

Southern Africa

A pre-travel pack for South Africa, Namibia, Botswana,
Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi.

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“Your Journey to Africa Starts Here: Growth, Grace & Grandeur!”

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ABOUT SOUTHERN AFRICA

Where is Southern Africa?

Southern Africa is the southernmost region of the African continent. It includes South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi. Some definitions also include Lesotho and Eswatini (Swaziland).

Geographically, Southern Africa is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Indian Ocean to the east, stretching from the southern tip of Africa (Cape of Good Hope) up towards the equatorial regions of the continent. The region is known for its diverse landscapes, wildlife and rich cultural heritage.

WILDLIFE AND SAFARIS

The region is famous for its wildlife, with top safari destinations like Kruger National Park (South Africa), Chobe National Park (Botswana) and Hwange National Park (Zimbabwe).

With exclusive game drives, intimate wildlife encounters and access to untouched landscapes, we create experiences that go beyond expectations.



ABOUT SOUTHERN AFRICA

Seasons in Southern Africa

Southern Africa has a generally mild climate, with sunny days and cool nights in most areas, though it can vary from Mediterranean in the southwest to desert-like in the northwest.

Summer	December – February	Autumn	March – May
Winter	June – August	Spring	September – November

CULTURE

Key aspects of the culture

RELIGION

Spirituality often blends traditional beliefs, ancestor worship and Christianity, with rituals and ceremonies playing a central role in community life.

ARCHITECTURE

Traditional dwellings include mud huts (rondavels) with thatched roofs, often arranged in homesteads that reflect communal living and kinship ties.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Communities are organised around kinship networks and shared homesteads, reinforcing communal living and a strong sense of belonging.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

Rich oral traditions, including storytelling, music, dance and various rites of passage, showcase the peoples' histories and values, reinforcing communal bonds and cultural identity.

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Travel insurance

Travel insurance is essential for every safari traveller. Safari.com can arrange cover for your trip, with a range of packages to suit different needs and budgets. Your safari specialist will walk you through the current options.

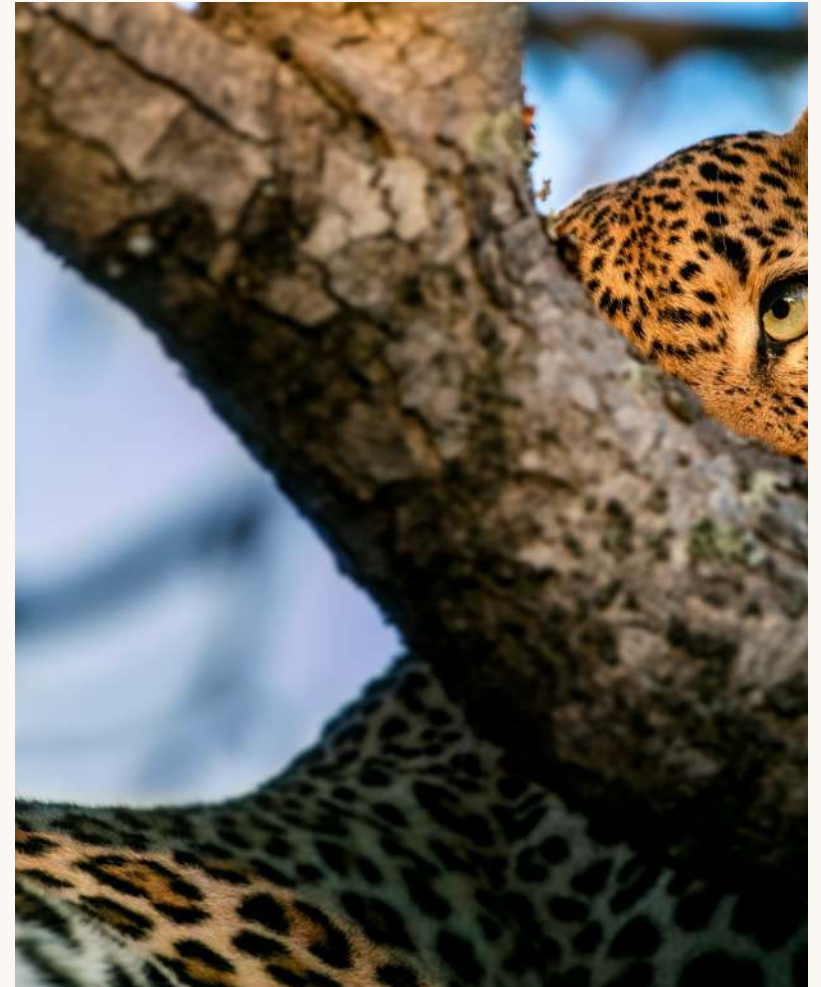
Not yet insured? [Submit the travel insurance form](#) and we will arrange it for you, time permitting.

