

# USEFUL TRAVEL INFORMATION FOR ATTENDEES

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## WILDLIFE VETERINARY COURSE

Here is some useful information and recommended websites about traveling to South Africa. Please don't hesitate to contact us for further information.

### COURSE INFORMATION

#### WHERE WILL THE COURSE TAKE PLACE?

Wild Spirit courses are dynamic and involve a high level of real hands on veterinarian work. During your time in South Africa we will be traveling along to game reserves, rescue centers and national parks in South Africa. There are two main areas where the course take place, Gauteng (Johannesburg and Pretoria province) and the Garden Route (George, Plettenberg Bay, Knysna).

#### HOW DOES THE TRANSPORT WORK?

Transport by car is included in the course and is part of the experience. Any special transport requests outside of the needs of the course will be negotiated as required. International or national airfares are not included in the course fee, even if we take it during course time.

International Airfares: Do not book your plane tickets until course has been confirmed. Please send us an email once you have booked your international airfares.

National Airfares: As you know half of the course will take place in the center of South Africa and part in the south, that means we all need to take a plane from Johannesburg to George, which is not included in the course fee.

ATTENTION! A few weeks before the course commences we will confirm your details about the necessary plane ticket from Johannesburg to George. So don't worry for now.

The first day of the course the Wild Spirit team will be at Johannesburg airport, waiting for you and to pick you up with the rest of the students. Please send us your international flight details.

#### Extra activities

What extra activities can we organise in the area?

We offer you the possibility to have others great experiences and adventures unique to South Africa.

We recommend you participate in them to gain more knowledge and experiences useful for you both personally and professionally.

We can organize these activities for you and we welcome your own suggestions, obviously the cost of which are not include in course fee. These are approximate fees to give you an idea of how much money you may need.

You can choose one or all of the following activities.

All activities are located close to the course locations. Transport cost will be at your expense.

Cage Diving with Great White Shark  
<http://www.whitesharkafrica.com/>



Whale Watching  
<http://oceanadventures.co.za/>

Bungee Jumping: The world's highest bungee bridge  
<http://www.faceadrenalin.com/>

Elephant Interaction  
<http://www.knysnaelephantpark.co.za/>

## TRAVEL INFORMATION

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MY PASSPORT?

What is a visa?

South Africa has the right to decide who may or may not enter its territory. A visa ensures that you have been properly screened before entering the country, and gives immigration officials the information they need to ensure you are admitted to South Africa for the correct purpose and length of time. A visa does not guarantee your entry to the country – it only allows you to travel to a South African port of entry, where an immigration officer will check that you satisfy the basic requirements for entry into the country.

What are the requirements for entering South Africa?

You will need:

A valid passport or travel document that will be valid for the length of your intended stay. Your passport should have at least TWO blank facing pages in it.

A valid visa, if required.

Sufficient funds.

A return or onward ticket.

Yellow fever certificate – if your journey starts or passes through the yellow fever belt of Africa or South America.

Do I need a visa to visit South Africa?

Depending on your nationality, and the purpose and duration of your visit, you may not need a visa to visit South Africa.

See the Department of Home Affairs' list of countries exempt from South African visas <http://www.dha.gov.za/index.php/immigration-services/exempt-countries>.

Insurance:

Please note working with wildlife can be dangerous. You are attending this course under your own responsibility and understanding of the risks. Please do not leave your country without MEDICAL and TRAVEL insurance. In South Africa the public hospitals are not recommended and private health is expensive.

The Wild Spirit indemnity form is required to be signed by the first day of the course, in addition game reserves and extra activities will often provide their own indemnity forms that require signing.

### MONEY

The rand (sign: R; code: ZAR) is the currency of South Africa. You could change the money to ZAR in the bank of your originally country, or at the airport in Johannesburg. If during your time with us you need more money, we can take you to a bank, if necessary.

The value of the ZAR is about:

1€ = 14 ZAR

1\$ = 11 ZAR

1£ = 17 ZAR

This is some of the websites you can find more information about currency conversions.

SOUTH AFRICA RESERVE BANK <http://www.resbank.co.za/pages/default.aspx>



SOUTH AFRICA CURRENCY <http://www.greenwichmeantime.com/time-zone/africa/south-africa/currency-south-africa/>

## VACCINES AND HEALTH INFORMATION

We recommend you get advice from your doctor, and additionally you can find some useful information on the following websites:

PLEASE note you will be in Malaria Free Areas and we are going to be in hygienic places, however any precaution is recommended.

Travellers Health:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/south-africa>

Also visit the Ministry of Health website in your country of residence.

