

HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



SOUTHERN AFRICA ODYSSEY

MARCH 14–31, 2024

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

In Southern Africa, diversity reigns from ocean to mountains, from desert to plains, and from waterfalls to extraordinary wildlife.

On this journey of astonishing beauty and consummate adventure, experience the magnificence of four distinct nations: South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia. Marvel at the spectacular Victoria Falls with its 300-foot-deep gorge and thundering spray. Set off on a rhino safari in open-top safari vehicles and end the day on a traditional Sundowner cruise on the mighty Zambezi River. Rise with the sun to see the world's highest crested dunes at Sossusvlei, its red-orange hues constantly changing in the early morning light.

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner, R=Reception

THURSDAY, MARCH 14

DEPART U.S. FOR JOHANNESBURG,
SOUTH AFRICA

FRIDAY, MARCH 15

ARRIVE JOHANNESBURG

Upon arrival in Johannesburg, transfer to your hotel in the suburb of Rosebank, where rooms will be ready for early check-in. As guests' arrival times may vary greatly, there are no group activities planned. This evening is free to rest and relax and to enjoy dinner on your own.

Overnight: *54 on Bath Hotel*

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

JOHANNESBURG / SOWETO

Meet your fellow travelers today before embarking on a tour of the Soweto district of Johannesburg.

See the home of former Archbishop Desmond Tutu; visit the home, now a museum, of the late Nelson Mandela; and tour the moving Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum to learn more about apartheid and the Soweto uprising of 1976.

Hear fascinating stories from a local Sowetan who was present during the uprising, followed by lunch at a local restaurant.

Tonight, enjoy a welcome dinner together.

Overnight: *54 on Bath Hotel* (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, MARCH 17
JOHANNESBURG / VICTORIA FALLS,
ZIMBABWE

This morning return to the airport for your flight to Victoria Falls. Upon arrival early this afternoon, board a motorcoach and travel to your deluxe hotel located in Victoria Falls National Park. With its 300-foot-deep gorge and thundering spray, Victoria Falls, known locally as “the smoke that thunders,” is a wonder of the natural world, especially as hippos, elephants, crocodiles, and other animals roam freely in the surrounding jungle. “Vic Falls” reach is higher and even more impressive than that of Niagara, as it plunges some 300 feet into the Zambezi Gorge below, forming the single largest cascade of water on earth. This afternoon’s tour is in a protected area (free from wildlife); you’ll be able to walk safely and photograph as you wish.

Tonight, enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Overnight: *The Victoria Falls Hotel* (B, D)

MONDAY, MARCH 18
VICTORIA FALLS

In the morning, visit a local school, where you have the opportunity to meet with the children and learn about their lives.

Then spend time walking through town and visiting artisan shops.

Later this afternoon, get another look at the thundering falls as you embark on a Sundowner dinner cruise on the Zambezi River.

Overnight: *The Victoria Falls Hotel* (B, D)

TUESDAY, MARCH 19
VICTORIA FALLS

This morning, set off in open-top vehicles on a rhino safari, for hopeful sightings of the most endangered of the “Big Five” species.

The afternoon is at leisure.

Early this evening, a guest speaker talks about the trials and travails of David Livingstone who “discovered” The Falls and claimed them for Queen Victoria in 1855.

Dinner tonight is at the hotel.

Overnight: *The Victoria Falls Hotel* (B, D)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20
CHOBE NATIONAL PARK, BOTSWANA

Depart early this morning by motorcoach to spectacular Chobe National Park in neighboring Botswana.

Enjoy a morning game drive as well as an afternoon game cruise through this exceptional reserve.

On your drive along the river that runs through Chobe, watch for the many animals that often congregate there such as, antelope, zebra, buffalo, and hundreds of species of birds. Thanks to a varied terrain and plentiful water supply, Chobe is renowned for its predator population, including lions, as well as zebras, hippos, and the rare Puku, a species of antelope indigenous to the area. You also can expect to see many elephants since Chobe is home to the world’s largest elephant population.

Enjoy lunch in Botswana today; dinner tonight is at the hotel in Victoria Falls.

Overnight: *The Victoria Falls Hotel* (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, MARCH 21 VICTORIA FALLS / WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

Today fly to Windhoek, Namibia's attractive, German-influenced capital and the country's largest city (pop. 150,000). With just over two million inhabitants in an area nearly four times the size of the United Kingdom, Namibia has the world's second lowest population density.

Upon arrival this evening, board a motorcoach for the one-hour transfer to the hotel.

Lunch and dinner are on your today.

