TOUR CODE

KT3

ADVENTURESABROAD

KENYA, TANZANIA & SOUTHERN AFRICA

Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Victoria Falls, Zambia, Botswana & Swaziland

33 days

Updated 29/04/2013

Day 1 *Arrive in Nairobi*

Today we arrive in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

Part of Maasai land when the British arrived, this modern capital grew with the development of the railway. Derived from a Maasai word meaning "Cold Water," Nairobi is a pleasant mix of colonial British with modern and traditional African influences.

Overnight in Nairobi. Meal plan: Dinner, if required.

Day 2 *Nairobi - Ol Pejeta Conservancy*

Today we travel from Nairobi, through the "White Highlands," so called because of the large number of Europeans who settled here, northwards to the lower slopes of Mt Kenya, rising to 5199 m (16,728 feet), Africa's second highest peak. Our drive will take us into the Central Highlands, the heartland of the Kikuyu people. This is a very fertile region, well-watered, intensively cultivated, and thickly forested. The land was coveted by the Europeans who began arriving in ever-increasing numbers once the railway through the area was completed. The settlers established coffee and tea plantations on the eastern slopes of Mt Kenya and cultivated wheat on the western slopes.

Our destination is Sweetwaters, a luxury tented camp clustered around a water hole and set in the pristine calm of the private Ol Pejeta Conservancy, a non-profit organization supporting endangered species, tourism and community outreach. Ol Pejeta is East Africa's largest Black Rhino sanctuary, the only place in Kenya to see chimpanzees, and holds some of the highest predator densities in Kenya.

This afternoon we'll enjoy our first game drive within the conservancy.

Overnight at Sweetwaters Camp. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 3 *Ol Pejeta Conservancy*

Ol Pejeta is a mosaic of grass plains, wooded grassland, acacia woodland and evergreen thicket extending for over 350 square kilometers. The conservancy boasts an astounding variety of animals, including the "Big Five."

We will have morning and afternoon game drives today, as well as a chance to visit the Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary -- the only place in Kenya where this highly endangered and remarkably intelligent species can be seen. The facility was initially established to receive and provide lifelong refuge to orphaned and abused chimpanzees from West and Central Africa. Here the chimpanzees are carefully nursed back to health so they can enjoy the rest of their days in the safety of a vast natural enclosure.

Overnight at Sweetwaters Camp. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 4 *Ol Pejeta - Great Rift Valley - Lake Nakuru National Park*

This morning we travel to Lake Nakuru, a shallow soda lake in the Rift Valley. The Rift Valley was created millions of years ago under the strain of enormous volcanic eruptions which resulted in a giant split in the earth's surface from Syria to Mozambique. Lava flowed into the valley, forming escarpments on either side of the gigantic trough which can be up to 80 km (50 miles) wide, big enough to be visible from space. At the lake, depending on the water levels, we may have the opportunity to see up to two million flamingos, in addition to the over 340 species of birds that have been recorded in the Rift Valley!

Lake Nakuru is very shallow and can fluctuate up to five metres (12 feet) each day. When the water is low, you can see a white band of crystallized soda along the shoreline. This is also one of the best places in Kenya to view the rare White Rhino as we explore the park on our afternoon game drive.

Overnight in Lake Nakuru National Park. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 5 *Lake Nakuru - Maasai Mara National Reserve*

Early this morning we depart from Lake Nakuru National Park and continue our journey through the Rift Valley, passing by Lake Naivasha and nearby Mount Longonot, a relatively young volcanic reminder of the Rift's violent past. We arrive at our lodge (via bad road) in the Maasai Mara National Reserve in time for lunch.

The Maasai Mara is a natural extension of the Serengeti eco-system and has an amazing concentration of wildlife. The largest population of lions in Kenya is found here, along with large herds of plains game. The Maasai Mara may also be the best place in Kenya to view cheetah. Later this afternoon we enjoy another game drive.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 6 *Maasai Mara National Reserve*

The Maasai Mara National Reserve consists of rolling grassland and is located at the northern end of the Serengeti Plain. Considered the best of Kenya's parks, it is on the pathway of the yearly wildebeest migration, which comes north from Tanzania about the end of June and returns to Tanzania around the end of September. "The Mara" sustains all of the "Big Five" -- lion, elephant, leopard, rhinoceros and buffalo -- as well as an astonishing wealth of herding animals and other wildlife. You can see the stately Maasai men and youth along the road tending their cattle and goats.

