



HOLBROOK

International Garden Tours

presents

South Africa

Featuring

Capetown, the Garden Route, Pretoria, & Sabi Sabi Private Reserve

Itinerary

Day 1

Today you will start your South African tour from your US departure city of choice. (Please note that most flights from the US are via a stop in London. Also, International airfare is not included in the tour cost.)

Day 2

En Route

Day 3

Upon arrival at Cape Town International Airport you will be met and transferred to The Radisson Waterfront Hotel. The hotel is spectacularly situated on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, overlooking its own private marina. It is a first class international hotel, combining high levels of luxury with efficient service and the warmth of true South African hospitality. The business district and Cape Town's beautiful beaches are just a short drive away, while the world famous V&A Waterfront, the shopping and entertainment hub of the city, is within a few minutes' stroll.

This afternoon, you will be able to enjoy a cable car ride to the top of Table Mountain. One of southern Africa's most beautiful natural wonders, the mountain rises over 3,500 feet above Cape Town. Despite being surrounded by the city, Table Mountain has remarkably remained mostly an unspoiled wilderness. Stunning examples of Fynbos (fine bush), silver trees, and red and blue disas are just a few of the close to 2,200 species of flora found here. You may glimpse sight of a grysbok (small antelope) or certainly a hyrax (small animal which looks like a rodent but is actually related to the elephant).

Overnight at the Radisson Waterfront Hotel (L D)

Day 4

The day will be spent visiting sites of interest on the Cape Peninsula, including Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, world-renowned for the beauty and diversity of the Cape flora it displays, and for the magnificence of its setting against the eastern slopes of Table Mountain. Kirstenbosch grows only indigenous South African plants. The estate covers 528 hectares and supports a diverse fynbos flora and natural forest. The cultivated garden (36 hectares) displays collections of South African plants, particularly those from the winter rainfall region of the country.

Special features of the garden include:

The Botanical Society Conservatory - enables Kirstenbosch to display South African plants which cannot be grown in the outdoor gardens. Here, under one roof, you will find plants from high mountain peaks, shady forests and hot, dry deserts. The main house, dominated by a large baobab tree, features succulents from the arid regions of southern Africa. Special collections of bulbs, ferns and alpines are displayed in smaller corner houses.

Peninsula garden - displays some of the 2,500 plant species found on the Cape Peninsula.

Cycad garden – displays the many species of Encephalartos found in South Africa.

Water-wise garden - demonstrates how to create a garden which needs far less water and maintenance than a conventional garden.

Fragrance garden - features plants with interesting textures and scents.

Medicinal garden - demonstrates the many medicinal uses of South African plants.

The Dell - the oldest part of the Garden, featuring Colonel Bird's Bath, tree ferns and a variety of shade-loving plants.

Protea garden - features members of the protea family (Proteaceae). This part of the Garden is most magnificent in winter and spring, when the proteas, cone-bushes and serrurias are in flower. Pincushions provide a colorful display in early summer.

Restio garden - focuses on the incredible variety of texture and form found in the reed family (Restionaceae).

Van Riebeeck's Hedge - planted in 1660 to protect cattle of the Cape colonists.

You will enjoy a seafood lunch en route to the reserve.

This afternoon you will visit the Cape of Good Hope, described by Sir Francis Drake as "the fairest Cape in the whole circumference of the earth". One of the main attractions of the Cape is the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, at Cape Point, which is noted for its floral diversity and especially its wild flowers, which bloom in spring (Oct.-Dec.). The Reserve boasts a spectacular coastline, with Cape Point possessing the highest sea cliffs in South Africa (249 m), several animal species, and is host to about half of the 2700 species of indigenous plants contained in the Cape Peninsula.

Overnight at the Radisson Waterfront Hotel (B L D)

Day 5

Proud Capetonian Sandy Ovenstone welcomes you into her private historic Cape Dutch home in Kenilworth for this special opportunity to see a private garden in Cape Town. Upon arrival you'll soon learn why this garden has gained a reputation as one of the loveliest in the Cape. Sandy will lead you on a tour of her spectacular garden, and you will then have the opportunity to take tea with her in her home.

