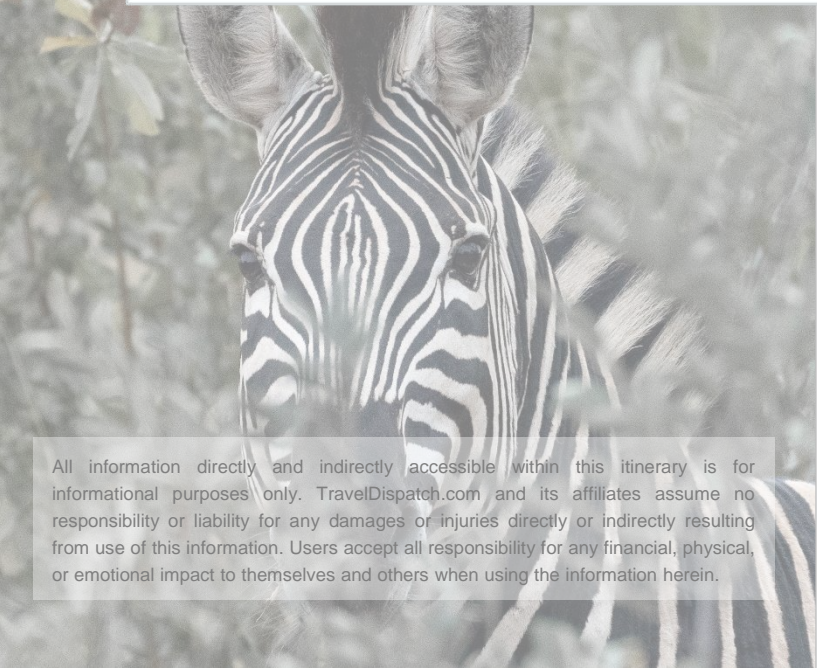




WELCOME TO SOUTH AFRICA

A 12-day Trip (including Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe)

This was a 12-day trip taken in late-May across South Africa with an overnight in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. We began our journey in Cape Town where we made our way past colorful beach shacks and penguins to the lighthouse on Cape Point before meandering our way back along the coast to take in the views from atop Table Mountain, Signal Hill, and Lion's Head. From Cape Town we headed through the Stellenbosch wine region on our way to cage dive with Sharks in Gansbaai and enjoy more beautiful coastline along our return. We then flew up to experience the awe-inspiring Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe for an evening before flying back for close encounters with wildlife in two private safari reserves adjacent to Kruger National Park. We eventually wrapped up our trip in Cape Town with a sobering visit to Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned. This was an unforgettable experience in both city and nature!



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Custom
Google Map



DAY 1

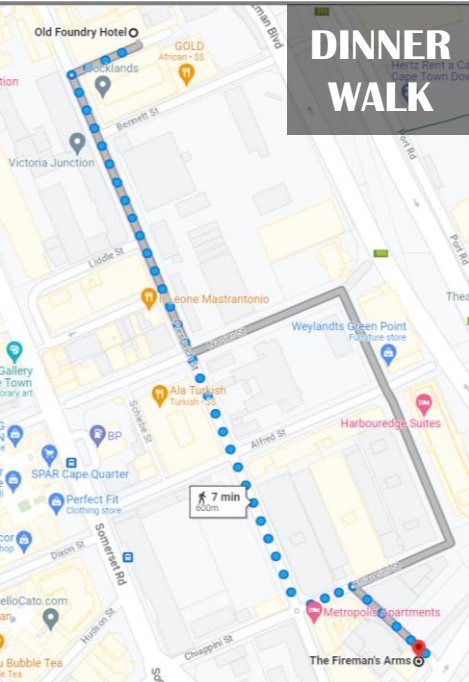
Today we arrived and settled in Cape Town. We arrived in the early evening after a red eye flight from the USA, picked up our rental, and drove to downtown Cape Town to check in at our hotel. We set out for dinner and drinks and still managed to get to bed at a reasonable hour so we could avoid jet lag and rest up for our early start the following morning.

5:10PM Arrive in Cape Town (CPT), pick up ZAR, and rental from [Budget](#)

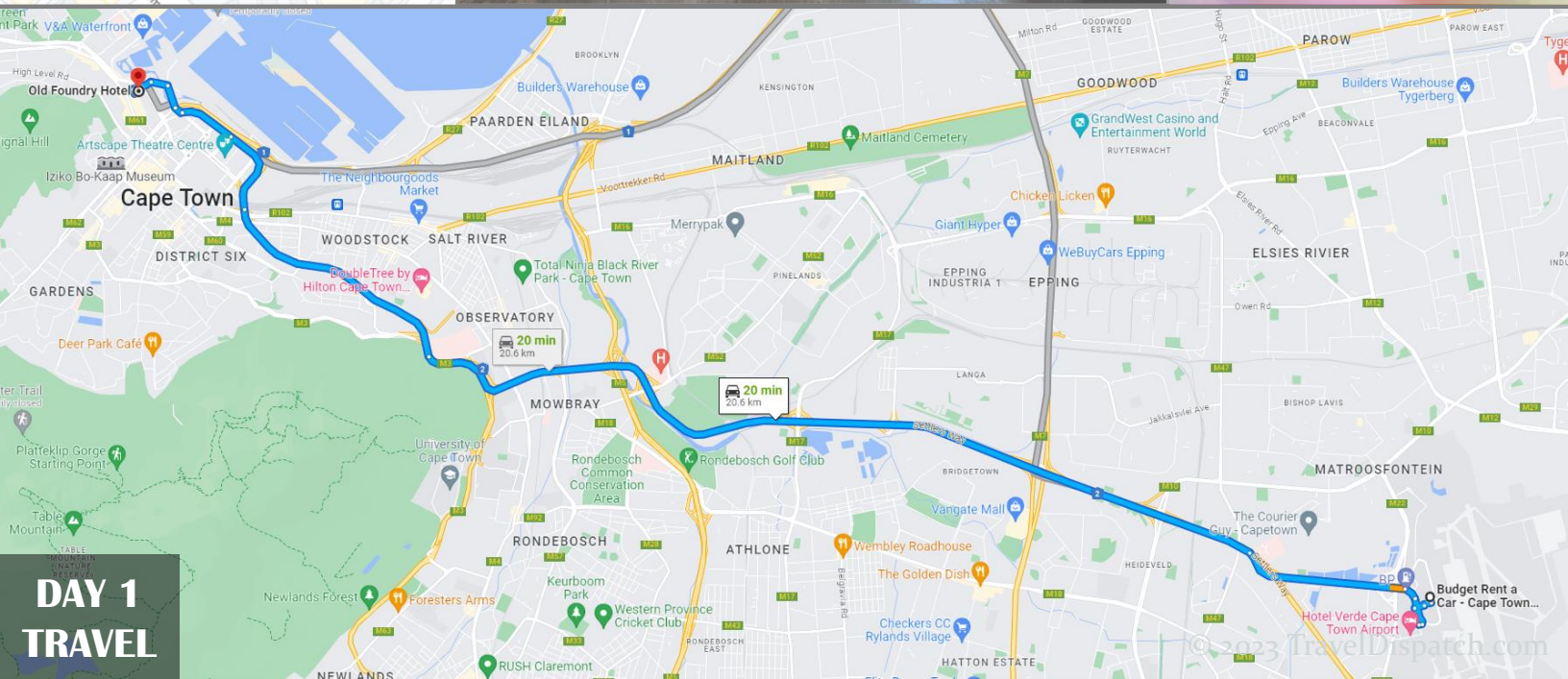
6:15PM Drive to **Cape Town** [24km; 30min]

6:45PM Check in at [Old Foundry Hotel](#)

7:30PM Walk for dinner and drinks at [Firearm's Arms](#)