Overnight: *Windhoek Country Club* (B)

FRIDAY, MARCH 22 WINDHOEK / NAMIB DESERT / SOSSUSVLEI

After a brief tour of Windhoek, set out on a journey through spectacular mountain passes en route to the Namibian desert of vast gravel plains and giant sand dunes that rise more than a thousand feet high. Though Namibia is one of the youngest of the African nations, it boasts a 130-million-year-old desert, the Namib. Specifically, you're traveling to the Central Namib, which stretches for some 700 miles along the coast. Huge dunes support tiny ecosystems, largely from the fog that rolls in off the ocean. Stop for a quick lunch en route to the western part of this scenic country.

Late this afternoon, arrive at the lodge where you dine together tonight. You're in the heart of the Namibian desert, a kaleidoscope of color and undulating sands at their most breathtaking during sunrise and sunset.

Overnight: *Sossusvlei Lodge* (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, MARCH 23 NAMIB DESERT / SOSSUSVLEI

This morning, embark on an early morning excursion to the dramatic red sand dunes at Sossusvlei, the world's highest. Here the dunes seem to be "alive;" they constantly change and undulate due to the desert winds. Despite their barren look, the dunes support a rich, complex system of wildlife that includes the blind golden mole, a large dancing spider known as the "white lady," plus geckoes and lizards. You may choose to climb on the velvety sands of "Big Mama", as the locals fondly refer to the largest dune. Next, visit the deep (100 feet) and narrow (at some points just 6 feet wide) Sesreim Canyon carved by a river out of sedimentary rock.

Return to the lodge for a leisurely lunch during the heat of the day and to relax and enjoy the stunning scenery and pool here.

Tonight, dine at the lodge.

Overnight: *Sossusvlei Lodge* (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, MARCH 24 SOSSUSVLEI / SWAKOPMUND

Travel through the Namib desert today en route to German-accented Swakopmund, Namibia's main port, a fishing center, and resort. On the journey there may be oryx, springbok, and ostrich in the wild; as well as the *Welwitschias mirabilis*, a botanical curiosity that exists only on the gravel plains of this desert. It was discovered in 1859 by an Austrian botanist and is known among the Africans as the "two-leaf can't die." That's because, despite incredibly harsh conditions, this two-leafed plant lives on condensed fog—and survives for years, as some mid-sized plants here are judged to be more than one thousand years old.

Travel past natural watering holes and through the otherworldly landscape of Kuiseb Canyon and Moon Valley along the western edges of Namib Naukluft Park, stopping for lunch during the desert passage. Before checking in at the hotel in Swakopmund, get acquainted with the town by visiting the Natural History Museum, which occupies a former harbor warehouse; and the Crystal Gallery, which together lend insight into Namibia's colonial past and rich natural resources.

This evening, enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Overnight: *Swakopmund Hotel* (B, L, D)

MONDAY, MARCH 25 SWAKOPMUND / WALVIS BAY / NAMIBIAN COAST

This morning, set out on a half-day excursion along Namibia's famed Skeleton Coast, named for the many shipwrecks its rocks and fog have caused and for the many bones on its beaches from whaling and seal hunting. Visit the seal reserve at Cape Cross, where the area's first European visitor, Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão, planted a cross in 1486. Protected by the Namibian government since 1968, the world's largest Cape Fur Seal colony inhabits this reserve—some 150,000 gather during the breeding season.

After lunch on board, return to Swakopmund, where the remainder of the day at leisure to explore this charming coastal city with its palm-lined streets and historic German architecture on your own. Options abound: visit the National Marine Aquarium or the Swakopmund Military Museum; venture to the main beach area, or spend your time browsing at one of the many shops or the local outdoor crafts market.

Overnight: *Swakopmund Hotel* (B, L, .)

TUESDAY, MARCH 26 SWAKOPMUND / WALVIS BAY / CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

En route to the Walvis Bay airport, stop to see a slice of unspoiled Africa where flamingos, pelicans, and a host of other water birds come to refresh themselves in the cool waters. (Please note that, based on local conditions, flamingoes may or may not be present).

After a two-hour flight, arrive in Cape Town, South Africa early afternoon. Transfer immediately to your hotel and have the remainder of the afternoon and evening at leisure to enjoy Cape Town and the waterfront.

Overnight: *The Table Bay Hotel*, Cape Town (B)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27 CAPE TOWN / THE WINELANDS

South Africa is one of the finest wine-producing countries in the world and some of its best vineyards are a mere 45 miles from Cape Town. After this morning's welcome briefing, embark on a full-day excursion through the Cape Winelands region, which has been producing wine since 1679. Travel through the historic town of Paarl (meaning "pearl") and the delightful village of Franschhoek; then stop at one of the region's wineries for a traditional lunch.

