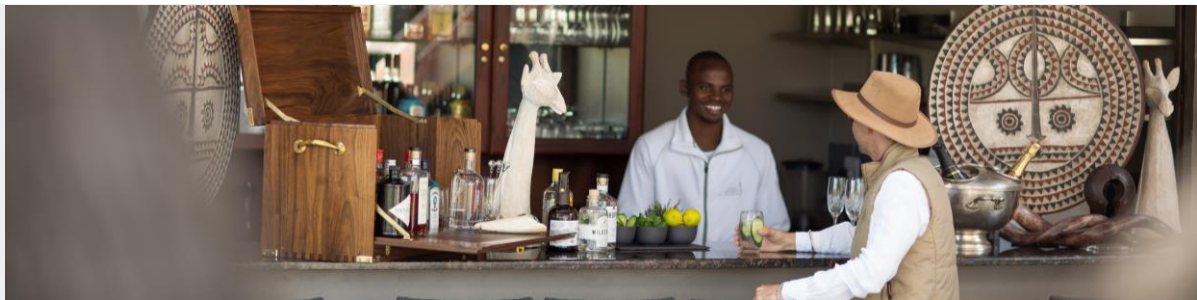


What to Wear on Safari

The adventure begins here...



Table of contents



04

Tips For All Seasons

07

Walking Safaris

10

Safari Clothing & Insect Life

12

What to wear through the seasons of South Africa

24

What Else to Pack

30

Additional Notes

The Insider's Guide to What to Wear on Safari

So, you've booked your safari holiday and time is getting close. You start to think about what are you going to wear. Do you really have to get yourself kitted out to resemble Robert Redford in *Out of Africa*? If you do, will you be out of place, or fit right in? How much gear do you have to go and purchase which you might never need or might never use again once you return?

As these are some of our client's concerns, we thought we'd put together an informal guide to what to wear on safari. It takes into account the mode of safari. E.g. Are you primarily doing drives in a game vehicle, or will you be doing a fair bit of walking? It also considers the time of year as many clients don't realize the (considerable) temperature differences between seasons in some safari destinations.

The complete answer as to what safari clothes are appropriate differs by season and by country as I will show. However, there are some general principles outlined here.



Tips for All Seasons

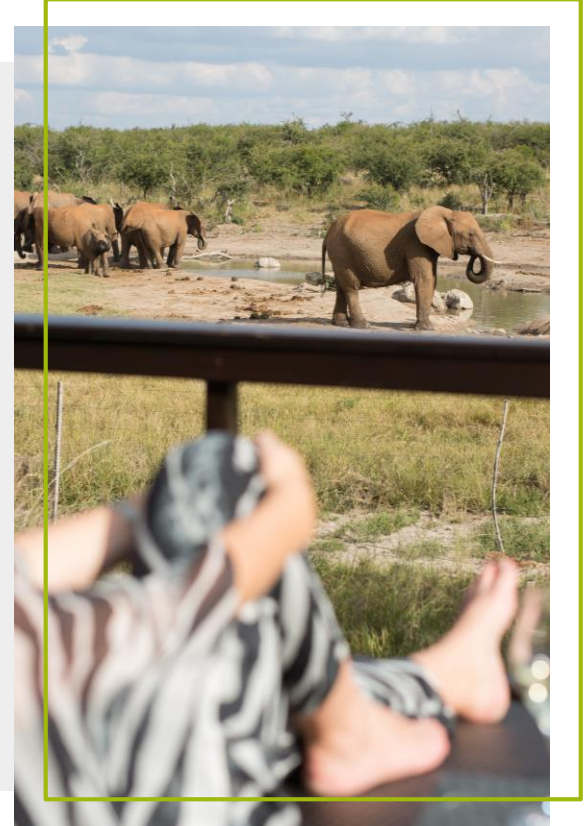
Neutral Colours for Safari Clothing?



If you don't own any clothing in neutral colours, it is not necessary to buy it just for the safari, unless you are intending to do a proper walking safari (see later).

However, if you are staying at one of the smarter game lodges, many fellow guests will have the classic safari gear (in brown, khaki or green). So you may want to blend in with your fellow guests and not just the wildlife! This is a matter of personal preference.

But please don't feel that you need to dress like Robert Redford in *Out of Africa* (however positive the connotations). Nothing marks a person out as a tourist as much as being dressed head to toe in khaki and wearing a photographers' flak jacket!





Walking Safaris



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Walking Safaris

If you are doing a walking safari, then you DO need to be more careful about which colours you wear. Your ranger will expect you to dress appropriately i.e., in soft, earthy colours with no white socks, brightly coloured t-shirts or strong patterns.

How strictly they will enforce this dress code varies from guide to guide. But it's not unheard of for people to be sent back to their tents or chalets to change their clothing whilst everyone else waits for them.

We also recommend long trousers, socks and proper shoes, even if it is hot, especially in areas which suffer from tsetse flies. (*Tsetse fly bites sting a lot!*)

Why the Stricter Dress Code for Walking?

Why is there so much more fuss over walking you ask? Primarily it is because the wildlife see a game vehicle as a sort of huge animal which they will not mess with. Overall, the colour will be khaki green and the odd bright colour will not affect them.

