

South Africa's Garden Route

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart London.
Day 2/3	Addo Elephant Park.
Day 4/5	Storm's River.
Day 6	Sedgefield.
Day 7/8	De Hoop Nature Reserve.
Day 9/10	Hermanus.
Day 11	Depart Cape Town.
Day 12	Arrive London.

Departs

August/September.

Focus

Birds, mammals & other wildlife.

Grading

Grade A/B. See Page 5 for more information.

Dates and Prices

Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk

Highlights

- Nine nights exploring the famous Garden Route
- Day & night drives in Addo Elephant Park
- Explore Tsitsikamma National Park
- Visit De Hoop Nature Reserve, a world biodiversity hotspot
- Southern Right Whales in Walker Bay
- Birds including Chorister Robin-chat, Knysna Turaco, Blue Crane & Narina Trogon
- Expertly guided by local South African naturalists



From the top: Clarence Drive, Southern Right Whale & Elephants in Addo Elephant Park



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Introduction

South Africa's scenic Garden Route offers a remarkable blend of spectacular scenery and abundant wildlife. On this carefully crafted tour we offer an unforgettable road trip through some of the region's most captivating landscapes and hope to encounter a wide variety of birds, mammals and other wildlife enroute. We begin our adventure, however, in Addo Elephant Park, not only home to Elephants, as its name would suggest, but much more too. Next, we venture into the lush habitats of Storm's River, where we explore the ancient forests and rugged coastlines of Tsitsikamma National Park, before moving on to the peaceful town of Sedgefield which is edged by long pristine beaches. From there we visit the 'Wilderness' section of the Garden Route National Park, known for its lush forests, rivers and beautiful waterfalls and offering numerous birdwatching and walking opportunities. Next, we explore the De Hoop Nature Reserve, renowned for being a biodiversity hotspot with breathtaking coastal views around every bend! Finally, we end our trip in Hermanus, famous for its world-renowned whale-watching opportunities and charming seaside atmosphere.

Itinerary

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

Day 1

In Flight

We depart from London's Heathrow Airport this evening on board our scheduled British Airways flight bound for Johannesburg.

Day 2

Addo Elephant Park



African Elephants

Our overnight flight arrives into Johannesburg in the early morning from where we connect with a short internal flight to Port Elizabeth. Here we will meet our guide and embark on the one-hour drive to Addo Elephant Park, stopping for lunch along the way. After checking into our accommodation for the next two nights we will enjoy our first game drive. Our time in Addo offers the best opportunity during this holiday to see some of Africa's most iconic large mammals including the African Elephant, Cape Buffalo and Black Rhino. Antelope species, such as the Red

Hartebeest, Common Eland, Bushbuck and Greater Kudu, also inhabit the park, whilst birdlife is rich and diverse and includes Cape Francolin, African Fish Eagle, Secretarybird and the beautiful Knysna Turaco. In the evening, we will return to the rest camp for dinner.

Day 3

Addo Elephant Park

This morning, we will head out at first light on an early game drive focusing on the reserve's key waterholes which attract a wide variety of animals from Elephants to Warthogs. Other mammals to look out for include Lion, Spotted Hyena, Plains Zebra, Cape Mountain Zebra and the endearing Meerkat or Suricate, whilst birds such as Denham's Bustard, Blue Crane, Southern Tchagra, Bokmakierie, Pale Chanting Goshawk, Martial Eagle and Emerald-spotted Wood Dove may also be seen. Arriving back at the camp mid-morning, we will have free time to relax and visit the lodge's private waterhole and the underground hide which provides a unique low angle view over a waterhole and is floodlit at night.

Later in the afternoon we will head out on a second game drive. During our stay at Addo Elephant Park there is also the option to join a night drive which offers the chance to locate a variety of nocturnal wildlife such as Spotted Eagle Owl, Barn Owl, Black-backed Jackal, Bat-eared Fox, Honey Badger, Bushpig, South African Crested Porcupine and even Aardvark for the very fortunate few. In the evening, we return to our rest camp for our second night in their comfortable chalets.

