



Volunteer In South Africa

South Africa Information Booklet

Thank you for your interest in Agape Volunteers! We've sent you this booklet so that you can find out more about what we do in South Africa.

- The first section serves as an introduction to South Africa and our programmes there.
- The second section explains the process of applying for and booking a volunteer placement.
- The third section contains travel advice and is intended to prepare you for your time in South Africa.
- The fourth and final section provides more details on the nature of the programme on offer in South Africa.

We hope to make you feel as comfortable as possible about volunteering in South Africa, prepare you for your orientation and minimise any culture shock on arrival.

If you have any questions you can't find the answers for here please email us at info@agape-volunteers.com or contact your trip adviser



CEO and Founder, Agape Volunteers

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Introducing South Africa

South Africa occupies the southernmost tip of Africa, bordering Namibia on the Atlantic coast and Mozambique along the coastline of the Indian Ocean.

South Africa is one of the most diverse African nations by virtue of the variety of races, nationalities and languages that exist in the country. It is well known for its spectacular wildlife and landscape,

home to one of the seven wonders of nature: 'Table Mountain'. Encompassing a range of national parks, the country is inhabited by a range of animals and plants in its numerous nature reserves. Our projects are based in the beautiful Marataba section of the Marakele National Park, which is renowned for its natural beauty.

South Africa is a country with a troubled past which has caused a big division between the rich minority and the extremely poor majority. South Africa has a spirit of determination to create equality for all its people, but to make this a reality it needs all the help it can get. This is where you come in. You can make a difference and any help you can give is valuable; whether it be helping in the poor communities or giving a wild animal a second chance in life.

The people of South Africa will make you feel so welcome and valued and this will lead to an extremely rewarding experience for you. South Africa is an extremely beautiful country with a fascinating history, nothing compares to its exquisite landscapes and its friendly people. It is known as the Rainbow Nation because of the many cultures that come together as one. There is something so special about South Africa. There is a certain feeling you get that cannot be put into words, you will need to come and experience it for yourself...

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Agape Volunteers In South Africa

How it all began

Agape Volunteers was founded by Guillaume Lefevre, who volunteered in Kenya for the first time in 2009. He felt that many of the volunteer agencies in Kenya did not conform to his ideals, and resolved to try for himself, alongside several like-minded employees of other organisations who were also eager to start out on their own.

They envisaged an organisation that was non-profit, volunteer-led and directly involved in projects in-country. Three basic aims guided this new venture: to make volunteering as accessible as possible; to provide real, long term and yet flexible help to those in need; and to let volunteers grow into their role and make a real difference. These aims have not changed.

Since 2009, Agape has worked with many people and organisations in Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania. Volunteer numbers have grown and grown, and we have been able to provide volunteer staff and funding for schools, clinics, orphanages, HIV projects, sports teams and wildlife conservation programmes. We hope to build on this progress further in the coming years.

Make a real difference

In South Africa we offer something a bit different to projects in other countries. The projects focus on wildlife conservation and is a perfect way for volunteers to experience the nature and beauty of the country whilst making a real difference to the animals in the area. There is a wide range of ways in which volunteers can help in these projects, most of them aiding the conservation of wildlife on game reserves to help sustain the vibrant range of wildlife in the region.

While Agape Volunteers continues to grow, our aims remain the same. We will make volunteering possible for as many people as we can. We will seek to support projects which make a real difference in their area. We will continue to improve our capabilities as an aid and development organisation. We will listen to and utilise the experiences and expertise of our volunteers, to improve the aid and services we offer.

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Our Team & Our Programmes

Meet The Team

Agape Volunteers has a fantastic team of volunteer coordinators and hosts in South Africa.

You can find out a bit about the senior team below:

Koos Niemann

Koos has more than 17 years experience in the bush having worked as a reserve manager and on anti-poaching teams before moving to his current role. He has a deep passion for conservation and anti-poaching, and is an extremely experienced in all aspects of animal monitoring and wildlife conservation. He is determined to provide you with a volunteering experience you will never forget. Koos will accompany you on all the volunteering projects and activities.



Sabrina Colombo

Italian by birth, Sabrina fell in love with South Africa back in 2011 and has been working there since 2012. She has studied alongside her work, gaining qualifications in tracking and as a field guide. Combined with a background in tourism and hospitality, Sabrina is both passionate about her work and brilliant at inspiring volunteer involvement.

As well as the senior team described here, there are many additional coordinators, hosts, placement staff and fellow charity workers affiliated with Agape Volunteers in South Africa, many of whom you will also encounter during your time volunteering.



Our Programmes In South Africa

In South Africa we offer one main project for volunteers; our wildlife conservation placement. This placement can be done for a 2 to 12 week period; much of the content of the placements will be the same, but you can obviously fit that bit more in on a longer trip.

An Overview

Agape Volunteers is committed to placing volunteers only where they are needed, as far as we possibly can. If placing a volunteer will not benefit a project in any worthwhile way, we will avoid doing so. As the needs of individual placement projects are regularly changing, this can make placing volunteers a complicated business.

For this reason, although the descriptions below are representative of our programmes, we cannot guarantee that you will have the opportunity to take part in all the activities mentioned. Nor will you be assigned a specific placement project until after you arrive in South Africa. For a representative example of the kind of project you will work on, please see the examples in the APPENDIX.



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Wildlife Volunteering

Wildlife volunteering focuses on helping in wildlife conservation. The majority of the volunteering will take place in the Marataba section of the Marakele National Park, working alongside our partners on the ground in South Africa.

A typical week consists of a combination of volunteering with wildlife, going on exciting activities, and helping the team analyze the results of recent data. Every day will bring something new and give you the chance to get up close and personal with some of South Africa's amazing wildlife. Depending on the volunteering needs, you might be up at the crack of dawn removing alien invader plant species, doing game monitoring, or analyzing the data you've collected on game drives.

You will also be involved with a major tracking project involving camera traps. Volunteers are needed to check these cameras frequently and record the sightings.



You will see what it takes to run a game reserve by taking part in day to day jobs like fence patrolling, path clearing and physical eradication of foreign plants. These tasks involve physical labour and will be hard work but they are essential to help maintain the reserve and the animals within it.

In general, the day will be split into two sections. You'll go on two game drive per day (unless on house duty), the first starting at 5.30/6am and returning around 11.30am, the second leaving at around 3pm and return at around 8pm.

The volunteering done with the wildlife is really needed. You will feel like you have contributed to the conservation of these amazing animals and we are sure this will be a meaningful experience you will never forget.



Booking A Programme

Making an Application

If you have not done so already, the first step in booking a programme is to make an application on our website, at www.agape-volunteers.com/programmes/.

Just hit **apply now** to get started.

In general, our South Africa programme runs from Tuesday to Tuesday. So you'll need to schedule your arrival and departure for Tuesdays. This is to ensure all volunteers get the same opportunities to experience all of the activities and projects available. Speak to your trip adviser for more info on availability and flexibility.

