

# Important Travel Advice for South Africa

## Passport & Visa

As of the 18th March 2020, passport holders from certain countries are now required to obtain a visa before travelling to South Africa - including the United Kingdom; United States of America; France; Germany; Italy; Spain; Switzerland; and New Zealand.

All international travellers are therefore advised to contact their local South Africa High Commission or Embassy to establish whether they need to apply for a visa. There may be a fee charged for issuing a visa.

Please note that some visas may take a long time to be processed so please do take this into consideration, as it is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct visa in place before you travel.

Visas are not issued at South African ports of entry and airline officials are obliged to insist on visas before allowing passengers to board.

Please note that anyone travelling to South Africa should have a valid return ticket and a valid passport.

Your passport should be valid for a minimum period of 30 days from the date of exit from South Africa. However, some immigration officials still request that a passport should have at least 6 months validity from the date of entry to South Africa so to avoid problems on arrival, we advise that your passport meets this requirement instead.

The passport must also have sufficient pages for entry/exit stamps if you require a visa to enter the country - AT LEAST 2 BLANK PAGES. If you do not need a visa, one page is sufficient.

### **TRAVELLING TO/FROM SOUTH AFRICA WITH CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS OF AGE AT DATE OF TRAVEL:**

It has been recently announced that the immigration laws for children travelling to South Africa who do NOT require a visa are to be relaxed, however not all airlines have updated their systems at the moment to reflect this amendment. Therefore, until we have received notification that all systems have been fully updated with the new relaxed rules, we are strongly advising that all passengers still adhere to these following guidelines: Parents travelling with children must produce an unabridged birth certificate for the child, showing full details of the child's parents. If the birth certificate is in a

language other than English, it must be accompanied by a sworn translation issued by a competent authority in the country concerned. If the child is adopted, the adoption certificate must be produced. If only one parent is travelling, said parent must also show consent in the form of an affidavit from the other parent named on the birth certificate authorising the child to travel (the affidavit must be no more than 3 months old from the date of travel, or a court order granting full parental responsibilities to the travelling parent, or (where applicable) a death certificate for the deceased parent. Legally separated parents should also provide a court order when the other parent does not give consent. Where a person is travelling with a child who is not their biological child, he/she must produce an unabridged birth certificate for the child supplemented by affidavits from the child's parents/legal guardian giving consent for the child to travel and copies of the identity documents or passport of the parents/legal guardian PLUS their contact details.

**PLEASE NOTE:** All documents must be original - PHOTOCOPIES ARE NOT ACCEPTED. In the case of foreign countries that do not issue unabridged birth certificates, a letter to this effect issued by the competent authority of the foreign country should be produced. For more information, contact the South African High Commission or Embassy in your country of origin or the South African Department of Home Affairs via <http://www.dha.gov.za/>

**PLEASE NOTE: Countries can change their entry requirements at any time. TCD Destination Management Company and The Cape Discovered Tours try to ensure that the information displayed here is correct, but the onus remains with the traveller to verify the information with the relevant High Commission or Embassy and ensure that they can comply with current passport and visa requirements.**

## Medical

You are advised to contact your doctor or clinic around 4-8 weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations and to get their professional medical advice regarding travel to South Africa.

To help avoid heatstroke, drink plenty of bottled water/fluids, and keep out of the midday sun.

There is a risk of malaria in and around the Kruger National Park/ Mpumalanga Province, the Limpopo (Northern) Province, and the north-eastern part of KwaZulu-Natal - check with your doctor about suitable antimalarial tablets. Try to avoid mosquito bites wherever possible - wear

loose long-sleeved clothing and trousers, and use a repellent on clothing and exposed skin.

There is no risk of yellow fever in South Africa, so a yellow fever vaccination is NOT required for travellers whose sole destination is South Africa. However, in accordance with International Health Regulations, South Africa requires all travellers over one year of age arriving from a yellow fever risk country, or having been in transit longer than 12 hours at the airport of such a country, to have a yellow fever certificate. These countries include Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda.

## Time Zone

South Africa Standard Time is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+2) and they do not operate Daylight-Saving Time.

## Languages

The 11 official languages are Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans, Pedi, English, Tswana, Sotho, Tsonga, Swati, Venda and Ndebele. Whilst many visitors will hear at least a couple of the tribal languages during the course of their stay, it is possible to travel extensively and comfortably with just English as a language.

## Currency

South Africa's currency is the Rand (R). South African bank notes come in R10, R20, R50, R100 and R200 denominations. There are 100 cents to R1, and coin values are 1c, 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, R1, R2 and R5.

Visa and MasterCard are generally more widely accepted than any other credit card. Some establishments will only accept card payments using a chip and pin machine, so if your credit card does not support this we advise taking additional cash.

## Electricity in South Africa

The South African power is 220 - 240 volts, 50Hz, which is delivered through a 3 pin round socket.