However, on foot you are entering into their territory. Your aim, given you are now much smaller than many animals around you, will be to blend into your environment as much as possible so that you can observe the animals without being noticed.



Laundry Washing at Bush Camps

Laundry is included at many of the safari camps in Botswana, Zimbabwe & Zambia, when you are often restricted by a luggage allowance of 20kg including camera equipment. So plan to have clothes washed at the camps.

Washing is often done by hand by the camp staff and will probably not be ironed. We recommend the technical materials which are crease- proof and ideal for a real bush safari.

A photograph of a safari vehicle on a dirt road in a savanna. The vehicle is moving away from the viewer, and several elephants are visible on either side of the road. The scene is set in a lush, green environment with tall grass and trees under a clear sky. A semi-transparent dark box with a yellow border is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the title text.

Safari Clothing & Insect Life

Safari Clothing & Tsetse Flies/Malaria

If you are in tsetse fly country (and I recommend asking your ranger when you arrive at a lodge) then you should cover up and wear long trousers with socks especially if you are on a walking safari. Again, this varies by the exact terrain, but parts of Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania & Kenya have tsetse flies. Tsetse flies do not pose any real health risk anymore, but they can give very nasty itchy stings and your skin can get red & inflamed for a few days. (I react badly to tsetse flies, but others less so)

You should **avoid the colours of blue and black** and some people say white as these colours seem to attract the tsetse fly. (You may see tsetse fly traps on your game drive which are coloured with blue and black stripes to attract them!)

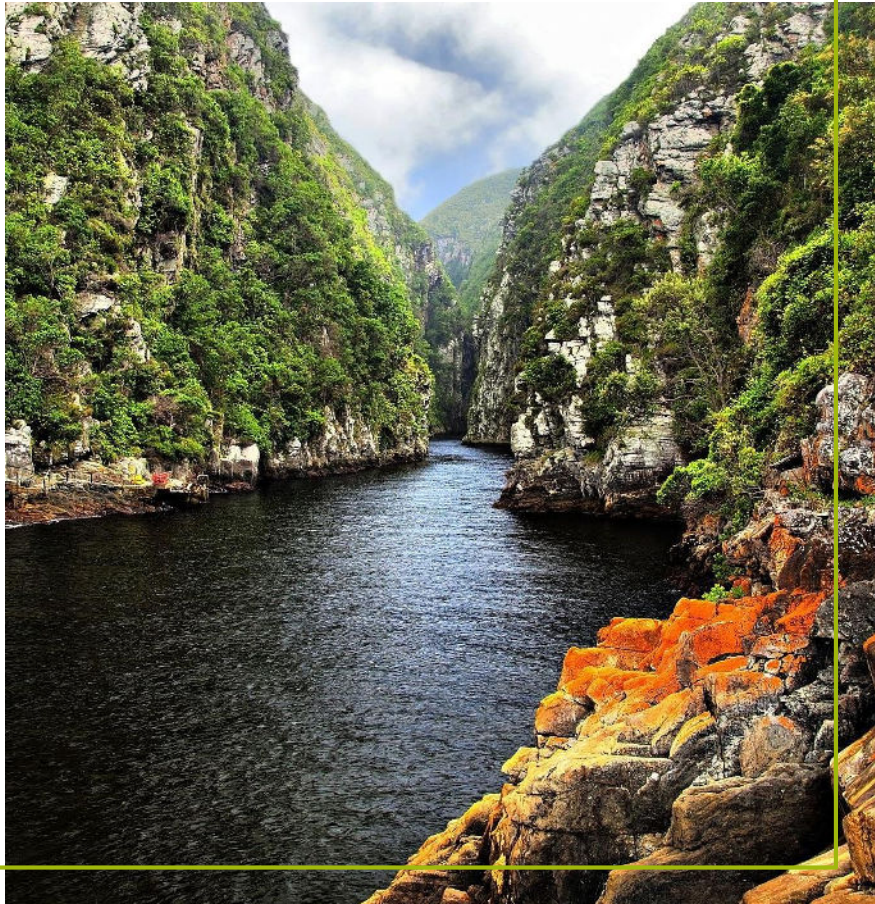


No doubt you will have heard about the need to cover up in the evenings because of mosquito activity. I would recommend bringing a couple of long-sleeved thin cotton shirts and some thin linen or cotton trousers.





What to Wear Through the Seasons in South Africa



Contrary to popular belief many African countries DO experience winter weather. Though the extent does vary by country.

South Africa has the most marked seasonal changes with marked winter weather down in the Cape with cool days and cold evenings, even rain. The rest of the country has a dry winter climate, so they have very pleasant and sunny winter days. But as the sun sets, temperatures plummet.

