

CHATHAM HALL IN SOUTH AFRICA 2012



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[What Kind of Documentation Will I Need to Enter South Africa?](#) Citizens of the USA do not require a tourist visa to visit South Africa. If you are a citizen of another country, kindly contact the South African embassy in Washington, D.C. to inquire about whether you need a visa for a short-term visit. The South African embassy may be reached at (202) 232 4400. You may also visit www.saembassy.org.

[What Medical Precautions Should I Take Before Departing for South Africa?](#) Selected immunization suggestions appear on the Chatham Hall website, as a companion to this and other South Africa program documents. You may also wish to visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website, and go to the "Traveler's Health" area. There, you can click on South Africa in the drop-down menu. Narrative in the South Africa section will give you a wealth of information about various immunizations.

Anti-malarial prophylaxis is not necessary to visit Cape Town. Also, Aquila Private Game Reserve lies in a malaria-free zone.

Please keep in mind that, on this trip, our accommodations, transport, and food is of an international standard. For this reason, your possibility of encountering food-borne, water-borne, air-borne, or blood-borne disease is low.

Please confirm with your health insurance carrier that you are covered while traveling overseas. Most major U.S. health plans provide such coverage. Extent of coverage varies from carrier to carrier.

Chatham Hall and Alterra Global Education Initiatives defer to your physician's advice, given your particular medical history and the extent to which you wish to receive inoculations for future travel to other world regions.

[Where Can I Obtain Medications and Medical Care During the Trip?](#) In South Africa, a pharmacy is often called a "chemist". Most chemists remain open until 6:00 p.m. In Cape Town, some emergency chemists remain open on a 24-hour basis. A hotel manager should point these out to you without much trouble.

If you require inpatient or emergency care, Alterra recommends the Cape Town Medi-Clinic, a top-quality private facility located five minutes by taxi from your hotel. Hotel managers and staff will help arrange your visit to the Medi-Clinic, and/or will contact their own on-call physician, based on your expressed needs.

South Africa boasts first-world health facilities, with the very highest standard of care. You might recall that the late Dr. Christiaan Barnard performed the world's first heart transplant during the 1960s at Cape Town's Groote Schuur Hospital.

[What About Flight Check-in at Dulles International Airport?](#) Your South African Airways flight – #208 – departs Washington on Sunday, March 11 at 5:40 p.m. The flight's destination is Johannesburg, with an immediate onward connection to Cape Town. Alterra recommends that the entire group be at the ticket counter no later than 2:40 p.m. The return flight arrives at Washington Dulles on Friday, March 23 at 10:20 a.m.

Incidentally, South African Airways operates a modern, comfortable, world-class fleet of Airbus A340-600s on its flights from Washington to South Africa. SAA, which has won several prestigious awards for its quality of service, has recently added its Washington service to supplement existing service from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

[Who Will Meet Us At The Airport in Cape Town?](#) Your first port of entry is Johannesburg International Airport. At Johannesburg, you'll proceed through immigration and customs, and then move as a group to the domestic terminal. At the domestic terminal, you'll board your flight to Cape Town; the flight to Cape Town is a quick two hours.

On arriving at Cape Town, you'll claim your bags and then proceed through directly to the arrivals area. Lynne Abrahams will be there to offer a warm South African welcome; Lynne is an in-country program manager affiliated with Alterra. She will escort you to your hotel, and will remain with you throughout your tenure in Cape Town.

[What Type Of Clothing Will I Need, and What Is the Weather Like in South Africa?](#) While March is the southern hemisphere's "autumn", the weather is likely to be comfortable during the days, even warm. This said, Cape Town lies in something of a micro-climate, and its weather is notoriously fickle. Please do be prepared for a few chilly, windy, even rainy days. Consequently, clothing suggestions run the gamut. They are as follows:

- T-shirts, sweatshirts, old jeans, shorts, etc. for community service.
- One set of "smart casual" wear (e.g., for our evening at Wynberg Girls' High School).
- Hat, for protection from the sun.
- Sunscreen and sunglasses.
- Umbrella.
- Light jacket for cool early mornings and evenings.

[Is Tap Water Safe To Drink?](#) Throughout South Africa, tap water is purified and is safe to drink; city supplies are filtered to international standards. This is particularly true of well-developed Cape Town. However, bottled and spring water is readily available. You may simply be more comfortable drinking bottled water; bottled water is readily available for purchase.