This afternoon you will visit another private garden which incorporates only the indigenous vegetation of The Cape.

This evening, enjoy dinner at the "African Café". This is a unique concept in African dining, started in '92 by husband and wife team, Portia & Jason de Smidt. It took shape at a time when South Africa was standing on the brink of a new dawn of its political and cultural development. It helped to open the eyes of South Africans to the previously ignored and under-valued culinary diversity of the African continent. As you take your seats the menu is explained to each table. The Communal Feast is a feast of dishes from all over Africa. Sixteen different dishes are served in individual bowls for each table. Once all the dishes have been tasted more food is offered, including dessert, coffee & tea. This has proved a highly successful concept and a great way to introduce the diversity of African Cuisine.

Overnight at the Radisson Waterfront Hotel (B L D)

Day 6

Today you will travel to the farm Waylands, home of the Duckitt family, near the town of Darling. This farm is well known for its bulb flora that can be spectacular in spring (Oct.-Dec.). After a walk at Waylands you will continue on to the West Coast National Park near Langebaan, which includes the Postberg Nature Reserve. Annual spring flowers abound in this reserve. Other delights include superb views over Langebaan lagoon, with its fascinating tidal salt-marshes, which attract many species of migrant and non-migrant water birds.

Light packed lunch en route.

You then will travel on to the town of Franschhoek, to Le Franschhoek Hotel, which captures the essence of four star luxury. The impeccably appointed Le Franschhoek offers unparalleled views of the spectacular Franschhoek Mountains.

Dinner and overnight Le Franschhoek Hotel (B L D)

Day 7

After breakfast you will depart for Vergelegen, a working wine estate with an old homestead and much to interest the garden and tree enthusiast. The famous Octogonal Garden includes a collection of old-fashioned heritage roses, which flower once a year in the spring. Also featured are the herb and vegetable gardens, while ancient oaks line the avenues, and the three hundred year old camphor trees in front of the house are a national monument.

You will then travel to the historic town of Stellenbosch, where you will have lunch and a visit to the Botanical Gardens, South Africa's oldest university garden. These gardens

contain indigenous and exotic plants, from Amazon water plants, orchids and lilies, to bonsai, herbs, and desert flora.

In the late afternoon, you will return to your hotel. This evening you will enjoy a meal at one of the superb local bistros.

Overnight at Le Franschhoek Hotel (B L)

Day 8

After breakfast you will have the opportunity to visit the Karoo National Gardens on the outskirts of Worcester, on the western edge of the Little Karoo. The Karoo Desert National Botanical Garden is totally unique in that it is the only truly succulent garden in the southern hemisphere and on the African continent. One of the floral highlights of the year is spring, when thousands of annuals and brightly colored vygies come into flower. A must for succulent lovers, falling within the succulent karoo biome, which includes the Namaqualand flora so famous for its spring flowers, the Garden boasts some 400 naturally occurring species. The garden is also a haven for rare and endangered plants, with over 300 species being protected and propagated. Almost 70 species of birds have been recorded in the Garden, as well as a wide range of small mammals, such as the Cape grey duiker.

Overnight at Le Franschhoek Hotel (B L)

Day 9

Today you will depart from Swellendam, travel via Suurbraak to Tradouws Pass on the Langeberg, and proceed via Barrydale to Warmwaterberg and along Agter Warmwaterberg Road to see Karroid Broken Veld vegetation and the succulent flora of quartz pavements.

From Warmwaterberg you will travel via the Little Karoo, Ladismith and through Huisrivier Pass to Oudtshoorn, capital of the Ostrich Farming Industry.

Upon arrival, you will be welcomed to De Opstal Country Lodge, in the picturesque Schoemanshoek Valley. De Opstal is just 12 km from Oudtshoorn on the main road (R328) to the world famous Cango Caves. The Lodge consists of a group of typical Little Karoo farm buildings, beautifully restored and fitted with modern conveniences, set in lush, tranquil garden surroundings. The complex has a swimming pool and a rustic restaurant where traditional breakfasts and hearty farm-style dinners are served.