DINNER WALK



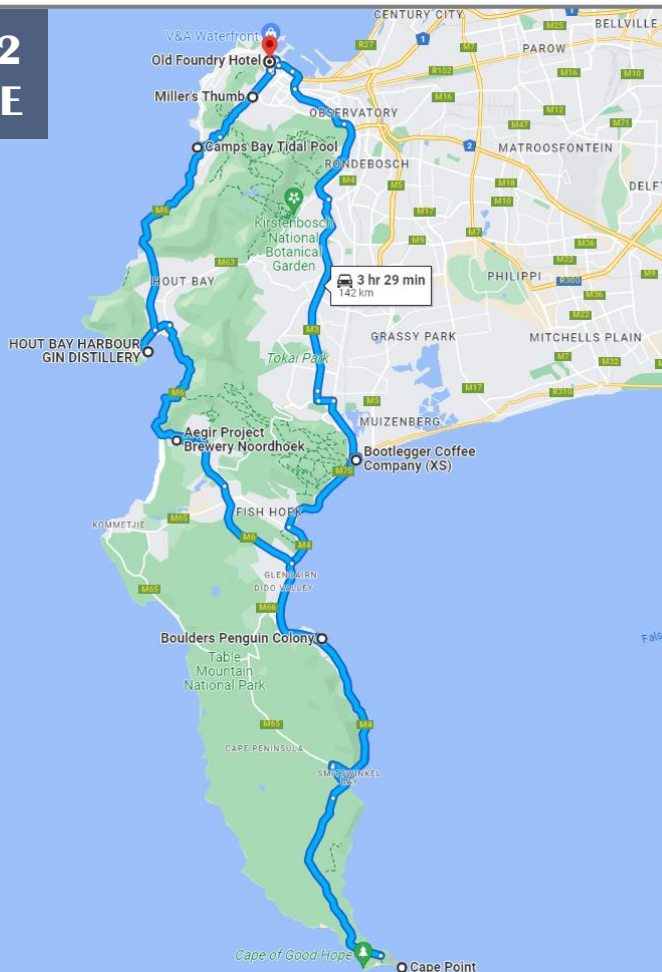
DAY 1 TRAVEL

DAY 2

Today we explored the entirety of the Cape Peninsula. We set off relatively early in the morning to grab coffee and check out the colorful shacks along Muizenberg Beach before visiting the penguins at Simon's Beach and making our way to the Cape Point Lighthouse. We enjoyed a delicious lunch in Noordhoek and tasty gin in Hout Bay on our way back along Chapman's Peak to catch sunset in Camp's Bay and dinner back in Cape Town.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 6:45AM | Drive to Muizenberg Beach [29km; 30min] [sunrise ~7:39AM] |
| 7:15AM | Grab coffee from Bootlegger and check out the colorful changing shacks along the beach |
| 8:45AM | Drive to explore Boulders Penguin Colony [15km; 25min] (there's a parking lot a short walk from the park entrance) |
| 10:00AM | Drive to explore Cape Point Nature Reserve [25km; 35min] (take the funicular up; check out the lighthouse; hike to Diaz Beach , if desired) |
| 12:00PM | Drive for lunch at Aegir Project Brewery [43km; 50min] |
| 2:30PM | Drive to Hout Bay via Chapman's Peak Drive [14km; 30min] |
| 3:15PM | Gin tasting at Hout Bay Harbour Gin Distillery |
| 4:00PM | Drive to Camp's Bay Tidal Pool for sunset [14km; 20min] [sunset ~5:47PM] |
| 6:30PM | Drive for dinner at Miller's Thumb (reservations recommended) [5km; 10min] |
| 8:00PM | Drive back to hotel [3km; 10min] |

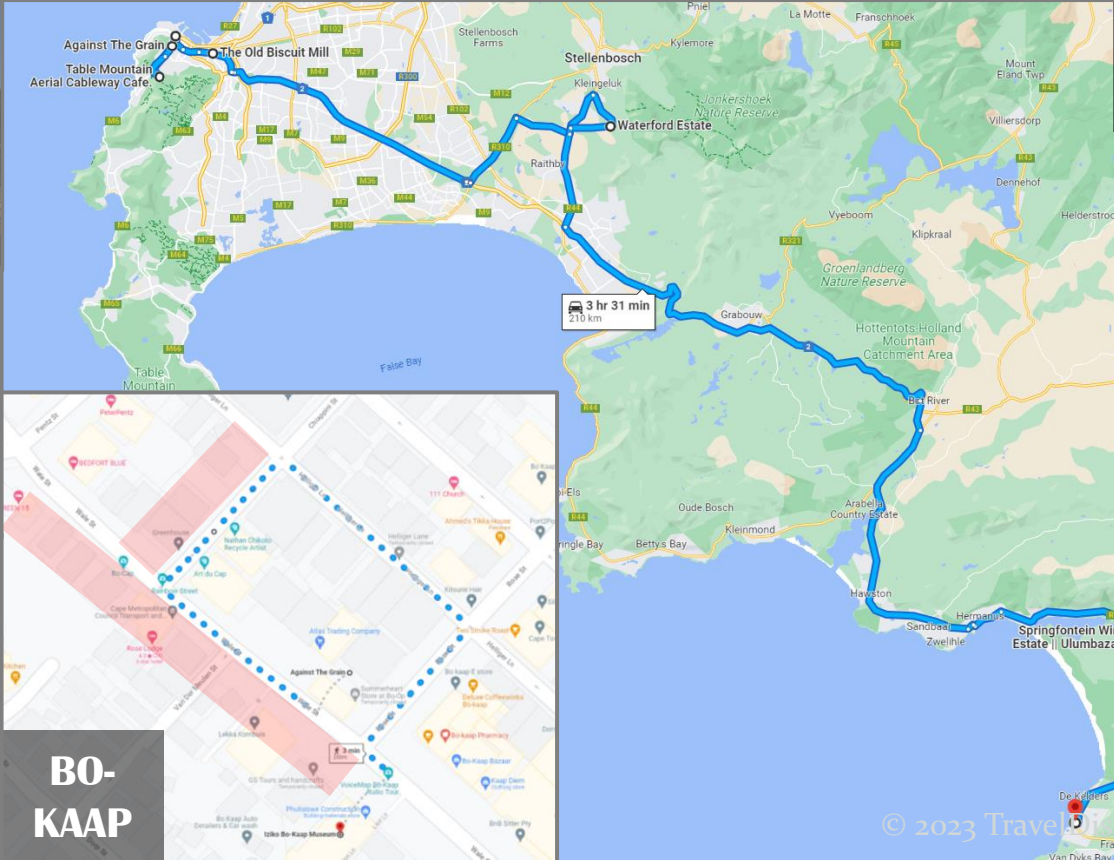
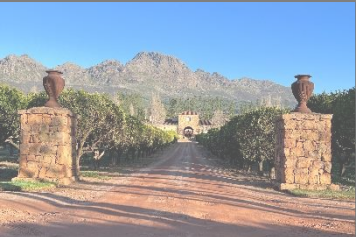
DAY 2 DRIVE



DAY 3

Today we migrated from Cape Town through the winelands to Gansbaai. We started the morning off with a wander and coffee through the colorful neighborhood of Bo-Kaap before taking the cableway up to the top of Table Mountain for 360-degree views of the entire Cape Town area. We then made our way over to stroll through the great variety of shops and food vendors at The Old Biscuit Mill before departing to taste our way through a couple notable wineries in Stellenbosch. We eventually found ourselves in the sleepy fishing town of Gansbaai for dinner and a good night's rest the night before we were set to cage dive with sharks.

- 7:15AM** Drive to pick up coffee at [Against the Grain](#) [1.5km; 10min]
- 7:45AM** Wander the [Bo-Kaap](#) neighborhood [sunrise ~7:39AM] (Chiappini, Wale, and Rose Streets)
- 8:15AM** Drive to take [Table Mountain Aerial Cableway](#) [5km; 15min] (park along the road to the lower station; pre-purchasing "Fast Track" tickets highly recommended to minimize wait; take the cableway up hike back down via [Kloof Corner](#), if you'd like [5km]; must exit the way you drove in, road is blocked)
- 10:30AM** Drive to explore and have lunch at [The Old Biscuit Mill](#) [9km; 20min]
- 12:30PM** Drive for tasting and snacks at [Waterford Wine Estate](#) [52km; 45min]
- 2:45PM** Drive for tasting and snacks at [Springfontein Wine Estate](#) [120km; 1hr 45min]
- 5:45PM** Drive to check in at [Saxon Lodge](#) [25km; 30min] [sunset ~5:47PM]
- 7:00PM** Dinner at [The Boathouse](#)



DAY 3 DRIVE

BO-KAAP

DAY 4

Today we cage dove with sharks. We ticked one of those bucket list items off in the morning with a trip out to 'The Shallows' to cage dive with Bronzer and White Sharks, with a visit from a couple short-tailed sting rays. Following our adventure, we meandered our way back to Cape Town along some beautiful coastline via Betty's Bay to catch sunset with a bottle of wine from the top of Signal Hill before having an excellent drum circle and dinner experience at the GOLD Restaurant; a must-do in Cape Town!

