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## South Africa Literacy Volunteers

Adventure



Relaxation



Culture



**Trip Name:** South Africa Literacy Volunteers    **Trip Code:** SALV    **Duration:** From 4 weeks

### Trip Highlights

- Give underprivileged youngsters a better standard of education and a brighter future.
- Work on your classroom skills and rediscover your love of books!
- Check out the many sights and sounds of Cape Town!



### Overview

This project presents a great opportunity to experience the real South Africa in a small community near Cape Town, as well as making a massive difference to local children's lives. You can play a significant role in improving the education of impoverished youngsters by helping them learn to read and write.

South Africa has put the past behind it and built a new future based around equality and opportunity for all. However there are still divisions in the society, most dramatically in literacy levels between rich and poor which exclude many from the new South Africa. The child literacy initiative aims to get children to fall in love with books and improve the reading skills of 5 to 12 year olds. The project teaches children the basic skills that will enable them to receive a full and rewarding education. This is a great chance to make learning fun and share your love of books with young children living in the Cape Town area.

### Destination Info

Your project is situated in various schools in the area surrounding the modern metropolis that is Cape Town. Each project is around a 15 minute taxi ride away from the seaside town of Fish Hoek where you'll be staying. Fish Hoek is known for it's laid back attitude and beautiful beach, which is just a short walk from your accommodation. If you fancy a dip or if you want to see the bright lights of Cape Town you can get there in around 45 minutes.

## Itinerary



The project aims to improve children's attitude to reading and hopes to help children love books by recruiting and training volunteers to help children aged 5-12 who find reading difficult.

Those of us that love to read have enjoyed privileges most of us have taken for granted; parents who read bedtime stories, books in English lying around the house or at the very least, an adult in the family able to read and write English. Whereas many South African children have parents who can't read or write English and who, therefore, can't help them to learn. Yet, without this, children tend to fall behind their peers, losing confidence and self esteem. With the loss of confidence comes the loss of pleasure: children who don't feel confident about their reading simply don't like reading, or books.

And why should they? For many of those children, reading has only ever been torture and humiliation. Those that don't read outside of school have only ever had the school's books imposed on them, and those books may not interest them. They've never had the opportunity to choose what interests them, and to explore that.

Volunteers are placed with children pre-selected by the school's head teacher. They sit in the library, or a quiet place outside of the classroom, and read with those children individually for half an hour at a time, twice a week.

This project is very informal and is focused on creating a relaxed atmosphere for the child to be able to enjoy their reading. You will be working on a one to one basis with children in libraries and building a valuable rapport with the children and staff at schools.

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The project survives through a volunteer workforce that gives their time to this valuable cause.

Most of the children come from disadvantaged areas. South Africa is facing schools where the average class size is 42. A recent international progress in literacy study (PIRLS, 2006) has revealed that almost 80% of South African learners have not developed basic reading skills by the time they reach Grade 5. The study, conducted in 40 countries across the world, showed that South African learners were up to two years behind the literacy standards set by their international counterparts.

Put simply, the more volunteers they have, the more learners they can assist!

You will be reading and playing with the children for half an hour, twice a week for each child, working one on one with children, reading to them, encouraging them to read back and boosting confidence in speaking and reading English.

Your typical working hours on this project will be from Monday to Friday, 9am until 1pm, but any extra time you can give will be appreciated as well as any other skills you can share.



## Day 1: Arrive into Cape Town

Today you will be met at the airport and taken to our volunteer house in Fish Hoek. You'll need to arrive in before 4.15pm so that you're all ready for the orientation which kicks off at 5pm. The journey from the airport to Fish

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Hoek should take around 45 minutes and if you keep your eyes open you might get to see Table Mountain on the way! The orientation will take you through what it's going to be like at your project, do's and don'ts, how to stay safe and it's your prime opportunity to ask any burning questions that you haven't yet had answered. After the orientation you'll have some time to relax and prepare before your first day at the project tomorrow.

If you aren't able to arrange a flight to get you into Cape Town before 4.15pm then we'd recommend you fly in a day early. We can arrange an early airport pick-up for you including one night's accommodation, please give us a call for more information.

## Day 2: Meet the kids!

Today is the first day on your project, where you'll get to know your fellow volunteers and staff, not forgetting the beautiful children! Starting out from your accommodation, the team will make sure you know what you're doing and where you're going, they'll also introduce you to the staff at the project who'll be your main contacts while you're working. The journey from your accommodation to the project is on public multi-people taxis and it will take about 15 minutes.

