

42 Day Southern Explorer (North)

This trip departs from Cape Town early on Sunday morning. Should you wish to explore Cape Town, an earlier arrival should be planned and accommodation booked through us.

Pre Departure Meeting: Held at the Departure Point at 17h00 the day before your departure.

Departure Point: Ashanti Lodge & Travel Centre - 11 Hof Street, Gardens, Cape Town.

Check-In Time: 08h45

Departure Time: 09h30

Please Note:

This itinerary should be used as a guide only and may vary from day to day depending on road & weather conditions, political situations and group decisions. All prices & Local Payments are subject to change. Due to Tourism Laws in some of the countries we visit, there may be a truck and crew change during the trip.

Day 1: Cape Town to Cederberg Area

Leaving Cape Town, we head north through the wine growing regions. We cross the Piketberg Pass into the rich fruit growing area of Citrusdal. Our first night is spent in a picturesque campsite surrounded by local wine farms. This afternoon we have the opportunity to sample some of the nectar of the gods or to explore the surrounding beautiful Cederberg Mountains.

Day 2: Cederberg Area to Orange River

From the Cederberg we travel north through the region known as Namaqualand, well known for its prolific display of Namaqua wildflowers that occur each spring. After stopping for supplies in Springbok, we continue on through the desert area of the Richtersveld to the Orange River, the natural land border between South Africa and Namibia, where we camp at a beautiful campsite on the South African bank of the river.

Day 3: Orange River to Fish River Canyon (Namibia)

This morning we have the option of a half-day canoe trip on the beautiful Orange River, affording us the opportunity of some bird watching or just a scenic and relaxing paddle. After lunch we cross into Namibia where, after a short drive, we reach the Fish River Canyon. At 161 km long, 27 km wide and about 550 m deep, it's the second largest canyon in the world. The outer canyon was formed by tectonic activity, while the erosion of the Fish River formed the inner canyon. A road follows the eastern rim, giving us access to several viewing points from where we can take in the spectacular vistas.

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Day 4: Fish River Canyon to Helmringhausen Area

After a leisurely morning at the Fish River Canyon, we head north through Namibia's farming area. We stop in Bethanie, a small, former missionary town, for supplies. We head to our overnight camp from where we have the opportunity to star gaze at the magnificent Milky Way.

Day 5: Helmringhausen Area to Sesriem

Heading north we enter the Namib-Naukluft Park in one of the oldest deserts in the world. We base ourselves at Sesriem, a good place to experience the Namib and its many moods. A short distance away is Sossusvlei, surrounded by a dramatic sea of sand dunes reputed to be the highest in the world. Magnificent views of the desert can be seen from the top of the dunes, some over 300 m high. We spend the afternoon exploring this amazing area. An optional (and must do) excursion is to walk around the area, learning about the amazing history, geology, flora and fauna from the specialised local guides of Sossus on Foot. They also give us a glimpse into the cultural legacy of the San people. View the sunset from the top of Dune 45 - a truly memorable experience.

Day 6: Sesriem to Swakopmund

After watching the sunrise across this beautiful area we leave the serenity of the dunes and head in a north-westerly direction to meet the Atlantic Ocean at Walvis Bay. Following the coast for some 35 km, we arrive at Namibia's prime holiday resort - Swakopmund where we enjoy 3 nights of rest and relaxation. Accommodation will be in dormitories. Upgrades are possible, but depend on room availability.

Days 7 & 8: Swakopmund

Founded by the Germans in 1892, their colonial influence is still evident today. Swakopmund has a selection of excellent coffee shops, restaurants & bars as well as many arts and crafts shops selling Namibian curios. There are fine beaches to walk along as well as a great museum, aquarium and galleries to visit.

OPTIONAL excursions include sky diving, quad biking, sand boarding, scenic desert flights, dolphin cruises, fishing trips, golf, horse riding and more. An activity briefing will be held on arrival in Swakopmund.

Day 9: Swakopmund to Spitzkoppe

Our departure from Swakopmund takes us to the 'Matterhorn of Namibia' - Spitzkoppe. The 1728 m high rock formation, one of Namibia's most recognised landmarks, is well known as an ancient San sacred site. Explore the surrounding area and its San rock paintings. Tonight we bush camp under the African stars.

