



T: 1-800-985-4852
E: info@realgap.com
P: Real Gap Experience, 8 Essex Center Drive, Peabody, MA 01960

Live with lion cubs in South Africa

Adventure



Relaxation



Culture



Trip Name: Live with lion cubs in South Africa **Trip Code:** SAC67 **Duration:** From 2 weeks

Trip Highlights

- Feeding, caring and playing with the adorable lion cubs
- Helping to look after the other animals on the reserve
- Living on this incredible wildlife reserve and hearing the roar of the lions from your bedroom- amazing!
- Participating in game drives on the reserve



Overview

Set in a stunning location in the North West Province of South Africa, the reserve is involved in white lion research and conservation and is home to a number of adorable lion cubs - and their older brothers and sisters, mums and dads!

At this wildlife reserve and lion breeding centre you will be spending your days looking after incredibly cute lion cubs, feeding them, playing with them and giving out lots of cuddles! You will have an amazing hands-on experience and getting so close to these animals is a once in a lifetime experience! However, don't forget that your role isn't always glamorous; the animal enclosures will need to be kept in good order, so expect to get dirty!

The lions, cubs and other animals all need a huge amount of care and attention and this is where you come in - and after spending time here we're certain you won't want to go home! What we can guarantee is that you'll fall in love with these incredible animals!

Destination Info

Live with lion cubs in South Africa

Diverse, exhilarating, spectacular, varied – South Africa is a wildlife volunteer destination to write home about. Never far from the news, it's a vast, modern multicultural country, full of contradictions and full of interest. It offers so many opportunities for student travel that it's difficult to summarise.

There's the country itself – offering everything from lush subtropics to deserts, savannah to scrubland, bushveld to stunning coastlines. If your taste is for Africa's big five, this is the one of the very best places on the continent to see them.

Then there are the people and what they've achieved. If your interest lies in modern politics, South Africa should definitely be on your travel shortlist. You'll have the chance to live and volunteer in a country that has accomplished so much in the years since apartheid was dismantled – it's unique in the world.

Itinerary



The centre has lions including some cubs as well as other predators and game that you will be helping to look after. It's involved in lion research, breeding and conservation and has been featured in documentaries by National Geographic and Aquavision among others. The centre is also involved in educating young people and is also open to members of the public wanting to learn more about wildlife and spend time in this stunning location.

The project works directly with the University of Pretoria and together they are at the forefront of white lion research; they are the only facility in the world that practices principles of ethical breeding as part of their white lion breeding programme. They have also participated in research on Lion AIDS and TB in lions and have even hosted several film crews for documentaries from around the world. An exciting fertility research project on big cats is presently being undertaken at the project, with several prominent researchers and professors from South Africa and Europe involved.

When the big cats grow up many of them will remain as part of the ongoing research projects; some are kept for breeding and others are released into enclosures. Any animals that are passed on will be to reputable reserves where checks have been carried out to make sure they have a good new home.

Live with lion cubs in South Africa



You will be helping to raise the cubs - feeding them and caring for them – along with making sure that all the other wildlife and facilities at the reserve are well looked after and maintained. Don't forget that you may also be involved in cleaning out the enclosures and will probably get dirty in the process; so roll up your sleeves and leave your gladrags at home! The rangers you'll be working with are keen to pass on their knowledge and experience and you will learn so much about the lions, the challenges facing them and how the reserve is run - an incredible opportunity for everyone!

Volunteers typical activities can include:

- Caring for the small cubs; stimulating, bathing and feeding the cubs as well as extensive interacting with guests and tourists on 'cub team' day
- Preparing food for the bigger cubs; handling raw meat, meat allocation, weighing and cubing meat and keeping a record of all milk and meat consumed daily
- Working with the ranger team; collecting vegetables, chickens, carcasses from local farmers and feeding the large and mature lions
- Mending and painting fences
- Raking and cleaning lion enclosures
- Cleaning and maintenance of farm needs



Day 1 (Monday) – Arrive into Johannesburg Airport (airport code JNB)

Live with lion cubs in South Africa

Today you will be met at the airport and taken straight to our backpacker's hostel in Pretoria. You'll need to arrive before 4.15pm so that you're all ready for the orientation which kicks off at 5pm. The orientation will cover what it's going to be like at the project, do's and don'ts, how to stay safe and gives you the chance to ask any questions that haven't yet been answered. After the orientation you'll have dinner prepared for you and this is the perfect opportunity to socialise with your fellow volunteers and have some time to relax before your first day at the project tomorrow.