Overnight at De Opstal Country Lodge (B L)

Day 10

This morning you will depart from Oudtshoorn after breakfast and head south over the Outeniqua Pass to George. You will then travel to Knysna and have the opportunity to enjoy a boat trip on Knysna Lagoon with a visit to the Featherbed Nature Reserve.

The Featherbed Nature Reserve provides scenic views of Knysna and The Heads from the opposite shore of the lagoon. On arrival at the reserve, you will be taken by 4x4 vehicles to the top of the Western Head. A wonderful foot trail leads through 2 km of coastal forest and along the water's edge back to the Featherbed tavern, where a delicious lunch of grilled, fresh line-fish may be enjoyed.

This afternoon you will visit the Pledge Nature Reserve, a community project situated within the confines of a developed urban and central commercial area of Knysna. It is 10 ha in extent and easily accessible by car or on foot. Its nearest entry point is within 500 meters of the town's busy Main Street. The Reserve offers 3.5 km of pathways through scrub forest and hillside Fynbos with fine views over the lagoon. The site was once an abandoned brickfield heavily infested with exotic invader species and was also an indiscriminate dumping ground for man's household discards. After only ten years of restoration there is no longer any evidence of this former degradation. Today Pledge Nature Reserve is a sanctuary for more than one hundred bird species and a place where the local fynbos diversity is well represented.

Overnight at Knysna Hallow (B L)

Day 11

This morning enjoy a special whale and dolphin encounter, giving you the opportunity of a lifetime. On this ecological and educational boat tour you will have the added bonus of listening to these wonderful mammals and their amazing songs underwater using a hydrophone. Experienced, friendly and enthusiastic guides are an absolute mine of information - knowledgeable not only about whales and dolphins, but also the fascinating geological surroundings and the historical happenings of this ancient bay. They also are quite educated about seals, sharks, fish, and the varied pelagic seabird life. Your boat trip will travel down the coast to pull onto land at a pristine beach for a champagne brunch. Here you can explore the area, look for Fish Eagles, swim, snorkel, or simply bask in the sun before heading out to the open ocean and continuing the tour.

This afternoon you will visit the Robberg Peninsula, which has a choice of 3 circular trails. One can enjoy the large variety of coastal dune fynbos and rich marine life. Your informative guide will describe the geological evolution of the Robberg.

Overnight at Knysna Hallow (B L)

Day 12

This morning you will travel back to the city of George for your onward flight (the cost of this flight is included in your tour cost). Upon arrival at Johannesburg International Airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The Grace in Rosebank is ideal for guests seeking a sophisticated city hotel with the highest levels of service and luxury, as well as that personal charm found only in small establishments.

Set in the heart of stylish Rosebank, you will be in a secure, leafy suburb that is cosmopolitan and rich in eclectic restaurants, shopping, cinemas and culture. The Grace has easy access to Johannesburg's most prominent businesses and the International airport.

Overnight at The Grace in Rosebank (B)

Day 13

Today you will have the opportunity to visit the Pretoria Botanical Garden, situated 8 km from the center of Pretoria. It accommodates both subtropical and temperate plants, giving the visitor a glimpse of the beautiful and varied flora of the subcontinent. This Garden is also home to the National Herbarium, Mary Gunn Library and Bookshop, all housed in the "Building on the Hill". The Garden's features include over half of the country's tree species as well as cycads, aloes and other striking collections. Paved nature trails give access to the

fascinating natural vegetation of the rocky ridge above the Garden. Seasonal features include the spectacular display of spring flowers (Namaqualand daisies and mesems) and the tree wisteria avenue.

Enjoy a light lunch en route.

This afternoon you will visit the Witwatersrand Botanical Garden, against the backdrop of the magnificent Witpoortjie waterfall. This Garden covers almost 300 hectares and consists of both landscaped and natural veld areas. The history of the Garden shows that it was founded in 1982, but has been a popular venue for outings since the 1800's. The natural vegetation of the area is known as the "Rocky Highveld Grassland" and consists of a mosaic of grassland and savanna, with dense bush in kloofs and along streams. The variety of habitats accommodates over 600 naturally occurring plant species.

