

## THE CLASSIC TOUR: JOHANNESBURG VIA SABIE TO THE CAPE

Arrival at Johannesburg Airport, take-over the rented car and drive via Dullstroom over the Long Tom Pass, one of the highest and most scenic South African mountain passes, to Villa Ticino. The picturesque, malaria free mountain village of Sabie in Mpumalanga is reached after four to five hours comfortable driving from Johannesburg International Airport or one hours drive from the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport. The province of Mpumalanga ("land of the rising sun") is world renown for its scenic splendours and breathtaking beauty. Villa Ticino in Sabie is therefore the ideal and most central base to acclimatise and to explore the numerous key sights in the vicinity (see sightseeing day tours).

### Day tour 1: Panorama Route

Start in Sabie, gateway to the famous Panorama Route, to view the spectacular Lone Creek waterfall. Thereafter depart to the Pinnacle and God's Window from where the view wanders on clear days to the Lowveld about 1000 m below. Visit two waterfalls before carrying on to view the cylindrical rock shapes at Bourke's Luck Potholes and the majestic Blyde River Canyon with the impressive Three Rondavels before heading via the gravel road to the old gold mining town of Pilgrim's Rest and back to Sabie.



### Day tour 2: Natural Beauty Tour

From Sabie drive to the Sudwala Caves being the oldest known caves and join the guided tour. Thereafter depart to Kaapsehoop, a historical village situated on a plateau. A marked walkway leads to the slope with a beautiful view over the lower lying area, sometimes joined by wild horses. The next stop is the Lowveld National Botanical Garden with its impressive natural flora, waterfall, suspension bridge and tropical rainforest. The way back leads via White River with Vintage Car Museum or via the fruit plantations back to Sabie.



### Hints

- Now you have an idea what the area has to offer, but you only have seen a fraction of the highlights, attractions and natural beauty the area has to offer.
- Restaurants offering steaks, trout, game dishes or other traditional South African dishes are only 10-80 meters away from Villa Ticino.

Then depart to the Kruger National Park. It is also possible to enter the Krugerpark somewhere midway and drive via different vegetation zones towards the southern parts to exit the park. The middle to southern parts of the Kruger Park is better for animal viewing, especially during wintertime. If interested an evening safari or a morning walk should also be booked at the same time as your overnight stay in the Kruger National Park.

#### Hints

- The possibility arises to stay in the Kruger National Park and also in a Private Game Reserve so that both opportunities can be experienced.
- A day visit from Sabie to the Krugerpark is also easily possible as the Phabeni Gate is only a 40 minutes drive from Villa Ticino.
- Time limited travellers can head directly in southerly direction from Sabie via Swaziland to Kwa-Zulu Natal.



The Kingdom of Swaziland has its own flair and is best viewed in good weather condition as it consists of a beautiful mountainous highveld, the lush valleys of the middleveld and the lowveld area. The drive via the highlands towards the inland passes scenic mountains and picturesque villages down to the flat area with fruit plantations. Traditional arts and crafts of the Swazi people are glass blowing, weaving, fabric printing as well as stone and root carving which can be viewed en route. Next to citrus, pineapple and cane plantations you also find some small game parks which cannot be compared to the bigger ones in South Africa.

#### Hints

*Important: A permit for your hired car to drive through Swaziland is needed from your car rental company. Permits for people to enter Swasiland are available at the border posts.*

- For travelling through Swaziland from north (Jeepes Reef) to south (Golela) one should at least estimate five hours.
- For travelling from nearby the Mozambican border through Swaziland via Siteki & Big Bend to exit via the border post Golela it will be a 3 hours journey.



After an impressive and eventful drive it is pleasant to make a relaxing stop in the Wetlands region where the most southern coral reef can be found. The iSimangaliso Wetlands Parks (formerly Greater St. Lucia Wetlands Park) has been declared a World Heritage site on 1 December 1999. In that region snorkelling, swimming, boating and animal viewing can be combined.

From here you carry on southwards direction Durban. The nature changes drastically en route to Durban in southern direction to a steep more vigorous coastal region with lots of small bays, which are ideal for a short sunbathing stop. It is a feast for the eye viewing all these white beaches, rocky cliffs, and dense exotic vegetation of hibiscus, wild bananas and giant strelitzias.

#### *Hint*

*- Time limited travellers can drive directly on the N2 via the Transkei to the Garden Route or alternatively can fly from Durban to Port Elizabeth.*



Continue your trip via the southern, central and northern Drakensberg mountain range (Sani Pass region, Giant's Castle and Royal Natal National Park) with its many walks or hikes offering very scenic views and nature enthusiast will enjoy the untouched natural beauty of the over 3000 m high peaks of the Natal Drakensberg range. Carry on via the Golden Gate National Highlands Park into the highland of the Free State Drakensberg mountains which have total different vegetation due to the dryer climate. The routes divide here for guests, moving on direction Cape area from those ones, which have to get back to Johannesburg. For those even the highland is offering a beautiful drive via sunflower and maize fields and ending the journey in Johannesburg.



#### **Travelling southwards direction Cape area**

Now the route, with a longer but manageable distance, runs along the Lesotho border (day trips to Lesotho are possible) to the dry countryside of the Great Karoo, where National Parks have been proclaimed, partly with mysterious, ghostly rock formations. From Graaff Reinet either drive via Cradock via the Mountain Zebra National Park to the Addo Elephant National Park where you still have the chance to view the last cape-elephants. Otherwise drive directly through the Karoo with its long straights passing through dry landscapes of cactuses, grasses and windmills. Or you drive on to stay overnight in Jeffrey's Bay, a surfer town at the Indian Ocean.



The scenery changes fast into wild mountain chains of the Tsitsikamma region with lots of gorges and forests from which the coast line of the legendary Garden Route will be reached. Plettenberg Bay is known for its beaches and the picturesque town of Knysna for its lagoon.



The proposed route to the cape region runs over the superb mountain dessert of the Little Karoo via Oudtshoorn, Meiringspoort, Swartberg Pass or via Mossel Bay with the well known Diaz Museum and lighthouse to the world famous winelands. Wine routes, whales (mainly September-November) and West Coast National Park including the wild flowers from Namaqualand (August/September) can either be viewed from one destination as day trips or also from different stopovers along the way.

#### *Hint*

- For information about the Namaqualand wild flowers as well as for whale watching please phone the Info-hotline at 083-910 1028.



A very special thank you to Karl, Jeanne, Mark and Wendy for granting permission to use some of their beautiful photos for our website.