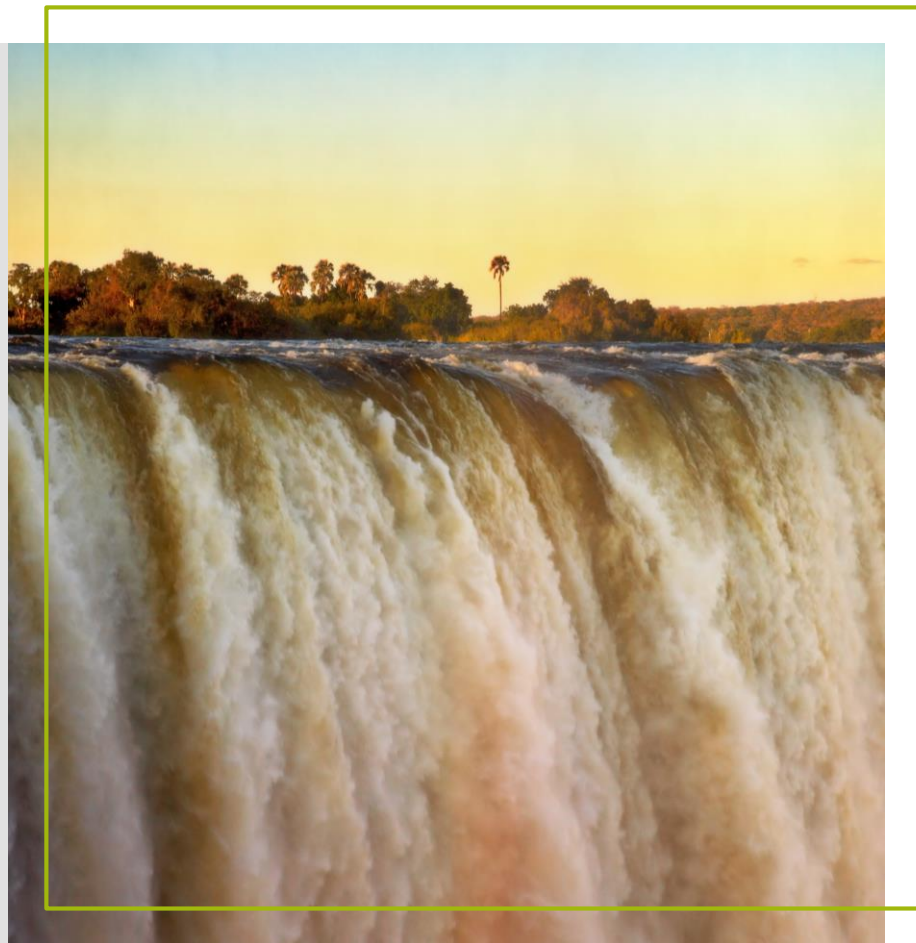
The rest of Southern Africa also experiences their dry season in the winter months as well and this is when game-viewing is typically at its most prolific. So if you are coming to Africa for your safari then you'll probably be coming in the winter months of May to August or spring months of September and October.

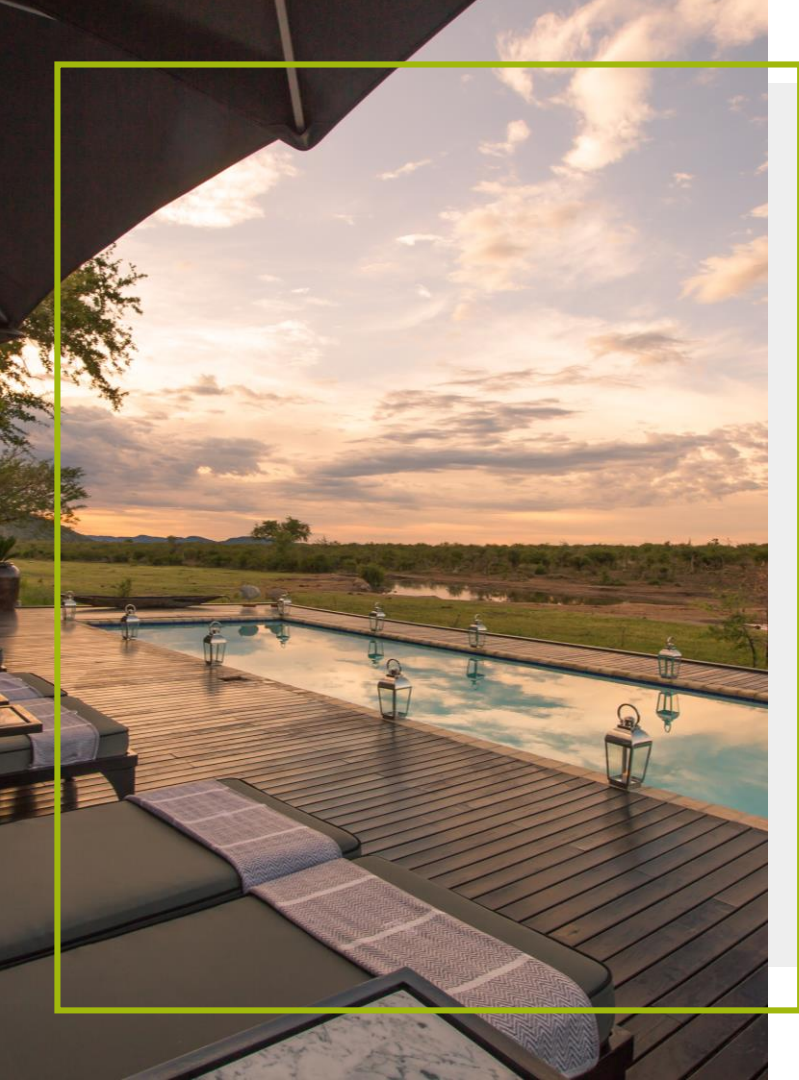


Climates of Neighboring Countries

Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe will have lovely dry sunny winter days but will still experience fairly cool/cold winter evenings in some reserves. The temperatures are not necessarily low but, on a safari, you are in the open air with the wind chill.

