

Best of South Africa



TRIP OVERVIEW

With landscapes stretching from the plains of the savannah to the coastline of the Cape, the claim that South Africa is a 'world in one country' seems justified. Enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the Big Five on safari at Kruger National Park, soak up the scenery along Chapman's Peak Drive, explore cosmopolitan Cape Town and discover the Winelands region.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to South Africa. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Cape Town

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Cape Town.

DAY 2: Cape Town

On arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

DAY 3: Cape Town B

Wake this morning to embark on a full-day tour around the Cape Peninsula. Leaving Cape Town behind, join one of the most spectacular coastal drives in the world; Chapman's Peak Drive, affording exquisite panoramic views. Next, visit Boulders Beach in Simons Town; part of a marine protected area and home to a breeding colony of over 2,000 endangered African penguins. The Cape Point Nature Reserve awaits at the very tip of the Cape Peninsula. A declared world heritage site, the area affords dramatic scenery and extensive views where the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean meet in harmony. Lastly, stroll through the beautiful Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. Unveiling sounds, colours, and aromas of the natural environment, the meticulously maintained gardens trace the history of the region and celebrate the botanical diversity of the Western Cape. Arrive back in Cape Town in time for dinner.

DAY 4: Cape Town B

This morning, enjoy a tour of Cape Town. Alongside high-rise office blocks, a harmonious blend of architectural styles has been meticulously preserved, including Edwardian, Victorian and Cape Dutch. Narrow, cobblestone streets and the Islamic character of the Bo-Kaap enhance the cosmopolitan ambience. During the tour you will see the Castle of Good Hope – this pentagon-shaped fort is the oldest surviving building in South Africa, and the Company's Garden. The tour of this beautiful city introduces you to a rich culture and history. Enjoy an afternoon of leisure, take an optional excursion (payable locally) including a helicopter ride over Cape Town and Table Mountain, a visit to Robben Island or take a cable car ride to the top of Table Mountain.

DAY 5: The Cape Winelands B

Today, tour the breathtaking Cape Winelands, first stopping at the town of Franschhoek, then onto Stellenbosch. South Africa's wine industry was first developed by French Huguenots who bought their wines with them and settled in Franschhoek in the 17th century. The reputation of South African wines flourished across the globe in the centuries that followed,

even Napoleon had wine shipped to him during his exile in the 19th century. Take some time to explore these delightful towns before enjoying a wine tasting of 'new-world' wines.

DAY 6: Cape Town to Knysna B/D

Take a scenic drive into the heart of the gorgeous Garden Route. Stop off at Hermanus, a popular fishing and holiday village, and Swellendam, a colourful agricultural town surrounded by mountains. Arrive at picturesque coastal, Knysna. This historic logging town is hemmed in between the Knysna Lagoon and the mountainous Knysna Forest.

DAY 7: Knysna B/L

This morning, take a ferry across Knysna lagoon to the Featherbed Nature Reserve taking in views of the imposing Knysna Heads. Explore the nature reserve with a guided walk and 4x4 trailer drive seeking out Blue Duiker, Knysna Loerie and the rare African Oyster Catcher.

DAY 8: Knysna to Port Elizabeth B

Depart for Tsitsikamma National Park, a section of the Garden Route famed for lush forests and dramatic coastlines. Visit a Protea Farm to see South Africa's national flower, before travelling onward to Port Elizabeth.

DAY 9: Port Elizabeth to Kruger B/D

Fly from Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg, where you will be transferred to the town of Hazyview. Your retreat will serve as the perfect base from which to explore Kruger National Park.

DAY 10: Kruger National Park B

An early morning start allows you to take advantage of the best time to enter the national park on what is undoubtedly one of the highlights of the tour. Kruger is one of the biggest, oldest and quite simply one of the best wildlife parks in the world. Covering an area of more than 19 square kilometres, Kruger boasts vast landscapes and the greatest variety of animals including the Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino) as well as giraffe, cheetah, hippos and many species of antelope and smaller animals. Accompanied by an experienced game ranger, you will tour specific areas of the park in an open-sided vehicle offering the very best safari experience with a clear view of the game from an elevated position.

DAY 11: Kruger B

Today is at leisure to relax or explore, or alternately take part in one of our optional excursions (at a fee) including a second 4x4 experience into Kruger.

