

# South Africa - Birds & Cricket (One Day Internationals)

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

January 2027

## Outline itinerary

<b>Day 1</b>	Depart London.
<b>Day 2</b>	Arrive Cape Town & transfer Paarl.
<b>Day 3</b>	ODI, Boland Stadium, Paarl.
<b>Day 4</b>	Paarl.
<b>Day 5/8</b>	Bloemfontein (including two ODIs at The Willows on Days 6 & 8).
<b>Day 9/11</b>	Karoo Gariiep Nature Reserve.
<b>Day 12</b>	Depart Bloemfontein.
<b>Day 13</b>	Arrive London.

N.B. This tour can be combined with our 'South Africa – Birds & Cricket': Cape Town Test Match' holiday which precedes this trip (website tour code: ZAF16)

## Departs

January 2027

## Focus

Cricket, plus birds, mammals & other wildlife.

## Grading

Grade A (see Page 4 for more information)

## Dates & Prices

See website (tour code ZAF15)

## Highlights:

- Enjoy three One Day Internationals between England and the Proteas, one in Paarl & two in Bloemfontein
- Abundant birdlife including Cape Rockjumper, African Penguin, Cape Sugarbird & many others
- Night drives in Karoo Gariiep Nature Reserve, home to Aardvark & Aardwolf



Cape Rockjumper



Aardwolf



Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: [info@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)



## Itinerary

**NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations may necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.**

### Day 1

### Depart London

We leave London Heathrow this evening on board a scheduled British Airways overnight flight bound for Cape Town

### Day 2

### Paarl

We are due into Cape Town late morning where we will meet our local naturalist guide and drive north to the town of Paarl, the venue for the first of the One Day Internationals and our base for the first three nights of the tour. We will stop en route to look for our first South African birds

If the flight arrives on time, we will spend some time at the Strandfontein Wetlands before starting our drive to Paarl. These are actually large water-treatment ponds and the open water as well as the prolific growth of water vegetation makes for a habitat that is very attractive to waterbirds such as Greater Flamingo, Red-billed and Cape Teals, Maccoa Duck, Cape Shoveler and Southern Pochard among others. This is a great venue for birding in the 'English' style; ie. setting up scopes and scanning for new species.

### Day 3

### Boland Stadium, One Day International

Today will enjoy a day of cricket at the Boland Stadium in Paarl where England will play the Proteas. The match is likely to last most of the day and afterwards we will head back to our guesthouse to rest and/or drinks in the bar, whilst no doubt enjoying a lively discussion about the ups and downs of the day's game.

### Day 4

### Paarl

We will spend today birdwatching around Paarl and down on the coast of False Bay. Areas we are likely to explore include the following:

**Paarl Mountain Reserve** - a beautiful reserve perched atop the plateau of Paarl Mountain. The size of this reserve is just over 1,900 hectares and the vegetation consists mainly of mountain fynbos dotted with small granite koppies, stands of evergreen trees and the occasional exotic tree. Birds include Cape Sugarbird, Cape Bulbul, Double-collard, Orange-breasted and Malachite Sunbirds. This is also a very good area to find the elusive Protea Seed-eater (Canary). Black Eagle, Jackal



Cape Sugarbird

Buzzard and African Goshawk often soar overhead along with various swifts, swallows and martins.

**Rooi Els** – Rooi Els, a small seaside village on the edge of False Bay, is a good spot to find the endemic Cape Rockjumper. Other birds around include Cape Sugarbird, Orange-Breasted Sunbird, Verreaux's Eagle, Cape and Sentinel Rock Thrushes, Ground Woodpecker and many more.



African Penguins

**Stony Point** – Stony Point Nature Reserve, near Betty's Bay, is home one of the only two mainland African Penguin colonies in South Africa. Around 1,600 pairs breed here along with a wide variety of other birds and mammals including Crown, Cape and Bank Cormorants, Cape Spurfowl, Jackal Buzzard, Cape Grassbird, Southern Boubou, Cape White-eye and others. Rock Hyrax are also common.

**Harold Porter Botanical Gardens** – Depending on time and weather, we may also visit Harold Porter Botanical Gardens which is not far from Stony Point. Although the flowers will not be at their best in January, the gardens are a great spot for birds throughout the year. Species to look out for include Cape Grassbird, Cape Rock Thrush, African Crested Flycatcher, Cape Robin-chat and Sweet Waxbill.

## Day 5

## Bloemfontein

Today we will return to Cape Town in order to catch our flight to Bloemfontein (via Johannesburg). On arrival we transfer to a comfortable hotel in the town, our base for the next four nights of the tour. We will, of course, make full use of any spare time today with birdwatching stops where possible around Paarl, Cape Town and Bloemfontein.

## Day 6

## The Willows Stadium, One Day International

Today will enjoy our second day of One Day International cricket, this time at The Willows Stadium in Bloemfontein where England will once again play the Proteas.

## Day 7

## Bloemfontein

We will spend today exploring around Bloemfontein in search of the wildlife of this arid region of the country. We are sure to spend time exploring the Free State Botanical Gardens, a 70-hectare reserve showcasing South Africa's flora and fauna and managed by the South African National Biodiversity Institute. Habitats here include grassland, woodland and rocky dolerite koppies, home to over 140 species of birds, 54 species of reptiles and approximately 35 species of mammals. These include Long-crested Eagle, Amethyst, White-bellied and Malachite Sunbirds, Karoo Scrub-robin, Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Fairy Flycatcher,



Long-crested Eagle

Pirit Batis, Layard's Warbler, Chestnut-vented Warbler, African Paradise Flycatcher, Ashy Tit, Common Scimitarbill and Long-tailed Widowbird. Mammals include Bush Duiker, Yellow Mongoose, Suricate (Meerkat) and Rock Hyrax.

