

Tips for your Holiday in South Africa

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ATC Service Number for a holiday in South Africa

You can reach ATC African Travel Concept under the 24-hour service number +27(0)82 253 63 26. During office hours you can contact us on +27(21) 426 0032.

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Business Hours in South Africa

Shops:

Monday - Friday 8h30 - 17h00

Saturday - 9h00 - 14h00 (In some cases until 17h00)

Sunday - 9.00 - 13h00 (Mainly in the shopping malls)

Some shopping malls, chemists and smaller shops remain open until 21h00 hours during the week.

Banks:

Monday - Friday 8h30 - 15h30

Saturday 9h00 - 11h00

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Car Rentals in South Africa

It is recommended that those wishing to explore locally or further afield on their own should hire a motor vehicle. An international driver's license is required. People drive on the left in South Africa.

In order to avoid paying a very high deposit, payment by credit card is recommended. The traffic signs are similar to those in European countries. Pay attention at the four-way-stop, where the first to arrive is also the first to depart. If in doubt, making eye contact helps to agree on right of way.

The speed limits, if not stipulated otherwise, are 60km/hour in the suburbs, 100km/hour on country roads, and 120kms/hour on the highways. The wearing of seatbelts is obligatory. The permissible alcohol level is 0,5ml/Litre.

It is forbidden to use mobile telephones while driving, unless the telephone is a hands-free kit.

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Electricity

The voltage is 220/230 volts. An adaptor is required for European equipment. These are usually available in the hotel, guest house or at the supermarket. World adaptors generally do not fit.

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Foreign Exchange / Currency

The South African currency is the Rand.

1 Rand = 100 cents.

5, 10, 20, 50 cent coins, as well as 1, 2 and 5 Rand coins, and 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 Rand notes are in circulation.

Credit cards are widely used in South African and are accepted almost everywhere and it is customary to settle small amounts with the credit card. Traveler's cheques issued in Euros can be exchanged almost anywhere.

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Gratuities

In South Africa, the restaurant bills exclude the service fee, which constitutes an additional 10% over and above the bill. A larger gratuity is left at your discretion, depending on the service required and given. The South African baggage handlers, waitrons and chamber-maids, like their colleagues elsewhere in the world, appreciate a gratuity or tip for their good services.

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Health Advice for a Holiday in South Africa

It is recommended that one take an anti-malaria prophylactic, should one be visiting north-eastern Mpumalanga (Kruger National Park) and Kwa-Zulu Natal (Wildlife Reserves in Zululand). Medications are also available at the local chemists without a medical prescription. Comprehensive information can be gained from your general practitioner. It is generally wise to wear light-coloured, full length clothing during nightfall and in the dark and to avoid sitting outside. One should sleep under a finely woven mosquito net or in rooms with air conditioning, if at all possible.

In the northern and eastern part of the country, most stagnant waters are infected with bilharzia, which can give rise to a dangerous illness. It is not advisable to swim in stagnant waters or put one's hands or feet into the water.

The sun's rays are intense and necessitate the wearing of a hat and sunglasses, as well as the application of sunscreen

having a high protection factor.

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Languages in South Africa

There are 11 official languages in South Africa - English, Afrikaans, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

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Medical Care in South Africa

Medical provision is generally of a very high standard. European insurance membership cards are not recognized and travellers must settle all costs incurred directly themselves. It is therefore advisable to conclude an additional foreign medical insurance prior to departure. Should one need to undergo any medical treatment/procedures, one should request to be furnished with a detailed invoice stating the diagnosis for submission to your health insurance company.

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Petrol Stations/Garages - South Africa

Petrol stations generally remain open from 7h00 to 18h00. In the big cities and alongside the highways, there are 24-hour petrol service stations. Self-service is not available and the petrol attendant expects a gratuity. Credit cards are not accepted. When undertaking a long journey, please remember to fill the petrol tank in time, because the distances between service stations in the less populated rural areas can be vast.