6:45AM Drive to check in and have breakfast at [Great White House](#) [4km; 10min]

7:00AM [Marine Dynamics Shark Cage Diving Tour](#) [sunrise ~7:40AM]
(20min out; 2hr for cage; 20min back)

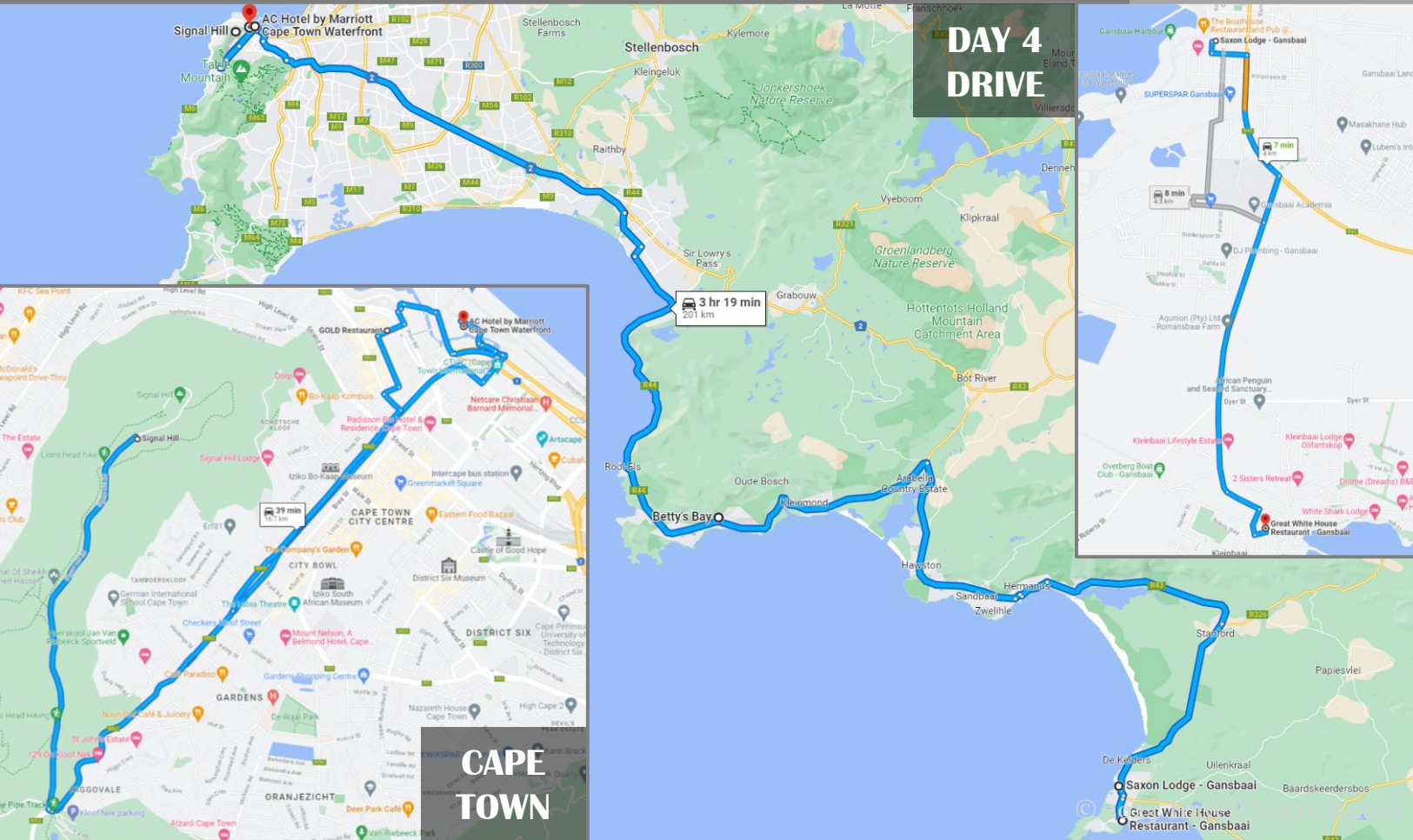
11:30AM Drive via **Betty's Bay** back to Cape Town [185km; 2hr 45min]

2:30PM Check in and freshen up at [AC Hotel Marriott Cape Town](#)

4:45PM Drive for wine & sunset at [Signal Hill](#) [8km; 15min] [sunset ~5:46PM]

6:15PM Drive for dinner at [GOLD Restaurant](#) [7km; 15min]
(reservations for drum circle & dinner required!)

Head back to hotel



DAY 5

Today we hiked for the best views of Cape Town before hitting more wineries. We started the morning with one of the best hikes and vantage points in all of Cape Town from Lion's Head before freshening up and heading back out to the winelands. After a couple wineries we meandered our way back for dinner in Camp's Bay and our final evening in this leg of the trip.

7:00AM

Drive to hike [Lion's Head](#) [6km; 15min] [sunrise ~7:40AM]
(2.7mi out-and-back trail; challenging with staples & ladders section)



10:00AM

Drive back to hotel to freshen up [6km; 15min]

11:00AM

Drive for lunch at [Post Card Café](#) and tasting at [Stark-Conde Wines](#) [64km; 1hr]

2:00PM

Drive for tasting and snacks at [Delaire Graff Estate](#) [10km; 15min]

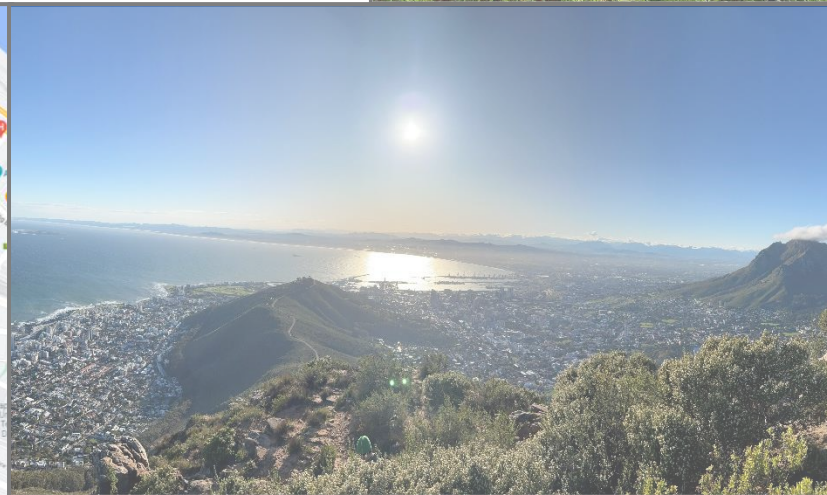
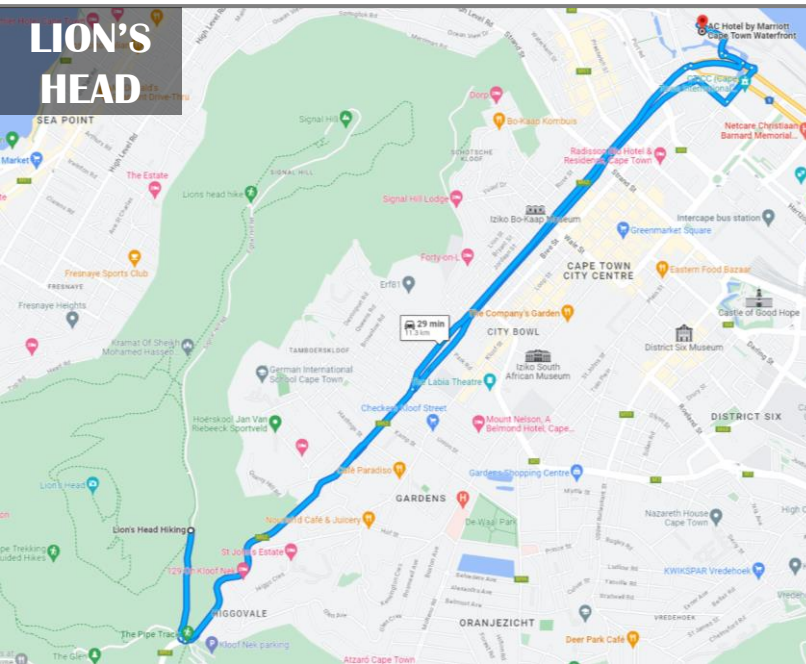
3:30PM