Apply early and you will have a great deal of freedom to choose when your programme starts. If an itinerary has already been scheduled around the time you suggest, your trip adviser will advise you on the dates you need to aim for.

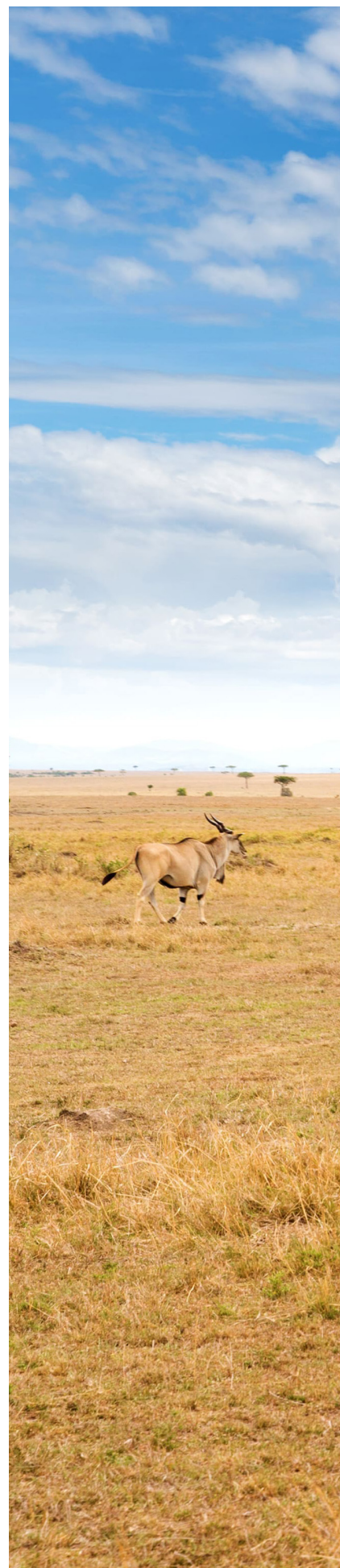
Please be aware that the number of placements available in South Africa is limited. Payment will be required at least 45 days before your date of departure. Therefore, please make sure to apply ahead and to complete your booking in good time.

Fees scale according to the length of your stay. For fees and what they cover, please see

www.agape-volunteers.com/costings.

When filling in the application form, please provide the following information:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Nationality
- Email address
- Contact telephone number
- Address
- Length of stay
- Programme
- Approximate arrival date
- Whether you are travelling with anyone else
- Previous volunteering experience
- Dietary requirements or medical concerns



Personal Trip Advisor

Once you've applied, you'll be assigned a personal trip advisor. Trip advisors are the friendly face of Agape Volunteers, providing you with a consistent, human point of contact with Agape Volunteers. They are there to answer any questions you have, guide you through the booking process, and help prepare you for your time in South Africa.

You should receive an email from your trip advisor within 48 hours of making your application. While answering any queries you may have, they will confirm your programme details, including programme type, approximate arrival date and length of stay. Trip advisors are mostly former volunteers with Agape. They are paid a commission for every booking they complete, but also donate a great deal of their own time to provide volunteer support and administrative work, which they carry out alongside degrees, jobs and busy lives!

Billing

When you're ready, your trip advisor will bill you according to your planned length of stay (we call this your "programme fee"). Agape Volunteers does not charge registration fees, so paying your programme fee is all you need to do to book your placement.



Programme fees must be paid at least 45 days before your date of departure. Up until this point, programme fees can be refunded, minus transaction fees incurred by the transfers.

If you choose to book an excursion, your trip advisor will bill you for these too.

Billing Cont.

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The programme fee includes the following:

- The Travel Insurance with Agape – the most comprehensive travel insurance provided as standard in the industry
- Accommodation in a hosted volunteer house
- Three meals a day, seven days a week
- Airport pick up and drop off
- Orientation
- All Agape admin and registration
- Pre- and post-programme support from your trip adviser
- In-country support from our experienced South African staff
- A donation towards Agape's projects*
- All wildlife conservation activities - your itinerary is all-inclusive

The programme fee does not cover other travel costs, such as:

- Flights
- Visa
- Vaccinations and anti-malarials
- Additional excursions

Where is my Money Spent?

Most of your programme fee is spent on the costs of making your volunteer programme possible. The majority covers your airport transfers, food and accommodation, transport and other costs associated with your volunteer itinerary, and the Agape Volunteers staff who support you in South Africa and manage your volunteer placement. A smaller sum goes towards the costs of Agape Volunteers in the UK, including: merchant banking fees on payments and international transfers; commission for the trip advisers who help you to book and offer contact support during your stay; the marketing which helps us to bring our programmes to your attention.

After these costs, the surplus on your programme fee is committed to funding the projects that Agape Volunteers supports in South Africa. However, this does not necessarily mean we give a set amount of money to your placement during your time in South Africa. More often, we accumulate this surplus until we have enough to fund larger scale projects with a more pronounced impact. Our programmes in South Africa are fully-funded by volunteers, ensuring that your money will make a real difference.



If you would like a breakdown of where we spend our money, we would be more than happy to provide one. Please email our CEO, Guillaume Lefevre, at gee@agape-volunteers.com, or ask your trip adviser.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is provided as standard and at no extra cost when you volunteer with Agape Volunteers. Travel insurance is essential, covering you against untoward developments which might affect your time away. By offering travel insurance as standard, we aim to make sure you have cover designed for you.

Underwritten at Lloyd's of London by ProSight Specialty Insurance, the Agape Travel Policy provides bespoke travel insurance tailored to the needs of our volunteers.*

Travel insurance with Agape Volunteers covers you not only for the standard risks of travelling, such as flight delays and lost passports, but also situations specific to volunteers.

This includes:

- Medical insurance covering emergency treatment, hospitalisation and repatriation; with 24 medical assistance.
- Hospitalisation and repatriation, with 24 hour medical assistance
- Needle stick cover and exposure to biological fluids as standard.
- Cover for over 70 activities and sports, including volunteer work and Agape Adventures activities such as safaris and mountain hiking.**

As such, the Agape Travel Policy is the most comprehensive travel insurance policy provided as standard in the industry.

Travel Insurance with Agape Volunteers is available to both UK and non-UK residents, regardless of where you'll be travelling from. Your cover is valid from the moment you pay your programme fee, insuring you against cancellation and curtailment, so it is in your interest to pay as soon as possible.

For a summary of the cover provided, or the full policy wording, simply ask your trip adviser. Full policy documentation will also be included with your volunteer policy (please see below).

