

# SOUTH AFRICA

## *The Rainbow Nation*

The Republic of South Africa lies at the southern end of the vast African continent, flanked by the Indian Ocean on the east and the Atlantic Ocean on the west. It is bordered by Namibia to the north-west, Botswana and Zimbabwe to the north, and by Mozambique to the north-east. The various population groups of South Africa create a society of diverse historical and cultural backgrounds, often described as a fascinating ethnic mosaic.



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## Useful Information

### CLIMATE

South Africa is mostly sunny and temperate throughout the year. Winters (June/July) are usually mild although snow may occasionally fall on the highest mountain ranges of the Cape and Natal. Summer months (December/January) are warm with cool nights. Summer rain is the norm over most of the country, except for Cape Town which has a Mediterranean climate and gets its rain from May to August

### CURRENCY & CREDIT CARDS

The currency unit in South Africa is the Rand (R or ZAR). Check rates of exchange with your hotel or bank. From the moment you step off the plane you will start seeing banks, bureau de change and automatic tellers all over. All major credit cards are accepted in South Africa. MasterCard and Visa are accepted throughout the country. American Express and Diners Club are not as widely accepted. In some small towns, you may find you will need to use cash, in small denominations in local currency. NOTE: If carrying cash, take only recently minted U.S. currency.

### SHOPPING HOURS

Most shops are open for shopping Monday – Saturday from 9:00AM – 5:00PM and Sundays from 10:00AM – 1:00PM. Some offer later shopping hours on Friday nights and The Victoria & Alfred Waterfront stores in Cape Town remain open until 9:00pm every evening. Always check with your hotel concierge for details.

### LANGUAGE

English and Afrikaans (which is derived from Dutch) are the two main languages spoken, with several African dialects found in rural areas. South Africa's Constitution recognizes 11 official languages.

### VOLTAGE

In South Africa, appliances operate on 220/250-volt, 50 cycle. Although hotels do provide accommodating outlets, it is recommended that you bring a converter/adaptor with you. Most of the major city hotels provide hair dryers in the rooms.

### ELECTRICAL PLUGS



230V 50Hz

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Be respectful of the local people's outlook towards photography and only take pictures if permitted by the person or people the picture is being taken. Never try to "steal" a photo against the will of the person concerned. Let your tour guide help you negotiate terms before you start taking pictures. It is not permitted to take photographs of border posts, persons in uniform, and of course, military installations.