DAY 12: Kruger to Johannesburg B

Today, travel along the magnificent Panorama Route, one of South Africa's most stunning scenic drives. Climbing high into the cliff tops witness the fresh mountain scenery and sweeping views over the Klein Drakensberg escarpment at the start of one of the world's largest canyons; the truly

impressive Blyde River Canyon. With awe-inspiring vistas, the route passes natural landmarks such as the spectacular peaks of the three Ronavels. Continue to Johannesburg for your overnight stay.

DAY 13/14: Johannesburg to UK or extension B

Enjoy a short sightseeing tour of the city, with a stop at the Apartheid

Museum and Soweto Township. Later in the afternoon, transfer for your overnight return flight, or continue on to your chosen extension.

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

Enhance your tour experience with our excellent range of optional excursions, to be booked locally in resort. Prices are per person; please speak to your local guide.

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| Day 4: 15 Minute Helicopter Flip - Get a bird's eye view over Cape Town on an unmissable 15-minute helicopter flip. From: R1925.00 (£95) |
| Day 4: Half Day Township Tour - Witness Cape Town's cultural vibrancy and creativity, by meeting local residents on a Half Day tour of a multicultural township. From: R660.00 (£36) |
| Day 4: Mercury Optional Gold Restaurant Dinner - Feast on an astonishing 14-course Cape Malay and African menu, whilst enjoying traditional entertainment From: R880.00 (£43) - Drinks at your own cost |
| Day 4: Marine Encounter Boat trip (seasonal December – June) - Cruise the emerald waters of the Indian Ocean and spot an energetic pod of dolphins playing in the waters below From: R750.00 (£37) |
| Day 4: Whale Watching Boat Trip (seasonal July – November) - Embark on an enthralling Whale Watching excursion in Plettenberg Bay From: R1459.00 (£73) |
| Day 11: 4x4 Game Drive - Enjoy a second day in Kruger National Park on jeep safari for another chance to spot the Big Five in one of the world's best wildlife parks. From: R1486.00 (£73) |

*Prices in pounds for illustration purposes only – please check current rates at your exchange bureau.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

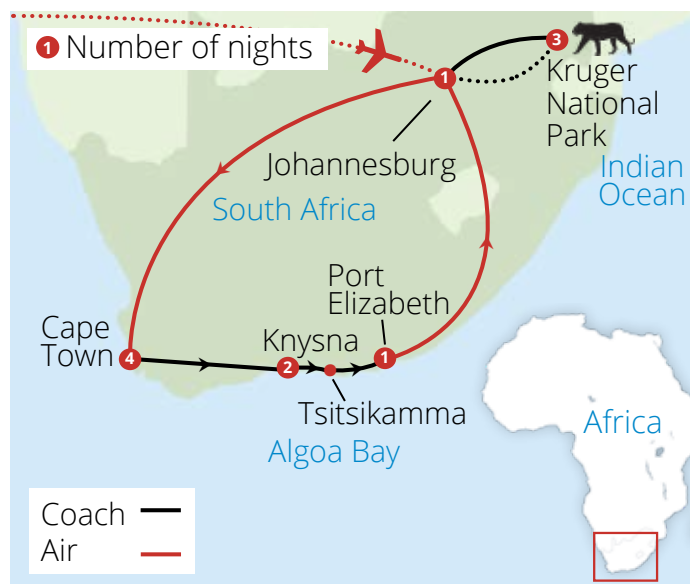
Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to leisure hotels. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and South Africa. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed. Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Lunch and dinner where stated will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotels. International meals will also be available.



ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Cape Town you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **African Eagle**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/South Africa representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your national guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries, however if you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

African Eagle

Telephone Number 0027 82 325 0201

E-mail duty@ae.co.za

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for **African Eagle**
24 hour: 002782 325 0201

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

British passport holders are not currently required to obtain a visa in order to travel to South Africa. This will be granted on arrival. Further visa advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you to check with your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding required passport validity.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities

you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call **0800 781 4237** and quote **'WK830'** for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks

vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace for Best of South Africa is intermediate. A good level of fitness is required as you may be on your feet for approximately four hours in a day, though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and will vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, and may be getting on and off coaches, trains and boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. You will stay in variety of hotels throughout the tour. Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival at each destination and will have a regional guide with you during your stay in each place, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times. There will be two separate guides in total. You will be met on your arrival at Cape Town airport and this guide will remain with you until your departure from Port Elizabeth on Day 9. You will have a different guide who will meet you on arrival in Johannesburg on Day 9 and remain with you until the end of your trip.

Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

Tipping

It is customary to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip your guide and driver approximately £6 per person per day in total and £6 (122 ZAR) per person per day for the ranger. This is a total of £78 (1590 ZAR) per person to budget for tips on your trip. Tipping for restaurants (recommended 10%) and the porters at your hotels will be at your discretion. Tips will be collected at the end of your tour. Tips are accepted in the local currency, US dollars, Euros and British pounds.

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunglasses, sunscreen and hat
- Waterproof lightweight jacket
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger/spare batteries
- Binoculars
- Mosquito repellent
- Anti-bacterial hand gel

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 15, and the maximum will be 35. If in the unlikely event there are less than 15 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Currency Exchange

The currency in South Africa is the South African Rand (ZAR). It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency. In Zimbabwe, multiple currencies are no longer accepted and cash is not available at banks. Therefore we recommend that you take cash in USD, as usual, as this is accepted in hotels and restaurants. Visas and national park fees are payable in USD. Visa and Mastercard use should be restricted to hotels, restaurants and supermarkets. Our local agent discourages the purchase of local currency due to the difficulties with foreign exchange generally, but the local guides will be able to advise you if you do require it. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £300- £400 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.



FOR CLIENTS TRAVELLING TO SOUTH AFRICA WITH CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18

Children travelling with both biological parents must travel with:

- Valid passport of travelling parent and child
- Visa, if required
- Birth certificate listing both parents (note: these must be the original documents or certified copies of the originals)

A child travelling with just one of the parents listed on his or her birth certificate must also present:

- Parental consent affidavit not older than 4 months or;
- Letter of special circumstances issued by director-general of home affairs in the event that a parent or parents are incapacitated or deceased and no legal guardian has been appointed as yet.

For full details of requirements for travel to South Africa, please visit dha.gov.za

FLIGHT INFORMATION

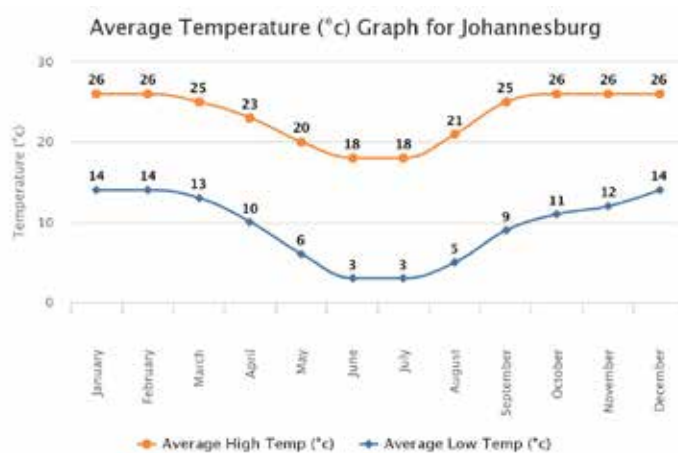
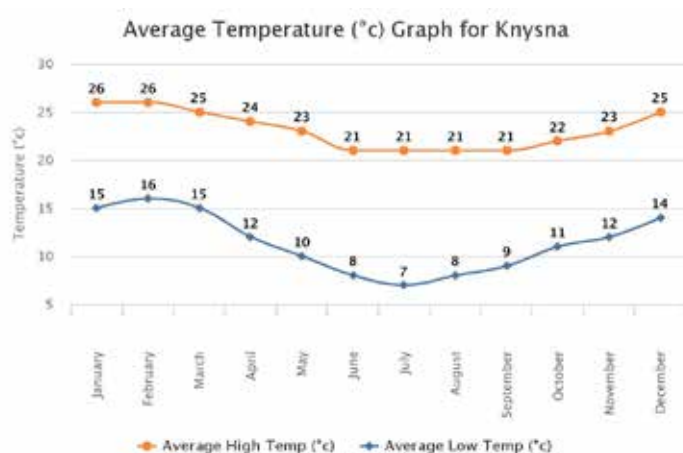
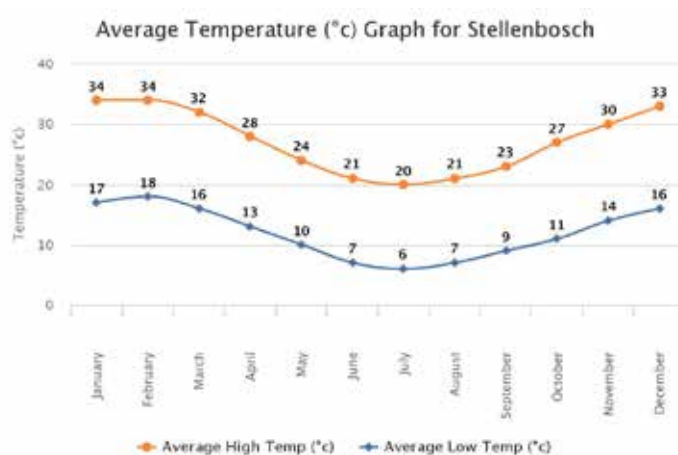
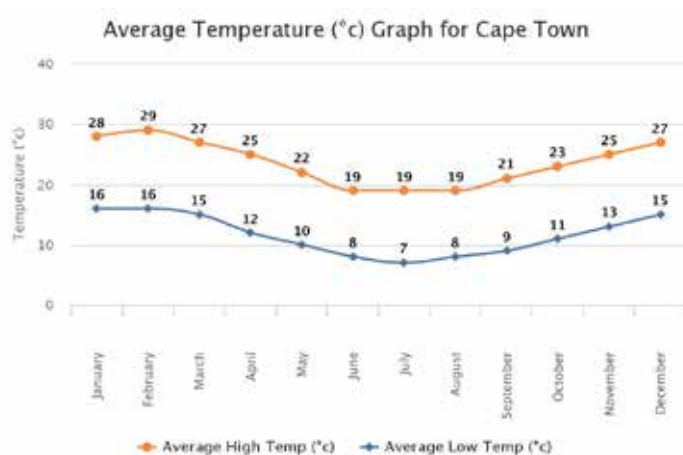
IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

