

MADE IN AFRICA

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South Africa

The Ultimate African Vacation

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A country of astounding diversity



Image: Sunway Safaris

As rich and varied as a rainbow itself, the Rainbow Nation is all about diversity - cultures from Africa, Asia and Europe sharing their traditions, languages and cuisines; encounters with creatures from dung beetles to lumbering elephant; accommodation options from rustic cabins to five star lodges and hotels and above all, a constantly changing, majestic landscape in which to enjoy it all.

Although the term is often over-used, South Africa really does fall into the category of 'bucket list'. A holiday to the southern tip of Africa is impossible to beat!

First off, most people visit Africa to experience a wildlife safari, and for good reason. African wildlife safaris are really amazing, fun, entertaining, and appeal to just about everyone, even those who don't really think a safari is for them.

Young, old, urban, rural, active, lazy, couples, singles, families, it doesn't matter: a safari is the ultimate holiday.

South Africa however is the only country that offers more than "just" safaris. In truth you could visit South Africa without ever going on safari at all, and still have a fantastic holiday. South Africa offers it all, and with a favourable exchange rate and low cost of living, it's a bargain.

While East Africa and Botswana offer exceptional wildlife safaris, South Africa takes the cake when it comes to all-round incredible African vacation destinations. It is quite possible to spend weeks in South Africa, and not venture into the bush once. For instance, Cape Town is a jewel that would be worth exploring, safari or no safari, and often maligned Johannesburg delivers far more to do and see than most African cities.

Spend four days exploring
the Kruger National Park
on foot >>



Beyond Beach Holidays

Known for its surging surf, diverse marine life and powdery sand, South Africa's beaches are as varied and beautiful as she is. And you'll get more than the ordinary sun, sand and sea.

Almost every traveller planning a trip to South Africa has *Cape Town* on his or her to-do list.

Why? Simply put, because it's worth it.

Utterly unique, with towering mountains and nestled on a gorgeous coastline, it's a bit of Sydney and a bit of San Francisco, with iconic Table Mountain presiding over it all.

Cape Town is bursting at the seams with attractions.

From hiking, surfing, and sun-worshipping on the city's many gorgeous beaches, to taking a cable car to the top of Table Mountain for incredible views of the city, visiting the stunning Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, and watching the comical antics of the penguins at Boulders Beach. You can also take a trip to Robben Island, the infamous island prison where Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners were held.



Image: Wilderness Safaris

Table Mountain Cableway.



Image: Wilderness Safaris

Along with its spellbinding beauty, Cape Town is famous for its food, and the city's food-scene is buzzing with new, unique restaurants, and hot new chefs.

In fact, the best restaurant on the continent for 2016, as voted by San Pellegrino "World's 50 Best Restaurants" was the Test Kitchen in Cape Town, while The Tasting Room in Franschhoek received the same accolade in previous years.

Along with food, Cape Town and the nearby *Cape Winelands* are famous for, you guessed it, wine, and you'll find no shortage of incredible vino to taste and buy. A day out on a wine tour is another of Cape Town's must-dos.

Explore Cape Town on our 10 day Highlights of South Africa trip >>

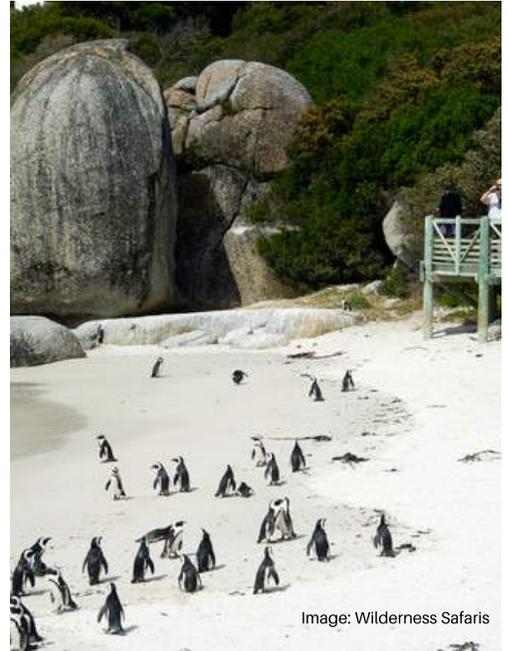


Image: Wilderness Safaris

Penguins of Boulders Beach.