On Day 2 volunteers need to go for their Help2Read Training which is facilitated at The Help2Read offices and not the school. Training start at 09:30 – 14:00. Tea and sandwiches are served during break. A shuttle will collect them at the volunteer house on Day 2 and also bring them back after training – this transfer is included.



## Day 3 -5: Get into the swing

Your first day at the project will be all about settling in and getting to know how things work. You'll start to learn the ropes this week, it's your chance to get stuck in and show everyone including yourself, what you're made of!

Literacy is a serious issue in South Africa. One in four adults is illiterate, and many school children are unable to read and write in English. Imagine how hard life must be for people who can't read English: they're frustrated every day by street signs, restaurant menus and posters, they'll miss out on the entire world of computers, and they're not as employable as they could be. Volunteers don't replace good teaching; they add to it, playing the role of a literate adult in the child's life with time and attention just for them.

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## Day 6-7: It's the weekend!

The weekend is yours to do as you please. You certainly won't run out of activities to keep yourself occupied in the surrounding areas. With places like Table Mountain, Cape Point, Kirstenbosch, botanical gardens and Boulders beach just a short distance from your accommodation, you'll be spoilt for choice.

## Following weeks

You'll be working Monday to Friday at your project, with the weekends all your own!

Now that you've been shown the ropes, make sure you take some time to get to know the staff and children; understand more about how and why the project exists and carve out your own niche to help shape your experience.

## Your last day

Having said goodbye to all your new friends you'll transfer back to the airport on this day. The return transfer from Fish Hoek to Cape Town International is not covered within your project fee but our regular transfer company will be able to sort the journey back for you, the costs will be around US\$35 / 250 Rand and this is easily arranged in country.

## Accommodation

You'll be staying in our large volunteer house in Fish Hoek throughout your trip. The house is reserved solely for i-to-i volunteers and you will have use of all facilities. The house accommodates up to 20 people in dormitory-style rooms with bunk beds which are based on same sex. There are three bathrooms and a maximum of 6 people in a room. There's also a lounge area, balcony, garden, barbeque facilities, swimming pool and flatlet. The house is in a locked compound in a residential area and a short distance from the shops and beach. There are lockers at the accommodation for you to lock your valuables away but please remember to bring a padlock and keys with you!

A 10 minute walk away there is a supermarket, serviced laundry and an internet café and there's also a shopping mall a little further on. You can also head down to the beach area for bars and restaurants, about a 10 minute drive away.

The bathroom facilities include hot water, showers, a bath and western style toilets. The property is well-maintained and reasonably new so the living conditions are good. There is a lovely garden to relax in, too! There isn't a washing machine at the house but there is a laundry just down the road where you can simply drop off your clothes and pick them up later!

Cape Town maintains a temperate climate throughout the year and as a result properties do not have central heating. The volunteer house is no exception (apart from a fire in the living room) so if you are travelling to South Africa between June and August please be prepared for the Cape Town winter which can be cold at night. You'll need to bring some warm jumpers, a decent sleeping bag and even some cosy socks especially if you're prone to feeling the cold.

## Things to bring from home

- Bedding is provided but we recommend you bring a sleeping bag for weekends and also for extra warmth in the winter (June to August)
- Towel
- Warm clothes if your coming in the winter (June to August)
- There is a TV but don't forget to bring books, music, cards and games
- Padlock and keys for locker

Please note that there is a 1000R deposit that will need to be paid to the in country team on arrival so please make sure that you have budgeted for this. Your deposit will be returned when you leave the accommodation at the end of your project as long everything is left as you found it.

## Programme Services and Facilities

The project is situated in within the area of Cape Town and is around a 15 minute taxi ride away from your accommodation plus a short walk to the school. Please note: Transport between your volunteer accommodation and project site is not included in your programme and will be at your own cost, you should budget around US\$15 per week.

The volunteer house is based at the top of a hill within Fish Hoek, which is a suburb of Cape Town and is about 45 minute by car or an hour by train to Cape Town city centre. Fish Hoek is a quiet, residential area to the south of Cape Town centre looking over False Bay. There are shops in Fish Hoek where you can buy all your essentials except alcohol as Fish Hoek is a dry area.

