

## **BEST OF SOUTH AFRICA**

### **Cape Town, Kwa-Zulu Natal & Kruger**

#### **Safari and Tour Highlights:**

##### **Cape Town & Western Cape:**

- Explore the Cape Peninsula/Cape Point, Kirstenbosch, and see the African Penguins.
- Visit Robben Island by boat (a World Heritage Site).
- Cable car to the top of magnificent Table Mountain, Cape Town.
- Explore the West Coast National Park.
- Tour the scenic Cape Winelands.
- Travel to Hermanus for southern right whale viewing.

##### **St. Lucia, Zululand & Phinda Game Reserve:**

- Cruise to see hippos, crocs & birds on the St. Lucia Estuary (A World Heritage Site).
- Experience Zulu culture
- On Safari in Phinda private Game Reserve

##### **Kruger National Park:**

- On Safari in the Sabi Sands private Reserve
- Opportunities for Big Five game viewing

#### **DETAILED ITINERARY FOR BEST OF SOUTH AFRICA TOUR AND SAFARI**

(13 nights / 14 days)

##### **Day 1 – Arrive Cape Town, South Africa**

Arrive Cape Town, South Africa where you will be transferred to our centrally-situated hotel. Check into the hotel and spend the rest of the day at leisure resting up after the long flight. Alternatively, spend the afternoon on a city orientation and leisurely walk through the Company Gardens. Lunch and dinner on own account; there are a number of good restaurants within easy reach of the hotel.

**Overnight: Cape Milner Hotel or guesthouse of similar standard**

##### **Day 2 - Cape Town / Robben Island / Table Mountain**

After breakfast at the hotel, the group will be picked up by a local guide and taken to the Waterfront Complex. Depart from the Nelson Mandela Gateway by boat (weather dependent) to Robben Island (a World Heritage Site). Spend the morning on a bus tour of this fascinating island and visit the prison where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated during the apartheid era. After lunch on your own back in the Waterfront Complex, transfer to the lower Table Mountain cable station. Take the cable car (weather permitting) to the top of Table Mountain and spend about an hour or two on top taking in spectacular views around the Cape Peninsula. Transfer back to the hotel late this afternoon before enjoying a group dinner this evening.

**Overnight: Cape Milner Hotel or guesthouse of similar standard**

##### **Day 3 - Cape Town / Cape Peninsula**

Depart the hotel after breakfast on a guided tour of the Cape Peninsula traveling via the scenic Atlantic coastline, Hout Bay and over Chapman's Peak (conditions permitting). Drive to the Cape Point Nature Reserve. Enjoy a group lunch at *Two Oceans Restaurant*, taking in fabulous views. Visit the African (Jackass) Penguin Colony at Boulders Beach and time permitting we will also visit the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, situated on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, and internationally acclaimed as one of the seven most magnificent botanical gardens in the world. Return to the hotel for overnight. Dinner on own account this evening.

**Overnight: Cape Milner Hotel or guesthouse of similar standard**

##### **Day 4 – Cape Town / West Coast National Park**

After breakfast, depart on a full-day guided tour of the West Coast National Park. Just inland from the harbor of Saldanha Bay are the waters of the Langebaan Lagoon, focal point of the West Coast National Park. The park boasts thousands of seabirds and

pristine golden beaches. The surrounding islands and salt marshes are home to vast concentrations of migrant waders from the northern hemisphere. Group lunch enroute included in the West Coast touring. Return to the hotel for dinner this evening on your own account.

**Overnight: Cape Milner Hotel or guesthouse of similar standard**

#### **Day 5 – Cape Town / Stellenbosch**

The morning is at leisure with lunch on your own before departing Cape Town with your guide for the Stellenbosch Winelands. Stellenbosch lies just 50 kilometers from Cape Town, in the wine zone of the Cape Winelands. The areas of Stellenbosch, Paarl and Franschhoek form the district of the Cape Winelands, the main wine region of South Africa. Winemaking is one of the main industries of the country, with more than a billion liters of wine produced each year. Stellenbosch is in the heart of this industry and is found on the popular Wine Route. Settle into a quaint local guesthouse before enjoying a group dinner this evening.

**Overnight: Batavia House or similar**

#### **Day 6 – Hermanus**

Embark this morning on a full-day guided tour in Hermanus to observe southern right whales with lunch on your own in Hermanus. Hermanus is the best place in South Africa to see the annual migration (approx. June-Nov only) of Southern right whales as they pass through Walker Bay. In recent years, as many as 2,000 whales have followed the annual migration from Antarctica to mate and calve in the warmer waters of the southern Cape coast. Hermanus, with a backdrop of mountains, a large lagoon and long white beach, deep rock pools, and a wealth of coastal fynbos, is beautiful in spring and winter, and is recognized by the World Wildlife Fund as one of the world's top whale-viewing spots. A group dinner is included this evening.