Day 10: Spitzkoppe to Cheetah Park

Today's drive is to the Cheetah Park - a private farm dedicated to conserving Namibia's cheetah population. We get to meet the resident cheetahs, a photo opportunity not to be missed!

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Day 11: Cheetah Park to the Etosha National Park

After stopping briefly in Outjo to get supplies, we head to Etosha. Covering 20 000 km², Etosha is Namibia's premier nature reserve. Situated around the Etosha Pan with a large variety of animal and bird life, the extensive network of gravel roads affords us the opportunity of accessing even the most remote areas of the park. We spend the remainder of the day exploring the park's southern area.

Day 12: Etosha National Park

Today we make our way 150 km across the park, keeping a look out for Etosha's large herds of desert antelope such as Springbok and the famed Oryx. After a full day of game viewing, we spend the evening relaxing at our camp.

Day 13: Etosha National Park to Rundu

From Etosha, we head in a north-easterly direction towards the lush Kavango region of northern Namibia. We stop at Rundu for supplies before heading to our spectacular campsite located on the banks of the Kavango River - complete with "open air" facilities and the occasional hippo grazing on the lawn!

Day 14: Rundu to Maun (Botswana)

Following the Kavango River, we enter Botswana and travel east along the course of the river to the southern reaches of the Okavango Delta and our destination, Maun. It is from here that we set off to explore the Okavango Delta.

Day 15: Maun to Okavango Delta (OPTIONAL)

The Delta is a huge expanse of water, which has travelled from the Angolan highlands, spreading out to form the largest inland delta in the world. Studded with exotic islands, The Delta is renowned for its incredible variety of bird life and animals and is unique to Southern Africa.

Here we have the opportunity to take the optional 3 Day / 2 Night Drive In/Mokoro Excursion into the Delta. From Maun we drive north for a couple of hours to reach the mokoro poler's station.

Mokoros are traditional dug out canoes manoeuvred through the waterways by local guides who "pole" them through the reeds. After our guides find us a place to camp, we set off on an afternoon game walk, allowing us to experience The Delta wilderness.

For those who'd prefer not to explore The Delta, you can stay at the lovely campsite relaxing by the swimming pool or challenging each other to a game of volleyball. There is also a crocodile farm nearby that has it's feeding times open to campsite visitors.

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Day 16: Okavango Delta

A day of rest, relaxation and Delta experiences await. Today we have the opportunity to partake in a number of activities including swimming (dependant on area & water levels), game walks, mokoro cruises and even a chance to try our hands at poling our own mokoro!

Day 17: Okavango Delta to Maun

This morning affords us a final opportunity for a game walk before packing up and setting off back to Maun. We arrive back in the early afternoon and have the chance to complete our picture of the Okavango Delta by taking an optional sunset scenic flight over The Delta.

Day 18: Maun to Chobe National Park

We travel east and then north to the town of Kasane where we set up camp on the banks of the Chobe River. The Chobe River forms a border between Botswana and Namibia and Zambia. The late afternoon sees us take a boat cruise along the Chobe River. Elephant, hippo and many bird species can be viewed from the boat while we watch another glorious African sunset. Listen out for the resident hippos!

Day 19: Chobe National Park

This morning we have the option to do an early morning game drive into Chobe National Park. Chobe is one of Botswana's premier game parks, renowned for its large elephant herds. After our game drive we return to camp for lunch and an afternoon at leisure.

For the adventurous spirits, there is the option for the Chobe National Park Sleep-out – an overnight experience in the Chobe National park. Spend the afternoon in search of wildlife en-route to the set camp within the park where we spend the evening surrounded by the night-time noises of the local wildlife. In the morning we continue our exploration and rejoin the group before heading to our next destination.

Day 20: Chobe National Park to Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe)

Leaving Botswana we enter Zimbabwe and drive to the nearby Victoria Falls. Here in Africa's adventure capital, we set up camp in the town's centrally located campsite. Victoria Falls or Mosi-oa-Tunya (the Smoke that Thunders) is one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World and it's not difficult to see why. At 1700 m wide and around 100 m high, this is the world's largest sheet of falling water and a memorable sight on any African Safari! The Falls can be viewed from the Victoria Falls National Park, Zimbabwe - a fantastic photo opportunity. The afternoon is spent relaxing at the campsite's swimming pool or exploring the many sights and delights of this town!

