

1. Medical information

- a. Refer to <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/safrica.htm#vaccines> for **detailed health information.**
- b. If you meet the health recommendations as established by your local health office prior to traveling you should be fine. South Africa does not require vaccination certification against Cholera. A Yellow Fever vaccination is only required for travelers coming from infected areas as designated by the World Health Organization
- c. All tap water we have found to be perfectly safe for drinking.
- d. Malaria is mainly confined to the eastern half of South Africa, especially on the low lands, coastal plains. Bilharzias is also found mainly in the east but outbreaks do occur in other places. Check with knowledgeable local people before drinking water or swimming.
- e. If you are intending to visit low areas with high rainfall it is advisable to take a course of anti-malaria tablets as a simple precaution. These are available at most pharmacies in SA and should be taken just before, during, and after a visit.
- f. SA has excellent health facilities for whatever kind of emergency that might arise.

2. Passport and Visa information

- a. Citizens of Canada and the USA do not require visas if you are staying for a period of less than three months. You must carry your passport while traveling.
- b. If you are not staying for longer than three months, you enter South Africa with a minimum of formalities. All you need is a valid passport, a return ticket to your country, and sufficient funds to cover your stay in South Africa. There is no charge for a three-month entry visa.

To obtain a visa prior to arrival in South Africa, if residing in the United States, contact:

Embassy of South Africa
3051 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008
Tele. (202) 232 4400
Fax (202) 265 1607

3. Additional things to know

- a. **Time Zone**
 - i. GMT +2
 - ii. South Africa is six or seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time depending whether Daylight savings time is practiced.
- b. **Electricity Format**

- i. All electric power operates on the 220/240 volt AC system common to Europe. Most places do not have adapters available. Make sure you have a converter to step down 220 to 110 if you have an item that requires 110-volt current such as hair dryers, electric shavers, and lap top computers.
 - ii. Most wall plugs are three prong round hole. Some are three prong rectangular plugs. Many are two prong round hole. Adapters can be purchased in SA but it is wise to pick up a set of international adapters at your local travel store prior to traveling.
 - c. **Computers**
 - i. It is OK to bring a laptop. Be sure to keep it safe and secure at all times. Laptop locks can be purchased at most electronics stores in the USA.
 - d. **Internet availability**
 - i. There will be high speed internet available at the CRC offices.
 - ii. Internet cafes are widely available.
 - e. **Communications**
 - i. As a volunteer and short-term visitor, it is recommended that you rent a cell phone upon arrival at Johannesburg International Airport. You can buy cell time at most petro stations in the country.
 - ii. Please inform people from the United States that the international dialing code, dialing from the States to South Africa, is 011, followed by the country code for South Africa – 27, followed by the exchange area. The exchange is always a three-digit number that starts with a zero. When dialing from overseas the zero is dropped. The seven-digit number follows this. If you were calling the cell phone of Dithoriso Patience Bojosi in Kagiso from Grand Rapids, Michigan you would dial 011 27 82 238 8095.
 - iii. All cell phones have a three-digit prefix followed by the seven-digit number. When dialing from a cell phone, you must dial the appropriate prefix exchange whether it is a cell number or a landline number.
 - iv. To dial to Canada or the United States from South Africa, Dial the international prefix – 091 followed by the area code and number.
 - v. Airmail post to North America takes usually 10 days.
- 4. **Be sure not to forget to take your:**
 - a. **Credit Cards** – Visa, Mastercard, American Express, and Diners Club are all widely accepted.
 - b. Warm Clothes for chilly nights
 - c. Bible
 - d. **Small Gifts** – A gift that reflects our way of life is appreciated. CD's or maps of your home state are usually received with gratitude. These gifts can be given to host families.
- 5. **Weather**

- a. Climate varies from location to location depending on altitude, proximity to the coast, prevailing winds and longitude. South Africa is an arid country. Summer (November-March) can be uncomfortably hot, especially in the lowland. Higher-altitude areas are pleasantly warm over summer but the mountains are rain and mist prone. The northeastern regions can be annoyingly humid, but swimming on the east coast is a year-around proposition. Winters (April-October) are mild everywhere except in the highest country, where there are frosts and occasional snowfall.

6. Culture Notes

- a. A pleasant and cheerful attitude on the part of us visitors goes a long way to make up for "mistakes."
- b. You will soon learn the "African" handshake - which is really three shakes - and the locals will be delighted to teach you.
- c. After a little familiarity, hugs are welcome!
- d. We have not run into situations where people are offended by passing on a food item, but whenever possible, give it a try, it is a good experience!
- e. The Zulu are one of the strongest surviving black cultures.
- f. The Xhosa also have a strong presence.
- g. The Afrikaners' distinct culture historically developed in deliberate isolation. Today's rural communities often still revolve around conservative Dutch Reformed Churches.
- h.

7. Dress

- a. What should men wear/avoid?
- b. What should women wear/avoid?
- c. Reminder of business dress in the country (no slippers, shorts, etc.)