This is less the case as you head north into the sub-tropical destinations of Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia. However higher parts of Tanzania and Kenya can be cool in the evenings as well.





Seasons of South Africa during the year:



Summer: October to March
(November to mid-March in the Cape)



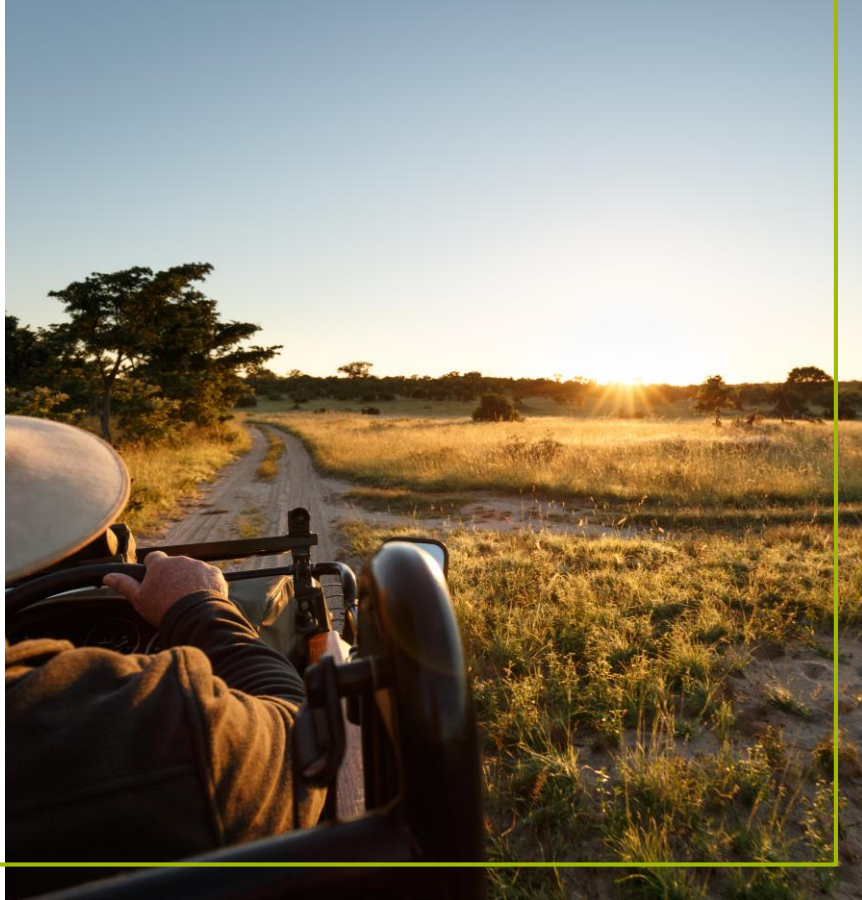
Autumn: April to May
(mid March to mid May in the Cape)



Winter: June to mid August
(mid May to August in the Cape)



Spring – mid August to September
(September to October in the Cape)



What to Wear In South Africa

Winter

During winter, you will need to pack a range of clothing as the South African winter varies in intensity from province to province.

In the Cape, with its southern Mediterranean climate, it will feel like a Spanish winter. The hotels and lodges are reasonably well-equipped with under-floor heating, fireplaces, even electric blankets! You also might have some rain in the Cape so come prepared with a rainproof jacket.

The rest of the country has dry winter with pleasant sunny days. It is not uncommon for the daytime temperatures to be 25°C so bring some lightweight shirts and t-shirts as well.