The closest shops, internet and laundry facilities are a five-minute walk from the volunteer house. Internet costs about R30 per half-hour and laundry about R50 per load. There is a phone at the volunteer house that can be used for incoming calls free of charge and for outgoing calls when purchasing a world call card from the shops. There are many electricity points at the volunteer house and adaptors if needed are easily bought.

The trains are a great way to get into the centre cheaply, particularly at the weekend. They do stop running at 7pm so if you do want to go out into the centre at night you'll need to budget around US\$35 / 250 Rand each way for a taxi.

The international dialling code for South Africa it is +27.

You will be able to buy a SIM card for your cell phone when you arrive at the airport. (Your phone will need to be Tri-Band and unlocked from your home network – speak to your cellular provider before you leave to make sure). Alternatively you can enable international roaming by speaking to your cellular provider before you leave home.

There is cell phone reception and payphones available at the town store, which you will be able to use at your own expense.

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South Africa uses 220/230V and a frequency of 50Hz. The plug sockets in South Africa take plugs with two circular pins and a larger circular grounding pin. There is electricity available at your accommodation allowing you to charge all normal electrical appliances.

## Lockers

Please note there are now lockers in the volunteer house that you will be staying at for you to store your valuables, however you will need to bring your own padlock and keys, or a combination padlock.

## Meals

Your time in Cape Town is on a self-catering basis. You'll have access to the kitchen complete with cookers, loads of fridge space, microwave, toaster and kitchen utensils so you can cook up tasty morsels. There's a dining area in the lounge or a table and chairs on the balcony if you prefer the outdoor experience! If you are feeling lazy you can even order a takeaway! While in the house you will be responsible for keeping the place clean so please tidy up after yourself, especially in the kitchen.

There is a supermarket and shops a 10 minute walk from the volunteer house. They are open late so you'll be able to shop either in your lunch-break or after your days work. You should budget around US\$50 per week for groceries, as prices are similar to home. There is a phone at the house where you can receive incoming calls and you can easily buy local phone cards to make outbound phone calls.

## What's Included

- Arrival airport transfer
- Accommodation
- In-country orientation
- Local in-country team
- 24hr emergency support



## What's Not Included

- Flights
- Visas
- Travel Insurance
- Return Airport transfer
- Local Transport
- Food



## What to Pack

Packing is a very personal thing; you could spend a small fortune buying up all those nifty travel items that you see in the shops! If you're on a tight budget then please don't feel the need to go overboard. You are normally able to buy most things that you need while you're in South Africa, particularly in the main cities. Part of the challenge and charm of this trip is that you probably won't have everything you consider necessary at home, so dive in and enjoy it! We have listed some items that we think may be useful to take with you...

### General

- 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)
- Padlock and keys (to use lockers)
- 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
- First Aid Kit including: Paracetamol, antiseptic wipes, plasters, water purifying tablets, sunscreen (high factor), malaria prophylactics
- Day rucksack / backpack
- Sleeping bag and liner (essential as bedding is not provided)
- Personal hygiene pack e.g.; toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, shampoo, toilet paper etc.
- Warm clothes if you're going in winter months (May to September), as it gets very cold

## Minimum Age

Minimum age is 18 years, maximum decided on health and fitness of participant.

## Minimum Numbers

There are no minimum numbers on the trip.

Please note: you may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. However, each of our Cape Town volunteer projects share the same accommodation. Therefore, if there are volunteers on our other programmes you will be able to spend your spare time and evenings with them. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact us

## Flights

Your flight to South Africa should arrive at Cape Town airport on your programme start date before 4pm, to ensure you are all ready for your orientation which will begin at 5pm on your programme start date. Your return flight or onward travel should be arranged on your programme end date.

To book your flights, please contact your sales advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.



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. **How many volunteers will I be staying with?**

We have a fantastic volunteer house in Fish Hoek where all of our volunteers stay who are volunteering on various projects around Cape Town. There is also a volunteer house next door with volunteers from our sister company so there will be plenty of people to relax or go out with at the weekends and in the evenings.

2. **How much spending money should I take?**

We would recommend budgeting for around £80-£100 per week to cover food, extra activities/tours at the weekends, souvenirs etc. It completely depends on what you are looking to do in your free time!

3. **Can I get in touch with other volunteers before I go?**

Yes! We provide a 'buddy list' of others email addresses joining you in Cape Town on the same start date.

## Police Check

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.

## 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 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.

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!

## 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.

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