

# HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



## SOUTHERN AFRICA ODYSSEY

March 6–23, 2025

### PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Traverse the Kalahari via South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia! See spectacular Victoria Falls, go on safari at Chobe National Park, and marvel at the world's largest crested dunes at Sossusvlei. End with a four-night stay in beautiful Cape Town.

## SCHEDULE BY DAY

*B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner*

### THURSDAY, MARCH 6 DEPART U.S.

Depart on your overnight flight to Johannesburg, South Africa.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 7 ARRIVE JOHANNESBURG

Upon arrival in "Joburg," Africa's fourth largest city, transfer to your hotel located in the suburb of Rosebank.

As guests' arrival times may vary greatly today, there are no group activities planned. Hotel rooms and breakfast are ready for those guests arriving early this morning. The day is free to rest and relax and to enjoy lunch and dinner on your own in the "City of Gold," the nation's largest and most diverse metropolis.

After struggling with crime and poverty for years, Johannesburg is now a burgeoning travel destination, with many rooftop bars and trendy restaurants to explore.

Overnight: 54 on Bath (B)

### SATURDAY, MARCH 8 JOHANNESBURG / SOWETO

Meet your fellow travelers today as you embark on a tour of Johannesburg's renowned

district of Soweto. Originally a collection of townships established by segregationists in the early 20th century to house black laborers, the "Southwest Townships" (from which the "Soweto" name derived) gained acclaim for its inhabitants' resistance to apartheid and today is a vibrant residential area.

Here see the home of former Archbishop Desmond Tutu and visit Nelson Mandela's home, now a museum.

Next, visit the Hector Pieterse Memorial, a monument to the Soweto Uprising which figured prominently in the struggle against apartheid. It was here that 13-year-old Hector was among those shot and killed in June 1976 while protesting the government's order that school instruction be delivered in Afrikaans.

Meet a local Sowetan and listen to her personal stories of the Soweto uprising and of what life is like today in this township.

Afterwards, enjoy lunch together at a local restaurant, then return to your hotel where the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure.

Tonight, toast your adventure ahead at a welcome dinner.

Overnight: 54 on Bath (B, L, D)

## **SUNDAY, MARCH 9**

### **JOHANNESBURG / VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE**

In the morning, return to the airport for your flight to Victoria Falls.

Upon arrival in the early afternoon, board a motorcoach and travel to your deluxe hotel, which sits less than two miles from the mighty Victoria Falls.

With its 300-foot-deep gorge and thundering spray, Victoria Falls (known in local Kololo language as Mosi-oa-Tunya—the smoke that thunders), is a wonder of the natural world, especially as hippos, elephants, crocodiles, and other animals roam freely in the surrounding jungle.

“Vic Falls” reach is higher than that of Niagara, as it plunges some 300 feet into the Zambezi Gorge below, forming the single largest cascade of water on earth. Take a guided walk of approximately three miles on paved pathways in a protected area of the falls free from wildlife and featuring unobstructed viewpoints, where you have ample opportunity to take photographs.

Tonight, enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Overnight: *The Victoria Falls Hotel (B, D)*

## **MONDAY, MARCH 10**

### **VICTORIA FALLS**

In the morning, encounter local life up close on a visit to a local grade school. Meet with teachers and students who treat you to a performance of traditional music and dance. Your tour director will facilitate the donation of any school supplies or books you may choose to bring as a greatly appreciated gift.

Following the school visit, spend some time walking through Victoria Falls town and visiting artisan shops.

Lunch is on your own today; you may choose to remain in town or return to the hotel.

Later this afternoon travel a short distance to embark on a “Sundowner” cruise on the mighty Zambezi River, where, as the sun sets, keep your eyes peeled for wildlife along the

river’s banks. Enjoy dinner on board your boat before returning to your hotel.

Overnight: *The Victoria Falls Hotel (B, D)*

## **TUESDAY, MARCH 11**

### **VICTORIA FALLS**

This morning, embark on a rhino safari for sightings of the most endangered of the “Big Five” species, as well as other game you may encounter.

After spending the early afternoon at leisure, enjoy a late afternoon lecture, at which a guest speaker discusses the trials and travails of David Livingstone, the 19th-century Scottish medical missionary and explorer, followed by dinner together at the hotel.

Overnight: *The Victoria Falls Hotel (B, D)*

## **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12**

### **BOTSWANA / CHOBE NATIONAL PARK**

Early this morning journey to spectacular Chobe National Park in neighboring Botswana for both a morning game drive and an afternoon game cruise through this exceptional reserve.

Thanks to its varied terrain and plentiful water supply, Chobe is renowned for its predator population (including lions) as well as hippos and the rare puku, a species of antelope indigenous to the area. Chobe is also home to the world’s largest elephant population.