Visa requirements vary by country across Southern Africa. Use Sherpa for live, passport-specific entry rules:

South Africa	US passport	·	UK passport	·	Australian passport
Botswana	US passport	·	UK passport	·	Australian passport
Namibia	US passport	·	UK passport	·	Australian passport
Zimbabwe	US passport	·	UK passport	·	Australian passport
Zambia	US passport	·	UK passport	·	Australian passport
Mozambique	US passport	·	UK passport	·	Australian passport

Travelling on a different passport? Click any link above and change the country of passport issue on Sherpa.

Safari.com's travel insurance ensures your journey is both secure and cost-effective.



TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Essential travel documents

Passport

Must be valid for at least six months beyond your intended return date. Ensure it has 4 consecutive blank pages.

Visa documents

Printout of your visa approval if required by your destination country. Confirm the visa type (tourist, business, etc.) and its validity.

Documents on travel to Southern Africa

Printed and digital copies of your general information document on travel to Southern Africa including flight bookings, departure and arrival details, as well as confirmations of hotel bookings or stay arrangements.

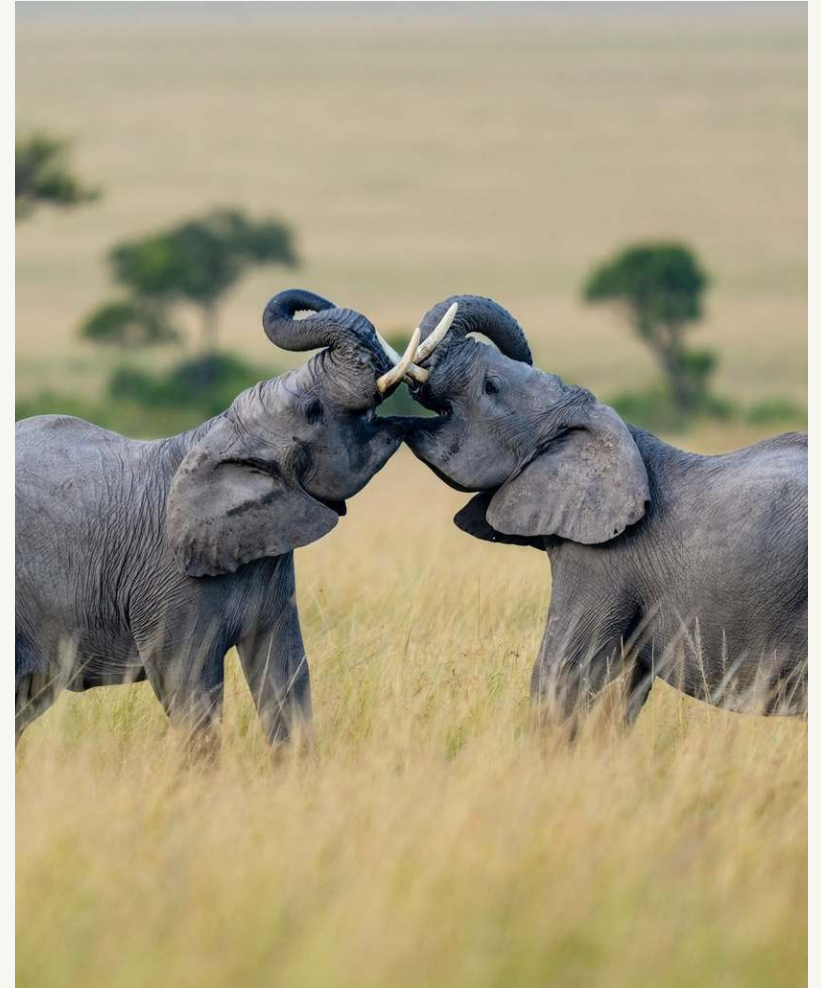
Proof of travel insurance.

Health documents

A doctor's note with prescriptions if you're carrying medication.

Emergency contacts

List of emergency contacts, including family and friends, and your country's embassy in the destination country.



TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Airport taxes and baggage

AIRPORT DEPARTURE TAXES

Many African airports charge departure taxes, typically included in your ticket price. However, some require direct payment in US dollars, ranging from \$3 to \$50 per person. For specific details, consult your Safari.com specialist or check your flight reservations online.