Image: Wilderness Safaris

The Garden Route stretches between Mossel Bay and Plettenberg Bay on South Africa's southern coast, and has long been considered one of the greatest drives on earth.

This beautiful corner of the country is an area of mountain passes, coastal roads, seaside towns, and lush green landscapes, and if you venture just slightly inland, you'll find the Klein Karoo, with its semi-desert arid landscape.

The Garden Route is ideal for self-drive holidays, as the area has high quality roads and little traffic. Whether you pick the main highway, or the back country routes on smaller roads, you'll find yourself mesmerised by undulating tarmac that takes you through desert and mountain scenery and passes, and passed typical Cape Dutch towns with their pretty white washed buildings and gabled roofs.

The Garden Route has two national parks, Wilderness and Tsitsikama. They boast a combination of coastal landscapes, verdant forests and beautiful beaches. This area is also home to massive seal and penguin colonies and is great for hiking and boat trips.

You'll also find some of the best land-based whale watching in the world along the Garden Route, with the quaint town of Hermanus being the best place to see southern right whales (from June to October).

Take a slow and thorough journey along the magical Garden Route >>

Combine a tour of South Africa with a yoga retreat on the Gardren Route >>



Big Five Safaris

South Africa is one of the continent's best safari destinations, offering the Big Five and more in accessible parks and reserves.

While you could visit South Africa and not venture into the bush, why would you want to when the country's game reserves and national parks offer far and away the best selection of luxury lodges in Africa.

While East Africa and Botswana have their share of five star lodges, there are just so many more to choose from in South Africa. If you're after the perfect pairing of first-rate wildlife viewings with outstanding accommodation, dining and guiding experiences, look no further.

The *Kruger National Park* is a national treasure, and with its excellent road network and lodges, it's the top destination for self-drive safaris. The Park is home to an enormous array of flora and fauna, including the much sought-after Big Five (elephant, rhino, lion, leopard, and buffalo)



Image: #Beyond

Game drive drinks stop.



Image: #Beyond

Abutting the Park are a number of private game reserves, which offer more luxurious, secluded accommodation, unfenced camps, private game drives, and some of the best guides and trackers in the business.

The premier private reserves include Sabi Sands, Manyeleti, Timbavati, Balule and Thornybush. These contain the vast majority of the world's greatest safari camps, and this region alone has as many great lodge choices as the rest of Africa combined. You'll find the top luxury safari names here, such as Londolozi, Singita, Malamala, Tintswalo, Royal Malewane, Lion Sands, Ulusaba, and Ngala, and you can't go wrong with a few days spent at any of these.

Another option for an exceptional safari is *Phinda Private Game Reserve*, a Big Five game park in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province. Phinda is nestled in the lush KZN hills, and home to seven distinct ecosystems (and thus a huge variety of bird, mammal and marine life).

You'll find the Big Five here, but also rarer species, like cheetah and black rhino. The Reserve has just a handful of luxury lodges, making a Phinda safari an intimate, lavish experience, with excellent guides on hand.

A Phinda safari also combines really well with a few days in the majestic *Drakensberg*. Inland the Berg rises in a flurry of towering peaks and awesome scenery. Many an intrepid hiker has had the experience of a lifetime here on wonderful walking safaris.

