

South Africa

January 29th to February 9th

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: Monday, January 29

We'll begin the tour with a stay in the town of [Stellenbosch](#), our base for the first three nights of the tour.

Arrival flight times should have us on the group at Cape Town International Airport and ready to roll by noon. I have copies of air schedules for each of you. If you receive any drastic schedule changes from your carrier, please let me know.

Once we've met our guide and driver, we'll be on our way to the hotel. Given that it's a bit early to check in and we'd like to get on a local schedule as soon as possible, we'll stop en-route for a wine tasting and light lunch.

Our visit is planned for [Neethlingshof Winery](#) at 2:00 PM. We'll take about 90 minutes there before taking another short hop to the hotel. Total travel time, with the stop, is just 45 minutes. Already in the area? You can meet us there about 2:00 PM instead of coming to the airport to join the group.

We'll arrive in Stellenbosch by 3:30 with dinner planned this evening at 7:00 PM near the hotel. Overnight Stellenbosch (de Wagen Boutique Hotel) (LD)

DAY 2: Tuesday, January 30

We'll start shortly after breakfast this morning with a visit to the [winery of Ernie Els](#), with wine tasting and light bites. We'll enjoy an afternoon visit to [Lanzerac Winery](#). You'll have some shopping strolling time in Stellenbosch in the afternoon and dinner is on your own this evening. There may be another option thrown in as well. Overnight Stellenbosch. (de Wagen Boutique Hotel) (BL)

DAY 3: Wednesday, January 31

We'll begin our touring about 9:30 this morning with an opportunity to stretch our legs and expand our artistic senses with a tour of the [Dylan Lewis Sculpture Garden](#). Departing there, we make a very short drive to the [Uva Mira Winery](#) for a wine tasting and light lunch. In the afternoon, we've got one more tasting at the [Spier Wine Farm](#). Dinner is hosted at 7:00 PM near the hotel. Overnight Stellenbosch (de Wagen Boutique Hotel) (BD)

DAY 4: Thursday, February 1

We depart our Stellenbosch Hotel in the morning for Cape Town, a distance of about 35 miles. En-route, we'll take the cableway up to the top of [Table Mountain](#). We'll take about 90 minutes to wander/hike/walk and enjoy the views. There are two cafes on top to grab something to see you through to dinner.

In the afternoon, you can either choose to travel with the coach to Boulders Bay to see the [Penguin colony](#) or drop off at the hotel for free time. Drive time round trip from the hotel is about 2 hours. Dinner is scheduled nearby at 7:00 this evening. Overnight Cape Town. (Protea Waterfront Breakwater Hotel) (BD)

DAY 5: Friday, February 2

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. 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. In the early evening, we'll journey to the seaside community of [Camps Bay](#) for a sunset seafood feast. Return to the hotel after dinner. Overnight Cape Town. (Protea Waterfront Breakwater Hotel) (BD)

DAY 6: Saturday, February 3

We depart the Victoria & Albert Waterfront shortly after breakfast for our drive to our Franschhoek hotel. En-route, we'll stop for wine and food pairing at [Vrede en Lust Winery](#), followed by free time in downtown Franschhoek for a proper lunch, shopping, or walking, as you prefer.

Before checking into our hotel, we'll enjoy a second winery visit at [Stony Brook Vineyards](#). From there, the hotel is just a few minutes away. We'll arrive at our hotel in [Franschhoek](#) about 3:30 PM for check in. Your afternoon is free before meeting for dinner in town at 7:00 PM. Overnight Franschhoek (Le Franschhoek Hotel and Spa) (BD)

DAY 7: Sunday, February 4

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 Franschoek (Le Franschoek Hotel and Spa) (BL)

DAY 8: Monday, February 5

A more reasonable schedule perhaps, with only two official tastings on the calendar. We'll have a morning tasting at [Haute Cabriere](#), followed by an afternoon visit to [Rickety Bridge Winery](#). You'll have free time in the town of Franschoek for lunch on your own and shopping. Because our hotel is located out of the center, it made sense to create time to spend in town.

Dinner is on your own this evening. Overnight Franschoek (Le Franschoek Hotel and Spa) (B)

DAY 9: Tuesday, February 6

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 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. (BD) Overnight Ukhozi Lodge
Safair 130 06FEB24 CPT/PLZ 12:30 PM 1:55 PM*

DAY 10: Wednesday, February 7

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 after noon. Your afternoon game time 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. Overnight Ukhozi Lodge (BLD)

DAY 11: Thursday, February 8

Today 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 see lions up close. I speak from experience on this. Overnight Ukhozi Lodge (BLD)

A couple links to share about Kariega Game Reserve. One is a charitable site that supports communities in the Eastern Cape, called [Pack for a Purpose](#). The other is a site loaded with [photos of wildlife](#) captured at the park.

DAY 12: Friday, February 9

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. Our local flight is designed to join up with scheduled flights home. You'll pick up your baggage at the domestic terminal, then check in for your early evening departure on Emirates, Qatar, British, etc. (B)

Safair 31 09FEB24 PLZ/CPT 2:35 PM 4:00 PM

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](#)

Portwood 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 and 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