We have a full day in the reserve, with morning and afternoon game drives.

In the Mara you will also have an optional opportunity to ascend over the northern Serengeti at daybreak in a hot air balloon (optional expense). From over 300 m (984 feet) above, you will be able to view the vast land and the myriad animals that inhabit the Maasai Mara.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 7 *Maasai Mara National Reserve*

We enjoy another full day with game viewing in Maasai Mara. Depending on the season and current game locations and

viewing conditions, we may divide our day into morning and afternoon drives, or take our lunches with us in order to venture further into the reserve if conditions warrant.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 8 *Maasai Mara - Nairobi*

After breakfast we depart for Nairobi. En route, just outside the capital, we visit the Karen Blixen Museum. Baroness Karen Blixen-Finecke emigrated from Denmark to Kenya in 1918 and, in 1937, wrote under the pseudonym, Isaac Dineson, "Out of Africa." The novel tells the tale of the Baroness's experiences on a Kenyan farm. Her home is now a museum, restored to the style in which she maintained it.

Overnight in Nairobi. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 9 *Nairobi - Amboseli National Park*

Today we travel south from Nairobi to the Amboseli National Park. Just across the border from Tanzania, this park is situated on the African plain at the foot of snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro, the continent's tallest mountain at 5894 m (19,300 feet). Here the cone-shaped mountain seems to hover majestically over the shimmering African plains.

The Amboseli National Park is also famous for its large herds of elephants. Here they cover themselves in red dust, giving them an even more imposing appearance. On this afternoon's game drive we hope to view animals grazing on the open plain with Mt Kilimanjaro providing the classic backdrop (weather permitting).

Overnight in the Amboseli National Park. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 10 *Amboseli, Kenya - Lake Manyara National Park, Tanzania*

This morning we cross the border into Tanzania and travel to Lake Manyara National Park via the town of Arusha, the starting point for the northern safari routes of Tanzania.

Manyara is the smallest of the northern parks in Tanzania (330 sq km, of which two thirds is the actual lake) hosting a wide variety of vegetation, ranging from savannah to ground water forest to riparian habitats. The park is host to thousands of pelicans, ibis and flamingo that can be heard from afar. Other common visitors to this beautiful lake are hippos and the majestic African fish eagle, which can be seen swooping down from its perch to snatch a fish from the still waters of the lake.

After lunch at our lodge we will have an afternoon game drive in the park, located at the base of the Great Rift Valley escarpment and comprising of forest, woodland, grasslands, and swamps. Wildlife interest at Lake Manyara is not confined to bird life only; animals such as buffalo, elephant, giraffe, impala, hippo and a great variety of smaller animals also inhabit the park.

Overnight at Lake Manyara. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 11 *Lake Manyara - Serengeti National Park*

This morning we enter the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, a beautiful rolling landscape with periodic views over the Ngorongoro Crater. Before descending onto the Serengeti Plain, we'll stop at a viewpoint overlooking the crater. The name "Serengeti" derives from a Maasai word meaning "Land-without-end." This is a land of superlatives, both in the vast landscape that surrounds you and the incredible biodiversity it supports. It is here that you have a chance to witness one of the most compelling natural dramas on earth -- the annual migration, a sight unparalleled anywhere in the natural world. Our afternoon game drive provides an excellent introduction to this fantastic landscape and the biodiversity it supports.

Overnight in the Serengeti National Park. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 12 *Serengeti National Park*

Today we have a full day of game viewing on the Serengeti. We will visit the "kopjes," a series of low, incongruous hills dotting the open landscape that often provide a vantage point for hungry predators contemplating the endless stream of hoofed animals parading past them. Depending on the season and the timing of the rains, up to 1.5 million wildebeest and a half a million zebra embark on a single-minded and perilous quest for water and grazing land. Following this spectacle, of course, are the meat-eating opportunists, hoping to capitalize on the physical toll this journey exacts on the desperate grazers. Even outside of "migration" time, large herds are still seen as they bear their young and feed, gaining strength for their annual return to the park's northern reaches. Resident species that do not migrate make for rewarding animal viewing in any season.

It may be possible to take an optional hot-air balloon safari over the plains at daybreak. Speak to your booking agent at the time of reservation.

