquito, which carries malaria, is most active after dark
- Using mosquito nets while sleeping.

It is advisable to avoid malarial areas if you are pregnant. Small babies must not be taken into Malaria areas.

For information on malaria, its prevention, protection from insect bites, and anti-malarial drugs, please visit www.travelclinic.co.za

HIV and Aids

In the 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic the UNAIDS/WHO Working Group estimated that around 5,400,000 adults aged 15 or over in South Africa were living with HIV; the prevalence rate was estimated at around 18.1% of the adult population. Travelers should exercise normal precautions to avoid exposure to HIV/AIDS. Unprotected sex with locals is strongly discouraged and not at all advisable. You should seek immediate medical advice if you are sexually assaulted or otherwise injured.

Cholera

Since November 2008, cholera outbreaks have been reported across Zimbabwe and have affected South Africa's Limpopo Province near the Zimbabwe border. Cholera is a potentially fatal bacterial infection of the intestine which causes severe diarrhea and dehydration. The disease is spread through untreated sewage and contaminated drinking water. Travelers to Limpopo Province are advised to drink boiled or bottled water and also use boiled or bottled water in food preparation. We recommend that should you experience symptoms of severe diarrhea, seek immediate medical attention.

Measles outbreaks occur from time to time in Kwa Zulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces. A measles outbreak occurred in September 2009, primarily in Gauteng province.

Bilharzia can be a problem in some of the east-flowing rivers, but it is easily detected and treated if it is caught early. Perhaps it would be a good idea to have a routine test a month or two after you get home, just to reassure yourself.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Most parts of South Africa can be safely visited by tourists and more specifically the risk to visitors travelling to the main tourist destinations is low.

South Africa does however have a high crime rate and appropriate precaution should be taken at all times. Basic common-sense precautions for example not walking alone in deserted areas at night, keeping large amounts of money, expensive jewelry, cameras and cell phones out of sight, should be adhered to at all times. Best advice is to stay with the crowd and be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Most major cities run crime prevention programs and Basic Safety Tip guidelines are available at hotels and tourism information offices. If you are in doubt as to the safety of a particular area or attraction, contact the National Tourism

Information and Safety Line on 083 123 2345. This number may also be used for assistance in replacing lost documents or reporting incidents.

Criminal activity, such as assault, armed robbery, and theft is particularly high in areas surrounding certain hotels and public transportation centers, especially in major cities. A number of travelers have been mugged or violently attacked on commuter and metro trains, especially between Johannesburg and Pretoria. Several travelers also reported theft of personal belongings after strangers whom they invited into their hotel drugged them.

Theft of passports and other valuables is most likely to occur at airports, bus terminals, and train stations.

There is a serious baggage pilferage problem at OR Tambo (Johannesburg) and Cape Town International airports, particularly affecting travelers changing airlines and those flying on smaller airlines—passengers flying on major international carriers may not be affected to the same degree. Travelers are encouraged to secure their luggage with locks, use an airport plastic wrapping service, and avoid placing electronics, jewelry, cameras or other valuables in checked luggage. Make an inventory of items in checked baggage to aid in claims processing in the unfortunate event of theft.

In the Western Cape, the Cape Flats area, surrounding townships, and squatter camps adjacent to the city center, should be avoided by people unfamiliar with the area. Additionally, travelers should be aware that muggings have become common along many popular routes on Table Mountain, a prime tourist destination in Cape Town. Visitors to Table Mountain should be vigilant, hike in groups, and not carry valuables.

Johannesburg, like other major international cities, has specific risk areas. You should avoid Berea and Hillbrow. There is a high level of muggings around the Rotunda bus terminus in the Central Business District.

Be vigilant at all times in Durban's city center and beach front area. Keep to main roads and avoid driving at night when visiting Northern KwaZulu Natal and Zululand, as there have been incidents of hi-jacking and robbery, particularly on isolated secondary roads.

Be vigilant on the approach roads to and from Kruger Park where there have been cases of car hijacking.

The local authorities have increased police patrols in this area.

Visiting the townships is a great experience however never do it alone. The best is to go with an experienced guide. Some tour companies' offer guided visits to the townships, and this is perfectly safe.

Please also note that taking an evening stroll, or walking to venues after dark can be very risky. It is best to take a taxi (a meter cab - not a minibus taxi) or private vehicle for an evening out.

Carjacking

Those who choose to drive private cars should be aware that car hijackings do occur, although precautions can be taken to avoid this.

