

Affordable AFS South African Safari

“Whales, Wildlife, Wine, and the Western Cape”

Aug 19-28, 2020

Come explore the majesty of Table Mountain, feel the thrill of Big Five safari game drives and listen to the songs of the humpback whales. We'll call this our Big Six expedition. Where else would you experience Africa's iconic wildlife on both land and sea? No place can rival the dramatic landscapes, variety of animals and diverse cultures as glorious South Africa. Yes, many AFSers have joined us here before – but never with this array of activities. And who wouldn't want to revisit Cape Town, the most visited city in Africa?

You're in for heart-pumping fun with photos to rival Nat Geo on our journey. I call this one “Safari Light” because it's such an easy and affordable escape! No visa, malaria-free zones, easy roundtrip air to CPT and the best ranger guides you've ever met. August is “winter” here with perfect temps and it's the height of Whale Season. We've also gotten the lowest rates at the finest properties because they love AFS.

Next is a scenic coastal drive to spectacular Aquila Private Game Reserve, set against the rugged Karoo Mountains. You'll love the stunning cottages and gourmet meals here. Morning and night game drives reveal countless animals from giraffes to leopards and birdlife from eagles to flamingos. Aquila is truly a sanctuary. It is home for lions rescued from the “canned hunting trade” and baby rhinos, orphaned by poachers. You'll get outstanding photos. Laze by the pool, indulge yourself at the spa and enjoy a horseback safari here!

And just when you think it can't get better, we travel the Wild Coast along the ocean to the Eastern Cape, home of the friendly Xhosa people. Our home is Hermanus, voted “World's Best Whale Watching Spot.”(The whale population here exploded in recent years. Scientists say over 20, 000 humpbacks splash these Indian Ocean waters as they migrate in August from Antarctica to Mozambique.) Past groups loved our chartered sailing day to view the omnipresent dolphins, Cape Seals, Southern Right whales, humpbacks and Bryde's whales.

Africa changes us with a magic that can't be described. So vast, it's where everything is magnified and leaves the most enduring memories. You have to experience it to believe it. Join us as we explore three different regions in one vacation to encompass your dreams. There's no prep. Just show up and let AFS be your concierge for large fun in South Africa.

April 19 - Depart USA to Cape Town or go a day early. All details to come in AFS Trip Tips.

Day 1: 20 August Arrive Cape Town D

Today land portion begins.

Welcome to South Africa . We transfer to hotel, relax and explore the area.

Your hotel is situated in the heart of the bustling V&A Waterfront with its many restaurants, shops, and wonderful Watershed craft market on your doorstep. Boat trips, the Robben island gateway and the Two Oceans Aquarium are also just meters away.

Overnight : Commodore Hotel , V&A Waterfront. (4 nts)

Overlooking the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront with views of Table Mountain, Robben Island, the Harbour and the Atlantic Ocean is the Commodore Hotel. Stylish living, quality service and a tranquil setting make this a favorite for visitors.

Tonight enjoy AFS Welcome Dinner and get to know your fellow travel lovers.

True African hospitality will warm your heart from the moment you enter, a unique and colourful decor will pique your curiosity and draw you further inside, the marimba band's catchy beat will loosen you up and all this leads up to the

authentic African cuisine and meaty meals that will satisfy your tummy. Mama Africa, strategically located on the energetic Long Street, attracts plenty of young tourists and anyone seeking a good helping of traditional African food.

Day 2 : 21 August Full day Cape Point Tour B

Experience some of the most spectacular views in the world. The tour begins with a scenic drive along the Atlantic coast passing through the fishing village of Hout Bay. Here you will have the option of taking a short boat trip to Duiker Island to view the Cape Fur seals (optional extra). The tour then heads along Chapman's Peak Drive on to Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve. From there we travel to False Bay and return to Cape Town by way of the Simon's Town naval base where we visit the Penguin colony at Boulders Beach. Travel via Fish Hoek fishing village and Muizenberg to Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens for an optional short walking tour of these beautiful gardens (time permitting). Return to Cape Town in the late afternoon.

On return there are many options for dinner within close, safe walking distance of the hotel.

Overnight: Commodore hotel

Day 3 : 22 August Free at last! B

Why?? Because theres so much to do in Cape Town, our last groups insisted on it. Today is your day free to explore, have fun or book yourself on one of a host of activities:

Options to consider:

Table Mountain Cableway

A trip up Table Mountain is quite rightly one of the first things a tourist wants to do when arriving in Cape Town. Once on the top, a 1000m above the city below, you are rewarded with spectacular 360 views. Take your time and enjoy this unique environment, go for a walk or have a bit to eat at the restaurant with arguably one views possible.

Robben Island

Robben island was declared a UNESCO world Heritage site in 1999. Robben Island has been used as prison and a place where people were isolated, banished and exiled to for nearly 400 years. It was also used as a post office, a grazing ground, a mental hospital and an outpost.