A breeding pair of majestic Black Eagles nest on the cliffs alongside the waterfall. The Garden is home to an abundance of wildlife. Together with the other 230 bird species, there are also a number of reptile and small mammals, including small antelope and jackal, which occur naturally in the Nature Reserve.

The JCI Geological Trail has recently been developed and gives visitors the opportunity to not only walk along the Roodekrans Ridge and in the Nature Reserve portion of the Garden, but also to learn something about the fascinating geology of the area.

Later this afternoon you will head for Lesedi Cultural Village, nestling in the pristine bushveld at the foot of the Magaliesberg Mountains just north of Johannesburg.

Families from the Zulu warrior nation, the proud Xhosa, the warm-hearted Pedi and the mountain dwelling Basotho live in their traditional homesteads. Lesedi awaits those willing to participate in an adventure that reveals the mystical cultures of these ancient peoples, steeped in tribal folklore and ancestral traditions. Whoever walks here amongst these cultures at Lesedi can also see the light. After a tour of the village, enjoy dinner with your hosts.

Overnight at the Grace in Rosebank (B L D)

Day 14

This morning you will be transferred to the Johannesburg International Airport in time for your flight to Skukusa. On arrival at Skukusa Airport you will be met by a lodge representative and transferred to Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve.

Bush Lodge is set in the heart of the Sabi Sabi bushveld overlooking a water-hole and an African plain. The Sabi Sabi lodge offers uncompromisingly high standards of service, efficiency and personalized attention - all in an informal atmosphere of warmth and hospitality. Each air-conditioned thatched suite features exquisite ethnic décor in keeping with the bushveld environment. The lodge features artistically designed open courtyards with spectacular wooden carvings by renowned South African sculptors, created from wood salvaged from the bushveld.

Overnight at Sabi Sabi Bush Lodge (B L D)

Day 15

This morning, enjoy an early morning game viewing, followed by brunch and then a visit to the Lowveld National Botanical Garden, which occupies an outstandingly beautiful site in the heart of Mpumalanga. The Garden sits astride the Crocodile River where it has cut down into the granite bedrock to form a narrow gorge. It is joined from the opposite bank by the Nels River and both rivers tumble over spectacular waterfalls within the Garden, forming a dramatic setting for the developed portion of the Garden. In addition to the approximately 600 plant species occurring naturally, more than 2,000 additional species are found. Over 650 species of South Africa's 1,000 tree species are cultivated in the developed part of the Garden.

Features of the garden include:

Tropical African rain forest - A unique collection of plants which represents the rapidly disappearing tropical forests of Central and West Africa. A complete ecosystem has been re-created here, from the high forest canopy, to the thick layer of herbaceous plants on the moist forest floor.

South African forest - A cooler forest type that is representative of the forests along the eastern mountains and coastal belt, from Cape Town to the Limpopo River in the extreme north of the country. The collection of South African ferns in this forest is the best in the country.

Cycads - The Garden has the largest collection of African cycads to be found anywhere in the world.

Return to the lodge in time for your afternoon game drive.

Overnight at Sabi Sabi Bush Lodge (B L D)

Day 16

This morning you will be transferred to the Skukusa Airport in time for your return flight to Johannesburg. An airport hotel will be available for you to relax and prepare for your flight to the US later in the afternoon or evening.

(B)

Day 17

Welcome home!

Tour Costs:

\$5898.00 Per Person in Double Occupancy/Low Season

\$6798.00 Per Person in Double Occupancy/High Season

Based on a group of 24 persons, including 2 complimentary tour costs

\$5598.00 Per Person in Double Occupancy/Low Season

\$6398.00 Per Person in Double Occupancy/High Season

Based on a group of 32 persons, including 2 complimentary tour costs

\$5298.00 Per Person in Double Occupancy/Low Season

\$6198.00 Per Person in Double Occupancy/High Season

Based on a group of 44 persons, including 2 complimentary tour costs

\$1798.00 – Single Supplement for all tour costs

**May thru August – Low Season
September thru April – High Season**