

Travel Tips

There are different air carriers who fly to and from South Africa. We advise you to do thorough research on the internet to compare the prices. You can fly directly to South Africa or with a stopover. Very often the stop over option is the cheapest. This way you can actually save quite a bit of money.

You can reach Kurhula Lodge by car from Johannesburg's international airport (OR Tambo - 6 hour drive) or you can fly into Phalaborwa or Hoedspruit airport and then drive to Kurhula (about 1 hour drive). At all airports there are Car-rental facilities. A car will be very handy during your stay as you can then easily participate in the many excursions on offer or drive through the Kruger Park. If you want to travel through the Kruger Park to Mozambique, you will need a 4x4 vehicle.

However, we please note that **if you come in the rainy season, a vehicle with a higher ground clearance is a must!**

You need a valid passport if you want to enter South Africa. You can obtain a Tourist visa when arriving at O.R. Tambo international Airport. This visa is valid for three months and can be extended for a further three months.

In South Africa everyone drives on the left hand side of the road. The roads are generally in a good condition, with one third of the roads still unpaved. In city centres there is a maximum speed limit of 60 kilometres and on high ways a maximum speed limit of 120 kilometres an hour.

Safety

South Africa is a wonderful place to visit, however, there are a few common sense do's and don't's you should be aware of.

The city

Like anywhere in the world, it is unwise to carry significant sums of money with you. Do not wear excessive jewellery or 'show off' expensive electronics. Always lock your car and take out all valuables. It is recommended to leave the glove compartment open, so anyone can see that there is nothing inside worth breaking a window for.

In the larger cities, such as Johannesburg and Cape Town, it is best to stay on the main roads. You may want to keep all doors of your vehicle locked and - at night - carefully run through red lights whenever traffic permits. Do not pick up any hitch hikers and do not go hitch hiking yourself.

The bush

You are not permitted to venture into the game reserves, without the supervision of experienced rangers. The Kruger Park you can enter with your own vehicle. This reserve offers special rest stops where you are allowed to leave your vehicle and stretch your legs or use the sanitation. Apart from these rest stops, do not leave the safety of your vehicle!

Kurhula Lodge is situated in a big five area and does not have any fences around her 21,5 hectares. You can safely move around in our garden surrounding your accommodation, but do not venture out into the reserve by yourself.

Health

Kurhula Lodge is in a low risk malaria area. Please ask your general practitioner about the use of malaria anti-prophylactics. In the spring and summer months we advise the use of long trousers in the evening and insect repellent. All rooms are fitted with mosquito nets.

Tick bite fever is also prevalent in our area, usually contracted by being bitten by a tick. Ticks are found in long grass and usually climb up your leg. That is why we advise the use of long lightweight trousers on any walking hikes.

Snake bites do not occur very often. Snakes are very skittish animals. Therefore it is best to pay attention where you walk. In the highly unlikely event that you do get bitten by a snake, we advise you to remain as calm as possible. Try to identify the snake, apply a pressure bandage on and around the bite and report this directly to us. We will make sure that you will get to the hospital as soon as possible.

Scorpion stings are quite painful but only in few recorded cases involving children and elderly people their sting proved to be fatal. An effective way to treat it is to apply kitchen salt on the wound and an ice bag against the pain.

Climate

Kurhula is situated in the eastern lowveld that has a subtropical climate with hot, wet summers and cool, dry winters.

Spring (September-November) Occasional rains and hot. Flowering knob-thorns, new grass emerges on the savannah and the mopaneveld becomes green. Good game-viewing as bush is not too thick, first migrant birds appear and in November lots of young animals are visible.

Minimum: 20 degrees Celsius Maximum: 30 degrees Celsius

Summer (December-February) Hot, humid and rains with some spectacular thunderstorms. Landscape very colourful and marulas start fruiting. Season of snakes, scorpions and spiders and there is intense predator activity.

Minimum: 20 degrees Celsius Maximum: 35+ degrees Celsius

Autumn (March-May) Noticeable drop in temperatures, occasional late summer rains. Vegetation dense, plenty of water available and baobabs begin fruiting. Most animals in peak condition and game spotting is more difficult.

Minimum: 20 degrees Celsius Maximum: 30 Degrees Celsius

Winter (June-August): Cool mornings and evenings, but warm days. Many trees lose their leaves, water is scarce and the veld prone to fire. Game concentrates around waterholes. Game viewing is good.

Minimum: 10 degrees Celsius Maximum: 25 Degrees Celsius

Holidays

In South Africa there are 12 public holidays, where the banks and most shops will be closed:

January 1st: New Years Day

March 21st: Human Rights Day

Friday before Easter: Good Friday

Monday after Easter: Family Day

April 27th: Constitution Day (= birthday of the first national elections)

May 1st: Day of Labour

June 16th: Day of the Youth

August 9th: National Women day

September 24th: Day of the Heritage

December 16th: Day of the reconciliation

December 25th: Christmas Day

December 26th: Goodwill Day

Practical information

Money

The currency of South Africa is the Rand (ZAR). See www.xe.com for the current exchange rate.

There are several banks in Hoedspruit and Phalaborwa, near Kurhula Lodge. There you can exchange travellers cheques and your foreign cash for the local currency. Most banks also have an ATM (Automatic Teller) machine where you can make withdrawals against your Master / Visa cards.

Electricity

The standard voltage in the South Africa is 220/230 volts. You will need an adaptor for the use of European appliances. Kurhula Lodge has several in stock which you can use during your stay.

Car rental

In order to rent a car in South Africa you will need the following:

- A valid driving licence for at least five years
- An international driving licence (obtainable in your country of origin)
- Age over 23 years
- A credit card (Visa / Master / Amex / Diners) - no debit cards are accepted

There are many international Car rental companies represented in South Africa and we advise you book all car rentals in advance: www.hertz.co.za, www.avis.co.za, www.europcar.com or www.budget.co.za.

We are always prepared to do a query for you and perhaps we can help you to organize some discount!