



Tailor Made Safaris • Specialist Walking Safaris • Guide Development • Building Leadership & Team Capacity

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Frequently Answered Questions

Outside of the information provided within area information sheets, suggested packing lists, our “terms and conditions” and so forth, the below reflect some frequently asked questions by our clients. Access to reliable, and current information, is fundamental to your planning a safari that delivers to your expectation.

1. General Information

- South Africa falls within the Southern Hemisphere. Due to its diverse topography and position, temperatures can fluctuate greatly across its regions and seasons. Seasonally, September to end November are spring, December to end February are summer, March to end May are autumn and June to end August are winter. The safari areas we visit mostly receive rainfall between November and February. We suggest reading our information sheet titled “Safari Clothing & Equipment”.
- Although not always the first language of South Africa’s diverse population, you will be able to communicate in English.
- South Africa’s electricity supply is 220 volts AC 50 Hz. Appliances of lesser voltage require transformers and adaptors. We suggest your packing an adaptor that is suitable for your device and gadgets. Based on their remoteness, most of the camps we visit generate their own electricity, this means that certain appliances like hairdryers cannot be used.
- Mobile signal coverage is mostly poor, sporadic to non-existent. within remote areas. The mobile provider MTN generally offers the best rural coverage. Many lodges provide you access to WiFi.
- Most of the safari areas we visit are remote. This generally means that there are no nearby shops, ATM’s, petrol stations or restaurants. Travel to these takes time and we strongly suggest that we plan to have everything with us.
- Value Added Tax (VAT) of 15% applies in SA. VAT can be claimed back on some physical products at the airport whereas VAT on service products, including daily rates, cannot be claimed back.
- Should you wish to tip staff for good service, or use money for some shopping, please consider bringing along some cash. With regards tips, at lodges or in camps, we always suggest to first check if any guidelines are recommended.
- Visa and entry requirements vary for visitors from different countries. Please see our terms and conditions for important information in this regard.

Travelers require a passport [with sufficient blank pages for entry and exit stamps] that is valid for six months beyond their intended stay, a valid onward air ticket and access to sufficient funds for their holiday.

We always suggest that make and carry copies, that are stored separately, of your passports and other identification.



2. Are safari companies or operators the same and do they offer similar experiences?

No, with regards both points.

A safari in Africa is something everyone simply must do – It can one of life's most memorable experiences and for some people even life changing. Saying this we know that making the decisions with who to work and where to go can be difficult and worrying - Even for seasoned travellers. A good private guide or safari operator makes your journey that much better.

- As with all businesses, the levels of client service and customer journey are not equal. There are budget operators and there are high service safari operators – The two offers, the experience and overall value are not the same. Spirited Adventures offers high quality private guiding and facilitates authentic, exciting, active, immersive and specialized experiences; Tailor made for both discerning and rugged adventurers. We are committed to, and pride ourselves in, high standards. We do not compete with budget operators.
- To create a high exchange of value, and deliver the associated quality service, requires deeper staff experience [guides and all other staff], better underpinning business infrastructures, equipment, auditable financials and strong relationships with the concessions used. These require resource and effort to maintain - Largely due to lack of paying attention to, or understanding, standard business practises, this industry has a notoriously high company churn rate. To stay in operation, whilst offering a high level of service and experience [customer value], a company must be able to continue investing into the business and its people.
- Almost each good safari operator focusses on a certain market, client type and activity preference. Although claims might be made that an operator can serve all niches effectively, not unlike any other business, generalists deliver a generic experience and not able to deliver a specialist experience.



3. Are all guides the same?

The quality of guide you choose to work, hugely influences the quality of your experience. For the first-time safari client, it is difficult to determine the quality of guiding standards without a previous benchmark, however as with all professions, all guides and guided experiences are not equal.