Travel to Zimbabwe and witness the awe-inspiring beauty and grandeur of the 'Smoke that Thunders' on this three night extension to Victoria Falls; one of the world's most sensational natural wonders.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your Victoria Falls extension.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

Day 13 : Johannesburg to Victoria Falls B

After breakfast fly to Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. You will be met by a representative and taken to your hotel to settle in. Optional excursions are available for an additional cost including helicopter ride to view the falls or a day tour to Botswana Chobe National Park. Early this evening, enjoy a sundowner during a sunset cruise on the mighty Zambezi River before returning to your hotel for the evening.

Day 14 : Victoria Falls B

This morning you will depart your hotel for a half day tour of the falls. Your guide will take you to vantage points where the finest views can be appreciated whilst educating you on how the falls were formed and the local customs and traditions surrounding them. Return to your hotel to relax.

Day 15 : Victoria Falls B

Today has been left at leisure for you to simply relax or choose to further explore this fascinating area.

Day 16 : Victoria Falls to Johannesburg B

Fly from Victoria Falls to Johannesburg. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

Day 17: Johannesburg to the UK B

After breakfast enjoy a short sightseeing tour of the city, with a stop at the Apartheid Museum. Depart for your return flight to the UK

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any meals not included, drinks and personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, and any extra snacks.

Currency Exchange

The Zimbabwean dollar is no longer valid currency. Transactions are conducted in US Dollars (\$). It is advised to carry small denomination notes as change is rarely available in smaller businesses. In Zimbabwe, multiple currencies are no longer accepted and cash is not available at banks. Therefore we recommend that you take cash in USD, as usual, as this is accepted in hotels and restaurants. Visas and national park fees are payable in USD. Visa and Mastercard use should be restricted to hotels, restaurants and supermarkets. Our local agent discourages the purchase of local currency due to the difficulties with foreign exchange generally, but the local guides will be able to advise you if you do require it.

Optional Excursions

Enhance your tour experience with our excellent range of optional excursions, to be booked locally in resort. Prices are per person; please speak to your local guide.