COMMERCIAL FLIGHT BAGGAGE POLICIES

CHECK-IN LUGGAGE

Weight: 20 kg (44 lbs)

Size: 90 cm (H) × 72 cm (W) × 45 cm (L)

HAND LUGGAGE

Weight: 8 kg (17 lbs)

Size: 56 cm (H) × 36 cm (W) × 23 cm (L)

LIGHT AIRCRAFT RESTRICTIONS

When taking charter flights on light aircraft, pack in a soft-sided bag with a maximum weight of 15 kg (33 lbs) per person. Most safari lodges offer laundry facilities, allowing you to minimise your clothing.

You can also store excess luggage at your hotel or the airport if you're returning there. Some charter companies have a weight limit of 100 kg per person; if you exceed this, be aware that you may need to pay for an additional seat due to weight distribution requirements.

Make sure your bags meet the weight and size requirements for a smooth travel experience.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

General health requirements

GENERAL HEALTH

In Southern Africa, travellers should be free of diseases like tuberculosis and cholera, common in some areas. Bring enough medications, along with wristbands, doctor's notes and prescription details for emergencies.

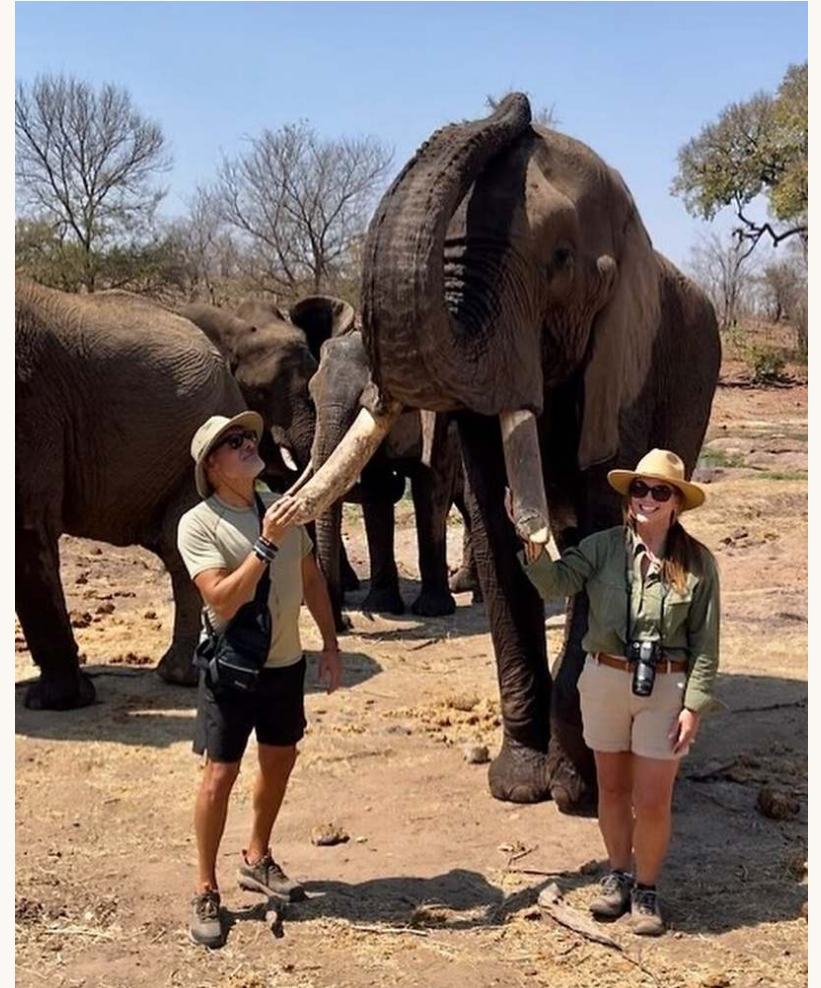
For physical activities like trekking or rafting, a doctor's letter confirming fitness is required.

IMPORTANT VACCINATIONS FOR TRAVEL

Yellow fever requirements depend on your country of origin and country of travel. Some countries, including South Africa, Botswana and Namibia, require proof of vaccination if you are arriving from or have transited through a yellow-fever-endemic country (such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia or parts of West Africa).

Consult your doctor or a travel clinic, and your safari specialist will flag the latest entry requirements before you fly. If exempt for medical reasons, a letter from your GP is required.

We craft unforgettable journeys, transforming moments into lifelong memories.