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Pharmacies (also called a Chemist or an Apteek)

In addition to medicines, toiletries and other articles are sold at chemists, e.g. sun protection creams and even film spools. Emergency chemists are available throughout the large cities.

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Physically Challenged

South Africa has been trying for several years, together with various organizations, to create suitable facilities for the physically challenged:

All of the National Parks Board camps have been equipped in a suitable manner for the physically challenged.

The large car rental companies are able to supply suitably equipped vehicles for the physically challenged.

A directory for the sight impaired is available at the South African National Council for the Blind.

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Post Office

The post offices are open from Monday to Friday between 8h30 and 16h30. Stamps can be purchased at the Post Office and at curio shops, or, alternatively, at the hotel reception or concierge's desk. In larger hotels, the receptionist or the concierge will ensure the forwarding of your mail.

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Public Holidays in South Africa

In addition to New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday (Family Day) and Christmas, there are eight additional public holidays. Access to shops and banks is limited on these days.

21.03. Human Rights Day

27.04. Freedom Day

01.05. Workers' Day

16.06. Youth Day

09.08. National Woman's Day

24.09. Heritage Day

16.12. Day of Reconciliation

26.12. Day of Goodwill

A special rule applies if a public holiday should fall on a Sunday; In this case the following Monday is regarded as a public holiday!

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Restaurants

Every culinary taste is catered for. It is customary and recommended that one reserves a table in advance, particularly during the South African holiday season (Christmas and the New Year until the beginning of January). An early reservation is also advisable for long weekends. Upon entering the restaurant, one waits at the door to be shown to a table.

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Security in South Africa

In the big cities, as in most metropolitan cities of the world, some security measures need to be observed

- Never leave one's baggage unattended, wear notably expensive jewellery or carry photographic equipment with you.

- It is better not to be en route alone at night and it is safer to take a taxi, which can be arranged by the hotel.

- When driving through the city, windows should be closed and the doors locked.
- When en route, carry only the amount of money required by you.
- Baggage and valuables must be left neither in the vehicle, nor in the boot.

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Smoking

Stricter non-smoking laws have been introduced in South Africa, which implies that in all public buildings, as well as in many restaurants, smoking is prohibited. Owing to the heightened danger of fires, because of the dry vegetation in many areas, cigarettes and matches must not be discarded anywhere!

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Souvenirs from South Africa

Visit South Africa and discover it's fascinating wildlife! Experience elephants, buffalos, lions, leopards, rhinos, sharks and many more in the wild. But this biodiversity is in jeopardy! Many of these wonderful animals are killed for holiday souvenirs and trinkets. Think Twice before buying souvenirs! Help protect the endangered African wildlife. Do not buy products made of wild animals, such as carved ivory, jewelry with elephant hair, products made of buffalo or elephant leather, fur from big cats or shark teeth. Please be aware: If we don't buy, they won't die! For more information please visit www.ifaw.org

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Taxis

Taxi ramps are seldom found and taxis cannot be stopped on the road. Central taxi depots exist in every big city. Hotels and restaurants will gladly order a taxi for you.

A basic rate is charged and for the duration of the journey, the taxi meter must be switched on. For security reasons, we advise you not to take the shared taxis, because these often have technical faults.

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Time Differences in South Africa

There is no time difference during the European summer. The South African clocks remain one hour ahead of middle-European time during the remaining months. Evening falls sooner than in Europe: In summer at about 19h30 and in winter at about 17h30.

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Telephones

The international dialling code for Germany from South Africa is +49, for Austria +43 and for Switzerland +41. Thereafter, dial the city dialing code without the 0 and then the subscribers telephone number.

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Value Added Tax (VAT)

Value Added Tax is currently at 14% and is included in the price. A VAT refund application can be submitted by tourists at the departure airport, if the purchases exceed a minimum total amount of R250.00. When purchasing goods, ensure that you request an invoice with the company VAT registration number on it.

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