- There are substantial differences between guide skill, knowledge, qualifications and experience. As guides mature in their experience many develop specialisms, and resultantly serve different client preferences - Specialist guides cannot be compared to entry level guides.
- Walking guides have different experience, a different skill set and working through an additional qualifications process, when compared to vehicle guides. There is a clear difference between undertaking short walks with close at hand lodge support versus been comfortable in all and multi-day unassisted experiences.
- To enhance your safari, and deliver to your expectation, our standards are bench-marked high. You will receive quality, participative, immersive guiding that is focused on your learning and building experience whilst keeping you safe. We work to set protocols in accordance to our company objectives and ethos. You can expect that your guides will have:
 - recognized qualifications
 - experience, knowledge and skill developed over time
 - the ability to offer continuity through your experience
 - areas of specialism
 - good communication skills
 - maturity and worldliness



4. What questions should I ask about my guide?

- Three fundamental questions [as these have legal bearing] all clients should ask their guide include:
 - Are you registered with the South African Department of Tourism?
 - Do you have a professional-drivers-permit?
 - Are you legal to walk and is your advanced rifle handling certificate current?

- Clients should ask the guides qualification level. Within the Field Guides Association Of Southern Africa [focused on professionalizing and raising industry standards] education hierarchy, the entry qualification is a Level 1. Each of the qualifications requires the completion of a number of assignments, sitting exams and practical assessments. Guides are expected to hold logbooks. Above the Level 3, sit various specialist qualifications [Specialist Skills and Knowledge].
- Walking guides should have a separate, additional qualification and a current advanced rifle handling certificate. Leading trails requires different experience, different skills and a different mindset to vehicle-based guiding.

5. Are all safari areas the same?

Absolutely not.

Each area has its own uniqueness – This is in terms of many factors including the type of habitat, species diversity, wildlife densities, vegetation zones, underlying geology, climatic influence, conservation practise, density of lodges in the area, traversing rights, exposure to other tourists, etc. True wilderness is increasingly under threat.



6. Does Spirited Adventures own the properties we will visit?

We are privileged to have long established relationships with the owners of the properties, reserves, concessionaires and lodges, from which we will facilitate your dream safari to reality. We do not own these and offer an independent service that is tailor made for you.

7. How far in advance can one book and pay for a safari?

- To secure availability at the times which you choose, advance booking is always preferable. Most bookings are made between 3 – 12 months in advance.
- To confirm a booking, a 50% non-refundable deposit [unless agreed differently in writing] of the total safari cost is required. The balance is payable 60 days before arrival. Cancellation forfeits apply as per our terms and conditions.

8. What times of the year are good to go on safari?

- We take bookings throughout the year. The only time we do not work is between the 23rd December – 5th January during which period we spend time with our families.
- Each season [and month] has its own special energy. When you choose to visit depends on your objectives and when you are able to. We take clients to the bush throughout the year. One or more of our guides are on safari every month of the year.

The bush opens up during the drier months of April to end November – This facilitates better game viewing and it is a cooler. Predators love this time, herbivores struggle. From November through to March, the bush fundamentally transforms with the rains. The trees, shrubs and grasses are lush, flowers are to be found and the herbivores are notably happier. During these months we are blessed with the antics of newly born antelope.



In terms of seasonality, with our falling in the Southern Hemisphere, September to end November are Spring, December to end February are summer, March to end May are autumn and June to end August are winter.

9. How long is the ideal safari?

We always suggest a minimum of 3 to 5 nights. Most people only settle into their safari on the start of the third day – Especially after travelling a long way or across continents. The period spent in planning is always longer than the time spent on your safari and thus it is important for you to maximize this special time. All our clients leave feeling that time past too quickly.

- Our safaris range in length up to 8 days. When planning please keep in mind the travel time required to reach your destination. If travelling by road, it is worth noting that some roads, especially as one nears our chosen safari areas, require us to reduce our travelling speed.

10. What city you recommend we fly into?

- From the United States [often via London] or Europe, it is easiest is to fly to Johannesburg OR Tambo.
- For safaris in the Greater Kruger National park, once in South Africa you will transfer to Hoedspruit where either Spirited Adventures or a transfer vehicle will collect you.