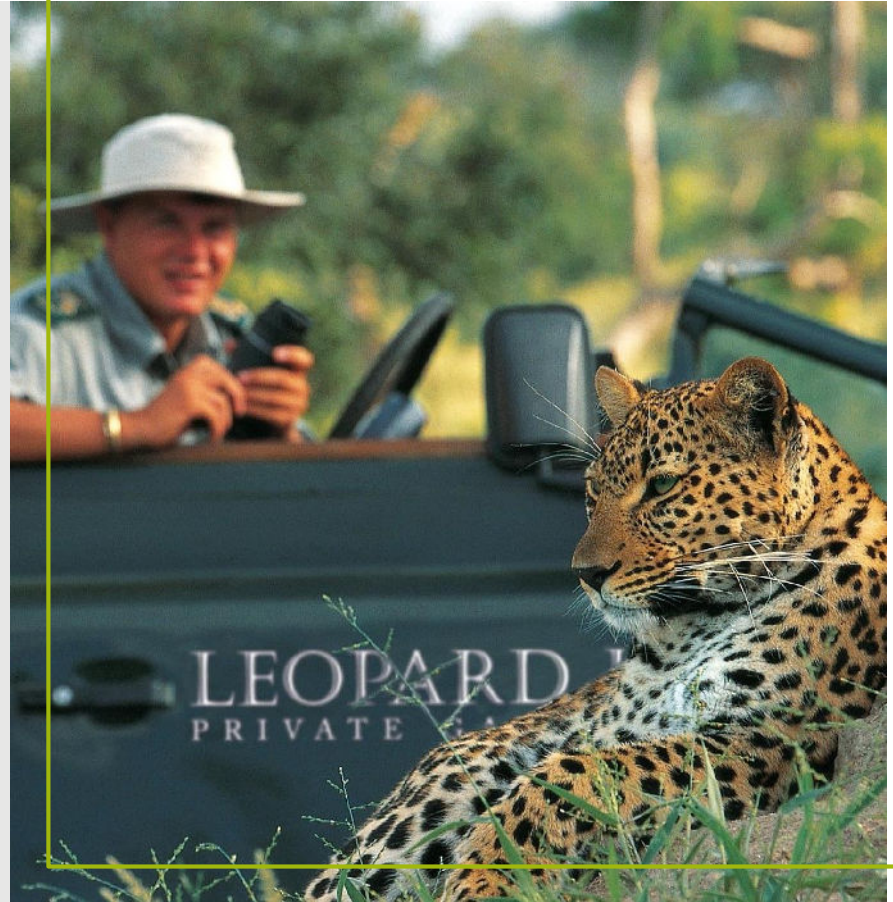


What to Wear In South Africa

Changeable Winter

However, it's the **diurnal range** in winter which flummoxes some visitors. A South African will say that it's 25°C during the day. But forget to say that the day could have started at 5°C. In fact, it's the warm sunny days which produce the sudden drop in evening temperatures as there is no cloud cover. If you are on safari in June or July, you will need to come fully prepared with hat, jacket, scarf etc.

The South African game lodges do not have central heating and are fairly open to the elements. So, you will need to wrap up warmly in the evening and to take a warm jacket & hat for the game drive (for when the sun sets).



What to Wear In South Africa

Spring – mid Aug to Oct

The 'shoulder months' of Spring and Autumn are always a tricky one as far as packing is concerned – anywhere in the world. Temperatures may vary wildly within an average two-week holiday period as you never know when Winter will change to Spring, Or Spring to Summer...

Spring-like weather starts in mid-August – but later in Cape Town & the Garden Route - but there's no guarantee of this. It's often variable weather: beautiful for days and then a bit cold and rainy for a day or two (in the Cape only). At the other end of the scale, October will be distinctly summer-like in the Kruger and KwaZulu Natal. And VERY hot in the rest of Southern Africa



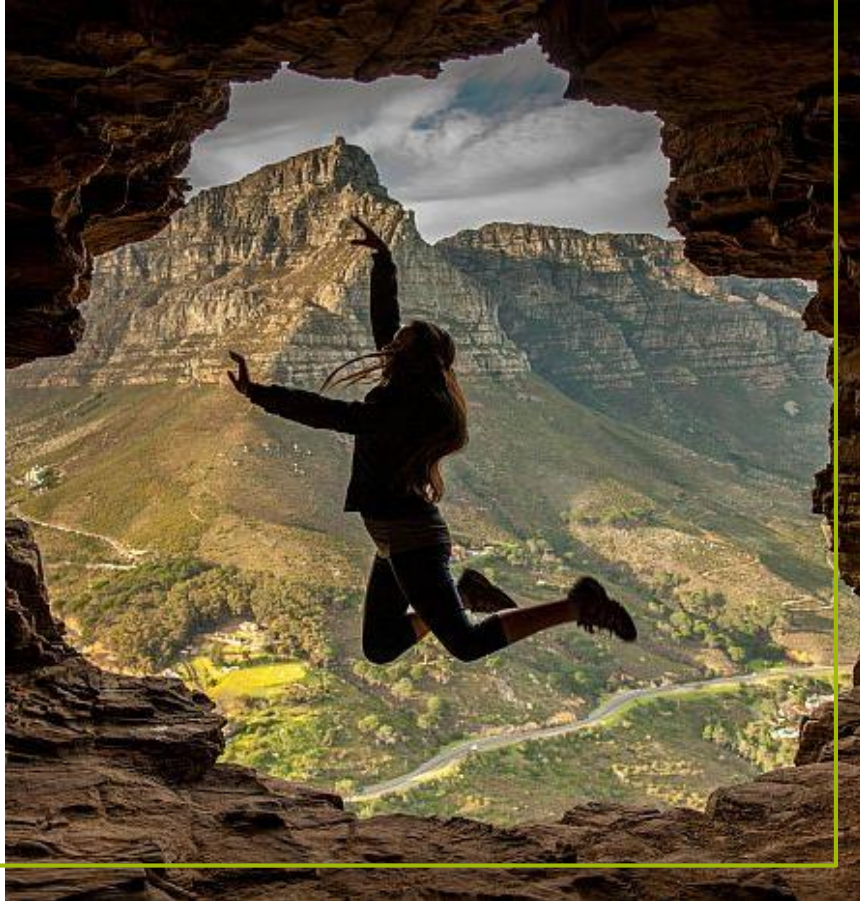
What to Wear In South Africa

Spring Tips

Even if the days are warm and sunny, night-time temperatures will be noticeably cooler.

- Warm jacket for the evenings
- Pashminas also work well.
- Bring a variety of clothes- both cool and hot weather options – t-shirts, short-sleeved tops, swim gear – especially if you are spending time in the Kruger
- But be ready for temperatures to change quite suddenly.