Drive to [Camp's Bay](#) for sunset [67km; 1hr] [sunset ~5:46PM]
(hike [Kasteelspoort Hiking Trail](#), if desired; 2.9mi out-and-back; 'diving board')

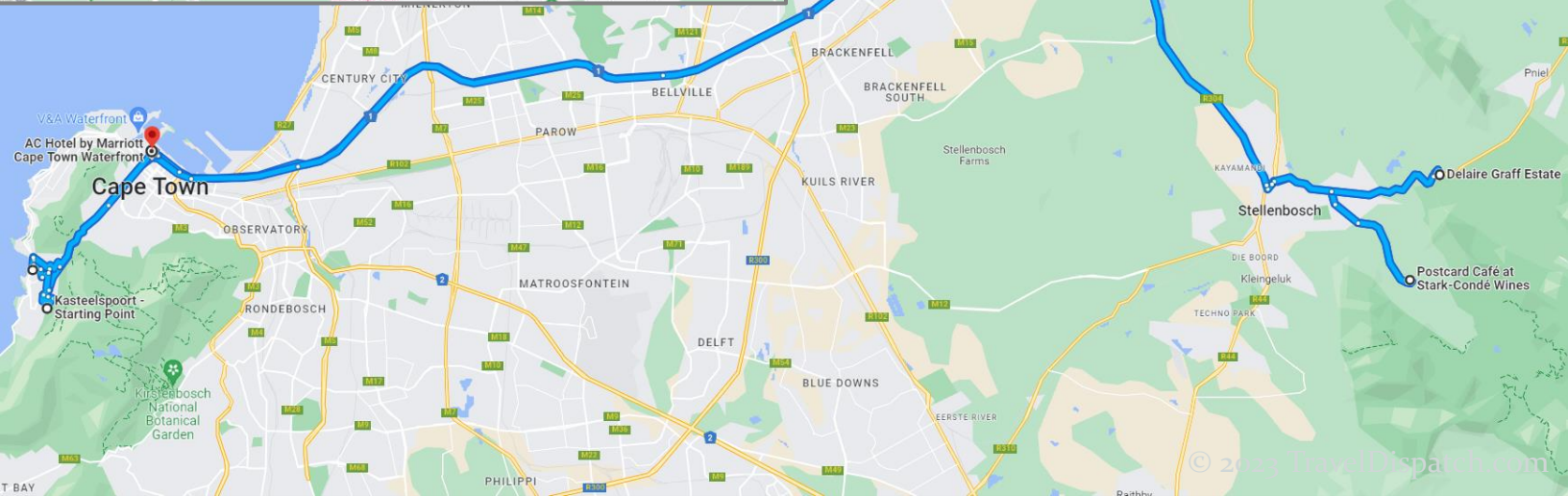
7:00PM

Dinner at [Mantra Café](#)

Drive back to hotel; fill up rental with fuel along the way [8km; 15min]



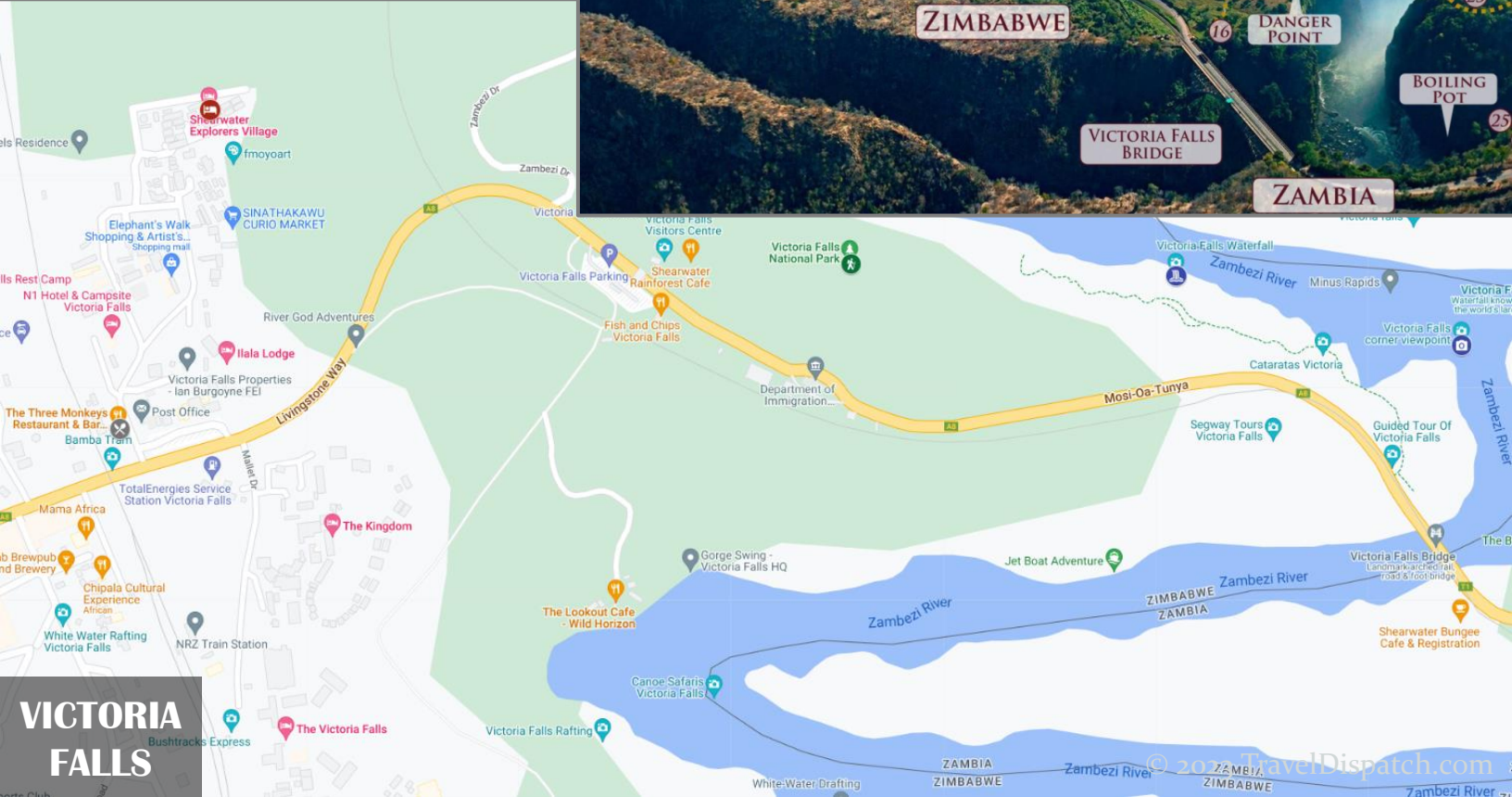
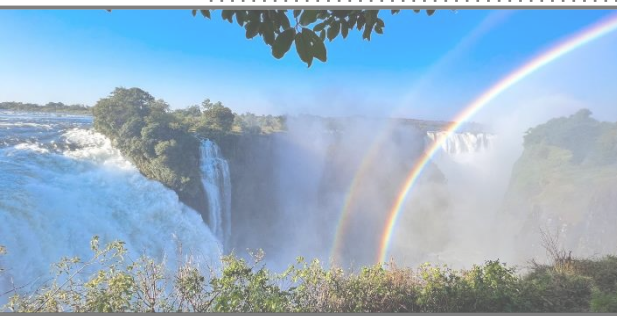
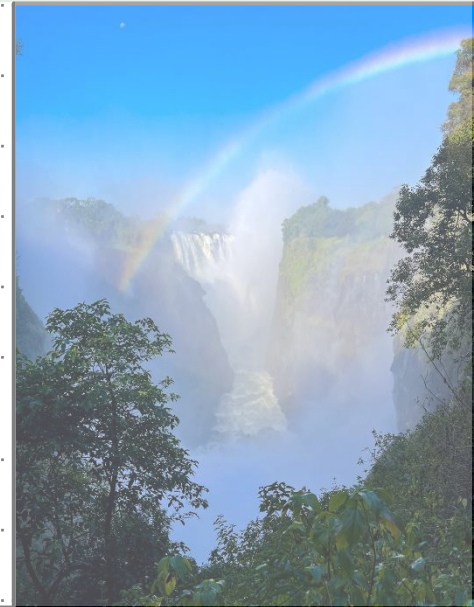
DAY 5
DRIVE