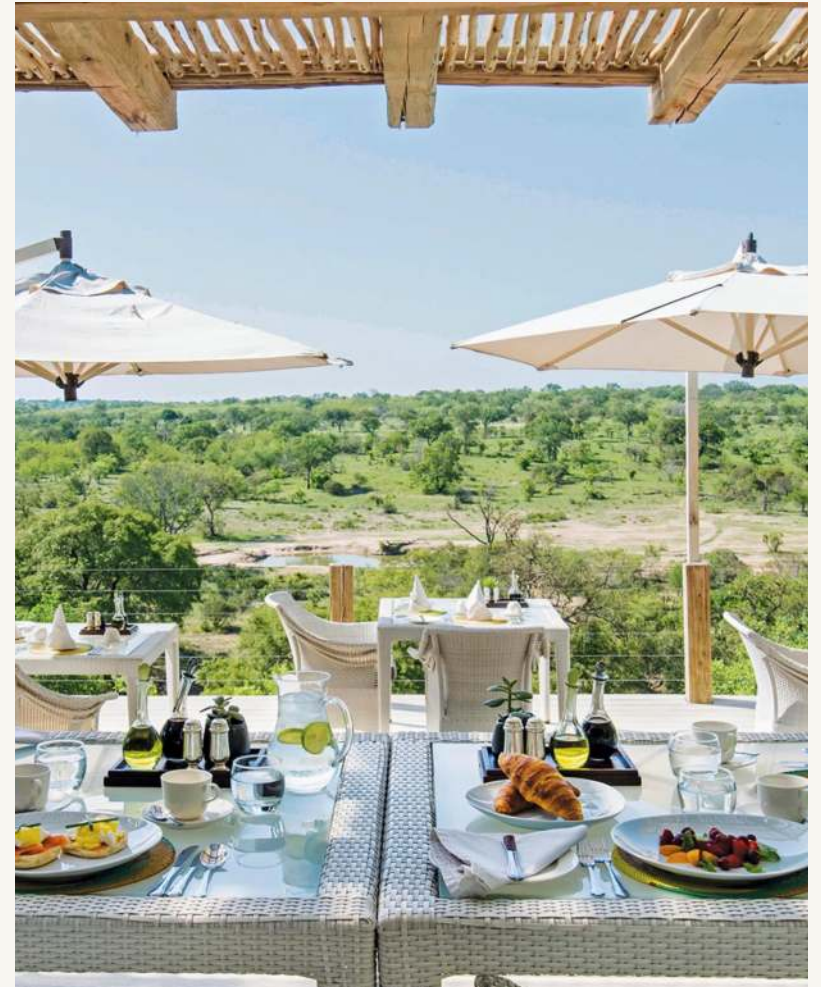
HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Health risks to consider

Altitude sickness. Risks associated with high-altitude trekking; acclimatisation is necessary.

Insect-borne diseases. Use insect repellent and wear protective clothing.

Access to healthcare. Medical facilities may be limited in rural areas; carry a basic medical kit and know how to seek help. Carry necessary medications, prescriptions and medical documents for emergencies.



MONETARY GUIDE

Manage currency in Southern Africa

Can I exchange currency in Southern African countries? You can easily convert cash to local currency at airports, hotels or banks.

TIPS FOR MANAGING CURRENCY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Currency exchange

You can easily convert cash to local currency at airports, hotels or banks.

Small denominations

Bring small bills for tips and gratuities, as it can be difficult to find change at lodges.