Overnight in the Serengeti National Park. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 13 *Serengeti - Olduvai Gorge - Ngorongoro Conservation Area*

Travelling back to Ngorongoro today we make a stop at Olduvai Gorge, site of the Leakey excavations in the 1960s and 70s that established this region as the prehistoric habitat of some of the earliest species of hominids with some finds dating back 1.8 million years. Experts in the life sciences have argued that the Olduvai contribution to the story of human origins remains unsurpassed by any other prehistoric site in the world. A small museum on site outlines the unique geological and human history of the area.

Called the 'eighth wonder of the world' and stretching across some 8300 sq km, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area boasts a blend of landscapes, wildlife, people and archaeology that is unsurpassed in Africa. The volcanoes, grasslands, waterfalls and mountain forests are home to an abundance of animals and to the Maasai. Ngorongoro Crater is one of the world's greatest natural spectacles and its magical setting and abundant wildlife never fail to enthrall visitors.

Balance of the day at leisure to enjoy our lodge overlooking the crater.

Overnight in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 14 *Ngorongoro Conservation Area*

Today we enjoy a half-day tour in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.* After an early breakfast we descend into the crater far below for a game drive in this incredible setting, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We explore the Ngorongoro Crater, 20 km (13 miles) wide and 700 m (2,300 feet) high where we may see the "Big Five" as well as many herbivores

like wildebeest, gazelle, zebra and hippopotamus, as well as thousands of flamingos on Lake Magadi.

* In order to reduce congestion and stress on wildlife, the Tanzanian government limits visitors to half-day visits of the crater. Depending on what time "window" we are assigned, our excursion may take place first thing in the morning, or later in the afternoon (both of which are equally advantageous for game viewing, given the relatively mild climate at this altitude).

Overnight in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 15 *Ngorongoro - Gibb's Farm - Arusha*

This morning we descend the Ngorongoro Highlands, retracing our steps back to Arusha via a lunch stop at Gibb's Farm. Founded during German colonial times and still privately owned, Gibb's Farm is now a small hotel perched on the outer slopes of the Ngorongoro Highlands, surrounded by coffee plantations with long views over lush and beautiful agricultural country.

We pass again through the town of Mto Wa Mbu ('Mosquito Creek'), famous for its lively cosmopolitan atmosphere and red bananas, which taste the same as regular bananas but their skins are a startling bright red.

We arrive back in Arusha later this afternoon.

Overnight in Arusha. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 16 *Arusha, Tanzania - Johannesburg, South Africa*

Today we fly from Arusha to Johannesburg, South Africa.

NOTE: Depending on flight schedules, we may have to travel to Nairobi and fly to Jo'burg from there. Final arrangements will be advised closer to departure. Please also NOTE that if you book your own international air, today's flight will cost you approx $500 MORE than our published tour price. We get a discount on this flight if you book your air with us; if you do not book air through Adventures Abroad, we cannot get this special pricing for you.

Overnight in Johannesburg. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 17 *Johannesburg, South Africa - Livingstone, Zambia - Victoria Falls*

Today we fly from South Africa to Zambia where we will spend three nights next to one of the world's most spectacular natural sights, Victoria Falls. Our arrival point is the town of Livingstone, once an important town in southern Africa during the first days of European settlement and the beginnings of colonial rule.

This area has actually been inhabited for hundreds of thousands of years. The first known name of the falls was "Shongwe"; the current name did not come into being until the Scottish missionary and explorer David Livingstone was brought to the falls in 1855 and named them after Queen Victoria. The falls and the nearby town of Livingstone are on the mighty Zambezi River, the fourth longest in Africa, forming the border with neighbouring Zimbabwe.

We will pass through the sleepy colonial town of Livingstone, the main street of which is lined with classic colonial buildings. These Victorian tin roofed houses with wooden verandas, many of which are decaying, are a typical example of English settler architecture. In 1905 settlers moved in to the higher ground at Livingstone to escape malaria.

Livingstone became the capital of Northern Rhodesia in 1911, but the capital was moved to Lusaka in 1935.

After settling in to our hotel, we will have a leisurely walking tour of the Zambian side of the falls. One special vantage point is the Knife Edge Bridge which affords views of the Eastern Cataract; the Main Falls, the Boiling Pot, where the river turns into the Batoka Gorge; and the famous Zambezi River Bridge, commissioned by Cecil John Rhodes. The bridge was completed in 1905 but Rhodes never lived to see it completed.