Drinking water in South Africa

The water is safe to drink and cook with when taken from taps in urban areas. Not all tap water in rural areas is safe for consumption, so take precautions as necessary.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry maintains that South Africa's national standard of water quality compares well with World Health Organization standards.

## ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION

WHAT IS THE CLIMATE LIKE IN SOUTH AFRICA?

The bush in open vehicles at sunrise and sunset (working time) can be very, very cold!!!

June to August are the winter months in South Africa.

A subtropical location and a high interior plateau are responsible for South Africa's often temperate conditions.

South African temperatures, which are measured in centigrade, average at highs of 28°C to average lows of 8°C in the summer months while winter temperatures range from 1°C at night to around 18°C in the day. Average annual rainfall is on the low side at under 500mm a year, making the country somewhat dry. Much of the rain falls in the Western Cape in the winter, differing from the rest of the country, which experiences summer rainfall. Thunder and lightning storms are common in provinces like Gauteng, North West and KwaZulu-Natal. On the plus side, the South African climate boasts more than its fair share of sunshine, recording an average of 8.5 hours a day.

South Africa's climatic conditions generally range from Mediterranean in the south-western corner of the country to temperate in the interior plateau, and subtropical in the north-east. A small region in the north-west has a desert climate.

Our relatively mild and short winters do not justify the expense of central heating in many buildings and homes, which may lead visitors to think the winter is colder than it actually is. The answer to this is dressing in layers.

<http://www.southafrica.net/za/en/travel-tips/entry/travel-tip-visa-requirements>

What you could need money for during a Wild Spirit Course?

Extra Meals:

Meals on the road during working time

Meals on free day or during extra activities

Extra activities

Cold and Alcoholic drinks

Souvenirs

South Africa Languages

There are 11 official languages spoken in South Africa and many unofficial ones.



English is the official language of business, politics and media but on South Africa's streets you'll find a heady mix of languages spoken from all over the world, most notably Africa, Europe and Asia. Most South Africans are multilingual and often mix languages together so you'll hear IsiZulu, for example, peppered with English or Afrikaans phrases.

### **WHAT SHOULD I BRING ALONG FOR PERSONAL USE?**

Most of the time we will be in game reserve or very relaxed environments so bring comfortable and working clothes. During course time we will be traveling a lot so we recommend bring no more than one bag of luggage.

Walking shoes (mountain boots), winter hat, cap, swimming wear, warm and waterproof coat, jersey, t-shirt, jeans or safari trousers, scarf, gloves, warm socks.

- Early morning in the bush in South Africa can be really cold!! BE READY!!!
- Complete bath bag, sun blocks.
- Stethoscope
- Sleeping bag, (only if advised)
- Laptop (not indispensable)

Digital Camera, GoPro; you will be glad to capture memories!!  
Small binoculars, not indispensable.

Small bag for walking, to carry on water, food and camera.

### **HOW TO WEAR?**

We are professionals and so we consider you as one, it is important to dress up professionally and appropriately according to the circumstances of the country we are at, its culture and our wildlife veterinary profession.

Our recommendation is to dress up with T-shirt, Jeans or comfortable trousers and good boots. In the top a good jersey and a waterproof coat.  
Some mornings can be FREEZING cold, so might be needed warm hat, gloves and scarf.

Please notice winter time in South Africa can be very cold and rainy, specially in the early mornings, however during the day the temperature increases. So be prepared, for the early mornings in open cars, the outside temperature might be 10°C but the body temperature feeling is -5°C. When the sun shines it is lovely and warm.

We will recommend you as well to bring a VET or Nurse Vet t-shirt if you have one and a stethoscope.

### **WHAT KIND OF BAGGAGE SHOULD I BRING?**

We will recommend you bring a medium side baggage and a small backpack.  
The baggage can be backpack kind or with wheels in any case remember that during the course we will be changing accommodations so the best will be to bring something easy for you to move and to pack.

### **IS SLEEPING BAG NECESSARY?**

The reality is that in most occasions we never use it, but just in case we will recommend you to bring one.

### **USB AND HARD DRIVE?**

As you can imagine by the end of this experience you will have thousands of pictures and videos. Usually our students are happy to share each other's pictures, so we will recommend you bring a high capacity USB or Hard-drive where to download yours or others' pictures.



## **CELLPHONE AND WIFI**

The best is to bring a phone where you could put any SIM card. In Johannesburg airport you could buy a Vodacom prepaid SIM card. This is not expensive (R400) and will give you the opportunity to be connected all the time your friends and family.

WIFI is not warranted, during the course sometimes we will be hosted on places with internet but wont be everyday.

## **TOTALLY ESSENTIAL**

Bring an open mind and be willing to enjoy, learn and feel with all the senses.