[What Type Of Food Will I Be Eating?](#) Breakfast at the hotel will consist of assorted fresh fruit, cereals, yogurts, home-made jams with preserves, tea, coffee, fruit juices, and sausage or bacon with eggs to order. Lunches will be catered daily at the service sites, and will consist of typical South African fare; this features a range of items from vegetarian to chicken-and-rice to beef dishes, etc. One evening, you'll enjoy flavorful 'Cape Malay' cuisine at Biesmiellah Restaurant. For dinner, Indian food, pasta, chicken & steak, salad – and, again, vegetarian options – are all served.

[What About Electrical Power?](#) Power is supplied on a 220/240-volt, 50-cycle in most parts of South Africa. Adapters are available on loan at the hotel reception.

[And Internet Access?](#) The hotel features a wireless hotspot. So if you have a laptop, you may open your browser in your room or in the hotel's public areas. You may also use the hotel's business center; four desktops are available exclusively for guests' use.

[How About the Value Added Tax?](#) On departure from South Africa, be sure to claim your 14 percent value added tax (VAT). We recommend that you attend to VAT refund matters at *Johannesburg* on Thursday, March 22, immediately prior to checking in for your Washington flight. Please fill out the VAT form completely and present it at the window, along with proof of purchase. You'll want to have your bags with you, with purchased items packed on top – just in case VAT officials wish to inspect your purchases.

[How Safe Are the Cities for the Overseas Visitor?](#) For the overseas visitor, Cape Town and Aquila Private Game Reserve are safe and comfortable destinations. You should feel free at all times to interact with local residents and participate fully in this unique service-learning experience - in the knowledge that that you and your belongings are secure. You will be guests of several local schools and communities; they are happy to have you among them and will embrace you as if you are family.

In South Africa as elsewhere, common sense should prevail. In the evenings, please move only as a group. Do not carry large sums of cash in your purse or pocket. Don't leave valuables unsecured in your hotel room. Make photocopies of your passport and air ticket, and keep them separate from the originals. The Waterfront is very safe; these are commonsensical precautions.

[What Should I Know About Access to Money?](#) The South African currency is the "*rand*". As of this writing, in mid-August 2011, it is trading at 7.2 rands to the US dollar. Locally purchased items, including gifts and meals, are considered to be relatively good value for US citizens and other dollar-earners.

You may acquire rands at ATM machines throughout Cape Town by using your credit card or debit card; it is most convenient for you to do so at Cape Town International Airport or at the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront mall, which is a 10-minute walk from the hotel. Making an ATM withdrawal is easily the most economical way to acquire rands. Be sure to call your credit card issuer before departing for South Africa, just in case they have an overseas limit, hold policy, or withdrawal ban. With such notification, you can waive any such limits, holds, or bans.

You may also acquire rands at any commercial bank during business hours. Or, you may order rands ahead of time at a large bank in your home city. Of course, the amount that you choose to take or withdraw will depend on your own personal spending needs.

[What Is the Most Economical Way to Make a Phone Call?](#) You may buy a phone card from most grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, and so forth – again, the safest and most convenient will be inside the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. There, a supermarket called Pick 'n' Pay (ground floor) sells cards, as does the post office on the 2nd floor. Please specify that you will be using the cards in a hotel room; some cards are valid only at public phones. Phone cards range from 50 rands in value to 500 rands in value. We suggest that you ask the party in the US to call you back; this is cheaper than using the card.

Alternatively, you may wish to rent a cell phone, at either the airport or the V&A Waterfront; prepaid "airtime" is available at local convenience stores to "top off your minutes". Or, if you have a US tri-band cell phone that operates on the GSM network, it too may function from South Africa; to learn whether this is the case, please check with your cell provider. I-Phones, Blackberries, and other smart-phones may need to be "unlocked" prior to departing the US.

[What is the Cape Town Hotel's Contact Information?](#) You'll be staying at the Hotel Graeme on Somerset Road, across from the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. When parents, friends, or colleagues call you from the U.S., they must dial as follows: 011 27 21 434 9282. Connections are typically clear to landlines in South Africa, with little echo or delay. During your stay, South Africa will be 6 hours ahead of the US East Coast.

[May Our Group Use the Hotel's Public Areas for An Informal Meeting?](#) Chatham Hall and Alterra will work with the Hotel Graeme to arrange reasonable accommodation for periodic informal group reflections.