Although the socket is 3 pin, it is not the same as a UK socket, so an adaptor will be needed. Most airport shops sell adapters for foreign plugs, or they can be bought in selected hardware shops in larger towns.

Electricity supply is reliable in cities and towns, but you may experience problems in more remote areas, especially during heavy thunderstorms, and you should be prepared for a sudden power failure!

## Water in South Africa

Tap water is purified and safe to drink in major cities and towns, however, we do advise that you do not drink the water in more remote places such as the camps in the National Parks - the water may be safe to drink, but it simply is not worth the risk, as bottled water is widely available.

Whatever you do, do not drink water from any river lake without firstly purifying the water. Always take water with you when you go on a hike, and have a bottle in the car on a long journey to avoid dehydration.

## Driving in South Africa

Driving in South Africa is easy and enjoyable, as the main roads and highways are generally maintained in a good condition, and are straight, long and fast. There are very few roads in South Africa where you would need a 4WD - even in safari areas, the roads are good and a 2WD can adequately cope with the odd bit of unevenness.

South Africans drive on the left hand side of the road, and all signposts are written in English.

The speed limit varies from 40 km per hour in towns and built up areas to a maximum speed limit of 120 km per hour (75 mph) on the motorways and open national roads.

It is law to wear a seat belt at all times, and using a mobile phone when driving is prohibited.

The majority of roads are tarred, and although you may come across the occasional pot-hole, overall they are maintained in good condition.

Many of the major main road are toll roads, in order to help maintain them in their present good condition. Tolls range from a few Rand to nearly R50, and depending on where you are, you have the option to pay either by cash, or some toll booths will take Visa or MasterCard credit cards.

Many hire car companies also now fit their vehicles with an automatic toll reader, so the car captures the toll fees instead and these are billed back to you at the end of the rental period.

The majority of petrol stations in South Africa accept overseas credit cards, and there are no self-service stations. Many larger petrol stations will also have an ATM that will accept VISA/Mastercard or Cirrus if the credit card facility is down for whatever reason. It is a good idea to keep some change handy to be able to tip the attendants (R5-R10 tip is customary).

All drivers must be in possession of a VALID driving licence from their country of residence. If the driving licence is not in English, then an International Drivers Licence is required. The licence must also contain a photograph of the holder and be valid beyond the point of returning the vehicle. UK citizens do NOT need to request a unique code from Gov.UK or the DVLA as you do not need confirmation of any penalty points to hire a car in SA.

Please note that the various car hire companies have different regulations regarding the length of time you need to have held a driving licence, so it is advisable to check with your hire car company about their requirements. Most hire car companies also insist that you leave a credit card number as a security deposit when you pick up your car. The credit card HAS TO belong to the named driver - a person who is not the named driver cannot supply the credit card.

You must carry your driving licence with you at all times when driving in South Africa. It is also a good idea to keep a photocopy of your drivers licence separate in your luggage, and also leave a copy at home with family or friends.

Speed cameras operate in cities and towns. If you are caught on camera, the fine will go straight to the hire car company, who will simply debit your credit card with the amount. A more common speeding trap is on the outskirts of towns, where traffic police wait for the unsuspecting driver to come racing out of the built up area.

If you are caught speeding by traffic police, the correct procedure is to give the traffic officer your details (name, car rental agency details and car registration number) and ask him to issue you with a speeding fine ticket. You can hand the ticket into the hire car company when you return the car but if you forget, don't worry - the fine is automatically be sent to the car rental company in any case, who will then redirect the cost of the fine to you together with an admin fee. You also have the option of taking the speeding ticket to a local police station and paying it directly - however, this may not be

a feasible option as it may involve a long detour and eat into valuable holiday time.

In a few areas, it is worth mentioning that some traffic officers are asking for an on-the-spot cash fine instead of writing you a speeding ticket - if you feel comfortable refusing to pay this, please do, as on-the-spot fines actually do not exist under SA traffic law.

**If you are planning on taking your hire car across from South Africa into a neighbouring country (such as Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana or Eswatini), do remember to clear this with your hire car company beforehand - many companies will need to issue you with a Letter of Authority to show at the border post.**

## Mobile phone coverage in South Africa

The international dialling code for South Africa is +27, followed by the regional code and then the number.

Mobile phone coverage is generally extremely good throughout South Africa.

Overseas visitors can use their own mobile phone with 'international roaming' enabled (remember to activate this before leaving home), but this can be extremely expensive - a much cheaper option is to switch to using a local provider during your stay in the country - the 2 main mobile phone providers are MTN and Vodacom.

South African emergency telephone numbers are as follows: 10111 - Police; 10177 - Ambulance; 10178 - Fire Department. You can also call 1022 which is a general main number for the Police, Ambulance and Fire emergency services.

*Your Journey of Discovery starts here!*

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