**Overnight: Batavia House or similar**

#### **Day 7 – Cape Town / Durban / St. Lucia (Kwa-Zulu Natal)**

After breakfast and check-out, you will be transferred to the Cape Town airport for the scheduled 2-hour flight to Durban in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Here a local guide will meet the group and travel northward a few hours by road (private transfer), crossing the Tugela River into the Kingdom of Zululand and continuing on via Ballito to the town of St. Lucia within the Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park area (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). Arrive at Lidiko Lodge for check-in and lunch. Spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure. Lidiko Lodge sits above the Great St. Lucia Lake, on a coastal dune and with stunning views of the estuary. The lodge offers accommodation in 15 well-appointed garden lodges. Group dinner this evening and overnight at the lodge.

**Overnight: Lidiko Lodge or similar**

#### **Day 8 – St. Lucia (Kwa-Zulu Natal)**

After breakfast, we set off for the Eastern Shores Game Reserve, with a chance of seeing elephant, buffalo, zebra and other species of game on the way. We stop at Mission Rocks viewing area and then on to Cape Vidal. There may be a chance for snorkeling (tide permitting) or relaxing on the beach. Enjoy a barbeque lunch today. Once back in St. Lucia, board a tour boat to cruise the St. Lucia Estuary at sunset searching for hippos, crocodiles, fish eagles and much more. 367 species of birds are known to be in the Greater St. Lucia Wetland Park. Group dinner in St. Lucia at the local restaurant *Fur Elize* this evening.

**Overnight: Lidiko Lodge or similar**

#### **Day 9 – St. Lucia / Hluhluwe / Phinda Game Reserve**

Today we drive from St Lucia to Hluhluwe with a stop enroute to visit the Ilala Weavers. Established some 30 years ago, with a clear vision and objective of revitalizing and enhancing the age-old Zulu tradition of handicrafts, today the Ilala Weavers helps over 2,000 Zulu people to attain self-sufficiency by retaining their lifestyle and rich heritage of basket weaving and bead work. Continue to Phinda Game Reserve where we enjoy lunch followed by check in at the Phinda Mountain Lodge. The subtle combination of avant garde and ethnic décor at [Phinda Mountain Lodge](#) is inspiring but nothing surpasses the view of the ash-blue Lebombo Mountains as they

sweep down to the coastal plains. The lodge has 20 air-conditioned chalets with private decks and en suite bathrooms with bath and shower. Paved pathways lead down the mountainside from the main lodge to the chalets. After settling into our accommodations head out on our first open vehicle afternoon game drive on the Phinda Private Reserve.

**Overnight Phinda Mountain Lodge or similar**

**Days 10 & 11 – Phinda Game Reserve**

Phinda Private Game Reserve is situated in the lush Maputaland region in northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Bordering the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, Phinda comprises 22,000 hectares (54,500 acres) of prime conservation land. Seven distinct habitats shelter an abundance of wildlife including Africa's Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, black and white rhino, and buffalo) and over 380 bird species, while the marine diversity off the nearby coast of Sodwana is said to rival the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. We will enjoy **two full days** here to explore the reserve – Early morning and late afternoon game drives and or a boat cruise – all with top notch safari ranger/guides. **Optional Tour:** Take an optional *Flight of the Fish Eagle* tour to experience a breathtaking 60-minute flight over the diverse Maputaland wilderness of scenic pans, coastal lakes, bushveld, densely vegetated dunes and wildlife with the chance to spot whales, whalesharks, dolphins and turtles in the magnificent Indian Ocean. (Additional tour/flight rate applies.)

**Overnights: Phinda Mountain Lodge or similar**

**Days 12 & 13 – Phinda Game Reserve / Sabi Sands Private Reserve (Kruger National Park area)**

After a morning game drive, we will fly from the Phinda private airstrip to Sabi Sands Private Reserve bordering Kruger National Park. The Kruger National Park and surrounding area are said to have the greatest variety of animals of any park in Africa, with the Big Five, cheetah, giraffe, hippo, crocodile, and many species of antelope and smaller animals. From our home-base at the Lion Sands River Lodge situated within the Sabi Sands Private Reserve, we spend two action-packed days, embarking on both early morning and late afternoon game drives in open 4x4 vehicles. Accompanied by qualified rangers and trackers, we seek out the area's wildlife. Accommodations at Lion Sands River Lodge are superbly situated along the Sabie River and offer thatched chalets with en suite bathrooms, all shaded by large indigenous ebony trees. The perfect place for us to end our African Safari, Lion Sands offers a blend of rich culture, exclusivity, and elegance.

**Overnights Lion Sands River Lodge or similar**

**Day 14 – Lions Sands Private Reserve / Johannesburg / Home**

Enjoy your final game drive this morning followed by brunch at the lodge before we fly from an air strip close to Lion Sands to Johannesburg to connect with homeward flights.

*We hope you will join us for this amazing Best of South Africa trip!*