Day 4 & 5

Storms River

After breakfast we will leave Addo Elephant Park and move along the coast making our way westwards to Storm's River in the Tsitsikamma region, a journey of approximate three hours with stops along the way. For two nights we will stay at Storms River Mouth Rest Camp, within Tsitsikamma National Park, which lies on the shores of the Indian Ocean. The park is known for its diverse ecosystems, including forests, fynbos and coastal habitats rich in marine life. Here we will stay in log cabins right on the shoreline. It is a rather spectacular



Storms River Suspension Bridge

location! We will explore the park on foot in search of such birds as Chorister Robin-chat, Olive Woodpecker, Cape Batis, Olive Bush-shrike, African Paradise Flycatcher, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Grey Cuckooshrike, Narina Trogon, African Fish Eagle and Knysna Turaco (which derives its name from the nearby town of Knysna). There are many walks to enjoy here, ranging from coastal forest trails to rocky shoreline walks dotted with rock pools full of intertidal life. We will also spend time on the first stretch



Knysna Turaco

of the famous Otter Trail which leads to a spectacular waterfall tumbling down the cliff. The Dolphin Trail – and numerous other small hikes – begin here and the mouth of the river can be crossed via the iconic suspension bridge. The wildlife of Tsitsikamma National Park includes a variety of mammals such as Vervet Monkeys, Rock Hyrax, and Chacma Baboons, plus an interesting variety of reptiles and amphibians. Cape Fur Seals can be seen offshore and even the occasional whale or pod of dolphins pass by.

Day 6

Sedgefield

Today we head for the town of Sedgefield, a picturesque coastal community nestled between the towns of Knysna and George. Known for its peaceful setting, Sedgefield offers a unique blend of natural beauty, being surrounded as it is by long golden beaches, sand dunes, lakes and lush fynbos-covered hills. We will be spending one night here in a comfortable guest house just 80 metres from Myoli Beach home to African Black Oystercatcher, White-fronted Plover and a variety of other waders.

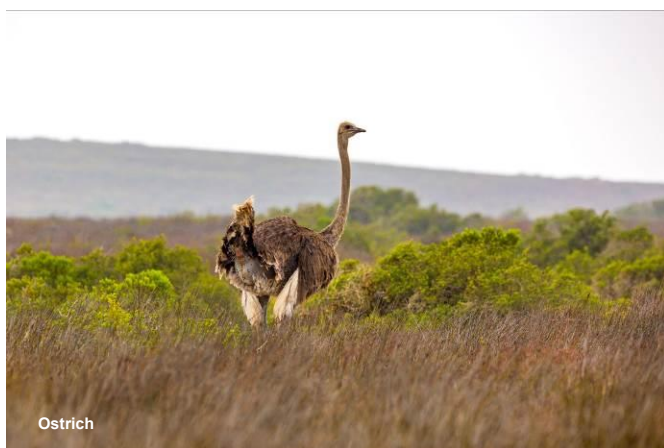
We will be sure to visit the 'Wilderness Section' of the Garden Route National Park. This section of the park offers numerous outdoor activities such as hiking, canoeing and birdwatching. The Kingfisher Trail and the Giant Kingfisher Trail will lead us through luxuriant forests, along rivers and to tumbling waterfalls. The birdlife here is abundant and we will be looking out for such species as Knysna Turaco, Narina Trogon, Chorister Robin-chat, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Olive Bush-shrike, Grey Cuckooshrike, Red-necked Spurfowl, Lemon Dove, African Crowned Eagle, Half-collared and Malachite Kingfishers, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Forest Canary and many others. Mammals such as bushbucks, duikers and Chacma baboons can also be found. After a day of exploring the 'Wilderness', we return to our guesthouse in Sedgefield to relax for the night.



Chorister Robin-chat

Day 7 – 8

De Hoop Nature Reserve



Ostrich

This morning, after some further early birding in the 'Wilderness', we will depart for De Hoop Nature Reserve, a journey of around three hours with stops along the way. This magnificent reserve is located in the Western Cape Province and covers over 34,000 hectares. It is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots and famous for its picturesque landscapes, which include coastal dunes, wetlands, limestone hills and fynbos; all edged by the blue waters of the Indian Ocean. It also features De Hoop Vlei, a large freshwater lake, recognised as a Ramsar Wetland of

international importance. The vlei is home to many birds and is one of the finest birdwatching destinations in all of South Africa. Greater Flamingo, Great White Pelican, African Spoonbill, Cape Teal, South African Shelduck and Caspian Tern are just a few of the waterbirds to look out for, whilst in drier areas we hope to see Ostrich, Blue Crane, Knysna Woodpecker, Southern Tchagra, Capped Wheatear, Namaqua Sandgrouse, Greater and Lesser Honeyguides, Brown-backed Honeybird and Horus Swift.