Day 2 (Tuesday) – Introductions at your project

The following morning you will be taken from Pretoria to Brits where your amazing lion adventure will start! The project is 1-2 hours drive away, around 70km north of Johannesburg. The project and accommodation are on the same site so you won't be late for work! Take time to get to know everyone and settle in, because this is your home for the rest of your stay.

Your first full day will be fairly laid back to get you settled in at the reserve. The staff at the reserve are always happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Days 3 to 7 (Wednesday to Sunday) – Keep up the good work

Now you're a fully-fledged member of the team, you can aim to be on duty from around 7am to 4pm daily. You'll be up with the birds in the morning but the afternoons are normally yours to relax by the pool on the reserve. You will sometimes be asked to work until 7pm as the cubs need constant attention...it's hard work, but someone has to do it!

Following weeks

Your remaining time on the project will be filled with caring for the cubs, cutting up meat for the bigger cats and any other activities needed by the project.

Your Last Day

At the end of your project a member of the team will help you arrange your onwards transfers to Johannesburg airport for a local fee so please arrange this with them in country. Please ensure that you allow sufficient time for checking in when booking your onward flight, usually we advise to make sure that your flight departs after 5pm.

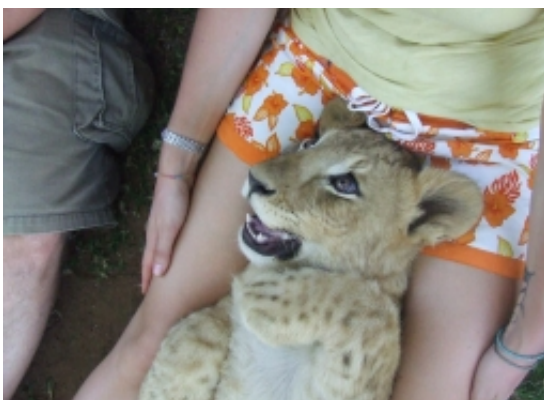
Live with lion cubs in South Africa



This is the perfect project for anyone with a love of lions and other stunning African wildlife. The project is quite laid back and structured with you in mind. Part of the experience is what you put in, but it's also about what you get out of it.

Deep breath... the centre is home to 100 lions, cheetah, tigers, hyena, caracal, serval, civets, impala, blesbuck, kudu, zebra, eland, giraffe, waterbuck, ostrich, warthog, gnu, red hartebeest! Phew... the list is never ending! This gives you a wonderful opportunity for a hands-on experience with the lion cubs as well as a huge range of other activities on the reserve, this trip really is a once in a lifetime experience!

As well as the work at the reserve, there are also great opportunities for horse-back safaris and visits to other reserves nearby at weekends and days off. All told, this is a fantastic South African wildlife experience that will stay with you forever!



It's not all work and no play! You're in South Africa so there's lots of sightseeing to be done and lots of fun to be had! Your days off will be arranged according to the needs of the project but you can just ask if you want to take specific time off, it's all very flexible.

You will be able to take 1/2 days off at weekends but don't forget that the hungry cubs will still need feeding!

Live with lion cubs in South Africa

These 1/2 days are your valuable time off to rest and explore. If you can tear yourself away from the swimming pool on-site there is plenty to see and do and the surrounding area is definitely worth exploring. Around Brits there is a cheetah centre, crocodile farm, cultural village and plenty of curio shops to browse, so there is no chance of being bored!

Accommodation

You will be staying in 'rondavel' style huts on site at the centre which are on a shared two or three person basis. The rondavels are well equipped and have modern amenities such as hot running water, showers and Western style toilets. There are two swimming pools on site along with a lounge with television and a beautiful garden for you to relax in during the afternoons.

The bathroom facilities include hot water, shower and western style toilets. Valuables can be locked up in the office safe but please mark these with your name to ensure they don't get confused. You don't need to bring bedding with you as this is provided and a mosquito net is optional. You will need to bring a towel for the pool! Don't worry about packing weeks and weeks worth of clothing as there are laundry facilities available. There is a local town around 30 minutes away so if you need to stay in touch with family or friends from home, then telephone and internet facilities are nearby. There is WIFI available 24h.