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****Please note, this policy is not available to persons aged 70 years or older. If you are not eligible for this policy, please contact your trip adviser for advice on alternatives.***

*****The Agape Travel Policy does not provide medical indemnity to practitioners. Medical volunteers should consult the British Medical Association or the relevant authority.***

Flights

Flights are not included in your programme fee, but your trip adviser can help you to look for low flight fares, so make sure they know your travel dates as soon as possible.

Your trip adviser can help you to look for low flight fares, so make sure they know your travel dates as soon as possible. You will need to fly into Johannesburg O.R. Tambo International airport (JNB) on a Tuesday. Depending on how early you book and when you plan to fly, return flights from the UK should cost between £400 and £750. Flights from elsewhere in the world will vary.

Before booking your flight, you must confirm with your trip adviser that your preferred dates are available. After booking flights, you must provide your trip adviser with your flight details (arrival date and time, departure date and time, flight numbers) so that they can arrange your airport pickup and drop off. Ideally, you can forward them the email or PDF itinerary provided by your airline.

Volunteer Policy

Agape Volunteers requires all volunteers to sign our volunteer policy. This contains our code of conduct, detailing our promises to you and what we require in return. After you've paid your programme fee, your trip adviser will email you a copy of this policy to sign and return



Vaccination and Anti-Malarials

Before travelling in South Africa, you must consult your GP about vaccinations and anti-malarials. For our recommendations, see this section on vaccinations below.

VISA

Obtaining a visa in South Africa is very simple, and in many cases you won't need one at all. You can get visas on arrival at the airport for no cost, this permits you to stay for 90 days which far exceeds the lengths of the programmes we offer in South Africa currently.

N.B. If you do not have an EU, Commonwealth or US passport, visa requirements may vary.

Arrival Procedure

On receipt of your signed volunteer policy, your trip adviser will take you through the arrival procedure. They will also provide a checklist covering all the necessary preparation for your trip (vaccinations, visa, etc.), as well as a list of contact numbers to take with you in case of difficulties.

Remember to print off these contact numbers so you have them to hand when travelling.

Fundraising And Donations

Many volunteers choose to raise money before they volunteer, either to help cover the costs of their trip or to fund donations and projects in country. If you would be interested in fundraising, ask your trip adviser for the Agape Fundraising Guide.

- Items that are always needed include:
- Camera traps
- 8GB SD cards (for camera traps)
- Rechargeable AA batteries & Torches
- First aid kits
- Metal Water bottles

If you really want to get stuck in while you volunteer, please let us know via your trip adviser, and we can suggest a project for you to support.

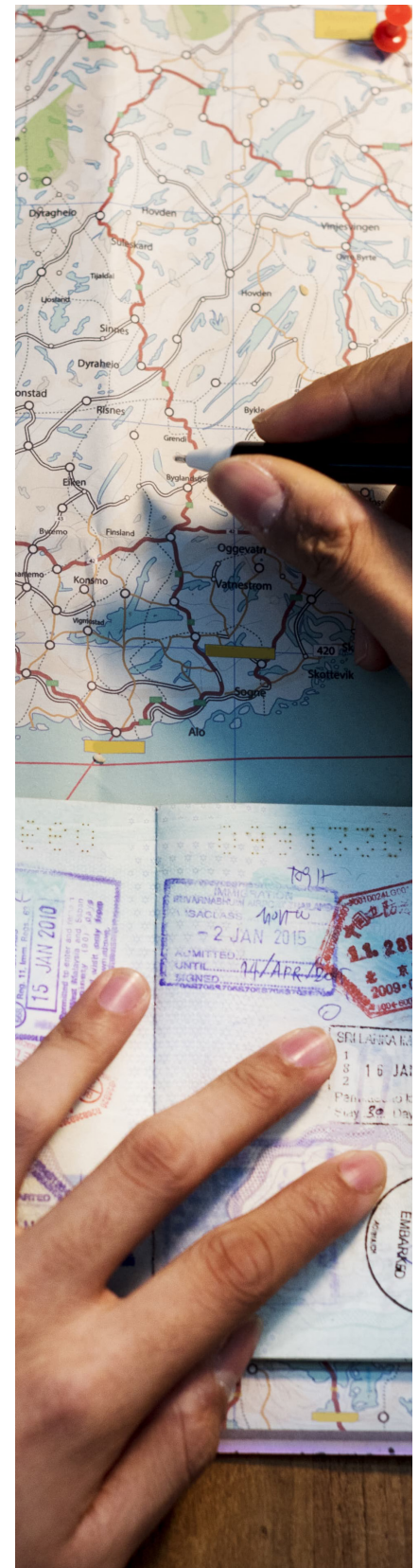
Preparing For Arrival

Volunteering in South Africa will be an exhilarating, horizon-widening time. You will find new friends and take on new challenges, experiencing a different way of life while you do so. It will also be hard, tiring work, in an unfamiliar country far from home. It will push you outside of your comfort zone at least once.

To make the most of this opportunity, it's a good idea to make sure that you are as prepared as possible, both physically and mentally. This section aims to help you with your preparations and give you an idea of what to expect.

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Physical Preparation

The last thing you want is for your trip to be ruined by ill health. Before you depart, you need to make sure you have received all the necessary vaccinations and medication, as well as a clean bill of health.

Vaccinations

Before you depart, you MUST consult your GP about which vaccinations you will need for a stay in South Africa. Some of these may require extended incubation periods, so it's worth arranging an appointment as soon as possible.

Our recommended vaccinations are:

- Tuberculosis
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Typhoid
- Tetanus
- Cholera
- Meningitis

Please also note that you may also require a Yellow Fever certificate if you have recently travelled to a country where Yellow Fever is prevalent.

Prevention

With all diseases, avoiding infection is the best strategy. As well as getting the necessary vaccinations and anti-malarials, you should aim to prevent infection in any way you can.

To prevent bites, make sure to bring plenty of insect repellent. A mosquito net which can be fixed from the ceiling is also a must.

Make sure to maintain good standards of hygiene, following all the guidelines laid out here and by the staff in South Africa. For more info on hygiene, please see the relevant section below.

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Anti-Malarials

You will be located in a non-malaria zone. However, it is always better safe than sorry. You should consult your GP about the courses available and costs.

Malarone is popular due to minimal side effects, which can be reduced further if the drug is taken with food or milky drinks. Doxycycline, Proguanil and Mefloquine offer viable cheaper alternatives to Malarone, but please check the side effects and consult your GP before taking. It is important to ensure that you finish your course of anti-malarials when you return home. Please be aware that some areas of South Africa are chloroquine-resistant malaria zones.

Health Check-ups

We recommend that you arrange medical, dental and eye check-ups before you depart, to identify any issues that might affect your time in South Africa.