What to Wear In South Africa

Summer – Nov to Mar

Summer in South Africa is generally hot to very hot – with the occasional cooler day in and around Cape Town and the Garden Route.

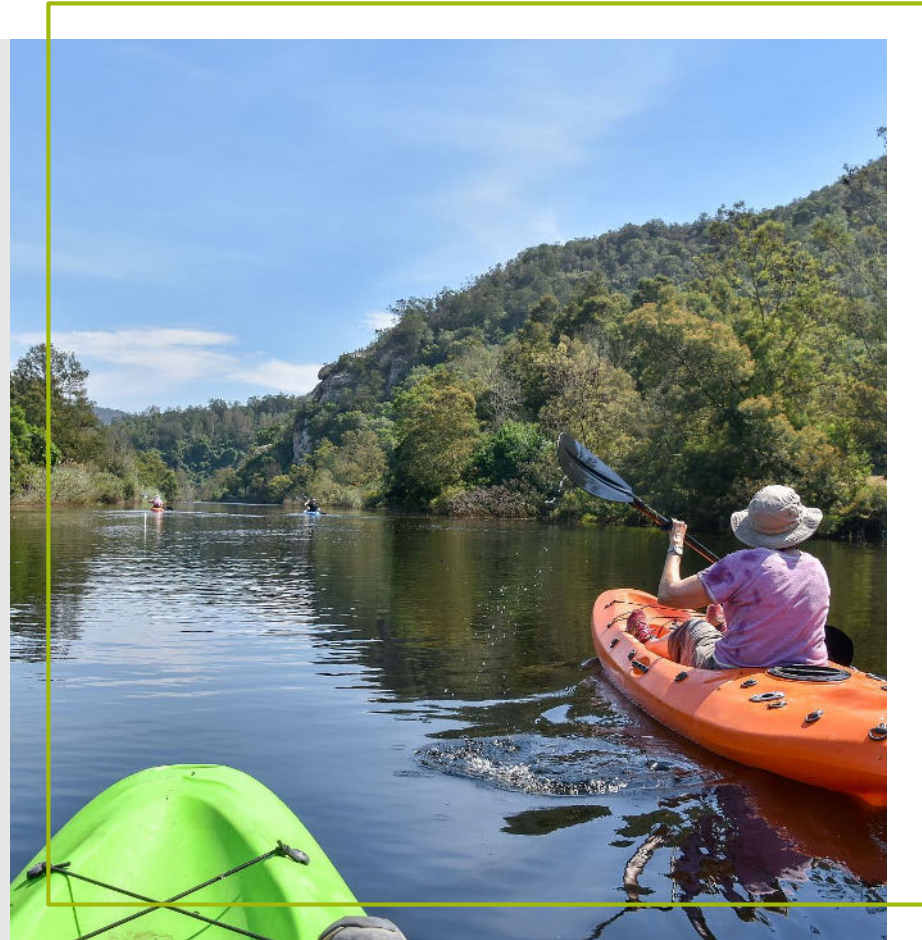
In the northern provinces of KwaZulu Natal and Kruger, or hotter areas like the Cedarberg or Northern Cape, the daytime temperatures will often be in the high 30's. But the Kruger/KZN areas also have bouts of afternoon rain...

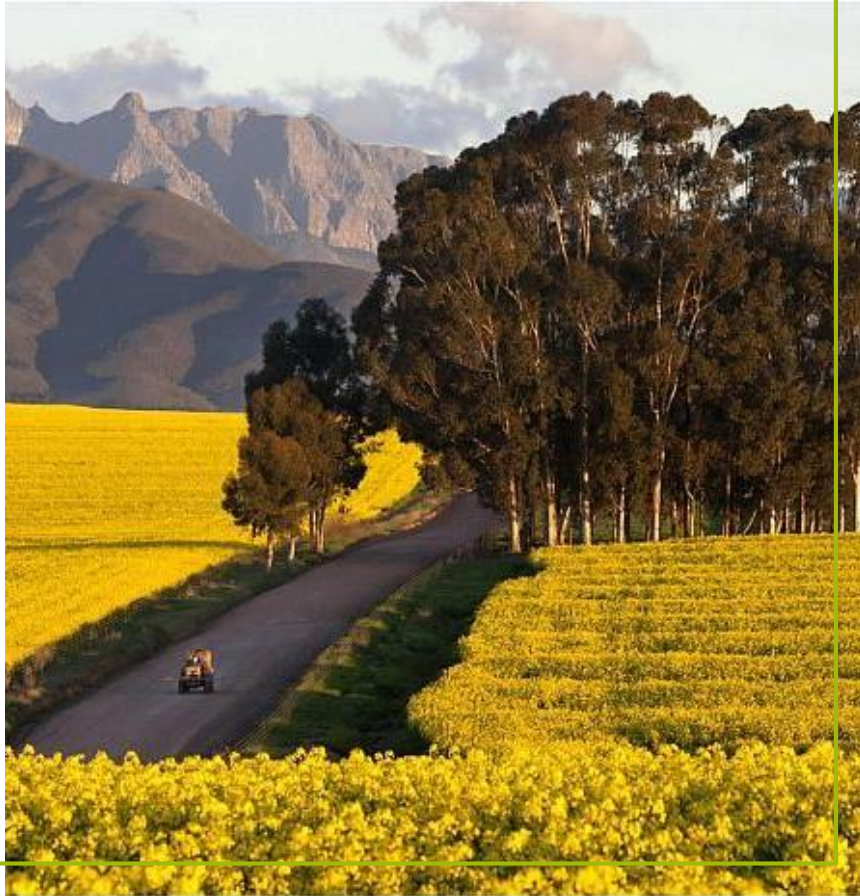
What to Wear In South Africa

Summer Tips

The northern part of the country has a summer rain eg Kruger, KwaZulu Natal, Madikwe etc. This takes the form of a cooling late afternoon shower – welcome relief from the heat – but occasionally it can rain for 2-3 days