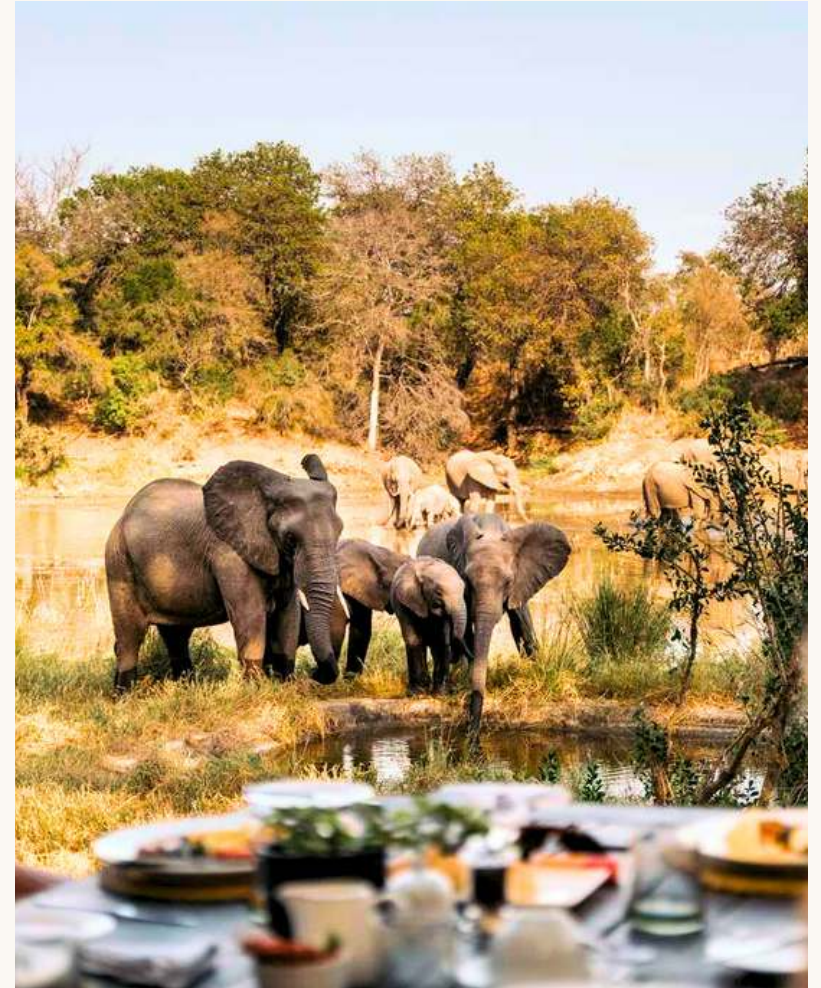
Check your bills

Ensure your USD bills are printed after 2006, as older notes won't be accepted.

Credit cards and ATMs

MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted, but transaction fees may be higher. ATMs are available in larger towns, though they may occasionally be out of order or affected by power cuts.

Always here for you, before, during and after your safari. We streamline your choices for the perfect safari.



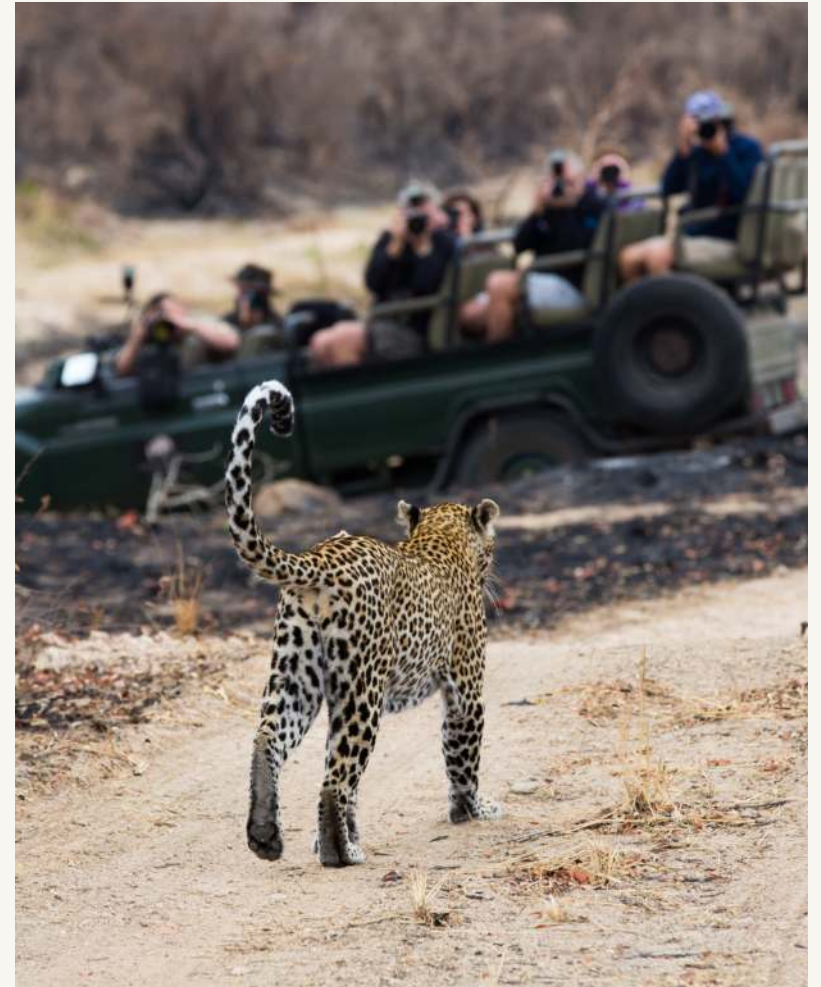
MONETARY GUIDE

Tipping and gratuities

South Africa uses Rands (ZAR), while Namibia accepts both Rands and Namibian Dollars. Other Southern African countries accept US Dollars.

MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted, though transaction fees may be higher in some countries.

Safari.com was voted Africa's Leading Safari Company at the World Travel Awards in 2024 and 2025.



CUSTOMS & ETIQUETTE

Communications

CHECK LODGE AMENITIES

Before your trip, confirm with the lodge what connectivity options are available. Some might offer Wi-Fi or other communication facilities, while others may only provide limited access.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Understand the emergency protocols of your camp or lodge. Knowing how and when they can reach help is crucial, especially in more remote areas.