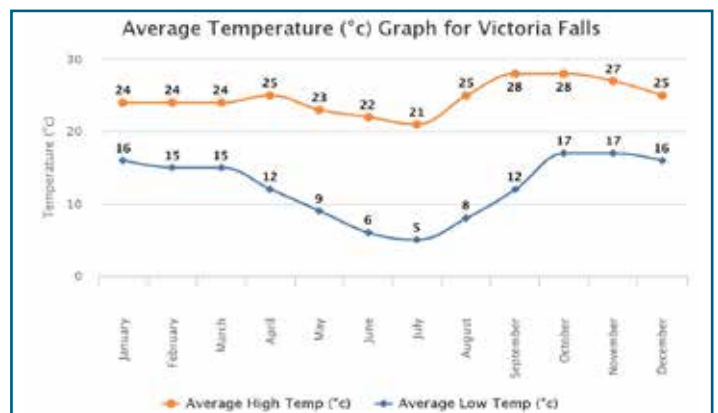
Victoria Falls Helicopter - Take flight over the incredible Victoria Falls for the chance to witness a bird's eye view of this natural wonder. **165.00USD (£128)**

Victoria Falls Bungee Jumping - Take an exhilarating 111-metre bungee jump from the Victoria Falls Bridge. **175.00USD (£135)**

Chobe Day Trip - Enjoy the exhilarating experience of spotting majestic wildlife roaming across Chobe National Park. **185.00USD (£143)**

*Prices in pounds for illustration purposes only - please check current rates at your exchange bureau.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE



FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**

Mauritius Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

Your 5 or 8 night stay is on the paradise island of Mauritius — home to world renowned beaches, a kaleidoscope of cultural influences within its bustling capital and luscious rainforests that open up for nature trails.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Mauritius.

Hotel

Your stay will take place at one of the following hotels on Half Board:

4★ Pearl Beach Resort & Spa. This hotel makes the most of its delightful beachfront location on beautiful Wolmar Beach. For an island that is rich with beautiful beaches, you know it's significant when we say that Wolmar Beach is among its very best. To the south of the hotel, the blue outline of Morne Mountain provides a dramatic backdrop. Hotel Information: P947+CCM Belle Beach, Coastal Rd, Flic en Flac, Mauritius. Contact number: 00230 401 6300

5★ Outrigger Beach Mauritius Resort. Set amidst the picturesque nature reserve of Bel Ombre, overlooking the Indian Ocean on the Southwest coast of Mauritius, this idyllic resort offers total relaxation in lush tropical surroundings. An array of land and water sports are on offer and an 18-hole championship course is close by. Hotel Information: Allee des Cocotiers, Bel Ombre, Mauritius. Contact number: 00230 623 5000.

Please note you will spend one night in Johannesburg before your Mauritius extension so your duration is 1 night Johannesburg and 4/7 nights in Mauritius.

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

Electricity Supply

The electricity supply is 220V and uses the same 3-pin system as the UK.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Mauritius is not escorted by a tour guide. All internal transfers are included.

Visas

A visa is not required for British citizens visiting Mauritius. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding passport validity.

Currency Exchange

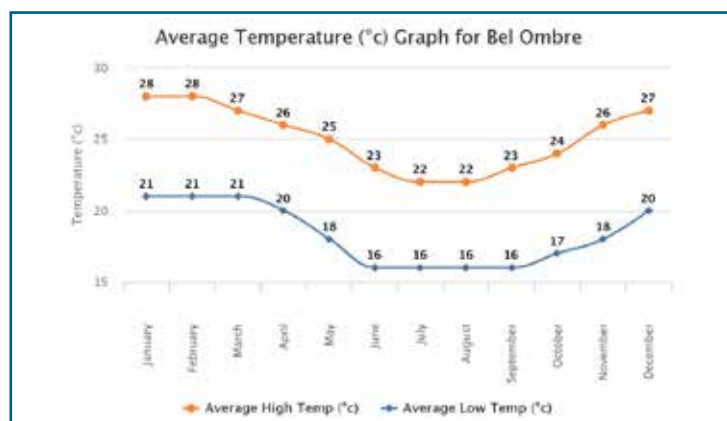
The currency in Mauritius is the Mauritian Rupee (MUR, however it is possible to pay in Euros at larger establishments. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover meals not included, personal purchases, laundry service and souvenirs.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



5★ Outrigger Mauritius Beach Resort

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**