The 86 species of mammal recorded here include Bontebok, Cape Mountain Zebra, Eland (the largest of all the antelopes), Grey Rhebok, Chacma Baboon, Yellow Mongoose and both Cape Clawless and Spotted-necked Otters. Cetaceans such as Southern Right and Humpback Whales, Bottlenose and Common Dolphin can be seen off-shore. For our two nights in De Hoop Nature Reserve we will be staying in comfortable cottages.

Day 9 – 10

Hermanus

From De Hoop we will drive for just over two hours to Hermanus stopping along the way to visit Cape Agulhas, the most southerly tip of the African continent and the meeting point of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. Hermanus sits on the edge of Walker Bay and is tucked between the Atlantic Ocean and the Olifantsberg Mountains. The town was originally known as 'Hermanuspietersfontein' and was named after a freshwater spring discovered by a shepherd named Hermanus Pieters. Today, Hermanus is best known as South Africa's whale-watching capital due to the annual gatherings of Southern Right Whales that move into the sheltered waters of Walker Bay to mate and give birth.



The whales are usually present from July to December and during this season they can be watched both from the cliff-top path in front of our hotel or from the water on an optional whale-watching cruise (see 'Extra Expenses' on Page 5). Cape Fur Seals are commonly seen on the rocky shores or basking in the sun and there are usually plenty of Rock Hyrax too enjoying the sun's rays on top of the bay's rocky cliffs. African Black Oystercatchers, Cape Cormorants and Hartlaub's Gull are common along the coast, whilst the inland fynbos of the Fernkloof Nature Reserve supports several endemic birds such as Cape Sugarbird and Orange-breasted Sunbird and a colourful suite of endemic flora, much of which should be in flower at the time of our visit. We will be spending two nights at the Windsor Hotel in Hermanus which is located on the coast with direct access to a famous cliff-top walk.

Day 11

In Flight

Since our return flight to the UK does not depart until the evening, we have plenty of time to slowly make our way to Cape Town. We will take the coastal road and make several stops en route including the Harold Porter National Botanical Gardens, Stony Point's African Penguin colony and Rooi Els (an excellent spot for Cape Rockjumper and Ground Woodpecker) before making our way through to Cape Town Airport to arrive in time for our flight home.

Day 12

Arrive London

We are due to arrive back into London's Heathrow Airport early morning.

N.B. Please note that this tour can be linked with our South Africa - Best of the Cape tour ZAF05. Please call the office on +44 (0) 1962 733051 for more information on linking these tours .

Weather

In late August and early September, South Africa's Garden Route is transitioning from winter to spring. Daytime temperatures range from 18°C to 22°C, while nighttime temperatures are cooler, ranging from 8°C to 12°C. The area sees moderate rainfall, with short, scattered showers. There will likely be a mix of mild sunny and cloudy

days although early spring storms do blow through from time to time. This is a tour where it is advisable to pack for all eventualities!

Tour Grading

Grade A/B. This tour is suitable for anyone of any age used to some regular walking. The holiday will be vehicle based in Addo Elephant Park and De Hoop Nature Reserve. We plan to spend as much of the holiday as possible on foot, however, walking on good trails. It should be noted that some of the trails at Tsitsikamma National Park and Wilderness can be steep and rocky in places.

Food & accommodation

Accommodation will be in a mix of national park chalets, cottages, guesthouses and hotels. All rooms have en-suite facilities. All breakfasts and evening meals are included in the tour cost, but lunches are at your own expense (allow around £90 - £110 per person). The standard of food in South Africa is excellent and extremely good value for money.

Extra Expenses

Please note that the following expenses are excluded from the cost of the holiday, subject to change and are paid locally. 1) Optional whale watching boat trip from Hermanus: approximately 1,320 Rand per person. 2) drinks, lunches, tips, laundry, souvenirs and all items of a personal nature.

Group size & transport

The maximum group size will be 12 people plus local naturalist guides who will meet the group on arrival into Port Elizabeth. The group will travel in Quantum minibuses that have been converted to have opening windows on each row of seats. All passengers will have window seats.

Entry requirements

UK passport holders do not require a visa to enter South Africa, but will need a valid passport with at least six months still to run after the date of travel and at least two blank pages for the entry and exit stamps. A list of recommended vaccinations is included in our pre-departure pack which will be sent to you after booking, however there are currently no mandatory requirements for South Africa.

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, Commonwealth and Development 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 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, 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.