RESPECTING OTHERS

If you bring a satellite phone, adhering to the guidelines to minimise disturbances is considerate. Keeping conversations brief and discreet not only respects fellow guests but enhances the overall experience for everyone.

POWER MANAGEMENT

Satellite phones can drain batteries, so consider bringing a portable charger or extra batteries to ensure you stay powered up.

While it's nice to have the option to communicate, remember that part of the safari experience is to immerse yourself in nature.

CUSTOMS & ETIQUETTE

Dress code and language guide

DRESS CODE

Being mindful of local customs is crucial when travelling. Hotels and lodges typically have relaxed dress codes, but dress and behave conservatively in urban areas, on beaches and in rural communities, particularly in Islamic regions of Southern Africa.

LANGUAGE GUIDE

Southern Africa is known for its rich tapestry of languages and cultures, with a variety of languages spoken across the region.

SOUTH AFRICA

Zulu	isiZulu
Xhosa	isiXhosa
Afrikaans	Afrikaans
English	English

NAMIBIA

Oshiwambo	Oshiwambo
Afrikaans	Afrikaans
English	English
Khoekhoe	Khoekhoe

BOTSWANA

Setswana	Setswana
English	English
Kalanga	Kalanga

ZIMBABWE

Shona	chiShona
Ndebele	isiNdebele
English	English
Chewa	Chewa

ZAMBIA

Bemba	Bemba
Nyanja	Nyanja
Tonga	Tonga
English	English

MOZAMBIQUE

Portuguese	Portuguese
Makhuwa	Makhuwa
Tsonga	Tsonga

MALAWI

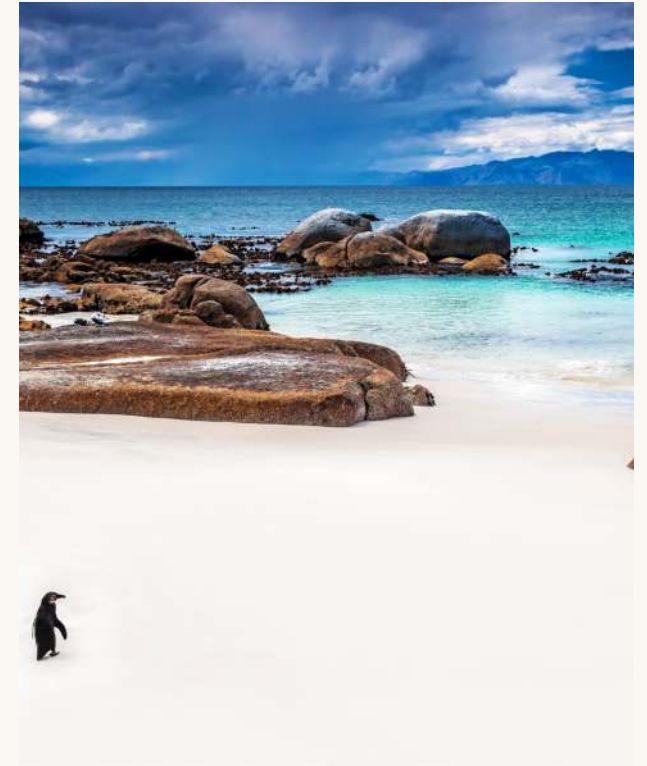
Chichewa	Chichewa
English	English
Tumbuka	Tumbuka

LESOTHO

Sesotho	Sesotho
English	English

ESWATINI

SiSwati	SiSwati
English	English



SAFARI TRAVEL TIPS

Suggested items to pack

Insect repellent. Choose a strong formula to protect against bugs, particularly mosquitoes.

Binoculars. Essential for wildlife viewing; lightweight and portable.

Day bag. A small backpack or tote to carry daily essentials.

Hat and sunscreen. To protect against the sun during daytime excursions.