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Days 21 & 22: Victoria Falls

The next 2 days are spent relaxing or participating in a myriad of Optional Excursions. Some of our fellow passengers will leave us in Vic Falls, to be replaced by new passengers joining us for the next leg of our trek.

OPTIONAL Excursions include trips into the Zambezi or Hwange National Parks, elephant back safaris, horse back safaris, a visit to the crocodile ranch, boat cruises and golf at The Elephant Hills Resort. Adrenalin junkies can bungee from the Victoria Falls Bridge connecting Zimbabwe and Zambia or abseil down the Batoka Gorge - neither activity is for the faint hearted! All year round, flights in fixed wing, micro light and ultra light aircraft or helicopters provide an aerial perspective over this magnificent World Heritage Site. White water rafting on the Zambezi is world class. Beside the excitement of the Grade 5 rapids, there are the "floats," where there is time to admire the scenic cliffs and the occasional wildlife on the riverbanks.

Day 23: Victoria Falls to Livingstone (Zambia)

We leave Zimbabwe and cross the Victoria Falls Bridge and the Zambezi River, entering into Zambia at the town of Livingstone. We have the opportunity to view The Falls from the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, Zambia. Another fantastic photo opportunity. The day affords us the opportunity to participate in the activities available in Zambia we weren't able to do on the Zimbabwean side of the Falls. Tonight we have the option of enjoying a sunset dinner cruise on the mighty Zambezi.

Day 24: Livingstone to Lusaka

An early morning start sees us head north through southern Zambia to our campsite on the outskirts of Zambia's capital city, Lusaka. The campsite is home to some local wildlife including the largest antelope – Eland.

Day 25: Lusaka to Chipata

From Lusaka we head north east to a beautiful little campsite just 10 km before the Zambia/Malawi border. Here we spend the night before heading into Malawi.

Days 26 to 30: Chipata to Lake Malawi Beaches (Malawi)

Leaving Zambia we cross into Malawi, the 'Warm Heart of Africa'. We stop off in the capital, Lilongwe, a small city distinctively divided into the old town and the new administrative centre. Malawi is a landlocked country with 20% of its total area made up of beautiful Lake Malawi. We travel the full length of the western side of the lake, stopping off at various bays and inlets over the next 5 days.

Spend the days learning the game of bao from the locals, scour the markets for a bargain or simply relax on the pristine beaches. Malawi's temperate climate allows for swimming in the clear blue fresh-water lake all year round. Explore the beautiful shore where you'll happen upon the local fishermen sorting their catch. Traditional fishing techniques are still practiced and to appreciate their boating skills, try to paddle a dug out canoe yourself! The various



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beachside campsites along Lake Malawi's shores offer many optional Excursions including a variety of water sports, horse back rides and a visit to the local village and school.

Day 31: Lake Malawi to Iringa (Tanzania)

After a relaxing 5 days, we leave Malawi, entering Tanzania through the border post at Songwe. Taking in the beauty of the Tukuyu tea and banana plantations, we head towards Iringa where we spend the night in the beautiful rustic 'Farmhouse' campsite famous for its Amarula Hot Chocolates and its steamy showers!

Day 32: Iringa to Dar es Salaam

The next morning we make our way to Dar es Salaam. We pass through the Mikumi National Park where it is possible to view a range of wildlife from the roadside, totally impervious to the passing traffic. On arrival in Dar es Salaam, we make our way to our lovely seaside campsite and prepare for our departure to Zanzibar the next morning.

Day 33: Dar es Salaam to Zanzibar

A ferry from Dar es Salaam takes us to the "Spice Island," where we have the option to spend the next 3 nights. Zanzibar is steeped in history and was one of the major starting points for most East African explorers in their quest for new lands. New passengers may join us to replace those that'll leave us at the end of our excursion to Zanzibar.

PLEASE NOTE: Accommodation and Meals are for your own account whilst on Zanzibar, as it is our experience that passengers prefer to explore the island on their own. The Trip Leader joins you and can arrange your accommodation, while meals can be enjoyed from a wide selection of restaurants.