Enjoy lunch in Botswana today; dinner tonight is at your hotel in Victoria Falls.

Overnight: *The Victoria Falls Hotel (B, L, D)*

## **THURSDAY, MARCH 13**

### **VICTORIA FALLS / WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

Today is a transit day, flying via Johannesburg to Windhoek, Namibia’s German-influenced capital, and the country’s largest city (pop. 431,000).

With just over 2.5 million inhabitants in an area some 25% larger than that of France, Namibia has the world’s second lowest population density.

Upon arrival this evening, board a motorcoach for the one-hour transfer to our hotel.

Lunch and dinner are on your own today.

Overnight: *Windhoek Country Club Resort (B)*

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 14** WINDHOEK / NAMIB DESERT / SOSSUSVLEI

After a brief tour of Windhoek, set out on a journey to the Namibian desert. Spy vast gravel plains and giant sand dunes that rise more than a thousand feet high during your travels.

Though Namibia is one of the youngest of the African nations (as it only became a nation in 1990), it boasts a 130-million-year-old desert, the Namib—your destination today.

Travel to the Central Namib, which stretches for some 700 miles along the coast and is covered with huge dunes which each support tiny ecosystems—largely from the fog that rolls in off the ocean. Stop for a brief lunch en route

In the later afternoon, arrive at your lodge in the heart of the Namibian desert, a kaleidoscope of color and mesmerizing sands at their most breathtaking during sunrise and sunset.

Dinner tonight is at the lodge.

Overnight: *Sossusvlei Lodge (B, L, D)*

## **SATURDAY, MARCH 15** NAMIB DESERT / SOSSUSVLEI

Embark on an early morning excursion to the world's highest crested sand dunes at Sossusvlei.

Here, the red-orange dunes seem to be “alive”—they constantly change and undulate due to the desert winds. Despite their barren look, the dunes support a rich, complex system of wildlife that includes the blind golden mole, a large dancing spider known as the “white lady,” as well as geckoes and lizards.

You may choose to climb on the velvety sands of Big Mama, as the locals fondly refer to the largest dune.

Return to your lodge for a leisurely lunch during the heat of the day, as well as some time to relax and enjoy the stunning scenery and pool.

Dinner tonight is at the lodge.

Overnight: *Sossusvlei Lodge (B, L, D)*

## **SUNDAY, MARCH 16** SOSSUSVELI / SWAKOPMUND

Travel through the Namib Desert today en route to German-accented Swakopmund, Namibia's largest port.

During the journey you may see oryx, springbok, and ostrich, as well as the picturesque mountain scenery.

Arrive in Swakopmund in time for a late lunch.

Get acquainted with the town by visiting the Natural History Museum, which occupies a former harbor warehouse and lends insight into Namibia's colonial past and rich natural resources.

This evening, enjoy dinner together at your hotel.

Overnight: *Swakopmund Hotel & Entertainment Centre (B, L, D)*

## **MONDAY, MARCH 17** SWAKOPMUND / WALVIS BAY / NAMIBIAN COAST

In the morning, set out from nearby Walvis Bay for a half-day cruise and lunch along Namibia's coastline.

“Walvis” is the Dutch word for whale, and the Dutch who first named the bay did so due to the large numbers of southern right whales that grazed the harbor for its rich plankton supply.

Putting out to sea on a catamaran, see this renowned waterway—Namibia's only natural harbor—from the perspective of the many mariners who went before, witnessing some of the shipwrecks the coast has claimed, as well

as the Cape fur seals, pelicans, and other sea birds native to these waters. Your nautical exploration of this rugged and striking region inland tribespeople call “the land God created in anger” will provide a cool respite after the arid desert atmosphere of Sossusvlei.

After lunch aboard the cruise, take a short tour of the Walvis Bay Lagoon, a protected area which is home to many species of water birds including the migratory greater and lesser flamingoes.

Return to Swakopmund, where you have the remainder of the day at leisure to explore this charming coastal city with its palm-lined streets and historic German architecture on our own.

Dinner tonight is on our own.

Overnight: *Swakopmund Hotel & Entertainment Centre (B, L)*

## **TUESDAY, MARCH 18**

### **SWAKOPMUND / CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA**

In the morning, visit Swakopmund’s Crystal Gallery, home of the largest quartz crystal cluster in the world—a 30,000-pound, 520-million-year-old chunk of rock that towers some 10 feet tall.

Transfer to the airport for your two-hour flight to Cape Town, South Africa.

Upon arrival this evening, transfer to your hotel on the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront and enjoy dinner on your own.

Overnight: *The Pepperclub Hotel (B)*

## **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19**

### **CAPE TOWN / THE WINELANDS**

South Africa is one of the finest wine-producing countries in the world—and some of its best vineyards lie a mere 45 miles east of Cape Town.

