

South Africa Wine and Safari February 11th

I am very much looking forward to South Africa. The country is beautiful. People are friendly. Great wines and cuisine are abundant. And it's summer.

Our local guide in the Western Cape will be Claudia Chennells, a native of North Carolina who has called Cape Town home for over 30 years. If you're looking for dinner options, questions about the region or people, just ask. Here's the daily schedule, which may still be subject to some tweaking here and there.

DAY 1: Sunday, February 11th

We'll begin the tour in the town of Franschoek, our base for the first four nights of the tour. Most of this group will arrive late afternoon/early evening with the last arrival just after 6:00 PM. We'll meet our guide and driver and proceed to Franschoek, just about 1 hour away from Cape Town International Airport. Barring late arrivals or baggage issues, those Delta arrives from Atlanta should arrive at the hotel by 8:30. I will meet you in the International Arrivals area at the airport with our local guide.

Because many of the group are arriving a day or two early and the arriving group may not get to the hotel until after 8 PM, it made sense to move our first group dinner to the following day, February 12th. Late arrivals will have food options. The last kitchen order for The Terrace is 9:30. The Sauvage Restaurant serves until 9:00.

Six travelers in the group are arriving 1-2 days early and should make their way to the hotel any time after 3:00 PM to check in. The hotel has your reservation held by name. You're also welcome to meet us at the airport, but it may be more convenient for you to Uber directly to the hotel. Overnight Franschoek (Le Franschoek Hotel and Spa)

DAY 2: Monday, February 12th

We're going to start our wine tasting week with one of the better-known wineries in the area, [Haute Cabriere](#). We'll break for lunch on your own with

time to shop and explore in Franschhoek before moving to our second winery, [Stony Brook](#). We'll have dinner near the hotel this evening. Overnight Franschhoek (Le Franschhoek Hotel and Spa) (BD)

DAY 3: Tuesday, February 13th

Big wine day ahead of us with three tastings on tap. Our first winery visit of the day is at [Klein Goederust Boutique Winery](#). The second visit today will be at [Boschendal Wine Estate](#) for a premium wine tasting with cheeses, charcuterie, and local breads. Finally, we end our day at a late afternoon tasting at [Dieu Donne Vineyards](#). You're on your own for dinner this evening.

This was originally slated to be a wine tram excursion. Logistically, it made more sense to use the coach at our disposal to maximize our time. Overnight Franschhoek (Le Franschhoek Hotel and Spa) (BL)

DAY 4: Wednesday, February 14th

Touring wineries in and around the town of Paarl, about 40 minutes to the NW of Franschhoek. Our first winery of the day is [Vrede en Lust](#). From there, we travel to the outstanding garden and winery of [Babylonstoren](#) for a self-guided tour of the grounds and fabulous garden before we meet at the cellar for a tour, wine tasting, and light lunch. A third and final tasting at [Nederburg Winery](#) before returning to our Franschhoek hotel. Dinner will be near the hotel this evening. Overnight Franschhoek (Le Franschhoek Hotel and Spa) (BLD)

DAY 5: Thursday, February 15th

We depart our Franschhoek hotel shortly after breakfast on our way to Stellenbosch. We'll stop just outside town at [Allee Bleue](#) for a premium tasting of their wines. From there we will enjoy a tasting and light plates at [Lanzerac Winery](#). Our final visit of the day, and very close to our hotel and check in at approximately 4:30 PM is [Spier](#). We've got dinner scheduled near the hotel at 7:00 PM. Overnight Stellenbosch (Southern Sun de Wagen Hotel) (BLD)

DAY 6: Friday, February 16th

Another day of wine tasting in the Stellenbosch area first with a visit to the [Dylan Lewis Sculpture Garden](#) for an opportunity to stretch your legs. We'll

then visit the winery of golfer [Ernie Els](#) for their collection tasting a selection of meats, cheeses, and salads. We'll call it a day and journey to the hotel for check in and free time to explore the town of Stellenbosch. Dinner is hosted at 7:00 PM near the hotel. Overnight Stellenbosch (de Wagen Boutique Hotel) (BLD)

DAY 7: Saturday, February 17th

We've got two final wineries today, located to the south of Stellenbosch. We'll visit [Vergelegen Winery](#) mid-morning for a tasting of their wines, break for free time and lunch on your own in Gordon's Bay, then an afternoon visit to [Waterford Wine Estate](#). We'll expect to arrive back at the hotel about 4:30 for free time and dinner on your own. Overnight Stellenbosch (Southern Sun de Wagen) (B)