Mental Preparation

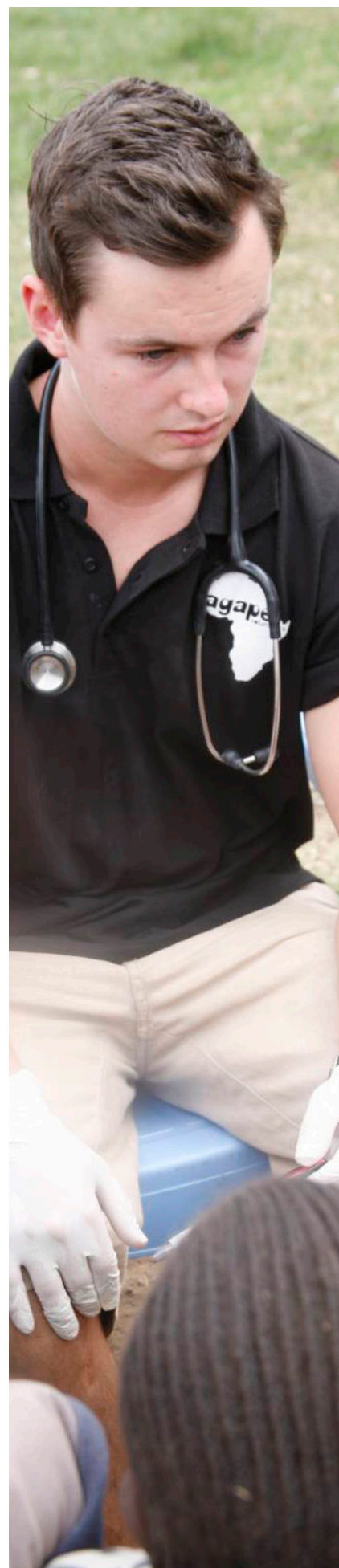
It's also a good idea to think about how to prepare yourself mentally. Culture shock and homesickness are to be expected, and while they're normally shortlived, they're no fun while they last. And no matter how hard we try, we can never fully prepare you for all the differences between life in South Africa and life at home. However, with a healthy mindset, these should be no more than a fleeting problem; and with a bit of preparation, you're ready to be a fantastic, valuable volunteer.

Why are you volunteering?

An important first step is to ask yourself why you are volunteering. Agape Volunteers is sincerely committed to providing quality, rewarding placements for our volunteers. We want to provide opportunities that may not be available otherwise – opportunities to gain valuable work and life experience; opportunities to travel, see foreign cultures and cities; opportunities to take exciting trips and excursions. And opportunities to help people.

Because ultimately, this is not only about you, but about the people you help by volunteering. And due to the nature of volunteer work in South Africa, it's almost certain that something about your trip will not be exactly as you expected. We will do everything we can to deliver a fantastic experience and to solve any problems, but the best volunteers are those who are willing to roll with the unexpected, even with disappointment, in order to achieve something tangible. Volunteers who want to help in any way they can.

Agape Volunteers is for you, but ultimately, volunteering is what you make it!





Learning About South Africa

Doing Some Research

A little learning goes a long way. Take the time to find out more about the people you will live and work with and the country they call home. Read up about South Africa's history and its eleven official languages- and see if you can learn some!

Travel guides like the Rough Guide and Lonely Planet are a good place to start. We also recommend the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office's travel advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-africa>

Being a Valuable Volunteer

As a volunteer you have access to fantastic opportunities all over the world - and Agape Volunteers tries to offer some of the best available. Our volunteer placements in South Africa are a chance to explore a new culture, gain valuable work experience and qualifications, enjoy exciting excursions and try to make the world a better place. However, it's important to remember that as a volunteer you should always aim to be at least as valuable to your placement as it is to you. Here are some tips on how to do that:

- Be positive – a can-do attitude and a willingness to get stuck in can make more of a difference than you realise.
- Keep an open mind – try not to have fixed ideas about what you will do on your placement: circumstances and needs can and do change. Be ready for new people, a different culture and unexpected challenges.
- Embrace a culture of sharing – don't be afraid to share your knowledge and don't forget you are there to learn too. Embracing what placement staff and other volunteers can teach you will make you a more valuable volunteer; and by sharing your experience and ideas.
- Be realistic about what you hope to achieve – think about how long you can volunteer for and plan any projects or activities to fit that timeframe, or else make sure they can carry on without you. You are most valuable where you can contribute to the long term goals of your placement project.
- Take something with you – most volunteers have access to valuable resources which can make a real difference to our projects in South Africa. This might be second hand sports kit, storybooks or medical supplies.



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Dealing With Culture Shock

Culture shock and homesickness are an inevitable part of volunteering abroad, something which all volunteers experience. The shock is literal – South Africa is harsher and dirtier than most volunteers are accustomed to, and you will be exposed to poverty and suffering in ways you may not have been before. At some point, normally within the first three or four days of your programme, you will begin to feel the lack of home comforts, and miss your family and friends. These feelings are completely natural and, more importantly, will pass quickly. Below are some tips on dealing with homesickness and culture shock.

- Get to know your fellow volunteers before you go. Use our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/AgapeVolunteers) to find other people volunteering at the same time as you. You can also ask your trip adviser for help.
- Make sure you can contact home if you need to. See the section on Communication below for the best ways to stay in touch.
- Remember that your host mama, the South African team and your fellow volunteers are all there to give you their support. It is very important to voice your feelings as these may not always be easily picked up by those around you. If you need to talk to someone, don't hesitate.
- Long term feelings of unhappiness or depression may be a side effect of your anti-malarials. If feelings of unhappiness persist, please talk to your host mama and the South African team immediately.

“South Africa is harsher and dirtier than most volunteers are accustomed to,”



Living In South Africa

The majority of volunteers will not have lived in a third world country before, and will not know what to expect. It is important to understand the conditions you'll be living in before you go.

Accommodation

Volunteers in South Africa live and work in the Marataba section of the Marakele National Park. The Marataba is a 24,000 hectare area only accessible to other volunteers and a few tourists resident at one lodge.

You will be staying with the other volunteers and staff in a large, comfortable and sprawling ex-farmhouse which also acts as headquarters for the conservation work undertaken. As the house is in the Park it is half an hour's drive from the nearest large town with full amenities, so you'll need to plan ahead for any shopping. There tends to be a trip into town every Friday to purchase supplies and to go to a bar/restaurant.

At the time of writing, accommodation is in dorm-style rooms, so you'll be sharing with other volunteers. There is also a private room available for an extra cost, please ask your trip adviser for further details and availability.

There is a recreation area where volunteers can relax and socialise in the evenings and during breaks. There are sofas, facilities for tea and coffee, and some wildlife books so you can brush up on your knowledge before a game drive.

The house itself is situated right between breeding camps, allowing you to wake up every morning and see antelopes, zebra, and other game. But don't worry - there is a fence so you'll be fully protected from any potentially dangerous animals!

Electricity comes in large part from solar panels, and is switched off at 22:30 every night to save power and allow volunteers to get some rest. A torch is therefore a must!