Today it is an icon of struggle, freedom and hope made famous by Nelson Mandela's imprisonment here.

Cape Canopy Tours

Cape Canopy Tour is a fully guided nature experience with a strong emphasis on client comfort and safety. Two trained guides will accompany each group on the 3½ hour tour. They will provide information about the endemic fynbos and geology of this unique World Heritage Site. Included in the tour is a 4x4 journey through the nature reserve, refreshments on one of the cliff - side platforms as well as a light lunch afterwards.

Uthando (Love) South Africa

Uthando (Love) South Africa is an award winning Fair Trade in Tourism certified non-profit organisation that is creating a unique link between tourism and community development projects.

Icarus Tandem Paragliding Cape Town

Icarus Tandem Paragliding Cape Town is an approximately 25 to 45 minutes tandem paragliding adventure offered by Icarus. The tandem paraglider is specifically designed to carry two people

Day 4 : 23 August. Optional - Full day Winelands & Eagle Encounter B

Experience the stunning beauty of the cape Winelands with its rolling vineyards against spectacular mountain back drop.

Start off with a champagne and nougat tasting before continuing on to Spier, one of the oldest wine estates in the Stellenbosch region , which also houses the Eagle Encounter. Eagle Encounters has been going since 2001, rehabilitating and releasing birds of prey, promoting conservation and education, on land donated by Spier. Birds of prey keep the farm's ecosystem in balance, making it possible to naturally control pests, without pesticides. Enjoy up-close-and-personal interactions with eagles, hawks, falcons, owls, kites, buzzards, snakes and lizards. Take part in heart-stopping falconry displays, where we fly birds to you. From there continue to the town of Stellenbosch where you are free to walk around and stop for a light lunch (own account). After this we will visit the picturesque town of Franschhoek (The French corner) which oozes charm and personality for a last wine tasting and walk around before returning home. (\$65)

Overnight: Commodore Hotel

Day 5 : 24 Aug Safari Time! BLD

Depart beautiful Cape Town to travel through the Western Cape mountains to Aquila Private Game reserve. You will get there in time for lunch and to check in before heading out on your first game drive. Time to head into the bush in search of the Big 5.

Overnight: Aquila Private Game Reserve & Spa (2 nts)

Just 2 ½ hours from Cape Town, Aquila is acclaimed for its social responsibility and renewable energy projects as well as its conservation programmes. It offers a wonderful wildlife experience within easy access of Cape Town.

Day 6 : 25 Aug Game drive adventures BLD

Get your cameras out for some great pics on your morning and afternoon game drives. The morning or afternoon game drive can be swapped for a quad bike safari on the reserve. Horseback safaris also available

Aquila also has the most magnificent spa and all our AFS's are given free access to the spa during their stay to make use of the 2 large heated indoor pools, steam room and sauna. It has a nail bar and 10 treatment rooms , so plenty of space for those wanting to book their treatments.

Overnight : Aquila

Day 7 : 26 August Heading to Hermanus, whale capital of the world BL

Travel through the beautiful Breede River Valley to get to the town of Hermanus. Hermanus has recently been voted as the world's best whale watching spot. Each year the whales come into the bay to mate and have their young between June and November – this is perfect whale watching time. (If time permits we'll offer an early morning Great White Shark Cage Dive for our adrenaline junkies.)

Everyone loves Hermanus. The lovely coastal town surrounded by mountains and sea offers beautiful cliff walks, coffee shops and restaurants and varied activities. Today you have lunch at one of our favourite spots – Bientangs Cave Seafood Restaurant with one of the most unique restaurant settings in the world. Created out of a traditional cave previously inhabited by the Koi Strandloper of the same name, the restaurant spills out onto the rocks of Walker Bay in Hermanus, where Whale Watching is the preferred local past-time. The rustic charm and natural ambience of the cave and its surroundings is a delight to all guests with great whale watching opportunities.

Spend the afternoon walking on the cliff paths, exploring this quaint town with its lovely market and many coffee shops – all within walking distance of the hotel.

Overnight: Windsor Hotel, Hermanus (2 nts)

Day 8: 27 August AFS Whale watching cruise B

Today you will spend the morning out at sea with Southern Right Charters in search of the whales and dolphins. This up-close and personal encounter with the gentle giants of the ocean promises to be an 'experience to be treasured.

WHAT YOU CAN ENCOUNTER

Southern Right, Humpback & Bryde's whales.

Dolphins, Seals, and a large variety of marine birds including the African penguin.

This afternoon you are free to explore. See hermanustourism.info for hundreds of fun ideas, from Wine Hopper Day to Fernkloof Nature Reserve hikes.

Day 8: 28 August Departure day B

Today we are heading back to Cape Town along the beautiful Clarence Drive coastal route to get you back in time for your flights out.