11. How do we best plan for a safari?

What to pack, how to pack, preparation and general trip management are fundamental to the success and overall enjoyment of your safari experience. We are here to help you – We can will help you with packing suggestions, basic advice with regards medical decisions, and be available to answer any questions you might have. Ask us for our packing information sheets.

Three notes:

- When going on a walking safari your equipment choices and level of required physical fitness is different to a purely vehicle-based safari. Choices of what to pack generally increase with complexity for self-sufficiency activities.
- For walking safaris pack neutral colored clothing e.g. browns, greens, khakis, dark blues, grey, etc. Although many animals are color blind, bright colors are intrusive in the bush. Certain colors, whites, neon yellows, black, bright pinks, etc. are picked up by animals quickly.
- Plan on arriving with a reasonable level of walking and physical fitness. If you are able to walk for a couple of hours at a time you are good - There is no need to be super fit.

12. What should I be thinking about from a medical perspective?

- If travelling, it is always advisable to consult your medical practitioner to discuss specific requirements for the region you are visiting [including inoculations, prophylaxis, etc.] as well as the management of any personal medical conditions you might have. This consultation should ideally occur 8 week's prior departure for your safari.
- Malaria is preventable, and it should not get in the way of you enjoying your safari nor of your having the wilderness experience of a life time. If visiting malaria risk areas, we strongly suggest that you consult your Doctor with regards taking prophylaxis, that you apply an insect repellent with a reasonable DEET content and sleep under a mosquito net. Citronella, mosquito bangles and related soaps are scientifically proven mostly useless. Should any of the typical symptoms present themselves, it is important to promptly visit your Doctor or clinic - Caught early it is readily treatable.
- It is imperative that you bring along your personal medication as well as any medication you feel you might need. South African law with regards administering or suggesting medication is very restrictive. If you wish to use medication from our personal kits, this decision is entirely yours.
- When on a more energetic walking safari, consider how you will replace the minerals and electrolytes which your body will lose whilst sweating [rehydrate, salt tablets, etc.]. Not doing so, can result in your feeling unwell and lethargic.



13. Can I bring my children on a walking safari?

We find that most children and teenagers absolutely love the experience and are often highly engaged. The future of conservation, wilderness and on a simpler level, outdoor pursuits, lies in the hands of today's youngsters. Where exposure opportunities of this sort are not available during their formative years they are likely to be distracted elsewhere.

From personal experience [Lutz in particular enjoys working with children] the age at which children can start coming on these types of experiences largely depends on the parental mindset and how much the parents are willing to compromise.

In saying this, younger children do place limitations on what we can do. We always suggest we talk through this point prior you book your trip. Some observations hereto:

- A high focus on the safety of your children **MUST** be maintained throughout the safari. This includes your/ our practicing high situational awareness [relaxed but constantly aware], a willingness to think/ do for them, constantly keeping them in your/ our sight and setting very clear boundaries. They must be with you from dusk through to dawn.
- Children must be able to keep quiet at certain stages, follow instructions and not be panicky. A level of fitness and strength is required for a walking safari. In instances where this is not possible [for any number of reasons] we set a suggested minimum age of 14 to 16 [individual dependent] for walks.



14. We are celebrating a special occasion. What can we do to commemorate this significant event?

Depending on our location, safety and the concession we are working from, we can arrange a special experience. To allow us to do this well, and meet your expectation, we need to talk through your thoughts through prior arrival.

15. How do I get the experience of backpacking but without the big pack?

We put together stunning trips that give you a sense of remoteness using either a fixed base or with a constantly moving fly camp set up for you [slackpacking]. You will only need to carry a small daypack and not need to build/ break camp each day. These types of experiences do not have permanent bathing or toilet facilities [they are especially set up for you].



16. Are walking safaris safe?

Trails are led by qualified, registered and highly experienced walking guides. They understand this environment intimately and your safety is their highest priority. Your guides practice constant situational awareness. With this in mind, these trails are probably safer than walking in certain parts of many cities. We truly don't believe that there is a better way to experience these incredible places. You will love it!