NOTE: Due to variable flight schedules and weather considerations, the order of Victoria Falls area sightseeing activities may vary at the discretion of your Tour Leader.

Overnight at Victoria Falls, Zambia. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 18 *Victoria Falls, Zambia: Day Trip to Chobe Park, Botswana*

Today we make an early morning excursion into Botswana to visit Chobe National Park, located only 1.75 hours away from Livingstone. Our journey includes a private 5-minute boat crossing at the point where four counties (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia) meet on the Zambezi River. We complete Customs and Immigration formalities and continue with a fifteen-minute drive to the lodge that we will be using as a base for today's activities.

Our safari starts with a cruise on the Chobe River (shade and refreshments available) that takes us close to the waterfowl and wildlife on the river. Large flocks of birds, big pods of hippos and very large crocodiles can be viewed from the safety of your boat.

Our lunch (included today) is served back at the lodge overlooking the river.

After lunch we board open (covered) safari vehicles and head off into the park to view some of the 70,000 local elephants, buffalo herds, sable, wildebeest, giraffe, and with luck, some resident lion and hyena. The game drive meanders its way back to the park gates for Customs and Immigration formalities and the crossing of the Zambezi River into back into Zambia and the road transfer back to our hotel, arriving at about 18:00.

Overnight at Victoria Falls (dinner on your own this evening). Meal plan: Breakfast and lunch.

Day 19 *Victoria Falls, Zambia: Local Village & Leisure Time*

This morning we visit an authentic Zambian village. The chief has invited visitors into his village to get a glimpse of how his people have lived for generations and to learn a little about their traditional customs and beliefs. The Chief's guides and the people of the village are more than happy to show visitors their huts and take you inside, explain how they are built and decorated, introduce you to various craftsmen and women at work. This is a working village, not a purpose- built tourist attraction, and it is a privilege to be welcomed in.

This afternoon is free for optional activities: Scenic flights, river boat trips, an excursion to the Zimbabwe side, or trips into Livingstone to visit the David Livingstone and / or Railway museums, can be arranged with the assistance of your Tour Leader. Costs and bookings for these optionals are available upon arrival in Zambia.

Overnight at Victoria Falls, Zambia. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 20 *Victoria Falls, Zambia - Johannesburg, South Africa*

Today we fly from Livingstone / Victoria Falls to Johannesburg (flight times are variable).

Overnight in Johannesburg (Sandton). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 21 *Johannesburg - Soweto - Tshwane (Pretoria) - Johannesburg*

This morning we have a tour of the city of Soweto.

Soweto unto itself is actually one of the largest cities in Africa with an estimated population of 2 million. It also has one of the most dubious histories of any city in Africa, as it was the site of some of the more infamous events during the struggle against apartheid. The name "Soweto" simply stands for South Western Township, due to its location outside Johannesburg. It was here that thousands of black workers were forced to live in order to provide labour for the gold mines.

We will see the good, the bad, and the ugly of Soweto -- from affluent neighbourhoods to shanty towns; the world's largest hospital, Baragwanath; and the former homes of Soweto's Nobel Laureates, Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. We also visit the excellent new museum dedicated to the victims of the 1976 Soweto Uprising.

En route to Pretoria we will visit the extraordinarily powerful Apartheid Museum, an obligatory stop for visitors and residents alike. The large blown-up photographs, metal cages and numerous monitors with continuous replays of apartheid scenes will make you feel that you were in the townships in the 70s and 80s, dodging police bullets or teargas canisters, or marching with thousands of school children. One can easily spend the better part of a day in this museum; however, for the sake of timing on a busy day, we will be taking in the highlights only.

We continue to Pretoria (recently renamed Tshwane*), the administrative capital of the Republic of South Africa. Surrounded by hilly countryside, this relaxed capital is known for its colourful gardens and lush green parks. We will see Church Square, dominated by its statue of the Boer Republic's first President, Paul Kruger, and lined with buildings of architectural and historical interest. From here we will proceed to a panoramic view of the city at the Union Buildings, the administrative headquarters of the Government of South Africa and scene of Nelson Mandela's inauguration as the New South Africa's first democratically elected State President in 1994.

* Tshwane is the name of a pre-colonial local chief and means "We Are the Same". In 2005 the city council approved the switch from Pretoria to Tshwane as part of an effort to make place names more African.