House Rules & Guidelines

You will be briefed on key house rules during your orientation and they are also listed on the notice board in the lounge. These rules are there to promote good feelings in the volunteer house and to help keep the place clean. They also exist for your safety and security and the safety and security of staff and other volunteers.

We expect all volunteers to follow the house rules and the guidance of our staff in South Africa. For more details, contact your trip adviser.

Electricity

Sockets in South Africa are of the three pin variety but are different to those used in the UK and are used in no other major country in the world. Adaptors for South African sockets can easily be bought online, this will be an essential item to bring in order to charge any electrical items such as phones, laptops etc.

Water

You will have running water available, but please try not to waste it! Tap water may not be suitable for volunteers adjusting to travel - drink bottled water instead if you experience discomfort. When in doubt, seek advice from your country coordinator.

Cooking

Breakfast, dinner and a packed lunch will be provided for you each day, and you may be asked to chip in the cooking and other kitchen activities. More details on the types of food you can expect can be found below.

Laundry

You will have the opportunity to wash your clothes twice a week for a small charge. The washing machine only runs full in order to avoid waste.

Paying for Extra Days

The cost of your accommodation is included in your pro-gramme fee. However, you may find you are staying in South Africa longer than the number of weeks for which you have paid, in order to secure the cheapest flights or simply to get a few more days in South Africa. If you wish to stay in volunteer accommodation during these extra days, you will need to arrange payment for this time personally with house staff.

“ You will have the chance to try traditional South African cuisine too. Don't be afraid to try the unfamiliar; it's all part of the experience and you'll be missing out if you don't! ”

Food

In South Africa you'll have the opportunity to try a variety of different foods. Many of the meals you will have will be familiar but you will have the chance to try traditional South African cuisine too. Don't be afraid to try the unfamiliar; it's all part of the experience and you'll be missing out if you don't!

Three meals day are provided for volunteers:

- Breakfast will consist of a continental style spread.
- Lunch will be provided each day of your placement. This will usually consist of pasta, risotto, burgers, eggs or salads.
- Dinner is also provided every weekday and will consist of a variety of meals including stews, pastas as well as more traditional South African meals. There is also occasionally the opportunity of BBQs under the stars as a special treat.
- Sundays are days off for our partners, so duty volunteers get the chance to cook for the group.
- Your hosts will happily cater to vegetarians and for those with allergies, but they cannot make food to everyone's individual taste. Being a vegetarian in South Africa is relatively easy. It is best when booking your trip to make any dietary requirements known as soon as you book so that your hosts can be aware of this before you arrive. A vegan diet is difficult to support in South Africa, there are limited grocery stores in the area which have very limited supplies for a vegan diet.

If you suffer from allergies or have other special dietary requirements, please make your needs clear to your trip adviser before you go AND to your host after you arrive in the airport. You can then get any food you'll need on the journey back to your accommodation. Your trip adviser will make a note of your preferences, but the best way to avoid confusion is to outline your needs yourself. If your dietary requirements are particularly restrictive, it's a good idea to provide an outline of what you are able to eat, to be sure your needs are understood.



Hygiene

Getting sick can ruin a trip, but by practising proper hygiene you can greatly reduce your chances of falling ill. Make sure to follow these guidelines while in South Africa.

- Wash all fresh fruit and vegetables before you eat. All food at volunteer houses is prepared hygienically.
- Wash your hands often. Always carry a bottle of antiseptic handgel to use during the day. Make sure you clean your hands after physical contact with animals.

Climate & Weather

Like much of the rest of the world, South African weather can vary widely. However, there are some obvious climatic patterns that can tell you what to expect.

The weather is consistently warm throughout the year. Summer is warm and humid with an average temperature of around 28°C, rising up to 40°C. The winter months are much drier with a slightly lower average temperature. Night times can get cold, with the temperatures dropping right down to 0°C. Whilst the climate is hot, it is comfortable for visitors to get used to so for most people it shouldn't be too difficult to adjust to.

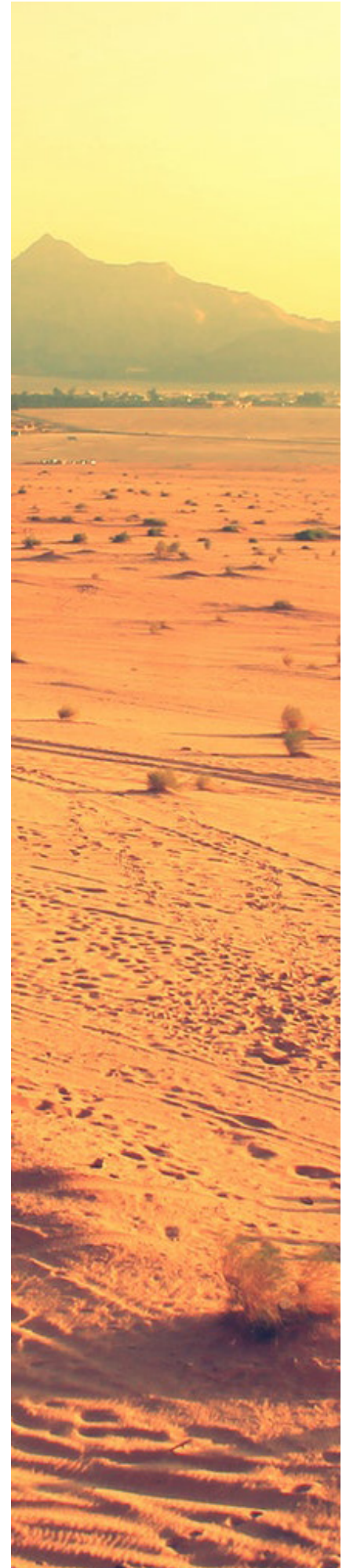
The summer months are between mid-October to mid-February, in this period there is the most rainfall in South Africa, although rainfall is still comparatively low. You may experience the occasional afternoon thunderstorm which will subside quickly, clearing the air.

Autumn, between mid-February to April offers the best weather, with very little rainfall but still with warm temperatures, which gradually get cooler as the winter months draw in.

Winter in South Africa is between May and September. In these months the days are often warm but nights and early mornings can be very crisp so it is a good idea to bring warm clothes if you are travelling in these months.

It is important to plan for the weather according to the time of year you are travelling but a preparing for some rain, warm weather and cold nights (if you are travelling in winter) is essential.

You will be far more reliant on natural light while in South Africa, so a torch is a must, as the evenings will get dark quickly in the evenings without streetlights.





Money

South African Rand

The currency in South Africa is the Rand (ZAR). As a rule of thumb, there are about 14-16 Rand to the British pound (GBP); however, exchange rates fluctuate a great deal, so it's a good idea to check them before you leave.

Withdrawing Money in South Africa

There is a cash machine in town. Trips into town will be made approximately weekly so ensure at all times in your stay you have enough money to last you for a week. Cards are also widely accepted.