Meals

Whilst staying in the reserve, all meals are included and prepared for you - it's all good hearty South African fare. You will need to make sure you work hard to burn off all the great food you'll be eating!

What's Included

- Accommodation
- All meals
- Airport pick-up on arrival date
- In-country orientation
- 24hr emergency support



What's Not Included

- Flights
- Travel insurance
- Visas
- Optional excursions
- Return airport transfer



What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore, you may not need all of the listed items on your travels.

Also, please be aware that the weather can change considerably from winter to summer and you should pack according to when you are travelling to ensure that you have the appropriate clothing.

General

- Work gloves (gardening ones will do!)
- Light weight shoes and/or trainers
- Sandals and or/flip flops
- Sun hat and sunglasses (with UV protection)
- Personal drink bottle
- Towel
- Torch (for use during power cuts)
- Binoculars for safari
- Camera
- Wet wipes or waterless soap
- Padlock (to secure belongings when travelling)
- Insect repellent + mosquito net – these can be bought cheaply in country (optional)
- First Aid Kit including: Paracetamol, antiseptic wipes, plasters, sunscreen (high factor), malaria prophylactics (If you plan on visiting Kruger NP)
- Day rucksack/backpack
- Sleeping bag liner or sleeping bag (if you intend to do a safari trip)
- Personal hygiene pack e.g.; toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, shampoo, tissues, lip balm, moisturiser etc.

Live with lion cubs in South Africa

- Warm clothes if you're going in winter months (May to September), as it gets very cold

Conservation

- Sturdy shoes (closed toe shoes) and work gloves
- Clothes that you don't mind getting dirty as much of your daily tasks will be hands on work (take both short and long sleeved tops)

Minimum Age

Minimum 17 years, maximum decided on potential participants health. Under 18 year olds need to have an indemnity form from the project signed by parents.

Flights

Your flight to South Africa should arrive at Johannesburg airport (JNB) before 4.15pm on your programme start date. Your return flight or onward travel should be arranged on your programme end date after 5pm.

To book your flights, please contact us on 01273 647219 and we'll help you to find a great flight price. We might even be able to get you on a flight with one of our other volunteers.

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your online account or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

FAQs

1. What should I bring with me?

All our volunteers say definitely bring a pair of gloves with you and clothes that you don't mind getting dirty!

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

The currency in South Africa is the Rand (R), which is divided into 100 cents. Coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10 and 50 cents, and 1, 2 and 5 Rand. Notes come in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 Rand.

US Dollars, Pound Sterling or Euros are the best currencies to bring to change locally. Major credit cards such as Visa or MasterCard are accepted in most towns, cities and petrol stations and ATMs can be found across the country. ATMs in cities are the most likely to give cash advances to cards on the on the Cirrus network.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant \$7.70
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) \$1.85
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) \$1.04
Water (0.33 litre bottle) \$1.13

(Prices quoted in US Dollar)

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

For stays of 90 days or less nationals of the European Union, the USA, Australia and New Zealand can obtain a free entry permit on arrival. All other nationalities should consult their nearest South African Embassy or High Commission for details on entry requirements.

Cultural Considerations

Smoking and Drinking

Smoking and drinking is tolerated in South Africa, although smoking has been banned in public areas such as cinemas, bars and airports. You will find that you will be able to get imported beer cheaply in most establishments and there are many tasty local beers too. South Africa is also famous for wines, so you shouldn't miss out on the opportunity to try some local varieties.

However, please respect other volunteers. Drinking is only permissible in moderation and must not impact on your

Live with lion cubs in South Africa

volunteer work during the week. While we want you to have fun in your free time, antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated on the project.

Drugs

It is absolutely forbidden to bring drugs into South Africa. Always keep an eye on your luggage while travelling. Never bring anyone else's luggage through customs. If you get caught there is little chance that you will walk away without punishment. As in most countries, South Africa has very strict rules when it comes to the possession of drugs. All drugs, including 'soft' drugs like marijuana, are illegal. Please do NOT use any illegal substances whilst travelling - it is not worth the risk and is not acceptable at the project.

Greeting

Pleasantries are taken seriously and using 'hello' and 'goodbye' can go a long way to making friends and being accepted. Please take the time to learn a few local words and show that you are keen to fit in. There is also a big emphasis on shaking hands. The Western way of doing this will be fine, but you are likely to pick up a few local variations!