- Have a couple of warmer items just in case of rain.
- Long trousers and long-sleeved shirts in the evenings – if you can bear it – to guard against mosquitos. Alternatively, liberally smother yourself in mosquito repellent.
- Otherwise summer-weather clothing.





What to Wear In South Africa

Autumn - Mid Mar- Apr

Again, Autumn is a tricky one to call as far as packing is concerned. Temperatures vary wildly from place to place so be prepared.

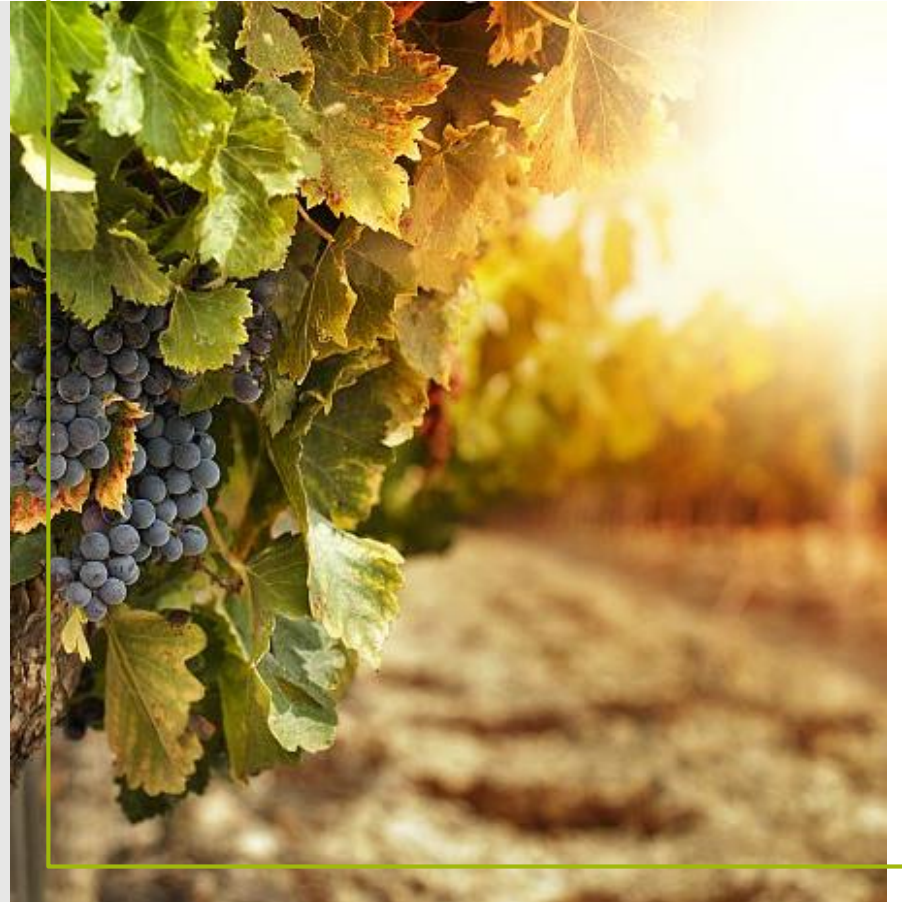
Bring plenty of hot weather clothing – especially if you are spending time in the Kruger and KwaZulu Natal - but also be ready for temperatures to change quite suddenly in the Cape.

What to Wear In South Africa

Autumn Tips

Night-time temperatures will start getting noticeably cooler in April and May so have a warmer jacket for the evenings. If you are spending some time on safari, be prepared for a sudden downturn in temperature once the sun has set.

It's not be uncommon to start a game drive at 4.00pm feeling very hot and end it three hours later distinctly on the cold side. You may feel vaguely silly bringing a warm jacket to the game vehicle when it's so hot at 4pm, but you won't regret it later.





Evening Clothing: Is Casual Acceptable?

Generally speaking, African dress code is very casual with some provisos. Very few restaurants expect a formal dress code in the evening, the exceptions being the luxury trains of Rovos Rail and the Blue Train.

However, in the cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg, restaurants will be attracting local clients as well who will be dressing in smart-casual attire.

The safari camps and lodges tend to be casual. But again at the very smart safari lodges, many other guests will be changing out of their safari clothes before dinner, but this is a matter of personal preference.