Budgeting

Throughout your stay all your basic needs (all food, accommodation etc.) will be covered by the programme fee that you pay upon booking. The only spending money you will need will be for luxuries

It is best to take between £100-£200 to be on the safe side but this obviously depends on how many extras you plan on buying. It will be easiest to exchange the money before you go and bring it with you.



Weekends & Free Time

Sundays and evenings are your own while you volunteer. This is time for you to relax or take part in 'extracurricular' activities at your placement or elsewhere. There will always be other volunteers and staff to chat with, play games, and soak up your beautiful surroundings.

Communication

It's reassuring to know you'll be able to contact home and keep in touch with staff and volunteers during your stay. Here are some tips on communicating in South Africa

Mobile Phone

It's a good idea to have a mobile phone with you while you volunteer. They allow you to contact the South African team if you need them and stay in touch with your fellow volunteers. It can also be reassuring for your family and friends to know that you'll be contactable.

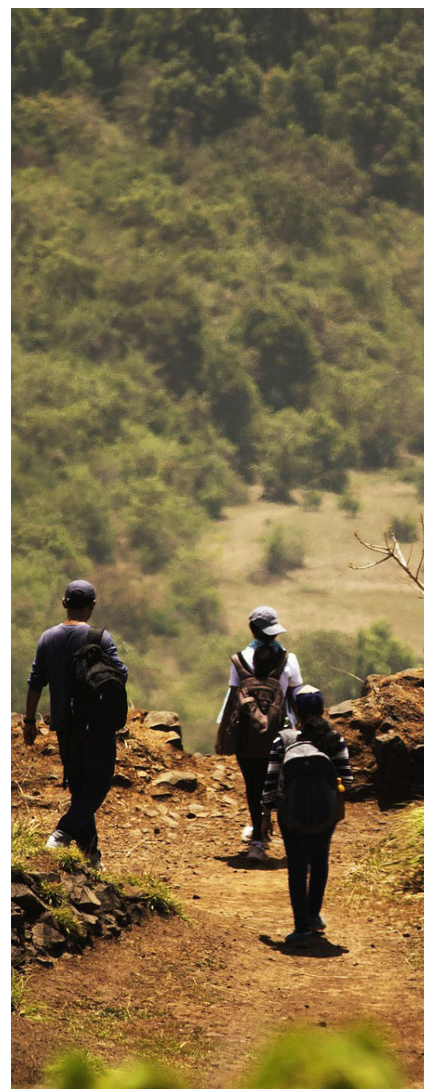
It is unlikely that you will need to use a phone much other than in emergencies or if you want to phone home. You're probably best off getting a local MTN SIM card upon arrival in the airport. Make

sure to also load this with enough credit!

Internet

The cheapest way to stay in touch with friends and family is via the internet, via email, social networks, and telecoms services like Skype. If you wish to do so, we recommend purchasing an MTN SIM card at the airport and loading this with a data bundle.

“
Having a mobile will allow you to contact the South African team if you need them and stay in touch with your fellow volunteers”



Safety

Our programmes in South Africa are safe experiences. Agape Volunteers does not promote high risk volunteer placements; nor, however, are we interested in “risk-free” volunteering – as to remove all risk is to provide a tour, rather than a volunteer programme that we hope can make a real difference in people’s

lives. Our responsibility lies in minimising risk and preparing you properly for your time in South Africa.

Agape Volunteers has a 100% safety record in South Africa and we mean to keep it. To this end, we provide in-depth support to all our volunteers, before, during and after your programme. That starts here with this booklet, which is geared towards preparing you as fully as possible for your stay in South Africa. Here we will

acquaint you with scenarios that might arise and ensure that you understand the potential risks and the support we offer to counter them.

If you have any further questions after reading, please don't hesitate to ask your trip adviser for more information. In country, the South African team will always be on hand to advise you on safety and any situations which may arise.

Illness or Injury

Should you fall ill or suffer an accident during your stay in South Africa, Agape Volunteers will take rapid action to ensure that you receive proper care. The South Africa team are on hand to provide immediate care and the UK team is only a phone call away to deal with emergencies.

We will arrange transport to a doctor or hospital if necessary. You are eligible for 24 hour medical assistance as part of your travel insurance with Agape Volunteers, included as standard when you volunteer (please see TRAVEL INSURANCE – THE AGAPE TRAVEL POLICY above for more details).

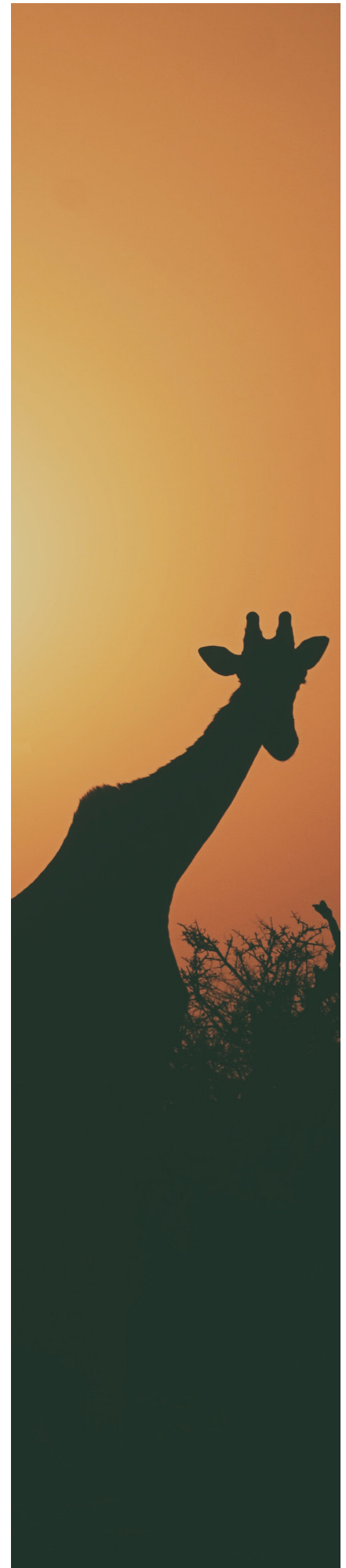
Should you need to return home early, we will provide all the support we can to get your flights changed as soon as possible. Unfortunately, in accordance with our terms and conditions, we cannot be liable for any extra travel costs. In some circumstances repatriation will be covered by your travel insurance with Agape Volunteers.