DAY 8: Sunday, February 18th

We're scheduled on a mid-day flight from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth to travel to the Eastern Cape and our safari experience. The flight takes about an hour, with a bus ride to the preserve about another hour. We'll arrive at the Kariega Nature Reserve about 4:00 PM in time for an orientation to the property and our safari activities for the next 2 ½ days. [Ukhozi Lodge](#) is all inclusive, which means that your welcome cocktail in the main lodge is just waiting for you. Dinner will be in the main lodge this evening. We'll have a welcome cocktail this evening followed by dinner. Overnight Ukhozi Lodge (BD)

Fly Safair 130 19FEB CPT/PLZ 12:35 PM 1:55 PM

DAY 9: Monday, February 19th

Your first safari day begins with an early morning wake up call for the morning game drive. We return to the lodge in late morning for a big breakfast, followed by free time. Lunch is served shortly afternoon noon. Your afternoon game drive takes place just before dinner. Most of the action in the preserve takes place in the morning or late afternoon/early evening. Dinner takes place at the lodge later this evening.

You're free to opt out of any of the game drives, but you'll miss out. The morning drive I skipped the early AM drive was our-close up lion encounter. We'd seen a pride the day before at a distance, but the drive I missed was a much better experience. Overnight Ukhozi Lodge (BLD)

DAY 10: Tuesday, February 20th

Day Two in the game preserve is similar to the previous safari day. There are two game drives offered each day. You may choose to opt out of one or more. It's almost a guarantee that the one time you stay back is the one where you get to wildlife up close or the elusive Cheetah. I speak from experience on this. Overnight Ukhozi Lodge (BLD)

DAY 11: Wednesday, February 21st

We'll depart the lodge shortly after breakfast (and another game drive if there's interest) for the hour-long drive to Port Elizabeth and the flight to Cape Town. Once we arrive, we'll be met by our guide and driver again for transportation to our hotel on the waterfront. We've got our farewell dinner scheduled this evening at Camps Bay at the Cod Father, a local legend for fresh seafood. (yes, salads are an option). Overnight Cape Town (Protea Waterfront Breakwater Lodge) (BD)

FlySafair 31 21FEB PLZ/CPT 2:35 PM 4:00 PM

DAY 12: Thursday, February 22nd

We'll be on the first ferry to [Robben Island](#) this morning for a tour of the museum and prison complex known primarily for its association with Nelson Mandela. We're just about 20 minutes from the ferry terminal.

After an introductory tour of the island, you'll have a tour of the prison with either a former guard or prisoner as your guide of the complex. You'll have free time to enjoy lunch and the waterfront area in the afternoon. Then we're off on a visit by cable car to the top of Table Mountain for an opportunity to walk the natural area on top or have a drink to enjoy the views.

We'll return to the hotel by 4:00 PM with time to freshen up for the drop at Cape Town Airport for flights home. Two airport shuttles will be available. For guests on the earlier United flight at 8:50 PM, your transportation will depart from the hotel at 6:30 PM. Guests booked on the later Delta flight at 10:55 PM will depart the hotel at 8:15 PM. You'll arrive at the airport for a 2-hour check in window. Your room is confirmed for two nights, so late check out is not an issue. (B)

Hotels

Stellenbosch	Southern Sun de Wagen Hotel Aan de Wagen Road, Stellenbosch +27 21 415 4444
Franschhoek	Le Franschhoek Resort and Spa 16 Minor Rd, Franschhoek +27 21 876 8900
Cape Town	Protea Waterfront Breakwater Lodge Portswood Rd, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town +27 21 406 1911
Port Elizabeth	Ukhozi Lodge-Kariega Game reserve

*About our flights to Port Elizabeth and return... We're booked with FlySafair. They operate 737 service to many of the cities in South Africa. We're booked on a group manifest. I will have tickets for the group at check in. The flight is only about 1 hour long. That's some consolation for those of us that get assigned middle seats (I have no control over the seat assignment process). You're allowed one carry-on bag and one checked bag, not to exceed 20KG or about 44 pounds.

If you haven't already done so, download whatsapp to your phone at add me as a contact, then send a note to me from the app at 425 417-3322. I've come to depend on this free service as a communication tool while on the road. Any changes to time or activity will be communicated via this app.

A few rules and regs about the app. It's fine to post to the group and is an outstanding photo sharing tool.

If you wish to send a private message or tell me (or another member) something the group doesn't need to hear, clicking on the individual's name will allow you to send a message to them only.

Please no posting between 11:00 PM and 7:00 AM. The notification bell interferes with my optimal sleep time. You can mute notifications, but this could be a problem if you forget to un-mute.

The app is also a great place to share contact information at the end of the tour. I don't share contact details, per se. The app allows anyone to add contacts to their list.

That's it for now! See you in South Africa.

Brad