DAY 6

Today we migrated up to one of the Seven Natural Wonders: Victoria Falls. We dropped our rental off at the airport before taking a morning flight to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe where we were shuttled from the airport to our resort. From there we took a guided tour of the magnificent waterfalls and became completely drenched from the pluming spray of the crashing water below. After drying off, we enjoyed dinner at a local restaurant that evening.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 6:15AM | Drive to airport to drop off rental at Budget [21km; 30min] |
| 9:45AM | Depart CPT [sunrise ~6:40AM] |
| 12:40PM | Arrive in Victoria Falls (VFA) ; meet driver in main hall |
| 1:30PM | Shuttle to check in at Shearwater Explorer's Village [22km; 30min] |
| 2:30PM | Check in for tour in main lobby |
| 3:00PM | Take Guided Tour of Victoria Falls (2hrs walking ~2km; bring rain jacket / poncho; need to pay park fee \$50) |
| 5:30PM | Walk for dinner at Three Monkeys [sunset ~5:46PM] |
| 7:30PM | Return to resort |

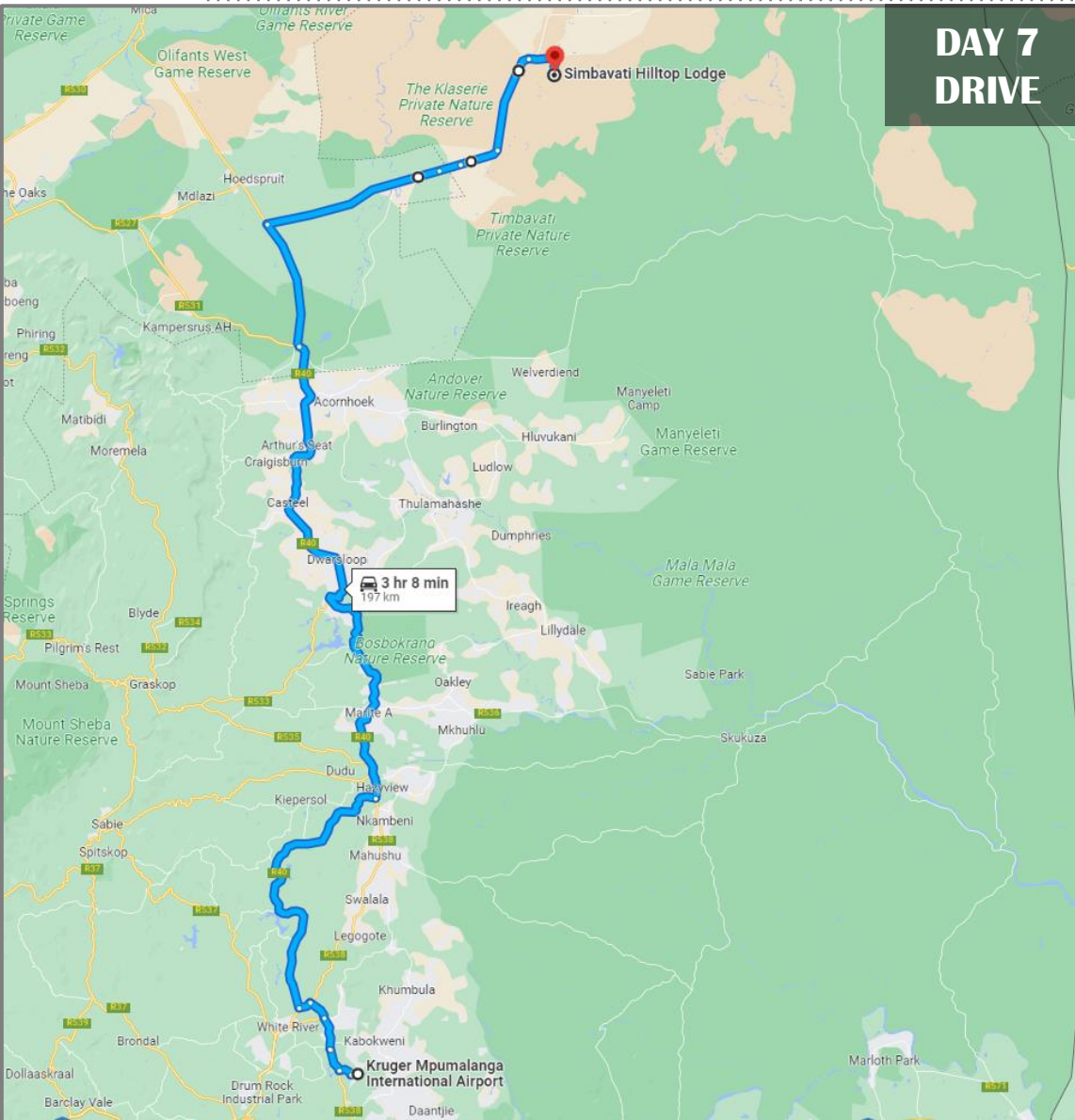


VICTORIA FALLS

DAY 7

Today we migrated down to our first safari camp in the Timbavati Game Reserve. With fewer than 24 hours in Zimbabwe, we checked out of the resort and headed to the airport to fly down to Kruger National Park in South Africa. Once we acquired our rental SUV (definitely get a proper SUV!), we made our way north through the Timbavati Game Reserve to check in at our safari lodge.

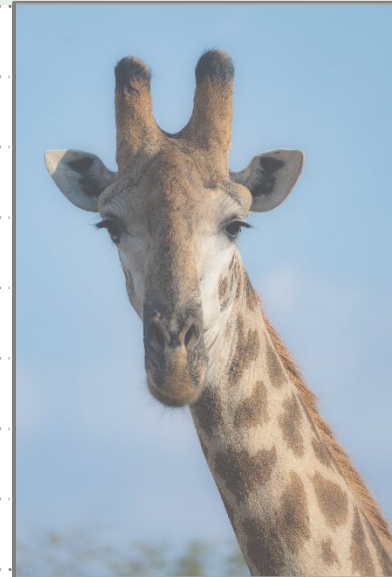
| | |
|----------------|--|
| 7:00AM | Breakfast at resort [sunrise ~6:40AM] |
| 8:00AM | Shuttle to airport [21km; 30min] |
| 10:30AM | Depart VFA |
| 12:15PM | Arrive in Kruger Mpumalanga International (MQP) and pick up rental from Budget |
| 1:00PM | Drive to check in at Simbavati Hilltop Lodge [~200+km; ~3hr 30min] (Take R40 north 140km; turn right on Argyle Road and take it past the park control gate (pay fee) all the way to Simbavati Hilltop sign / entrance on right, around 45km; it's then another 6km along jeep trail to lodge) |
| 5:00PM | Enjoy sunset and cocktails on deck at lodge [sunset ~5:23PM] |
| 7:00PM | Dinner at lodge |