Overnight in Johannesburg (Sandton). Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 22 *Johannesburg - the 'Panoramic Route' - Hazyview*

From Jo'burg we head off through the vast wilderness of Mpumalanga (formerly the Eastern Transvaal), the "Land of the Rising Mist". Along the way we travel from the vast grasslands of the High Veld, with its huge farms and ranches, down to the drier Low Veld region characterized by rocky hills and acacia scrub forest. This is an expansive landscape of mountains, valleys, rivers, waterfalls, primal forests, and colourful flora. Steeped in a history of pioneers and fortune-seekers, we will pass many Gold Rush towns and farming communities en route. Lydenburg ("town of suffering") established by Voortrekkers in 1849 lies at the bottom of Long Tom pass. This pass, named after the big gun used by the Afrikaners during the Anglo Boer War, is one of the most scenically dramatic in the country. It links Sabie on the escarpment with Lydenburg on the Drakensberg plateau.

A highlight of our sightseeing today is the spectacular Blyde River Canyon. This great escarpment is the kind of place where brochures and guide books run out of original adjectives to describe the fresh mountain scenery and magnificent

panoramic views. The Blyde River Canyon is one of the most spectacular in Africa and its cliffs rise between 600-800 m (2,000-2,640 feet) from the river bed. At the "Three Rondavels viewpoint" is an unforgettable view of three huge rock spirals rising out of the far wall of the canyon. Their tops appear to have a hut-like rounded roof.

Following the road and the Treur River south, there are further viewpoints; Wonder View, God's Window and the Pinnacle. Their names help to conjure up the indescribable vastness of the scenery. From here we continue to Hazyview near Kruger National Park.

Overnight in Hazyview. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 23 *Kruger National Park*

Early this morning we enter South Africa's largest game reserve, Kruger National Park, named after Paul Kruger, the first to initiate the setting aside of this area as a reserve in the 1890s. Here we transfer to open safari vehicles and make a full-day excursion through the southern sector of this fascinating and beautiful park.

The Kruger Park is an enormous area of flat veld, broken by rivers and comprised of mixed vegetation and terrain. The park, officially founded in 1926, supports more species of wildlife than any other African reserve -- over 137 mammal species, 49 fish species, 112 reptile species, and nearly 500 bird species! With some luck we may see and photograph lion, leopard, cheetah, elephant, zebra and many other wonderful African animals.

We return to Hazyview in the late afternoon.

Overnight in Hazyview. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 24 *Hazyview, South Africa - Mbabane, Swaziland*

We travel south today and enter the Kingdom of Swaziland, an independent country completely landlocked by South Africa and Mozambique, and smaller than Kruger Park! Naturally fortified by beautiful mountains, Swaziland remains one of the last kingdoms in Africa, a continent once dominated by colonialism. The pace of life here is relaxed and the lifestyle traditional; we will see rural people working their farms and tending their herds as we make our way to the vicinity of Mbabane, the capital city.

Overnight in / near Mbabane. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 25 *Mbabane, Swaziland - St Lucia Wetlands, South Africa*

This morning we depart our hotel and travel south, descending onto the Swazi Lowveld (lowlands), similar in climate and vegetation of the lowveld region we experienced in South Africa and Kruger Park in previous days. We'll travel through sugar cane plantations and the bustling commercial centre of Manzini, before crossing the border back into South Africa and the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Our destination today is the St Lucia Wetlands. Lake St Lucia and the Eastern Shores together comprise the largest estuarine system on the African continent. Lake St Lucia was declared a Natural World Heritage Site by UNESCO -- South Africa's first -- on December 1, 1999. The park features a variety of landforms including coral reefs, long sandy beaches, coastal dunes, lake systems, swamps, and extensive reed and papyrus wetlands.

This afternoon we enjoy a boat safari on Lake St Lucia, with excellent opportunities to view hippo, crocodile, and

myriad bird species for which the park is famous.

Overnight at St Lucia. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 26 *St Lucia - Durban - Port Elizabeth*

This morning we participate in another nature / game viewing activity at St Lucia before travelling by road to Durban, the 'Garden City' of South Africa. This area was opened up to white settlement by the Voortrekkers in the early 19th century, though the Portuguese were navigating the coast here as early as the late 15th century. Vasco da Gama was the first European to sail along this coast, giving it the name Natal to commemorate his Christmas Day arrival. In 1899 the British and the Boers went to war, but under reconciliation in 1910 formed the Union of South Africa with an agreement signed in what is now Durban's modern-day Main Post Office.