On The whole, South Africans are easy-going people - any social errors are unlikely to cause offence, so please do not worry!

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

Safety

Tourists can be targeted by pickpockets and thieves. Please educate yourself about Africa and South Africa in particular, before you leave, so that you can be alert for all types of situations. General travel safety rules are below.

- Avoid travelling alone, especially at night
- Find out where the unsafe areas are and avoid them
- When travelling keep all-important documents and valuables in a safe place, like an inner hidden pocket or money belt
- Carry only as much cash as you think you will need for the day
- Don't wear expensive jewellery or watches
- Be wary of people who seem too friendly too fast
- Keep cameras out of sight. Always keep bags and purses in your sight.
- Before swimming, ask how safe the area is

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating

unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

If your card is confiscated or you are concerned that your card has been tampered with, please report immediately to the bank or cancel your card.

Swimming

If visiting a beach in South Africa it is important that you take note of any information boards that are located on the beach before entering the water. Most beaches also operate a flag system to indicate whether it is safe to swim or not, it is essential that you take note of any advice given and heed any warnings that are in place as there can be the risk of rip tides, strong currents and Shark attack. If you are unsure whether it is safe to swim in the ocean, speak to the lifeguards or your in-country coordinators.

Language Guide

There are 11 official languages in South Africa; Afrikaans, English, Zulu, Xhosa, IsiNdebele, Northern Sotho, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. There are many other tribal, indigenous languages. However, English is spoken prevalently across the country. In Cape Town, the predominant language is Afrikaans. We suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

English - Afrikaans

Hello - *Hallo*

How are you? - *Hoe gaan dit?*

I'm fine - *Goed dankie*

Thank you (very much) - *Baie dankie*

Please - *Asseblief*

Yes / No - *Ja / Nee*

Goodbye - *Totsiens*

English - Isi Xhosa

Hello - *Molo*

How are you? - *Kunjani?*

I'm fine - *Ndiphilile*

Thank you (very much) - *Enkosi*

Please - *nceda*

Yes / No - *Ewe / hayi*

Goodbye - *Hamba kahle (go well)*

Food & Drink

Food in South Africa is delicious. You will be exposed to every different type of meat at every meal, ranging from impala and kudu to ostrich. All can be enjoyed in many different ways, but one of the best ways to taste these meats would be to sample it off a hot braai (barbecue). Be prepared to try something new! If you want to try some more traditional food then go for some Biltong (dried meat) and Boerewors (barbecue sausage).

If you are a vegetarian, do not worry. South Africa is abundant with delicious local vegetables, such as yams and sweet potatoes.

Live with lion cubs in South Africa

Drinking water from the tap is safe throughout the country, apart from in the more rural areas.

Public Holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. However, although businesses and government offices are closed on public holidays, tourist attractions and shops are almost never closed. The main impact on the tourist of these holidays is the increased competition for travel and accommodation from South African's who use long weekends to get away from the big cities.

To view a list of the public holidays for South Africa, please see the link below:

<http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/south-africa/>

Weather

Seasons in South Africa are opposite to those in the northern hemisphere. The climate is varied across the country with warm showery summers and cold winters in the Gauteng Province (Highveld), scorching summers and a slightly less chilly outlook for winter in the Durban area (Lowveld) and the Western Cape hit hardest by winter rains. Karoo's desert-like climate means it's hot and ready to explore all year round but if you want to explore the rest of the country Spring (mid-September to November) and autumn (April and May) are ideal almost everywhere.

Time

South Africa is two hours ahead of GMT.

In Africa, time is not a priority like it is in much of the western world – there is a saying that Africa works to 'Africa Time', which basically means you must exercise a lot of patience! If a boat is due to leave at 12pm, don't be surprised if it still hasn't a couple of hours later... keep an open mind, and arrive 'expecting the unexpected'.

Electricity

In South Africa the electric system is 230 Volts and frequency 50 Hertz. If you bring a device that does not accept this Voltage you will need to use an adapter.

Outlets in South Africa generally accept 1 type of plug:



Three round pins arranged in a triangle

Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of recommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!



Live with lion cubs in South Africa

Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

Phone: 1-800-985-4852

Email: info@realgap.com

Post: Real Gap Experience, 8 Essex Center Drive, Peabody, MA 01960

Web: www.realgap.com