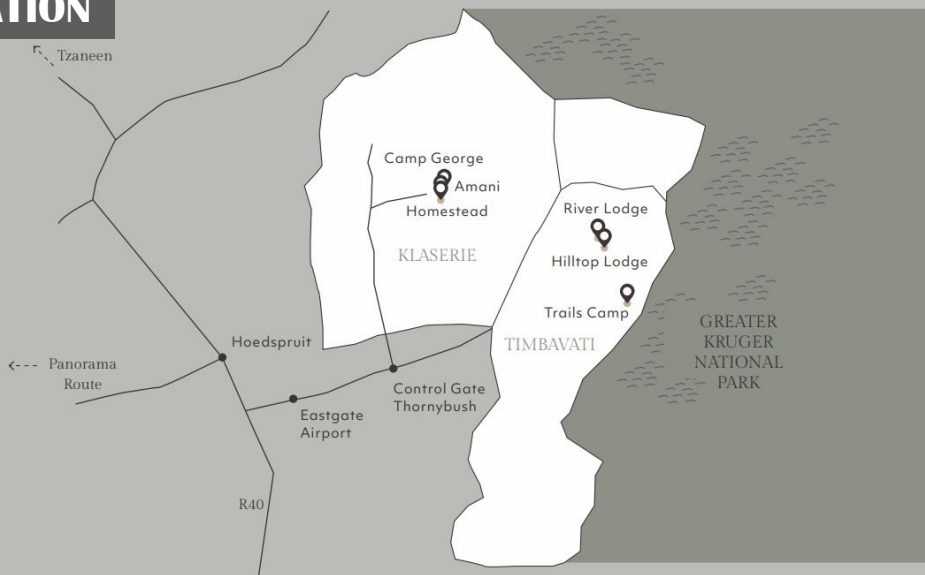
DAY 8

Today we settled into safari life and wildlife immersion. Safari life is pretty easy and fantastic. We woke up; had coffee; went on a game drive; had breakfast; relaxed for a bit; had a light lunch; went on another game drive; and then returned for dinner and beverages the remainder of the evening. All lodging, game drives, meals, and almost all beverages (including alcohol) are included. That's pretty much the standard protocol at most safari camps, and why they're so expensive. But it is definitely worth it!

| | |
|----------------|---|
| 5:30AM | Wake up call from the rangers |
| 5:45AM | Ranger escort to dining area for coffee / tea [sunrise ~6:29AM] |
| 6:00AM | Morning game drive with driver / guide and tracker (~3hrs) |
| 10:00AM | Breakfast back at camp |
| 11:00AM | Free time to do whatever or relax (~2hrs) |
| 1:00PM | Light lunch at camp |
| 3:00PM | Afternoon game drive with driver / guide and tracker (~3hrs) |
| 7:00PM | Dinner and beverages at camp [sunset ~5:14PM] |



LOCATION



DAY 9

Today we migrated from Timbavati to Mala Mala Game Reserve. We had one final morning game drive in Timbavati before making our way from the northern to the southern end just outside of Kruger National Park: Mala Mala Game Reserve. This was by far the nicest safari camp we ever experienced and our safari experiences only got better!

5:30AM Wake up call from the rangers

5:45AM Ranger escort to dining area for coffee / tea [sunrise ~6:29AM]

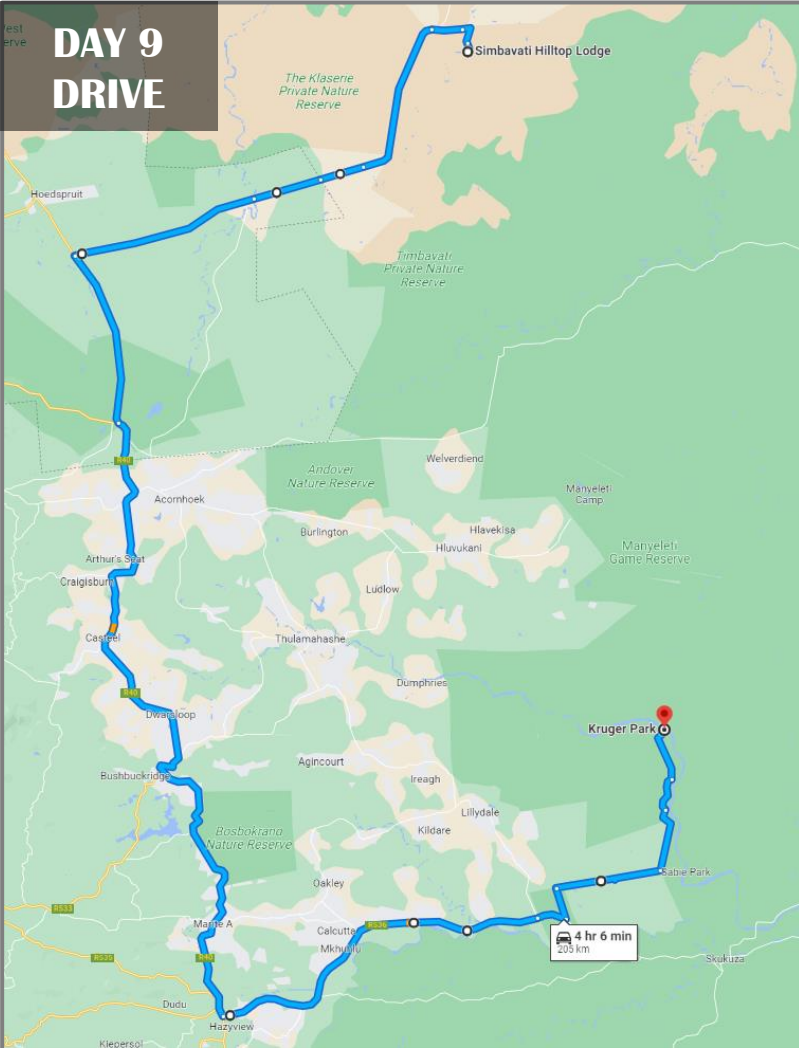
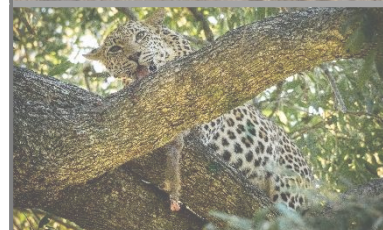
6:00AM Morning game drive with driver / guide and tracker (~3hrs)

10:00AM Breakfast back at camp

10:30AM Drive to check in at [Mala Mala Sable Camp](#) [205km; 4hr]
(Follow exit signs back to **Argyle Road** and take it back to southbound **R40**; at **Hazyview** turn left on **R536** and take it ~38km to a brown sign for MalaMala; you'll pass through the park checkpoint and pay the fee and continue for another ~17km. NOTE: there are regular speed traps on **F536**; we know from experience!)

3:00PM Afternoon game drive with driver / guide (~3hrs) [sunset ~5:14PM]