*For those not opting to visit the island of Zanzibar, the next 3 days are spent at leisure at the beach campsite in Dar es Salaam.

Days 34 & 35: Zanzibar

History aside, Zanzibar offers a wealth of experiences for the visitor. Today the quiet streets of the old Stone Town still retain their Arabic influence, from the Medina-like shops to the palaces of the Sultans, who founded their vast empires on the spoils of the slave and ivory trade. The island is famous for its spices and an excursion around a spice plantation is always a fascinating experience. Other options include a trip to the beautiful beaches and giant tortoises of Prison Island, a full day scuba dive in Nungwe or a fishing trip in a traditional dhow. Mopeds are available for hire if you'd like to explore the more remote areas of the island. Zanzibar is a seafood lover's paradise. Numerous restaurants offer a great variety of the freshest catch from the ocean - crayfish being a popular speciality. Alternatively, mingle with the locals for dinner at the Forodhani Gardens seafront market, where delicious, inexpensive seafood is on offer.



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Day 36: Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam

Leaving Zanzibar, we return to the mainland and another night in Dar es Salaam.

DAY 37: Dar es Salaam to Arusha (B / L / D)

From Dar es Salaam we travel through vast sisal plantations to Arusha. On the way, we pass The Pare and Usambara Mountain ranges before driving through the town of Moshi. Moshi is the base for Mount Kilimanjaro climbing expeditions and weather permitting; we may even catch a glimpse of this magical mountain's snowy summit - a photo opportunity not to be missed! Tonight we stay in a lovely campsite in Meserani on the outskirts of Arusha, before heading out on our Optional Excursions to the Serengeti and Ngorongoro Crater.

Days 38 to 40: Arusha / Optional Ngorongoro Crater / Serengeti Excursion

Arusha is a pleasant town situated at the base of Mount Meru and is the starting point for the optional excursions to Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti. We conduct these excursions in locally operated 4WD vehicles, which are adapted for safari use.

For those not opting to visit the Ngorongoro Crater or Serengeti National Park, the next 2 days are spent at leisure enjoying the Meserani reptile park, Masai Cultural Museum and the surrounding villages and craft markets. Alternatively the town of Arusha is close by to explore.

The Optional Ngorongoro/Serengeti excursion takes us via the Masai town of Mtu Wa Mbu (Mosquito River) that lies adjacent to the Lake Manyara National Park, and up the Rift Valley Escarpment to the higher lying village of Karatu. Karatu offers magnificent views over the surrounding hills and has many well established wheat farms that add to the picturesque panoramas. We spend the evening at a pleasant campsite in Karatu. The following morning we depart early for the Ngorongoro Conservation area and head into the wildlife rich Ngorongoro Crater. This World Heritage Site boasts some of the best game viewing in Africa – including the elusive Black Rhino.

After our game drive in the Crater, we head down the Crater rim and past the 'Cradle of Mankind' on our way to the Serengeti National Park. We cross the vast plains as we game drive through the southern and central areas in the park. Tonight we camp in the bushveld surrounded by the sounds of the African wilderness. In the morning, we head off for another game drive and explore the landscape in search of the resident game. With some luck, we may see some of Africa's 'Big 5'!

After our morning drive, we head back across the plains and the lush Crater rim to our truck at Arusha, where we spend the evening musing over our thrilling wildlife experience.



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Day 41: Arusha to Namanga (Kenya)

After a morning spent exploring Arusha's city centre and vibrant craft markets, we head to lunch just outside of town. After lunch, we travel 120 km to the Tanzania / Kenya border. Once the border formalities are complete, we camp at Namanga just over the Kenyan border.

Day 42: Namanga to Nairobi

This morning we travel 180 km north to the capital city, Nairobi. On arrival, we head to the Hotel Boulevard, where we exchange addresses and part ways, having just experienced a trip of a lifetime!

FREE TRIP

When you book this trip, you are entitled to receive both a FREE 3 Day Cape Town City Package the Thursday before your trip begins and a FREE 3 Day Masai Mara Safari the Sunday after your trip ends. The Local Payments are still applicable for each trip. This fantastic offer must be taken up at the same time you book this trip. Ask us for more details. Conditions apply.



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