Drivers should always be on the alert when they come to a halt at traffic lights or stop streets, as well as when they are arriving at or leaving premises. Always ensure adequate space between your vehicle and other road users in order to drive away at any sign of danger. Doors should be locked at all times, and while the temptation is to keep windows open in sunny weather, they should be kept closed. Plan your travel route beforehand.

When parking at night choose well-lit or security-patrolled parking areas. Street security guards will usually ask whether they can watch over your car and in return should be paid a small fee – anything from two rand upwards. Make sure that you do not leave valuables in clear view of people on the side of the road as articles such as cellular phones and handbags left on seats are favored targets of smash and grab thieves. This should be adhered to while you are parked or driving.

ATM

Watch out for con artists. A favored target is the automated teller machine (ATM).

Under no circumstances allow a stranger to assist you in your transactions. Should your card become stuck in the ATM, enter your PIN three times whereupon the machine will retain your card. You can then approach the bank to release it, or call the helpline number that can usually be found at ATMs for assistance.

Beware, too, of confidence tricksters who try and persuade you to invest in their schemes, requiring you to disclose confidential banking details.

Credit Cards

Try not to let your Credit Card out of your sight—when paying for a meal rather take the trouble to walk up to the desk and watch your card being swiped through the machine. It has been known for criminals to record the numbers and use them over the Internet to purchase goods. AND always check it is the correct card that is handed back to you and not someone else's card.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

From a fixed line: 107 - Emergency
10111 - Police

10177 - Ambulance
082911 - Netcare911 and The National Sea Rescue Institute

From a mobile phone:

112 - All Emergencies
082911 - Netcare911 and The National Sea Rescue Institute (You only need to dial 911 from Vodacom mobile phones)

GETTING THERE

International access to South Africa is via air travel. O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg is the major airport in South Africa and is the hub for 55 airlines from all 5 continents.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

For the majority of foreign nationals who travel to South Africa for vacation, entry is straightforward and hassle-free. All visitors to South Africa must be in possession of a valid passport, but for many countries, visas are not required up to a maximum number of days. For the latest visa requirements, contact your nearest South African embassy or mission.

Inoculations

If you're an adult, you won't need any inoculations unless you're travelling from a yellow-fever endemic area (the yellow fever belt of Africa or South America), in which case you will need certification to prove your inoculation status when you arrive in South Africa. It is recommended that you have the required inoculations four to six weeks before you travel to South Africa (a yellow fever inoculation certificate only becomes valid 10 days after inoculation - after which it remains valid for 10 years).

Hepatitis B inoculations are recommended for children up to the age of 12 who have not completed the series of injections as infants. Booster doses for tetanus and measles can also be administered.

Passport validity

Your passports must also be valid for no less than 30 days after the end of your intended visit. Please make sure that you have at least two empty pages in your passport before travelling to South Africa. If not, you may be turned away.

Travelling with children

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentary evidence of parental responsibility before allowing lone parents to enter the country or, in some cases, before permitting the children to leave the country.

Travel Documents

It is a good idea to keep photocopies of your passport, entry visas, traveller's cheque sales advice, airline tickets, drivers' licence etc. separate in your luggage, and also leave copies at home with family or friends in case of theft. It is always easier to obtain replacements when you have photocopies of all the details.

Visas

If you are a passport holder of the following countries/areas you do not need a visa for stays of less than 90 days:

African Union	Czech Republic	Jamaica	Portugal
Andorra	Denmark	Japan	San Marino
Argentina	Ecuador	Liechtenstein	Singapore
Australia	Finland	Luxemburg	Spain
Austria	France	Malta	Sweden
Belgium	Germany	Monaco	Switzerland
Botswana	Greece	Netherlands	United Kingdom
Brazil	Iceland	New Zealand	Uruguay
Canada	Israel	Norway	Venezuela
Chile	Italy	Paraguay	United States of America

If you are a passport holder of the following countries/areas you do not need a visa for stays of less than 30 days:

Antigua and Barbuda	Cyprus	Malawi	Slovak Republic
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Barbados	Gabon	Maldives	South Korea
Belize	Guyana	Mauritius	Swaziland
Benin	Hong Kong	Mozambique	Thailand
Bolivia	Hungary	Namibia	Turkey
Cape Verde	Jordan	Peru	Zambia
Costa Rica	Lesotho	Poland	
Cyprus	Malaysia	Seychelles	

FACILITIES

South Africa boasts world-class transport infrastructure, telecommunications, banking, medical and tourism facilities. Accommodation caters for all needs and is accredited by the national Tourism Grading Council, which upholds very high standards.