7:00PM Dinner and beverages at camp

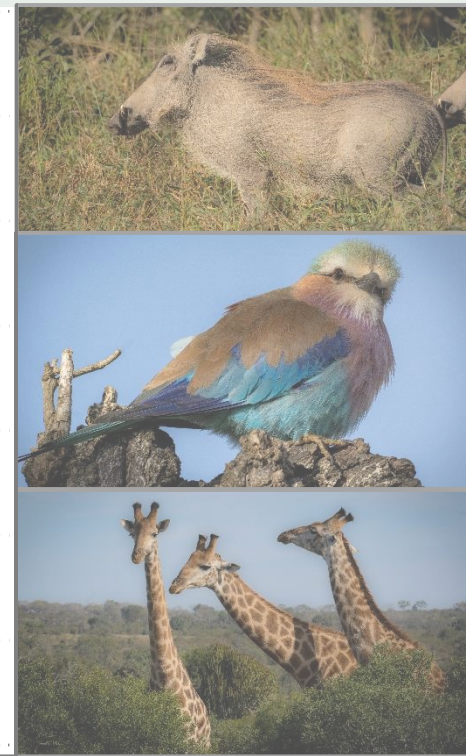




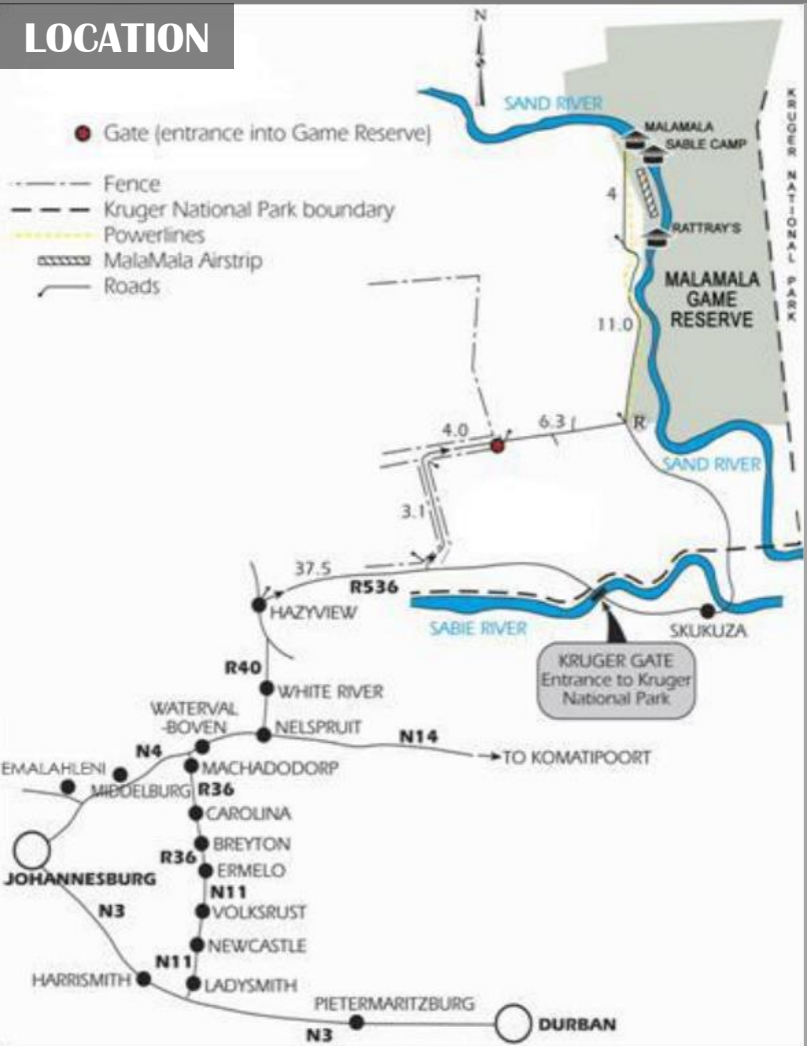
DAY 10

Today we continued our safari camp and game drive experiences. The routine at MalaMala was similar to Simbavati with a few minor differences: the morning start times were a little later; the game drives a little longer; and we only had a single person who served as our driver, guide, and tracker (Reggie is definitely one of the best in the industry we've found across all our safaris!).

| | |
|----------------|---|
| 6:00AM | Ranger escort to dining area for coffee / tea [sunrise ~6:30AM] |
| 6:30AM | Morning game drive with driver / guide and tracker (~3hrs) |
| 10:00AM | Breakfast back at camp |
| 11:00AM | Free time to do whatever or relax (~2hrs) |
| 1:00PM | Light lunch at camp |
| 3:00PM | Afternoon game drive with driver / guide and tracker (~3hrs) |
| 7:00PM | Dinner and beverages at camp [sunset ~5:14PM] |



LOCATION



DAY 11

Today we migrated from out of the bush back to Cape Town. Rather than try to squeeze a game drive in before we departed for the airport, we decided to leisurely pack and enjoy breakfast. We navigated back out of the park and made our way to the airport to return our rental and fly to Cape Town. After checking into our hotel we wandered around the Silo District and had dinner.

Pack, relax, and enjoy a leisurely breakfast at camp [sunrise ~6:30AM]

8:30AM Drive to airport and return rental [123km; 2hr 30min]

1:25PM Depart **Kruger Mpumalanga International (MQP)**

4:10PM Arrive in Cape Town (CPT) and take taxi to hotel [21km; 20min]

5:30PM Check in at [AC Hotel Marriott Cape Town](#)

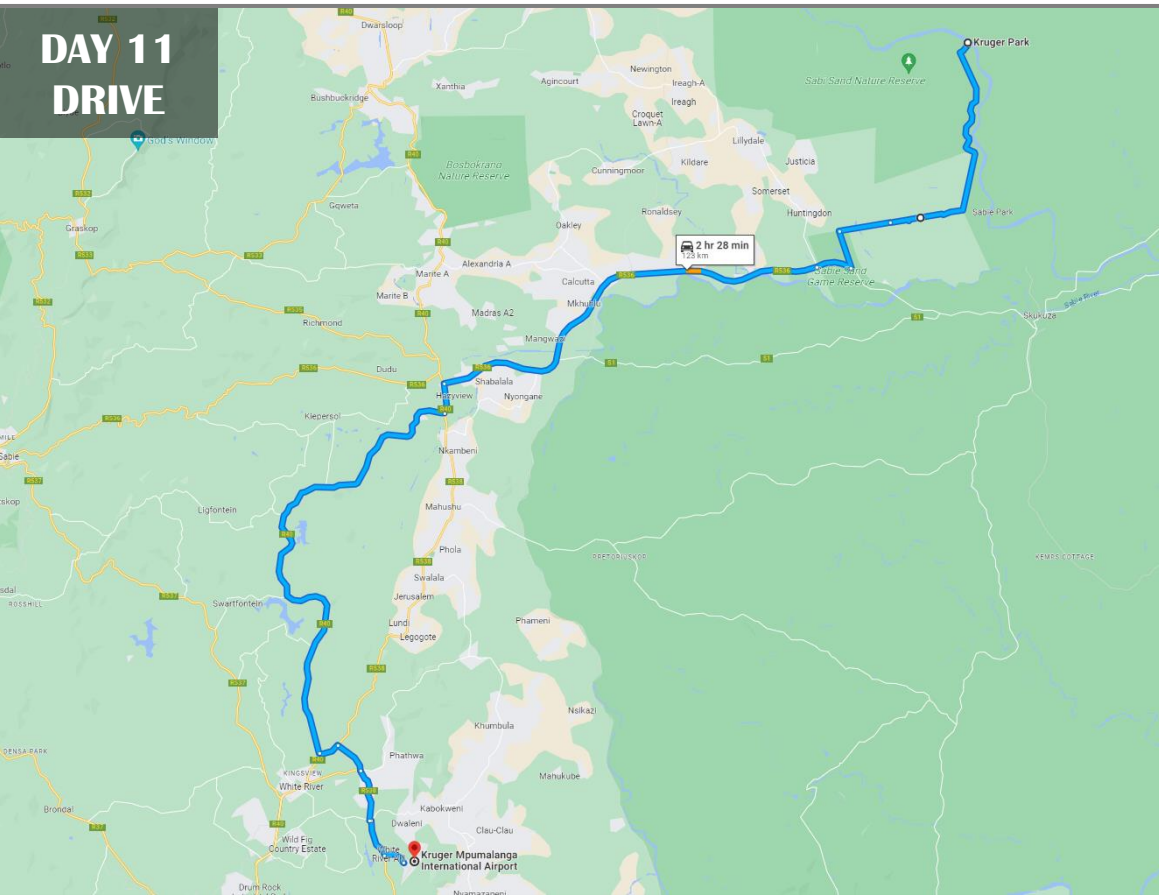
6:00PM Walk over to explore the [Silo District](#)

7:00PM Dinner at [The Granary](#) (reservations required!) [sunset ~5:44PM]

8:30PM Walk back to hotel and get some rest!



