

ASSOCIATED PRODUCT

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SOUTH AFRICA

August 2024

GENERAL UPDATES

FlySafair has launched another route to Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (MQP) in Nelspruit, this time from OR Tambo International Airport (JNB).

The new twice-weekly service starts on 02 August 2024.

The JNB-MQP flight schedule will be as follows:

Friday and Sunday – Departs OR Tambo International Airport at 11.15am – Arrives in MQP at 12.10pm.

Friday and Sunday – Departs MQP at 12.45pm – Arrives in OR Tambo International Airport at 13.40pm.

Singita has appointed Marcelo Novais as International Sales Manager for Africa, Mexico, South America, China and Southeast Asia from 01 August 2024, based in the Singita Cape Town office.

Simbambili Game Lodge in the northern Sabi Sands, has re-opened after a major refurbishment. After months of construction, modifications, repurposing and interior design, they have crafted a modern-day classic, but maintaining the essence of luxury safari.

What to Expect:

- New Health and Wellness facilities
- New Bar
- New Library
- New Swimming Pool area
- New Plunge Pools
- Improved Suite Interior
- Boma Upgrade

For **Hermanus & surrounds**, it's not just whale season – it's also the secret flower season in the Overberg region. South Africa's Gold award-winning Chelsea Flower Show display will be showcased in the historic village of Stanford, just 20 minutes from Hermanus and 15 minutes from Grootbos, from 21 September to 06 October 2024. Ask your Travel Designer about costs should your guests wish to visit during their stay in the area.

Icon Villas in Cape Town has added two new villas to their portfolio, Symphony of Light (in Bishopscourt) and Villa Nouveau (in Fresnaye). Both can accommodate eight guests. Villa stays have become very popular due to the exclusivity and flexibility they present. Icon Villas has an extensive portfolio for all budgets.

The Residence Hotel has completed its renovations and upgrades and is looking stunning. Revitalised guest rooms and enhanced common areas create an atmosphere that seamlessly blends the sophistication of a bygone era with modern luxury.

BLUU Car Rental South Africa presented new season rates applicable from 01 November 2024 to 31 October 2025. Additions to the Super Package Rate now include a GPS, and BLUU has added a Group O: Lead in small manual SUV – Toyota Urban Cruiser – and Group N: comprises SUV models.

Rovos Rail has new running times in 2025, where certain dates will carry the new departure and arrival times; the rest remain the same (at current times). In 2026 all dates will carry the new departure and arrival times.

- **New 2025 and 2026 times**
PRY-CPT > D 10:00 – A 15:00
CPT-PRY > D 09:30 – A 15:00

Kambaku Lodges have removed Kambaku Trails Camp from their portfolio.

SPECIALS

La Clé in Franschhoek has a winter special: stay for two nights or more in La Clé Lodge or La Clé Village, and save 20%. Included is a gourmet breakfast and an iconic in-house shared dinner table experience on one of the nights, as well as access to all La Clé activities, from tennis and biking to around-the-fire board games and puzzles.

Bushmans Kloof in the Cederberg is offering an “Early Booker Special” whereby 2024 rates apply for bookings staying 01 April to 30 August 2025.

Qwabi Game Reserve in the malaria-free Waterberg region is offering a Stay 3 Pay 2 Special valid from now until 22 December 2024, at both Qwabi Letamo Lodge and Qwabi Babohi. Letamo is ideal for families with children, and Babohi is an intimate lodge for adults (no kids under 16 years).

Tswalu Kalahari sent a reminder about their Stay 4 Pay 3 exclusive offer combining Motse and Loapi. This is the best way to explore the diverse fauna and flora, in pursuit of elusive species like the pangolin and aardvark. Additionally, don't miss the opportunity to participate in rhino ear-notching and microchipping, available from March to September.

Madikwe Safari Lodge specials are valid until 10 January 2026 excluding peak season (20 December to 09 January). Valid across all three luxury camps – Lelapa, Kopano, Dithaba – and the new Elela Villa. Promotions cannot be combined unless explicitly stated. Promotions can be applied to exclusive-use offerings.

- **Stay 4 Pay 3** – Stay at any one of the camps or the new villa for 4 nights and only pay for 3.
- **Honeymoon Offer** for newlyweds, spend 3 nights at any of their luxury camps and one spouse gets 50% off their accommodation rate.
- **Repeat guests** will be gifted 10% off their accommodation rate – for guests who have visited the lodge more than once within the last 5 years. Excludes travelling companions who have not stayed at Madikwe Safari Lodge before. Can be combined with other promotions and specials.

Savanna Private Game Reserve

- **Honeymoon offer** – One newlywed partner will receive a 50% discount off the accommodation costs for their minimum 3-night stay. Wedding date is required and cannot be booked if travel dates are more than 12 months post-wedding date.
- **Repeat Guest Offer** – returning guests will receive a 15% discount off their accommodation costs; there is a minimum stay of 3 nights and guests' last dates of travel are required to confirm the discount. This discount will only apply to repeat guest's accommodation and not first-time guests who may be travelling in the same party.
- **4-Night Combination offer** – spend two nights at Savanna Private Game Reserve in an executive suite, combined with two nights at one of the Dulini lodges (Dulini Moya/Dulini Leadwood or Dulini River) and receive a safari transfer between the lodges.

Kambaku Lodges have made changes to their terms and conditions for certain specials, such as: Stay for 4 nights and only pay for 3, a 25% discount is applicable for 4 nights only, not for longer stays. Honeymooners receive 50% off the bride's rack rate (25% total discount). Applicable to a 3-night stay only, not for longer stays.