Theft & Crime

There is always a risk of theft when travelling abroad. However, this can normally be negated with some basic precautions and common sense. The Park is secure, so you do not need to worry about burglary. However, you should take the following precautions:

- Seriously consider what you want to bring on your trip. We strongly discourage you from bringing items which you consider valuable, as there will be always be a risk of damage or theft. This might include jewellery and watches, valuable clothes, expensive cameras, smartphones, tablets and laptops, and so on, or objects with sentimental value.
- Avoid making yourself a target. Do not carry large sums of money, and do not be ostentatious with your valuables –don't wear expensive watches or jewellery, don't flash your camera or your phone.
- Clothing with concealed pockets and zips will make you a less tempting target. Don't keep things in your back pocket and don't count your money in public places.
- Be wary of bag snatching in transport hubs (airports, bus and train stations) and other public spaces. Avoid loose shoulder bags or similar that could be easily snatched.

Theft Cont.



Theft Cont.

- Avoid taking large sums of money or valuables on matatus, as the cramped conditions are ideal for pickpockets. Be wary in markets and crowded public places. Thieves' tactics (like dropping a coin in front of you or a bag in your lap) are the same the world over, so do a quick Google search on evading pickpockets.
- Avoid travelling alone – it's safer and more fun to travel in a group.
- Pay attention to the precautions and advice of our South African team. Follow the safety and security guidelines in the volunteer house and obey the house rules.

HIV / Aids

HIV is not something to be afraid of, but certainly something to be aware of, especially for volunteers on medical or HIV/AIDS placements. You will receive further briefing in orientation and at your placement, but all volunteers should be aware of how HIV is spread.

HIV can be contracted through the exchange of bodily fluids. This includes unprotected sex, sharing needles or any situation where an open wound is exposed to another person's blood. Always wear gloves when dealing with blood injuries, even if you have no cuts yourself. For more information on HIV/AIDS and the precautions you should take, please see the APPENDIX.

Terrorism

There are occasionally terrorist threats in certain regions of South Africa. Agape Volunteers take these threats very seriously and will continue to take precautions to ensure the safety of our staff and volunteers; however, we do not believe a day to day threat is posed, as will be explained below. For more information and general travel advice for South Africa, we advise consulting the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's South Africa page:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-africa/terrorism>

The most important times and places to be vigilant is in larger cities or at the airport, being picked up and dropped off. You will, of course, be met by one of our partners on arrival and taken to the airport for your departure.

Due to the nature of the programmes we offer in South Africa, volunteers will not have much cause to be in the larger cities so the risk of being affected by crime and terrorism is extremely low.

We do not envisage ever having to deal with a situation where all volunteers must vacate the country. However, it would be naïve of us not to make contingency plans for a development of this kind. When you sign and return our Volunteer Policy, you provide us with contact information and your passport details. This allows us to coordinate an evacuation of volunteers with the relevant embassies in the event of an emergency. If you would like more information on our evacuation procedure, please contact Guillaume Lefevre at gee@agapevolunteers.com.

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Packing

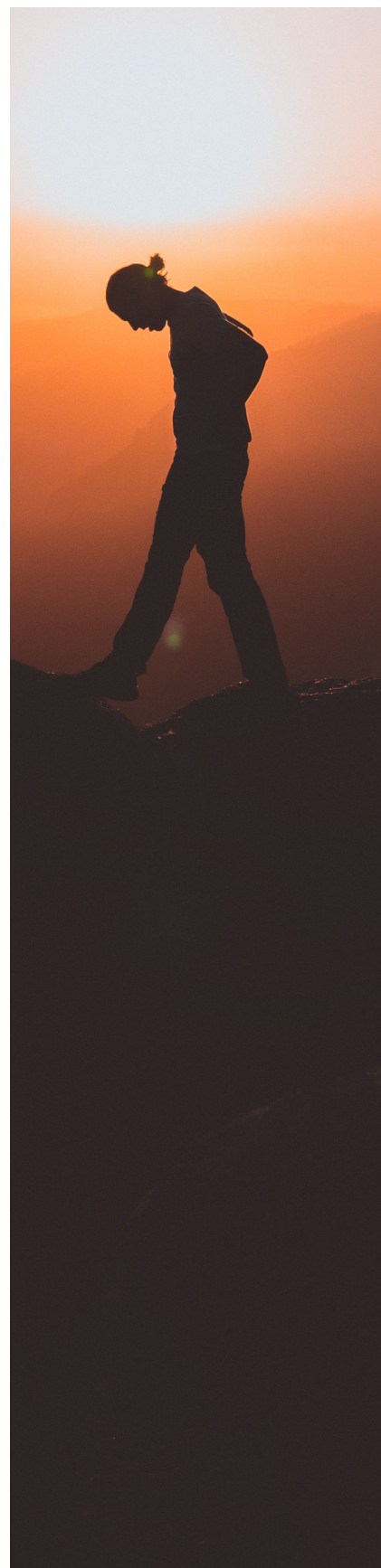
Packing

Below are some suggestions about what to pack. Everything on these lists is essential or useful. When packing, seriously consider what you really need to bring with you. If you can live without an item, and think that you would be upset if it was lost, broken or stolen, consider leaving it behind.

General Kit List

- Passport!
- Travel pillow
- Towel
- Sleeping bag – this is a must!
- Toiletries – consider bringing dry shampoo and wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Anti-malarial tablets
- Any other medication you require (eg Epipens, inhalers, etc.)
- First aid kit
- Plasters
- Blister patches
- Antiseptic cream
- Indigestion tablets
- Immodium or an equivalent anti-diarrhoeal
- Cold and flu relief
- Painkillers (paracetamol, ibuprofen, aspirin)
- Insect repellent
- Sun screen
- Water bottle
- Torch
- Penknife
- Mobile phone
- Adapter (if your country does not use the British 3-pin socket)
- Books (check out the book exchange in the volunteer house)
- Music (portable speakers are great too)
- Cards and games
- Pencil case and paper

Any teaching aids or sports equipment you wish to bring (programme specific)



“
When packing, seriously consider what you really need to bring with you.”

Clothes

There are a couple of things to bear in mind when packing clothes for South Africa. The first is the weather – it can vary quite a lot, depending on the season in which you are travelling (see the section on WEATHER and CLIMATE above for more info).