Explore both the towering Drakensberg and Big Five country >>

Combine a Big Five safari with a balmy beach holiday >>





Image: 8Beyond



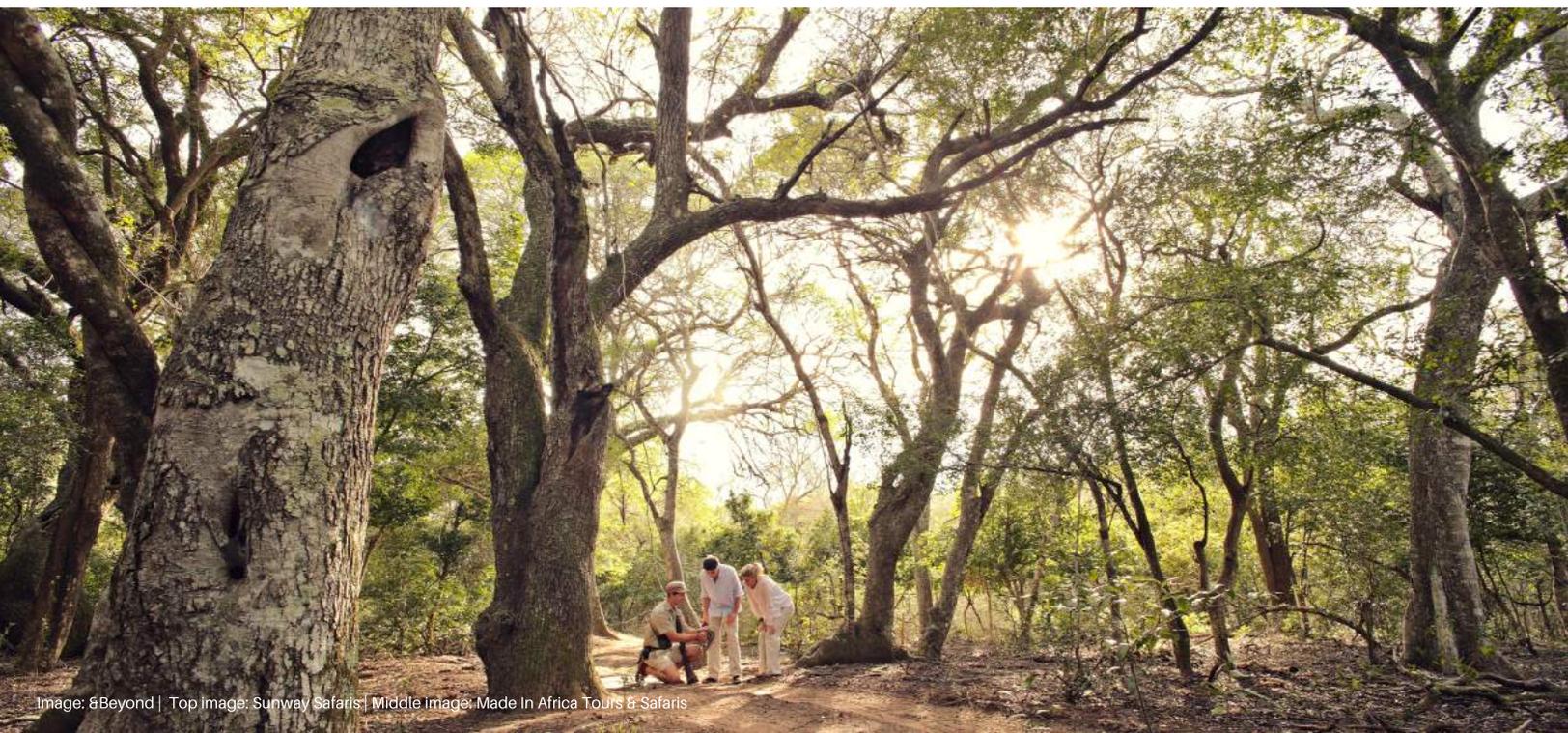
Image: 8Beyond



When to visit South Africa

South Africa is a large country with many diverse habitats. In terms of when to go, it's very much dependant on which areas you will be visiting, and what kind of holiday you want.

- **Cape Town** and the **Western Cape** experience winter rainfall and a largely hot and bone-dry summer (November to March). Great for a beach holiday!
- The rest of the country, including the **Kruger National Park, Madikwe, Pilanesberg** and **KwaZulu-Natal**, experiences summer rainfall, so it can be best to visit these areas during the cooler winter months (May to October)
- The **KwaZulu-Natal** coast is known for its year round sunshine and very hot summer temperatures
- The **Eastern Cape** and **Garden Route** can have slightly more unpredictable weather, with rain at any time during the year.
- And if it's **whales** that you hope to see, visit the **Cape** during June and November.





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