FIRST-HAND FEEDBACK

Megan Valentin, Amy Watson, Rene Balt, Kendall Cozett, Nerusha Jay Narain and Janine de Bruyn recently went on a Cape educational trip, and shared this feedback on their stays.

Megan, Amy and Rene, the three Johannesburg ladies, arrived in a cloudy, rainy Cape Town, though there was the occasional ray of sun and rainbow peeking out. The first day was an easy introduction with an orientation drive through the city, and tasting some local delicacies in Bo-Kaap. Dinner was enjoyed at the lovely Alphen Hotel in the Constantia area. The hotel has an old-world charm to it with its Cape Dutch character, and 18 designer suites spread over various smaller buildings, giving it a more intimate feel. The restaurants are well supported by the local public, and there is always a vibrant energy around their grounds. Perfect for couples, families and small groups. The night was spent at The Vineyard Hotel, another Grande Dame of the southern suburbs (located in Newlands). It is surrounded by the most beautiful gardens with views across to the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden area and glorious mountain views. Here we recommend booking any room or suite that has mountain views. The hotel has recently undergone some renovations and soft refurbishments and is looking fabulous. The evening turndown included a beautiful pot of tea and treats – very special and unique. Breakfast was an amazing spread.

The following day was dedicated to site inspections of the Victoria & Alfred Hotel, Queen Victoria & Dock House, Winchester Mansions, and Icon Villas in the V&A Waterfront and Atlantic Seaboard area. Overnight was spent at the gracious Clarendon Fresnaye, perfectly located in Fresnaye which is a five minute drive to the Waterfront and the beaches of Camps Bay. Gift welcomed us warmly and was extremely attentive. They have lovely gardens, lawns, and two swimming pools. The family rooms are situated away from the main house, which has its own pool, so you can easily have families staying in one section and honeymooners on the other side. Rooms are contemporary with accents of colour giving it a modern appeal.

The next day we continued with hotel site inspections. We visited Clarendon Bantry Bay, The Pod Hotel, Welgelegen Guest House, the Onyx Hotel and Kensington Place. We ended off at Four Rosmead for the night. This guest house

is located in Oranjezicht in the City Bowl, and walking distance to many popular restaurants. The rooms are quaint and comfortable, with everything you expect from a guest house. The breakfast selection and quality were noteworthy. Four Rosmead offers a cosy stay for honeymooners and couples looking for an economical option. We would recommend staying in rooms that are not close to reception.

The following day was spent exploring the Cape Winelands. Our first stop was at Hazendal, a Newmark Hotels property, and a lovely resort-style hotel offering golf, mini-golf, padel, a large swimming pool, various eateries, state-of-the-art kids play centre, art gallery, and vintage car museum; plenty to keep families entertained. We continued to Spier for lunch, which currently is undergoing major renovations to the hotel. They are elevating their offering and we look forward to returning to visit their "new" hotel. That night we stayed at Lanzerac, which is an institution in the Stellenbosch area with 330 years to its name. Beautiful Cape Dutch architecture and thoughtfully curated interiors showcase the heritage and elegance of this hotel. Complimentary services are very comprehensive, including a mini-bar, wine tasting, wine cellar tour, use of spa hydro facilities, and transfers to Stellenbosch. Stunning property suitable for couples, families as well as groups.

The next day took us to Franschhoek where we visited Tokara, Delaire Graff, Cloud Estate, Bartinney and La Fontaine. We also visited Pigcasso, a farm sanctuary NGO, where one can view the pig's art creations in the OINK gallery, and feed Ballo, the resident cow. Good fun! All properties are lovely and have a unique charm. We stayed over at Avondrood. What a gem of a place, a lovely boutique hotel just a block away from the main road, where all the restaurants and quaint shops are situated. The staff were super friendly and Justin, the manager, is very hands on and passionate about the offering. The rooms are spacious with a country-style feeling, spread over the lush gardens. A charming guest house for those looking for an authentic local stay.

A beautiful drive took us from Franschhoek to the Overberg region, along the renowned Hemel-en-Aarde wine route to Hermanus. Along the way we stopped at various estates. In Hermanus we visited Auberge Burgundy and Harbour House Hotel, located at the historical old harbour. We spent the night at Abalone Lodge which is just a five-minute drive from the town centre, located right on the coast. You have beautiful views especially from the upstairs ocean-view suites. We were welcomed warmly by Nicole with drinks, and a thorough orientation of the property. It was very cold so it was great to have heated flooring. Something to bear in mind is that the bathrooms in the ocean-view suites are separated from the bedroom by a glass window. The curtain is rather sheer, so does not provide total privacy. So great for couples, but perhaps not the best option for two friends sharing a room (we'd recommend the garden rooms for this option). It's a warm intimate property with a lot of soul.

The next day saw us exploring the Stanford area, where we visited Mosaic Lagoon Lodge. A lovely cosy retreat tucked into a milkwood forest along the lagoon. From here we continued to Grootbos for the grand finale of our educational. We stayed at Forest Lodge and did site inspections of Garden Lodge and the villas. What a magnificent offering, Grootbos is definitely next level. From its unique location surrounded by pristine fynbos and milkwood forest, to the finely curated, luxury rooms, the gourmet food and mind-blowing wine cellar. The choices of activities are many so would recommend a three night stay. We participated in a fun and educational nature drive, visited the Florilgium with its extraordinary artwork. Marna, our guide, was amazing. Grootbos is just perfect in every way!