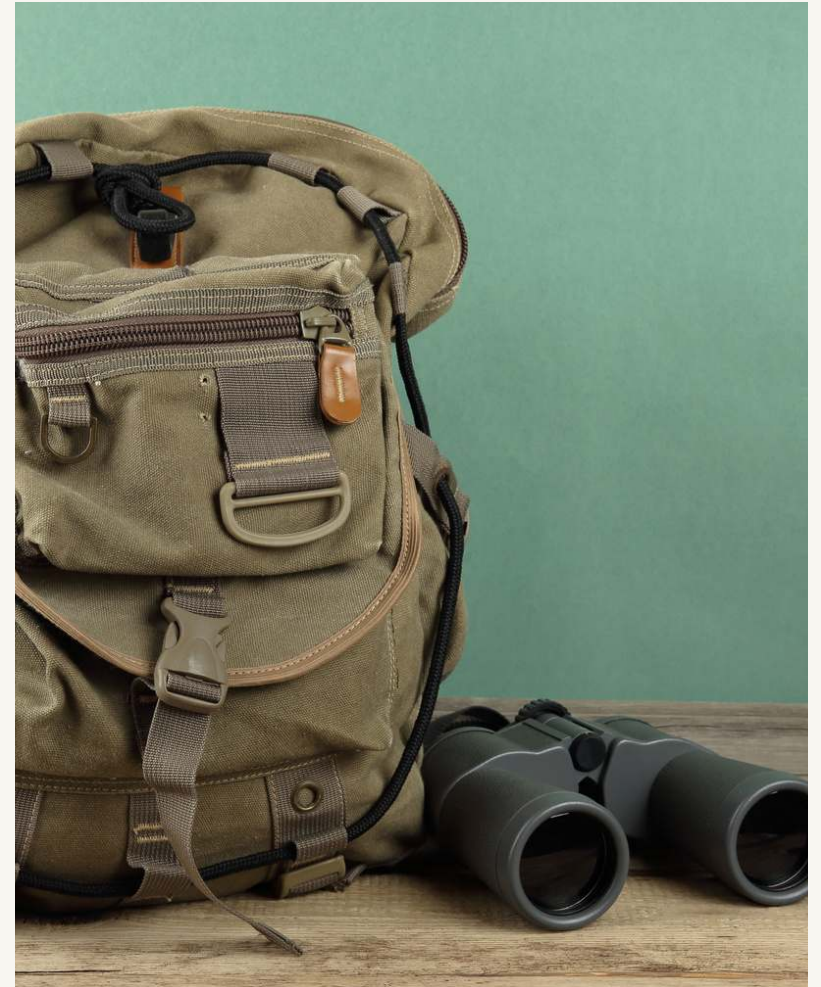
Water bottle. Reusable and sturdy, to stay hydrated throughout your adventures.

Camera and lenses. Waterproof bag to protect your gear from dust and moisture.

Footwear. Comfortable walking shoes or boots for drives and hikes; sandals for the lodge.

Rain jacket. Lightweight and packable for sudden showers.

Since 2006, over 58,000 travellers have entrusted us with one of life's most significant journeys, a luxury safari.



SAFARI TRAVEL TIPS

Warm layers, extras & packing tips

CLOTHING

Warm layers. Sweater or fleece for chilly evenings. Gloves and a scarf for winter trips.

Swimwear. If your lodge has a pool or you plan to visit the beach.

Trousers and shorts. Breathable fabrics; consider the season when packing.

GENERAL PACKING TIPS

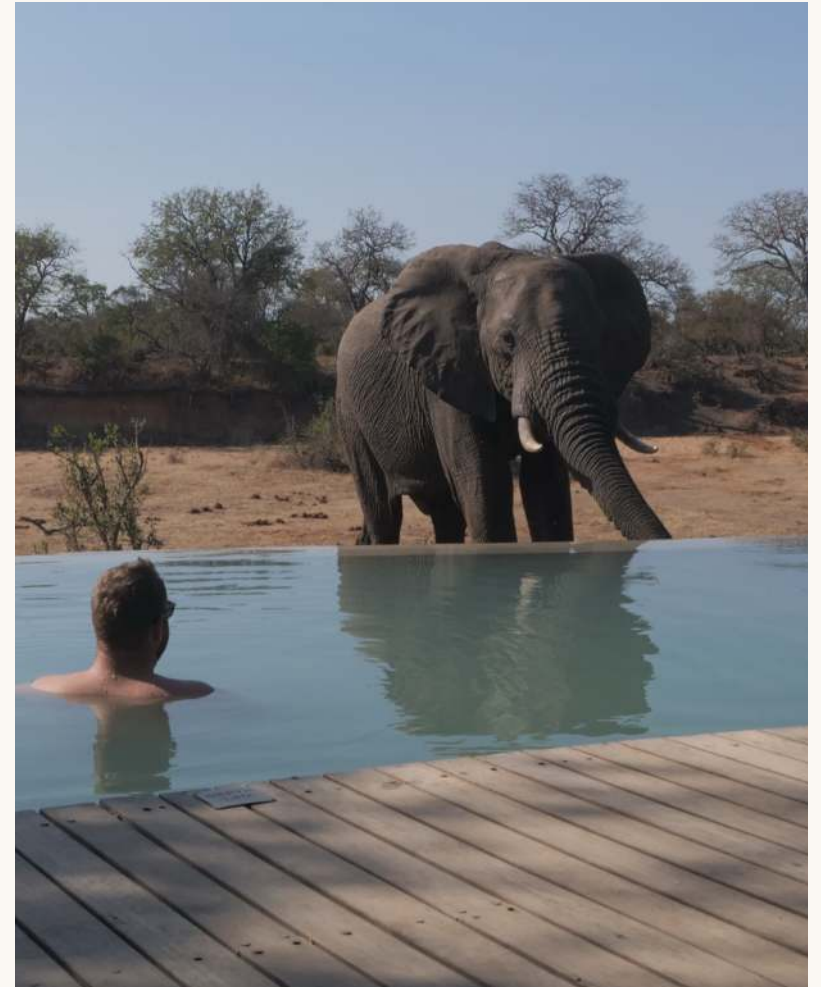
Pack light. Many recommended safari lodges provide laundry services, allowing you to bring fewer clothes.