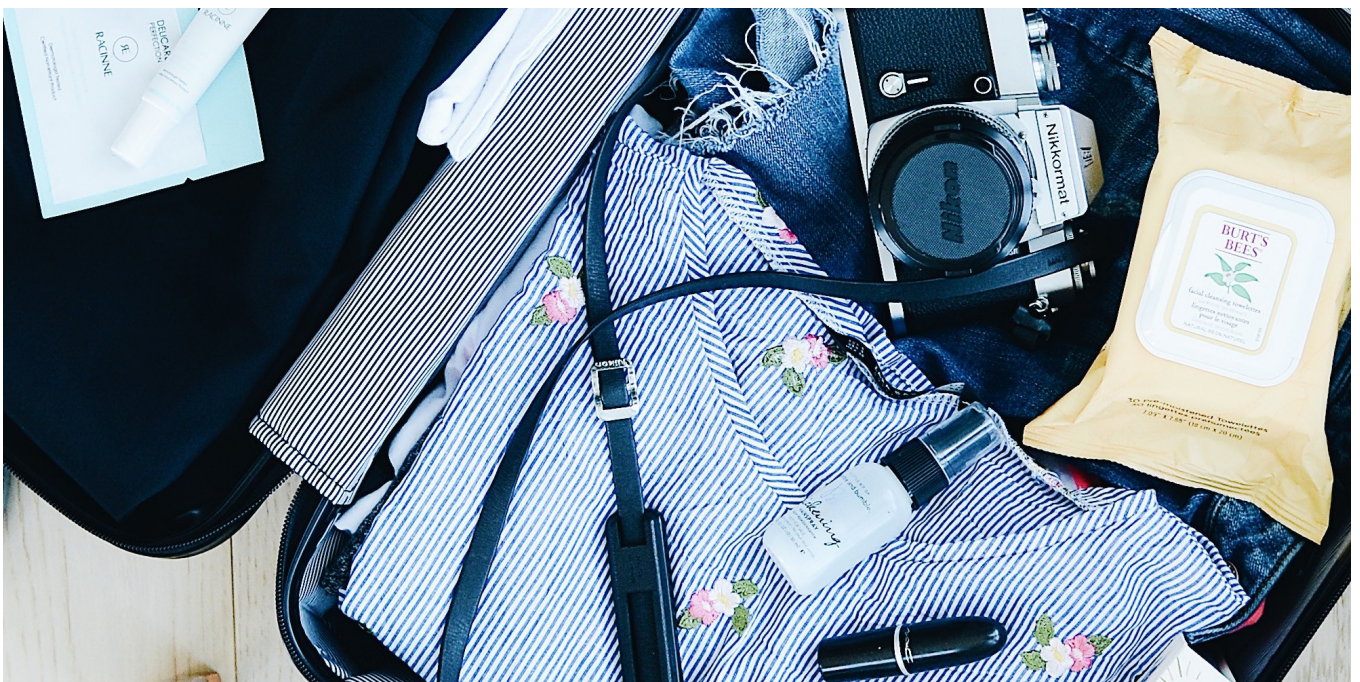
You'll need to dress to protect yourself from the sun, but also be prepared for rain in certain seasons. Try not to wear too many white clothes, as these will be ruined by the dust/mud before long. Lightweight shoes will also be ruined quickly, so do not bring your favourite shoes. It is important to ensure the clothes you have are comfortable, shoes should be durable and comfortable as a lot of the work you will be doing will be with animals in outside environments.

You will be provided with a t-shirt which you must wear when working in the park, but here's a suggestion of what else to bring:

- T-shirts
- Shorts
- Lightweight trousers and tops
- Jumper and jeans for the evenings
- Plenty of underwear
- A raincoat
- Hat for the sun
- Trainers or boots
- Sandals
- Day shoes



“
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Appendix

Programmes in Detail

The following pages cover our wildlife volunteering programmes, with details and tips.

Agape Volunteers is committed to placing volunteers only where they are needed, as far as we possibly can. If placing a volunteer will not benefit a project in any worthwhile way, we will avoid doing so. As the needs of individual placement projects are regularly changing, this can make placing volunteers a complicated business.

In addition, the unpredictability of the weather and the wildlife you will be working with can also play havoc with the best laid plans. For this reason, although the descriptions below are representative of our programmes, we cannot guarantee that you will have the opportunity to take part in all the activities mentioned, and some activities may take place on different days to the ones planned below.

Our Partners

Agape work closely with our partners in South Africa, making sure that there are always enough volunteers to perform the necessary tasks. You may also be working alongside other, external volunteers during your stay in South Africa.

The team in South Africa is very experienced in both wildlife conservation and looking after volunteers. You will find them very approachable and extremely knowledgeable and passionate about their work.

Arrival

You will arrive at the airport in Johannesburg and be met by one of our staff in South Africa. You will then be driven to your accommodation in Marakele, around three and a half hours drive away.

En route you will get the chance to stop off at a supermarket to purchase any additional items you may need for your stay. It would also be a good idea to buy a local SIM card and exchange any money whilst you're in the airport.

Upon arrival in your accommodation you will be met by the staff and other volunteers, and get a chance to make yourself at home. You'll then be given a full orientation, including a safety briefing, introduction to the local area, and a more thorough idea of your itinerary for your stay.



A 'Normal' Day

In one sense there is no 'normal' day volunteering as a wildlife conservationist in South Africa! Each day will bring different challenges and opportunities set by both the Park manager and the animals themselves!

However, in general there are two game drives or activities per day, with each volunteer going on at least one game drive per weekday, and also staying back at base for half the day on a rotary basis.

In the morning the departure time is 5:00/5:30am in the summer and 6.00am in winter, returning around 11:30am. The afternoon drive leaves at 3:00/3:30pm and returns around 8:00pm. Occasionally you will stay out the entire day, according to the work that needs to be done and the priorities set by our partners and Park Section manager.

You will be engaged in a wide-range of activities during your time spent on a game drive.



Everything depends on the many variables which are outside our control such as weather, animal interactions, water sources, and a variety of other external factors. While you can't expect to see all of the Big Five every day, there can be very intense and lucky days and other quieter experiences in the bush.

Our Work

Our work in South Africa is based around a few broad areas, and you're likely to have the chance to get involved with most of them. In general you will be monitoring animal behaviour, spatial movements, interactions, feeding preferences, health and reproduction in their natural habitat.



“In general you will be monitoring animal behaviour, spatial movements, interactions & feeding preferences.”



The monitoring work focuses on collecting and analysing data to generate reports on lions, white and black rhinos, elephants, leopards, cheetahs, buffalo and hyenas. A great respect for the animals and their behaviour is required for this, and we therefore try to avoid any interference with the animals' lives when observing them. Any sort of 'hands on' interaction is only done if completely unavoidable and only in medical emergencies or animal relocation. We collaborate closely with the Park managers and veterinary services, establishing priorities for the benefit of fauna and flora.

A balanced ecosystem grants a greater quality of life to the animals. For this reason volunteers will also help the team with some reserve management activities such as bush clearing, road restoration, alien plants removal, game capture and animal darting.

closely with the Park managers and veterinary services, establishing priorities for the benefit of fauna and flora.

Primary Responsibilities

Your work as a volunteer will be broken into two main areas: in the field and at base.

In the field you will be: Collecting data on the species monitored; taking photos of the animals for ID purposes; bush clearing; animal tracking, spotting and recognition; helping set up camera traps; game capture and veterinary actions such as animal darting (when requested by the Park Veterinary). You will also take part in bush walks to ID animals, look for suspicious tracks and sleep-outs (organized according to the weather and need).

At base you will be: inserting data; providing photos for ID kits; processing camera trap photos to create ID kits. During this time you will also help with general maintenance work, cooking and cleaning. This part can be also seen as a break to recover from the early wake up time!



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