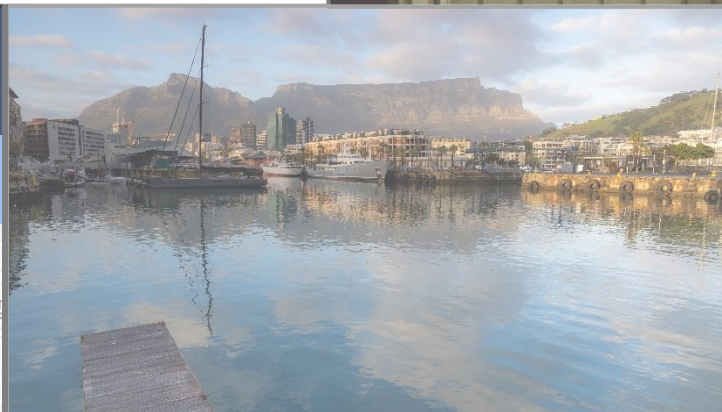
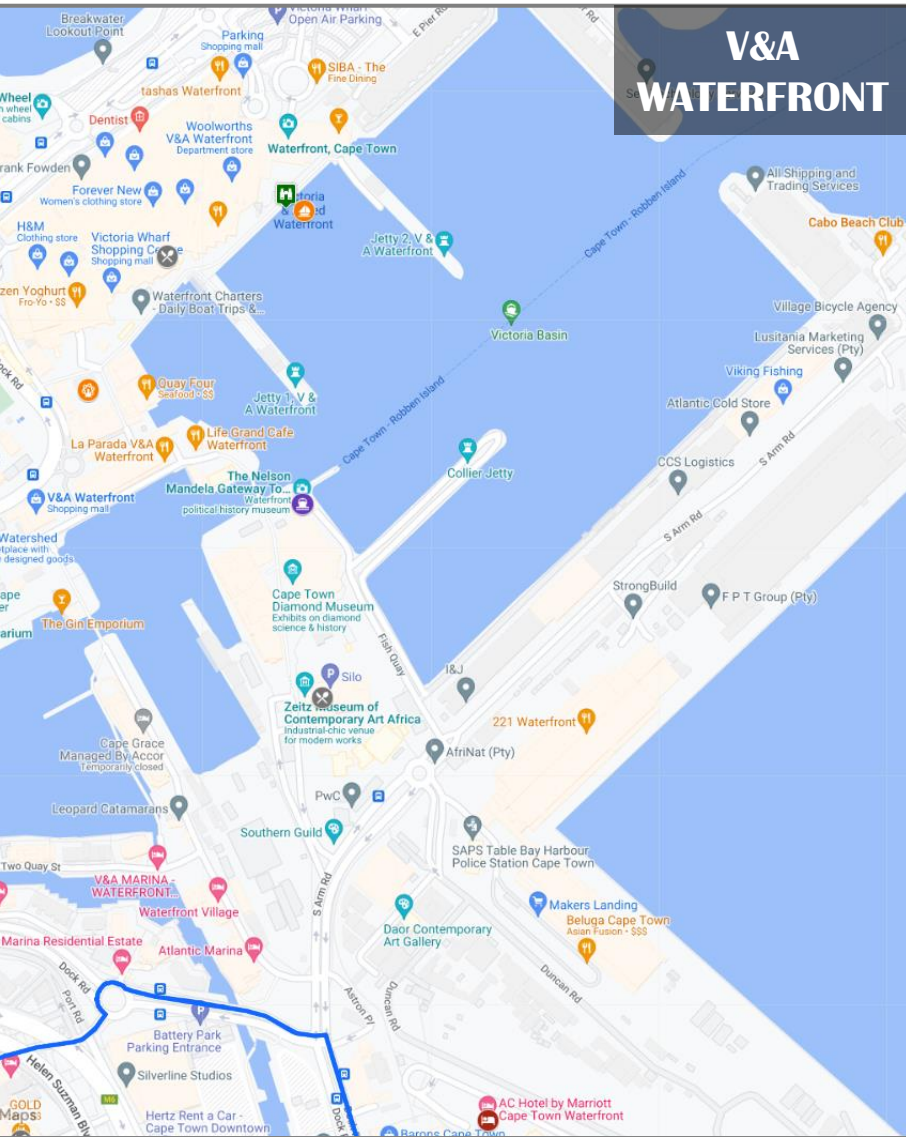
DAY 11 DRIVE



DAY 12

Today we explored the V&A Waterfront and Robben Island before flying home. Our flight home wasn't until the evening, so after breakfast we dropped our bags off with the front desk, checked out, and went about our way to take the first ferry to Robben Island. Once back on the mainland, we enjoyed our final hours in Cape Town with lunch and wandering around the V&A Waterfront. Although there's much more to explore in South Africa, we hope you agree this itinerary provides a fantastic introduction!

| | |
|--------|--|
| | Have breakfast, drop bags off, and check out [sunrise ~7:45AM] |
| 7:30AM | Have a quick wander around the V&A Waterfront before going to ferry |
| 9:00AM | Take ferry to Robben Island (~3.5hr experience; 30min ferry; bus tour of island; guided tour of prison and Nelson Mandela's cell; fantastic and sobering experience) |
| 1:00PM | Ferry returns back to waterfront pier |
| 1:30PM | Walk for lunch at Karibu Restaurant |
| 3:00PM | Wander around shops, entertainment, and views of V&A Waterfront (Cape Wheel; views from piers) |
| 5:00PM | Return to hotel to collect bags and take taxi to airport [21km; 20min] |
| 7:50PM | Depart CPT for home! [sunset ~5:44PM] |



The lists below illustrate our top picks based on our experiences along our trip. The lists are not intended to be exhaustive and we do not have partnerships or receive incentives from any of our recommendations. We've included any available links to the providers and to 'our reviews' I've posted on TripAdvisor. We wish you memorable travels and encourage you to reach out with any questions!

LODGING

[Old Foundry Hotel](#) [Cape Town, South Africa; Days 1 & 2] [{Our Review}](#)

Creative and unique repurposed foundry space with friendly staff in a relatively central and convenient location.

[Saxon Lodge](#) [Gansbaai, South Africa; Day 3] [{Our Review}](#)

Friendly and accommodating owners providing a great launching point for cage diving adventures in the area.

[AC Hotel Marriott Cape Town](#) [Cape Town, South Africa; Days 4 & 5; 11 & 12] [{Our Review}](#)

Solid Marriott hotel with great staff and relatively easy walking access to Silo District and V&A Waterfront.

[Shearwater Explorer's Village](#) [Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe; Day 6] [{Our Review}](#)

Nice property and rooms within walking distance to restaurants and curios and short drive to Victoria Falls park.

[Simbavati Hilltop Lodge](#) [Timbavati, South Africa; Days 7 & 8] [{Our Review}](#)

Excellent full-board safari camp with fantastic staff, accommodations, and wildlife!

[Mala Mala Sable Camp](#) [Mala Mala, South Africa; Days 9 & 10] [{Our Review}](#)

The best full-board safari camp across all aspects we've found; it's a bit more expensive, but is completely worth it!



RESTAURANTS

I've included our Top 5 places where we ate during this trip; *sequenced by day, not ranking.*

[Aegir Project Brewery](#) [Noordhoek, South Africa; Day 2] [{Our Review}](#)

Fantastic craft brewery with delicious food; definitely recommend stopping in for a tasting and lunch.

[Miller's Thumb](#) [Cape Town, South Africa; Day 2] [{Our Review}](#)

A local institution with great staff, delicious food, and reasonable pricing the provides incredible value.

[GOLD Restaurant](#) [Cape Town, South Africa; Day 4] [{Our Review}](#)

Drum circle and tasting dinner was amazing and a 'must do' experience when in Cape Town!

[Simbavati Hilltop Lodge](#) [Timbavati, South Africa; Days 7 & 8] [{Our Review}](#)

Just because it's included, doesn't mean the chef's don't deliver tasty and well-executed food.

[Mala Mala Sable Camp](#) [Mala Mala, South Africa; Days 9 & 10] [{Our Review}](#)

Being the best safari camp also means their chefs know what they're doing and they do it deliciously.



EXPERIENCES

[Wander the boardwalk at Boulders Penguin Colony](#) [Simon's Town; Day 2]

Great boardwalk and views of the large colony; definitely worth the trip.

[Taste your way through Stellenbosch](#) [Stellenbosch; Days 3 & 5]

South Africa is known for their Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Chenin Blanc; you should drink them all. [Waterford Estate](#), [Stark-Conde](#), and [Delaire Graff](#) are all noteworthy.

[Stay at one of the private reserve safari camps](#) [Kruger NP area; Days 7 – 10]

The private reserves outside of Kruger National Park provide full-board and better access to amazing wildlife. Although the volume wasn't as large as in Kenya and Tanzania, the abundance of leopards here is definitely higher. Although pricey, safari is definitely life changing and worth it.

[Hike to the top of Lion's Head](#) [Cape Town; Day 5]

Best 360 views of Cape Town and surrounding area! (2.7mi out-and-back trail; challenging with staples & ladders section)

[Take the ferry to experience Robben Island](#) [Cape Town; Day 12]

You don't have to slug your pack into the backcountry, but cooking your dinner and staring at a fire before retiring to your tent on a chilly night is a mandatory experience for your memory bank!