What Else To Pack



Item to Pack	Season				Done
	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	
Shorts (neutral colours if walking)	√	√	√	(√)	
Long trousers	√	√	√	√	
Pedal pushers	√	√	√	√	
Light short sleeved shirts	√	√	√	√	
Lightweight long-sleeved shirts for evening	√	√	√	√	
Swimming costume	√	√	√	√*	
Wide brimmed sunhat (or cap)	√	√	√	√	
Comfortable walking shoes	√	√	√	√	
Warmer long-sleeved shirt				√	
Beanie or warm hat			Poss	√	
Scarf	Poss		Poss	√	
Non-crease clothing at Bush Camps	√	√	√	√	
Rain jacket	√			√	
Warm jacket			Poss	√	
Sleeveless jacket	√		√	√	
Pasminas	√		√	√	
Smart-casual clothing for good restaurants	√	√	√	√	



What Else To Pack: Non- Clothing Items

Many of the listed overlead can be easily purchased in South Africa.

At both Johannesburg and Cape Town Airports or at places like Cape Union Mart.

Item	Comments	Buy at Airport?	Check
General Items			
Passport with spare pages	At least 1 spare page per country visited		
Yellow Fever Certificate	Only if visiting selected countries		
Travel Insurance Documents	Plus, copy kept in separate place		
Copy of essential travel documents (e.g., Passport)	Kept in separate place (with one copy left at home with someone)		
Itinerary & e-Tickets			
Credit card & Money			
Glasses & Contacts Lenses	If needed		
Personal toiletries			
Sun-block	Preferably with 2 different SPF	Yes	
After-sun lotion	If prone to overdoing it!		
Insect Repellant		Yes	
Malaria tablets	If going to malaria area	Yes	
Small first aid kit	See below	Yes	
Personal Medications			
Adaptor plugs		Yes	
Backpack/ bag for excursions		Yes	
Six pack cooler bag	Cold drinks if self-driving	Larger airports only	

Item	Comments	Buy at Airport?	Check
Safari Items			
Small torch or headtorch		Yes	
Hand Sanitizer	Useful for the bush	Yes	
Pocket-sized animal identification book	SO you don't have to borrow the rangers	Yes	
Binoculars	Ideally one per person, 8 x30 or 10x40	Larger Airports only	
One 'serious' camera*		Larger only	
One 'point and shoot' or phone camera*		Larger only	
Battery charger (with adaptor)		Larger only	
Memory card			
Journal or notebook		Yes	

A large baobab tree stands prominently in the foreground of a savanna landscape. The tree has a thick, textured trunk and a dense canopy of spiky leaves. In the background, other smaller baobab trees are scattered across a flat, open plain. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The foreground is filled with low-lying green and yellow shrubs.

Additional Notes

Cameras, Money & Medical Emergency Advice





What about Medical Emergencies?

South Africa is plentifully supplied with pharmacies and the safari lodges are always stocked with a comprehensive medical kit. But sometimes it's most convenient to have the main items that you might need.

Item	Comments
Painkillers	
Anti-itch cream for bites	
Anti- diahorhea	
Air sickness pills	Idea for small charter planes in Botswana!
Anti-allergy pills	If you suffer from hayfever, the change in climate can produce allergic reactions
Tweezers	
Plasters	
Anti-septic cream or wipes	
Throat lozenges	
Lipsalve	Preferably with sunblock
Cold/flu medication	
Personal medications	



Cameras

We recommend that between a couple you aim to have one 'serious' camera and one good smartphone or 'point and shoot' camera. In this way, if the serious photographer has the wrong lens on at the precise moment of high-speed drama, the other person can capture it. It may not be the best shot but at least it is recorded by someone. Plus, you may not always want to lug heavy cameras around when sight-seeing!

If travelling as a family, I also recommend giving as many children as possible the ability to take photos either using a camera on a phone or a disposable camera. It saves any amount of low-grade squabbling.

Same goes for binoculars!



Money

In South Africa, most people use their credit card or debit cards to draw money in the local currency (Rands) from ATMs and for most purchases. However, we recommend that you also bring some dollars, pounds or euros to change as well.

Please note that ONLY Rands are accepted as currency in South Africa. You cannot pay for any goods with dollars.

If travelling in Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania or Kenya, you will be able to use dollars for tips and buying curios.

About The Author

Kate Bergh is South Africa Managing Director of Cedarberg Africa, a specialist safari company that she co-founded with her sister Ginny. We help people who are unsure where to turn to for friendly well-informed safari planning.

Kate has lived in South Africa since 1993. She's travelled extensively to the countries marketed by Cedarberg travelling mostly by herself or with colleagues. She especially likes some of the more remote areas such as Coastal Maputaland, the Makgadikgadi pans and the Lower Zambezi. Her home is in the Cedarberg mountains in the Cape (hence the name of the company) where she enjoys hiking and cycling. She has three children, who were used when younger as guinea pigs to test out the family appeal of various South African hotels and safari lodges.



Thank you!

Cedarberg African Travel has been designing tailor-made holidays and safaris to East and Southern Africa since 1995. A fully licensed and bonded tour operator in the UK and South Africa, we assure you of great value and unbiased, expert advice.

This guide was created by Cedarberg Africa, safari operator for whole of Southern Africa. To ensure the safari trip of a lifetime, book through a Travel Expert like us.

*Have questions? Talk to us at kate@cedarberg.co.za
www.cedarberg-travel.com*



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