Electricity

The electricity supply is 220/230 volts AC 50 HZ, with the exception of Pretoria (230 V) and Port Elizabeth (200/250 V). Most plugs have 3-pin or 2-pin, in both cases with round pins. Adaptors can be purchased, but may be in short supply. US-made appliances may need a transformer. Most hotel rooms have 110-volt outlets for electric shavers and appliances. Television is on the PAL system.

Driving

Non-residents are permitted to drive with a driving license issued and valid in their own country, provided it bears the photograph and signature of the holder and is in English. If your driver's license does not meet these requirements, an international driver's license is required. Driving is on the left and the wearing of seatbelts is compulsory.

On highways it is well worth remembering that overtaking can occur in any lane including, occasionally, the hard shoulder. On single-lane roads the hard shoulder is also sometimes used by trucks and slower moving vehicles to allow faster moving vehicles to overtake, it is regarded as a courtesy to acknowledge this, usually with a brief flash of hazard warning lights. Four-way-stops are commonly found at the quieter intersections, the first vehicle to arrive has priority. On roundabouts, give way to the right.

Road standards are mostly very good, but some roads in the more remote areas are less well maintained and potholes may be encountered. It is strongly recommended that you drive cautiously at all times and adhere to speed limits. You should avoid unfamiliar rural areas at night. Thieves have been known to employ various methods to make a vehicle stop, enabling them to rob the occupants. You should be aware that one such method is the placing of large stones in the middle of the road.

Care must also be taken when crossing streets as a pedestrian. Drivers should also take care to avoid pedestrians crossing roads, which occur frequently on major highways.

Shopping

Modern shopping malls, arts and crafts routes and markets, flea markets and informal vendors provide a wide variety of goods, curios, and shopping experiences. South Africa's fashion, gold and diamond jewellery, and art are sought-after. As are the traditional handcrafted items such as Zulu beadwork; carved chessboards; painted ostrich eggs; colourful woven baskets, handbags and soft furnishings; mohair or sisal rugs; traditional wooden masks and carvings; pottery and leather items. And don't forget the world-renowned Cape wines, exotic fruit liqueurs, brandy, rooibos tea, dried fruit, biltong (dried meat snacks) and chutney. Most major shopping centres and malls operate 7 days a week, but small-town shops are often closed on Sunday.

In the major cities most stores, cinemas and restaurants are open on most public holidays. The exceptions are Christmas Day, 25 December and New Year's Day, 1 January.

BANKING AND MONEY

The South African financial institutions are world-class, with no shortage of banks, bureau de change and automatic tellers. The banks are generally open from 9am to 3.30pm Mondays through Fridays, and 8.30am to 11am on Saturdays, but those at the airports adjust their hours to accommodate international flights. The major banks have branches as well as automated teller machines (ATMs) in most large towns, and all over the cities.

International banks have branches in the major cities. Thomas Cook (represented by Rennies Travel) and American Express foreign exchange offices are also available in the major cities.

Currency

The local currency is the South African Rand, which exchanges favorably with the major international currencies. The rand is divided into 100 cents. Coins come in denominations of 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, R1, R2 and R5, and notes in denominations of R10, R20, R50, R100 and R200.

Credit cards

All major credit cards are widely accepted in South Africa, with American Express and Diners Club enjoying less universal acceptance than MasterCard and Visa. In some small towns, you may find you'll need to use cash.

Travelers' cheques

Most international traveller's cheques are accepted, however, it is advised that you bring them in a hard currency, such as US dollars or British Pounds. Make a record of all travelers' cheques, mark off the cheques you have used. If lost or stolen, you will have a record and claiming insurance will be easier.

Paying for fuel

When it comes to paying for fuel, you may also have to pay cash. South African filling stations can now take credit card payments, regulations allowing them to do so came into effect in July 2009. However, many filling stations (or garages, as we call them) may take a while to adjust, or may choose not to. Look out for the "cash only" notices. Many locals have special fuel credit cards, known as garage or petrol cards, for use only at filling stations. These will still be accepted.

Road tolls, on the major routes between cities, can be paid using MasterCard or Visa.

VAT

On departure from South Africa, you can have your VAT (value-added tax at 15%) refunded at point of departure, provided you present your original tax invoices on items purchased greater than R250 at the VAT desk at the airport. This does not apply to services rendered, e.g. car hire, accommodation costs, etc.

Tipping

Tipping is common practice in South Africa for a range of services. In restaurants the accepted standard is around 10% of the bill, although sometimes a gratuity will be included (often in the case of a large party). Barmen are tipped a similar percentage.

Petrol stations are manned by attendants who will expect a tip of two or three rands for filling up with petrol, checking oil, water and tyre pressure and cleaning windscreens. Hotel porters should be tipped two to five rands. It is also appropriate to tip taxi drivers, tour guides and even hairdressers.