Luggage restrictions. Keep passport, visas and insurance details accessible, and check baggage allowances for light aircraft transfers.

ENTERTAINMENT & EXTRAS

Reading material. A book or e-reader for downtime.

Travel documents. Passport, visas and insurance details easily accessible.



SAFARI TRAVEL TIPS

Day-pack packing list

Water bottle. Reusable and insulated to keep drinks cold; consider a hydration bladder for easy access.

Snacks. High-energy snacks like nuts, energy bars, dried fruit and jerky.

Sun protection. Sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher), lip balm with SPF, sunglasses (UV protection), wide-brimmed hat or cap.

Camera. With extra batteries and memory cards.

Binoculars. For wildlife spotting.

Phone and charger. Optional power bank for extra battery life.

Lightweight poncho or rain jacket. In case of unpredictable weather.

Trash bags. For packing out waste or storing wet items.

SAFARI TRAVEL TIPS

Travel safety tips

Keep documents secure. Make copies of important documents (passport, ID, insurance) and store them separately.

Use reliable transportation. Opt for reputable taxi services or rideshare apps and avoid unlicensed taxis.



SAFARI TRAVEL TIPS

Photography tips

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS

A standard digital camera works well.

Bring extra batteries and memory cards (recharging may not be possible daily).

Always ask permission before photographing people or sensitive areas and respect local customs. Let your guide assist with negotiations.

PROFESSIONAL / SEMI-PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

Use a dustproof case and monopod for stability.

Consider a private safari for fewer distractions.

Carry two camera bodies to avoid lens changes in dusty conditions.

The rainy season offers cleaner air and fewer tourists.

IMPORTANT SAFARI NOTES

Electricity

Some lodges have limited power, requiring guests to charge devices in central areas. Solar-powered lodges may only offer electricity based on weather and usage, so bring spare batteries and chargers.

Specialised equipment (such as CPAP machines or hairdryers) can be used at town hotels or generator-powered lodges, but not at solar-only lodges. Check your itinerary for charging options.

WEATHER & CLIMATE

Southern Africa's climate varies from tropical to temperate. Summers (November to March) are warm with rainfall, while winters (June to August) are cooler and drier, with frost in some highlands. The savanna has hot, wet summers and cooler, dry winters.

Trust that we'll help you plan the perfect trip, look after you every step of the way, and deliver on our promise of an unforgettable, seamless experience.





IMPORTANT SAFARI NOTES

Road conditions, distances & vehicles

ROAD CONDITIONS, DISTANCES & VEHICLES

Southern Africa has well-maintained tarred roads, often in better condition than other areas of the continent. However, expect challenging dirt roads in remote or mountainous regions, where travel can be slow and bumpy. For longer trips, charter flights are a great option.

Travel is typically in 4×4 vehicles, like Toyota Land Cruisers, designed for local conditions and game viewing, accommodating 4 to 7 passengers for memorable safari experiences.

BAN ON PLASTIC BAGS (BOTSWANA)

In 2019, Botswana banned plastic bags to reduce pollution and protect wildlife. The ban covers the production, importation and distribution of single-use bags, reflecting a broader shift towards sustainability in the region.

IMPORTANT SAFARI NOTES

Children on safari

Kid-friendly lodges

Many lodges cater to families with activities and amenities for kids.

Ranger packs

Lodges provide educational packs to keep children engaged.

Age restrictions

Children under 5 are usually not allowed on regular game drives for safety.

Private game drives

Families can opt for private vehicles for shorter, kid-friendly drives.

Travel requirements

One parent. An unabridged birth certificate and consent letter from the other parent are needed. **Guardians.** Guardians need affidavits from parents granting travel permission.

A safari in Africa offers children a life-changing connection with nature and wildlife.



SAFARI.COM INFO

Do you have any questions?

Please don't hesitate to reach out. Our team of safari specialists are here to support you every step of the way. A safari specialist will be in touch within as little as 15 minutes during working hours.

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