17. Why do we carry rifles on walking safaris?

We carry heavy-caliber rifles when walking in areas with potentially dangerous animals. These are intended solely for your protection in the event of an escalating threat towards us. We are highly trained in their use. Saying this it is our intention to make absolutely every effort not to shoot an animal. Our guides are highly experienced in viewing potentially dangerous game.

18. Price versus quality of experience

As with all industry's the customer journey differs between businesses. The private guided experience, and the areas we operate within, **cannot be benchmarked against budget operators** – We deliver a notable difference in service, value and the overall quality of your tailor-made experience. It is very important to consider this when comparing alternatives in your decision-making.

Your safari with us is about you. We focus on quality and not churn. Whether you go on safari once a year, or whether this is a once in a lifetime experience we are confident that we will deliver to your expectation. We build your experience to suite your needs and preferences. Our engagement with you starts prior your safari, the customization of your experience, the sophisticated unpretentious personalization, the high quality of guiding standards, the supporting qualifications and the freedom you will experience whilst with us, uniquely differentiates us. Your experience will be authentic, active, immersive and exciting.

19. What are the factors that influence the cost of my safari?

- Number of people on safari: The size of the groups we work with varies between 2 and 8. Should it be important, economies of scale are achieved through booking a larger group as certain underlying costs per safari are fixed regardless of group size.
- Time spent on safari: We find that the ideal safari experience should be a minimum of 3 to 5 nights. Our clients always leave wishing that they had more time and most only feel that they relax into the experience on day 3 or 4.
- The level of access, and exclusivity, would you prefer



- Are you happy to share a camp or game viewer with people that you do not know? Or would you prefer exclusivity?

- What level of exclusivity would you like from your guide? Do you have any specific learning or experience objectives?
- What is the density of lodges in the area? How much exposure will you receive to other tourists?

d. Location/ Reserve:

- Is the venue of your choice a private nature reserve, a provincial nature reserve or a national park?
- How well the reserve is run [this generally impacts their fixed and variable costs]?
- What is the level of lodge density in the reserve?



e. Wilderness: Clients are often surprised to hear the costs of maintaining these areas, and what it takes to keep the surrounding communities to see the value of these. Concession fees are much like the levies we pay to keep our homes in good shape. 15% of African wilderness has been lost in the last 20 years. For future generations to enjoy these places, safari areas must earn enough to both protect wildlife and their habitat, as well as provide for community upliftment.

f. Accommodation preference

- Movement of an unsupported backpacking trail
- Mobile tented wilderness fly camp
- Permanent tented camp
- Permanent brick-&-mortar structure

g. Level of preferred luxury

- Rustic however safe and comfortable
- Mid-range
- Luxurious
- Service expectation from the camp staff



h. Transfers: Our quotes cover your time on safari. Should you wish, we include the transfer to and from the airport.

i. Catering: When on a catered safari, what preferences do you have? Would you like to eat wholesome food, from an À la carte menu, vegetarian, vegan, banting, etc. Does your group have any specific dietary requirement related to allergies [gluten intolerance, etc.] or religious requirement [kosher, halaal, etc.]

j. Activity choices

- Walking only
- Walking as well as game viewing from a vehicle
- Only game viewing from a vehicle
- Horseback safari
- Canoe safari
- Other

k. What level of customer experience do you prefer? As with all businesses and professions, differences exist. All experiences are not equal and from a business costing, execution, resource, experience or infrastructural perspective cannot be equal. A private guiding business should be built on a solid business infrastructure and a platform of professionalism [reference points 2 and 3 in the documents]. This combination allows for a different level of client service and support – It affords you the connoisseur experience you want.



20. Close

It is our aim to ensure that your experience is that good, that you are already planning your next trip as you leave. We hope that the above answers some of your initial questions and that the information aids in your decision making that results in your booking your safari with [Spirited Adventures](#).