If you park a car in a populated area such as near a shopping center, street security guards will usually ask whether they can watch over your car and in return should be paid a small fee - anything from two rands upwards.

GOLF

The 1st rule of golf is that "ladies and gentlemen do not need rules". We can only agree.....

However, to avoid mutual embarrassment, you may want to take note of the following customary rules of golf in South Africa:

Dress code**Men**

Long pants or golf shorts with long socks or white ankle sports socks. Shirts must have collars and sleeves and must be tucked in. Golfing shoes, with soft spikes only. Smart-casual attire after 19.00 in the bar / clubhouse.

Ladies

Tailored trousers, skirt or golf shorts. (Skirt to be no shorter than 15cm. above the knee when kneeling). Golf shirt with collar. Golfing shoes, with soft spikes only. Smart casual attire after 19.00 in the bar / clubhouse.

Strictly not accepted

Shirts hanging out of trousers, footwear worn without socks, football socks, tracksuits, beachwear, slip slops, running shoes.

Mobile phones

The use of mobile telephones is generally not permitted in the club house or on the golf course. Obviously, exceptions will be made, e.g. for medical doctors on call.

Halfway House

It is South African custom to stop for a quick snack and/or drink at half way. To speed up play please adhere to a break of 10 minutes maximum.

Handicaps

The South African handicap system is based on the Stableford points. Please refer to the Rules of Golf for an in-depth explanation of the system. Most clubs require a maximum handicap of 24 for men and 36 for the ladies. Please inquire at the golf club which (color) tee box is most appropriate for your handicap.

Format of play / speed of play

Most golf clubs indicate that the maximum time for a round of golf is 4 hours and 15 minutes. Some golf clubs will take your 4-ball off the course if you exceed the time. Halfway is obligatory on most golf courses and virtually everybody stops for a quick snack or drink. As mentioned before please adhere to a break of maximum 10 minutes. It has to be said, that probably one of the most frustrating things about golf is the slow play of others, especially the 4-ball in front of you. Interviews held over the years have shown that 80% of the respondents who stopped playing this great game, did that because of the frustration of waiting. Because of this and in an effort to speed up the total time for a round of golf, medal rounds are hardly ever played in South Africa anymore. Almost all rounds of golf in South Africa are played in a better (or best) ball - Stableford format. This means that if you cannot:

- score a point anymore, please ring or circle your score;
- Improve on your partner's points, the etiquette allows you to say "I cannot improve on my partner's score" and pick up your ball and walk to the next tee.

Other general remarks for speeding up play:

- Always try to park your golf car as close to the next tee as possible;
- After finishing the hole, please mark your score card on the next tee and clear the green for the fellow golfers behind you.
- The notion of playing "ready golf" is also widespread. If you are ready to hit your shot and your partners acknowledge that, please do so.

Caddies

On those courses where you would not need a cart or where carts are prohibited, we strongly recommend to take at least one caddy per flight / 4-ball. The caddy will:

- show you the way along the course;
- spot your balls for you;
- hold the pin;
- rake the bunkers and
- repair divots and pitch marks.

This will also enable you to speed up play. Caddy fees vary from R300 to R500 (of which R30 – R50 to be given at halfway usually) for 18 holes, but of course you are most welcome to give a tip. Please check with the golf course about the rates for a caddy.

Weather

In South Africa violent thunderstorms are experienced during mainly the summer months. To prevent the risk of lightning striking you during these storms all golf clubs have early warning systems installed. When you hear the warning sirens you must mark your ball and immediately return to the club house. A siren will be sounded when it is safe to continue play.

Last but not least

Every great shot begins with a smile... Play one shot at a time and always enjoy your game!

FIFTY FACTS ABOUT A REMARKABLE NATION

Economy

- The rand was the best performing currency against the US Dollar between 2002 and 2005 (Bloomberg Currency Scoreboard)
- South Africa has 55,000 high net-wealth individuals holding at least US\$1million in financial assets (World Wealth Report 2008)
- South Africa has the 27th biggest economy in the world, with a Gross Domestic Product of US\$254 billion (World Bank)

- South Africa accounts for almost 25% of the GDP of the entire African continent, with an economy more than twice the size of the second biggest – Algeria. (World Bank)
- Gauteng is South Africa's smallest province but produces 34% of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (Stats SA)
- The JSE Securities Exchange is the 14th largest equities exchange in the world, with a total market capitalisation of some R2.3 trillion (JSE)
- More than 12,000 'Black Diamond' families (South Africa's new black middle class) - or 50,000 people - are moving from the townships into the suburbs of South Africa's metro areas every month (UCT Unilever Institute)
- The black middle class grew by 30% in 2005, adding another 421,000 black adults to SA's middle-income layer and ramping up the black population's share of SA's total middle class to almost a third. Between 2001 and 2004, there were 300,000 new black entrants to the middle class (Financial Mail)