## Day 8

## The Willows Stadium, One Day International

We will return to The Willows Stadium in Bloemfontein this morning for our final day of ODI cricket between England and the Proteas.

## Day 9 – 11

## Karoo Gariep Reserve

After breakfast on Day 9 we will drive for three hours to New Holme Lodge in the Karoo Gariep Nature Reserve. After settling in, we will head out to sample the wildlife of the Karoo, a vast semi-desert habitat that covers over 40% of South Africa. Birds may include Burchell's Courser, Blue Korhaan, Blue Crane, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Greater Kestrel, Bokmakierie, Karoo Thrush and Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, whilst both Rowan and Sable Antelopes live here too.

After dinner back at the lodge, we will again head out for our first night drive. Karoo Gariep is an exciting new destination that is gaining an excellent reputation for elusive mammal sightings, and boasts regular sightings of Aardvark, Aardwolf, Cape Fox, Bat-eared Fox, African Wildcat and Cape Porcupine. Rarer mammals such as Zorilla are also seen on occasion.

We will have two full days in the wonderful Karoo Gariep Nature Reserve, enjoying morning, sunset and night drives. During the day, we will be able to relax around the lodge, and explore the reserve, on foot and on game drives, in search of its diurnal birds and other wildlife. For those that are interested, it will also be possible to take a guided walk from the lodge to an ancient rock art site, while learning about the area's fascinating history, including the legacy of the Anglo-Boer War.

Meals will be taken at the lodge, although, weather permitting, there may be an opportunity to eat dinner out in



Swallow-tailed Bee-eater



Aardvark

the bush one night. Of course, the focus of our stay here will be the reserve's birds and mammals. Over the last few years, this reserve has proven to be especially reliable for Aardvark, perhaps the most sought-after of Southern African rare mammals. Although widespread in Africa, Aardvarks – which means 'earth pig' in Afrikaans – are rarely observed, in most areas being strictly nocturnal in their habits and emerging from their burrows well after sunset. The second of Southern Africa's 'Aards', the attractive Aardwolf, is also regularly seen on night drives

## Day 12

## Depart Bloemfontein

We have a final morning to enjoy the wildlife of the Karoo Gariep Nature Reserve, before we must leave on the three hour drive to Bloemfontein Airport to catch our late afternoon flight to Johannesburg. From there we continue home on our early evening British Airways flight to London Heathrow.

## Day 13

## Arrive London

We will arrive back at London Heathrow early this morning.

---

## Weather

January is mid-summer in South Africa with midday temperatures often climbing into the mid to upper 20s degrees centigrade around the Cape Town and 30 degrees centigrade plus around Paarl. The maritime weather around the Cape can be fickle at any time of the year, however, and although we expect plenty of sunshine, the occasional wet and windy day on the coast here cannot be ruled out.

Bloemfontein lies in the centre of the country where temperatures often climb into the mid-30s degrees centigrade during the middle of the day dropping down to the mid-high teens at night. There is also likely to be some rain during our stay, although the showers tend to take the form of short and sharp afternoon thunderstorms. There will be plenty of sunshine too!

## Tour grading

Grade A. This is an easy tour suitable for those with an average fitness level who enjoy cricket and birdwatching. Walks are on mostly gentle terrain, although it should be noted that it will be hot in the middle of the day, especially around Bloemfontein and our time at Karoo Gariep will include a couple of optional night drives and early morning starts.

## Your transport

We use 10-seater Toyota Quantum minibuses for the Cape section of the tour specially converted so that all the passenger windows slide open. Please be aware, however, that the windows open by sliding forwards and backwards and so not all the windows can be fully open at the same time. There is enough room for photography, however, and group members will be rotated frequently so everyone gets equal share of the 'best seats'.

Although the vehicles we will be using for our time around Bloemfontein do not have opening windows, we will not be birding from them and they will only be used to get from A to B. All drives in Karoo Gariep will be undertaken in open vehicles.

## Food & accommodation

All accommodation is included in the holiday cost as are breakfasts and dinners from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 12. Lunches are excluded and you should budget for around £150 - £200 per person to cover these. We will be based in comfortable hotel and lodge accommodation for the duration of this tour. All rooms have private facilities.

## One Day International tickets

The tour price includes tickets for the three ODI games, one at the Boland Stadium in Paarl and two at the Willows Stadium in Bloemfontein.

## Extra expenses

Please note that the following expenses are excluded from the cost of the holiday and are paid locally. Lunches, any necessary visas (not needed for UK citizens), locally paid airport taxes, drinks, tips and all items of a personal nature.

## Your safety & security

You have chosen to travel to South Africa. Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website – [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-africa](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-africa) or telephone 0870 6060290 prior to travel.

## How to book your place

In order to book a place on this holiday, you will need to read the Naturetrek terms and conditions in the back of our brochure or on our website, and then book either online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk), by calling us on 01962 733051, or by completing and returning the booking form in the brochure together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost. If you do not have a copy of this brochure, please call us on 01962 733051.

---