Embark on a full-day excursion through the Cape Winelands region, which has been producing wine since 1679. Stop at a winery for lunch in their superb restaurant.

Return to your hotel late this afternoon. The remainder of the day is at leisure, and you dine on your own tonight in this cosmopolitan city

Please note that the exact order of sightseeing today and over the next two days may vary so that we can take advantage of the best possible weather to visit Table Mountain.

Overnight: *The Pepperclub Hotel (B, L)*

## **THURSDAY, MARCH 20**

### **CAPE TOWN / CAPE OF GOOD HOPE**

On today’s excursion to the Cape Peninsula, visit the place that Sir Francis Drake called “the most stately thing and the fairest Cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth”—the Cape of Good Hope.

Pass by lovely Hout Bay before reaching the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, with some 19,000 acres of protected parkland. Here on this unspoiled peninsula, mountains drop into the sea, unique flora thrives, and bird life is abundant. A funicular takes you to the summit of the Nature Reserve for a stupendous ocean view.

After a seafood lunch, drive through historic Simon’s Town—headquarters of the South African Navy—then continue to Boulders Beach to visit a unique penguin colony. From one pair introduced here in 1982, some 3,000 penguins now make their home at Boulders.

Dinner tonight is at a local restaurant.

Overnight: *The Pepperclub Hotel (B, L, D)*

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 21**

### **CAPE TOWN**

Your tour of Cape Town this morning features a visit to the Bo-Kaap neighborhood, the city’s historical center of Cape Malay culture. This hillside neighborhood of brightly colored homes and businesses is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in Cape Town, and its picturesque setting and cobbled streets have made it a desirable place to live.

Learn about Bo-Kaap’s history as the Malay Quarter, owing to the thousands of

Capetonians of Southeast Asian descent who made the area their home.

Also visit Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, considered among the finest in the world. Cutting a swath across one thousand acres on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, the property was bequeathed to South Africa by wealthy industrialist Cecil Rhodes upon his death in 1902. The gardens planted here are almost exclusively devoted to the indigenous plants of South Africa—approximately 9,000 of the nation’s 22,000 species.

Return to Cape Town for a visit by cable car (weather permitting) 3,500 feet to the top of Table Mountain. The views from the summit are phenomenal.

Mid-afternoon, return to your hotel.

Tonight, toast your Southern Africa Odyssey together with a farewell dinner.

Overnight: *The Pepperclub Hotel (B, D)*

## **SATURDAY, MARCH 22**

CAPE TOWN / DEPART FOR U.S.

Today, transfer to the Cape Town airport and your overnight return flight to the United States. (B)

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## **OPTIONAL EXTENSION: KRUGER: KAPAMA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE**

MARCH 22–25, 2025

## **SATURDAY, MARCH 22**

KAPAMA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

This morning, transfer to the Cape Town airport for the flight to Hoedspruit or Mpumalanga, where you then transfer to your lodge in the Kapama Private Game Reserve.

Here, the magic and mystery of Africa begin to unfold as you embark on your first game drive.

This wildlife region, which sits adjacent to the enormous Kruger National Park, boasts an

abundance of bird and mammal species, including the “Big Five”: elephant, lion, leopard, buffalo, and rhino. Experienced rangers accompany you in your open Land Rovers to ensure close-up encounters with the animals.

As Kapama is a private lodge, you can enjoy longer game-viewing hours than guests in adjacent Kruger National Park. Additionally, vehicles can go off-road anywhere in the private reserve and guests are allowed to get out of the vehicle and go on foot, both of which are not allowed in the national park.

Lunch today is on your own en route from Cape Town.

Upon arrival at your lodge, have some time to freshen up before our first game drive, and dinner is included in camp upon your return.

Overnight: *Kapama Southern Camp (B, D)*

## **SUNDAY, MARCH 23**

KAPAMA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

At morning’s first light and again in the late afternoon, when the animals hunt, embark on game drives.

In between, return to your lodge to rest, relax, and refresh: soak in the splendid setting, cool off in the swimming pool, visit the library, gym, or spa, or observe wildlife from the lodge’s private elevated viewing decks.

All meals today and tomorrow are served at the lodge.

Overnight: *Kapama Southern Camp (B, L, D)*

## **MONDAY, MARCH 24**

KAPAMA PRIVATE GAME RESERVE

Have another day of game drives and relaxing at your lodge, savoring the natural splendor of Kapama.

Overnight: *Kapama Southern Camp (B, L, D)*

## **TUESDAY, MARCH 25**

KAPAMA / JOHANNESBURG / DEPART FOR U.S.

Return to the airport today and check in for your flight to Johannesburg, then on to the United States.

Note for land-only guests: Flight schedules from Hoedspruit to Johannesburg can vary, so it is strongly recommended that you do not book a return flight to the U.S. that departs Johannesburg prior to 6:00 p.m.

Meals: *B*