Infrastructure

- South Africa generates two-thirds of Africa's electricity (Eskom)
- South African power supplier provides the fourth cheapest electricity in the world
- Chris Hani-Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto is the biggest hospital in the world
- Durban is the largest port in Africa and the ninth largest in the world.
- There are 39 million cell phone users in South Africa (International Telecommunication Union)

Tourism

- The number of tourists visiting South Africa has grown by 200% since 1994, from 3 million to over 9 million in 2007 (Dept of Environment and Tourism)
- The Singita game reserve was voted the best hotel in the world by the readers of a leading travel magazine (Conde Nast Traveler)
- The world's best land-based whale-watching spot is located in Hermanus in the Western Cape.
- In 2002, South Africa was the world's fastest growing tourist destination. In 2006, South Africa's tourism grew at three times the global average.

Sport

- South Africa hosts the largest timed cycle race in the world (the Cape Argus Cycle Tour), the world's oldest and largest ultra-marathon (the Comrades Marathon) and the world's largest open water swimming event (the Midmar Mile).
- South Africa will become the first African country to host the Soccer World Cup in 2010 ... and only the second country in the world to have hosted the Cricket, Rugby and Soccer World Cups.
- Since the 1940s, South African golfers have won more golf majors than any other nation, apart from the United States.
- In 1994, we won 11 medals in the Commonwealth Games. In 2002, we won 46.

SA Teaching the World

- South Africa houses one of the three largest telescopes in the world at Sutherland in the Karoo
- South Africa is the first, and to date the only, country to build nuclear weapons and the voluntarily dismantle its entire nuclear weapons program
- South Africa Constitution is widely regarded as being one of the most progressive in the world, drawing from the experiences of the world's most advanced democracies
- The South African oil company Sasol has established the only commercially viable oil-from-coal operations in the world.
- Two of the world's most profoundly compassionate philosophies originated in South Africa – Ubuntu (the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity) and Gandhi's notion of "passive resistance" (Satyagraha), which he developed while living in South Africa.

Education

- Almost a quarter of South Africa's non-interest budget is spent on education
- The University of South Africa UNISA is a pioneer of tertiary distance education and is the largest correspondence university in the world with 250,000 students.
- Our learner to teacher ratio has improved from 1:50 in 1994 to 1:34 in 2004
- South Africa's matric pass rate has improved from 49% in 1994 to 70% in 2004, but student's receiving university exemptions has remained at 18%
- The first MBA program outside of the United States was started by the University of Pretoria in 1949.

Social

- Over thirteen million South Africans (a quarter of the population) have access to social grants (Department of Social Development)
- Since 1994, 500 houses have been built each day for the poor and 1,000 houses per day have received electricity
- Seventy percent of South Africa's population is urbanized

Environmental

- The Kruger National Park supports the greatest variety of wildlife species on the African continent
- The Cango Caves near Oudsthoorn is the world's longest underground cave sequence
- South Africa is the only country to house an entire floral kingdom (fynbos), one of only 6 on the planet
- In 1991, South Africa became the first country in the world to protect the Great White shark.
- South Africa has the oldest meteor scar in the world, at the Vredefort Dome near Parys. The scar is 2 billion years old.
- South Africa has the 3rd highest level of biodiversity (SA Tourism)
- The Cape Hyrax's (dassie) closest relative is the African elephant
- South Africa has embraced the concept of trans-frontier 'peace parks', linking ecological reserves across national borders

General

- South Africa is the cradle of mankind
- Afrikaans is the youngest official language in the world
- The Western Deep Levels is the world's deepest mine at 3777 meters
- South Africa has the world's largest deposits of gold, chromium, platinum and manganese
- The only street in the world to house two Nobel Peace Prize winners is in Soweto. Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu both have houses in Vilakazi Street, Orlando West.
- South Africa has the world's second oldest air force, established 1920.
- South African Breweries (SABMiller) ranks as the second largest brewing company in the world. It supplies up to 50% of China's beer.
- South Africa has the second oldest film industry in the world
- In 2007 South African businessman Cyril Ramaphosa was included in the Time 100, an annual list, assembled by Time magazine, of the 100 most influential people in the world
- Cape Town has the fifth-best blue sky in the world, according to the UK's National Physical Laboratory