Next, travel to Stellenbosch, a former frontier town on the banks of the Eerste and the second oldest town in South Africa. The town square is one of the "newest" sections of town, with buildings from 1777 and several fine examples of Cape Dutch architecture. Late this afternoon, return to the hotel; the remainder of the day is at leisure and dinner is on your own tonight.

Please note that the exact order of sightseeing today and over the next two days may vary so

that you can visit Table Mountain during the best possible weather during your stay in Cape Town.

Overnight: *The Table Bay Hotel*, Cape Town (B, L)

THURSDAY, MARCH 28 CAPE TOWN/CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

On today's full-day excursion to the Cape Peninsula, visit the place that Sir Francis Drake called "the most stately thing and the fairest Cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth"—the Cape of Good Hope. Pass by lovely Hout Bay before reaching the Cape Point Nature Reserve, with some 19,000 acres of protected parkland. On this unspoiled peninsula, mountains drop into the sea, unique flora thrives, and bird life is abundant. A monorail takes you to the summit of the Nature Reserve for a stupendous ocean view.

After a seafood lunch, drive through historic Simons Town, headquarters of the South African Navy; then continue to Boulders Beach to visit a unique penguin colony.

Return to Cape Town in time for dinner together.

Overnight: *The Table Bay Hotel*, Cape Town (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, MARCH 29 CAPE TOWN

Your tour of Cape Town this morning features a visit to the Bo-Kaap neighborhood, the city's historical center of Cape Malay culture.

Also, pay a visit to acclaimed Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, nestled against the eastern slopes of Table Mountain. One of the world's great botanic gardens, Kirstenbosch champions South Africa's rich biodiversity as it cultivates only native plants.

Then (weather permitting), enjoy glorious bird's-eye views of Cape Town as you ride by cable car 3,500 feet to the flat top of the city's signature Table Mountain.

The afternoon is at leisure.

Tonight, celebrate your southern Africa odyssey at a farewell dinner.

Overnight: *The Table Bay Hotel*, Cape Town (B, D)

SATURDAY, MARCH 30 CAPE TOWN / DEPART FOR U.S.

The morning is at leisure before this afternoon's transfer to the Cape Town airport and your overnight return flight to the United States. (B)

SUNDAY, MARCH 31 ARRIVE U.S.

Arrive in the U.S. today and connect with your domestic flights home.

OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

SATURDAY, MARCH 30 KAPAMA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

In the morning, transfer to the Cape Town airport for the flight to Hoedspruit or Mpumalanga, where you then transfer to your lodge in the Kapama Private Game Reserve. Lunch today is on your own, en route.

Upon arrival at the lodge, you have some time to freshen up before your first game drive.

This wildlife region, which sits adjacent to the enormous Kruger National Park, boasts an

abundance of bird and mammal species, including the “Big Five”: elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo, and rhino. Experienced rangers accompany you in open-top Land Rovers to ensure close-up encounters with the flora and fauna.

As guests of a private lodge, you can enjoy longer game-viewing hours than guests in adjacent Kruger National Park. Additionally, vehicles can go off-road anywhere in the private reserve and guests are allowed to get out of the vehicle and go on foot—neither of which are allowed in the national park.

Dinner is included in camp upon your return to the lodge.

Overnight: *Kapama Southern Camp* (B, D)

SUNDAY, MARCH 31

KAPAMA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

At morning’s first light and again in the late afternoon when the animals hunt, embark on game drives.

In between, return to the lodge to rest, relax, and refresh. Soak in the splendid setting, cool off in the swimming pool, visit the library, gym, or spa, or observe wildlife from the lodge’s private elevated viewing decks.

All meals today and tomorrow are served at the lodge.

Overnight: *Kapama Southern Camp* (B, L, D)

MONDAY, APRIL 1

KAPAMA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

Enjoy another day of game drives and relaxing at your lodge, savoring the natural splendor of Kapama.

Overnight: *Kapama Southern Camp* (B, L, D)

Tuesday, April 2

KAPAMA/JOHANNESBURG/DEPART FOR U.S.

Return to the airport today and check in for your flight to Johannesburg, then on to the United States. (B)

Note for land-only guests: Flight schedules from Hoedspruit to Johannesburg can vary, so it is strongly recommended that you do not book a return flight to the U.S. that departs Johannesburg prior to 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 3

ARRIVE U.S.