This evening we fly from Durban to Port Elizabeth, the start of the famous "Garden Route." (As this will likely be an evening flight, we will not be including dinner this evening).

Overnight in Port Elizabeth. Meal plan: Breakfast.

Day 27 *Port Elizabeth - 'The Garden Route' - Knysna OR George*

Port Elizabeth is South Africa's fifth largest city and the third largest port. This morning we will have a brief panoramic tour of this city seeing the Market Square and the beaches of Algoa Bay.

From Port Elizabeth we travel along the world-famous 'Garden Route' toward Knysna. This route is parallel to the ocean and features lakes, mountains, beaches, and steep cliffs. This part of the garden route reminds one of the Oregon Coast (USA) with its sand dunes and great surf beaches. We'll make a lunch stop at Storm's River Mouth in the Tsitsikamma National Park, located on the shores of the Indian Ocean. You will have time to walk a short section of the famed Otter Trail, widely regarded as one of the finest in the world, stretching 41 km (25 mi - 5 days) from Storms River Mouth to Nature's Valley.

We continue to Knysna, a charming coastal town with tremendous water and mountain view and a laid-back lifestyle. The town was founded in 1817 by George Rex, reputed to be an illegitimate son of King George III. Known for its picturesque lagoon, the town was first established as a timber port. Today, Knysna is proud of its riviera atmosphere with many sidewalk cafes and shops.

Depending on limited accommodation availability in Knysna, we may overnight here in Knysna or continue a little further down the road to the town of George.

Overnight in Knysna or George. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 28 *Knysna OR George - Mossel Bay - Outdshoorn*

This morning we travel down the coast to Mossel Bay. Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias arrived here on February 3, 1488, thus proving to his sponsors that Africa had a southern tip; making it theoretically possible to sail from Europe to India. Our destionation is the Dias Museum Complex, which marks the spot of the historical landing of Bartolomeu Dias. The 500 year old Post Office Tree, a national monument, can still be seen at the site, now harbouring a post box shaped as a shoe.

We then head inland and over the Outeniqua Mountains to the Little Karoo (Klein Karoo), a semi-arid yet fertile valley or depression surrounded by formidable mountian ranges. This is the ostrich capital of South Africa with thousands of these unusual birds dotting fields throughout the area. At the turn of the century ostrich feathers were in such demand that the fashion conscious paid a premium and feathered the nests of the barons who built magnificent mansions known as "Feather Palaces." This fine architecture can still be seen around the sedate and pleasant town of Outdshoorn (pronounced 'Oats-horn'), our final destination.

We will have lunch at one of the region's main ostrich show farms, followed by a tour thereof before continuing to Outdshoorn where we finish our day.

Overnight in Outdshoorn. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 29 *Outdshoorn - Swellendam - Cape Town*

From Oudtshoorn we travel through the Huis River Pass with its spectacular rock formations, and the little farming town of Ladysmith, named after the Spanish wife of British Cape Governor Sir Harry Smith. We cross our second mountain range of the day to arrive in the town of Swellendam, the third oldest colonial town in South Africa, established in 1745. Here you will have time to have lunch and visit several historic buildings built in the charming Cape Dutch style with characteristic whitewashed walls and black, thatched roofs.

We then pass through a vast wheat growing and sheep farming area on our way to Cape Town. In the late afternoon we cross the Hottentot's Holland Mountains (our third range for the day), the centre of South Africa's apple growing region, to arrive in Cape Town, one of the world's most isolated and beautiful cities.

Overnight in Cape Town. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 30 *Cape Town: the Cape Peninsula*

Today we have the quintessential full-day tour of the Cape Town area: The Cape Peninsula.

Our tour takes us south along the Atlantic Seaboard where we have spectacular views of some of Cape Town's most affluent neighbourhoods and spectacular mountain and coastal scenery. We have a brief photo stop just before Camp's Bay, a pretty surfside suburban community featuring the classic view of the town with the 'Twelve Apostles' peaks as a backdrop.

We continue south along a seaside-hugging route, through the town of Hout Bay and the famous Chapman's Peak Drive, one of the most spectacular marine drives anywhere in the world. The 9km route, with its 114 curves, skirts the rocky coastline of Chapman's Peak, the 593m high southerly extension of Constantia Berg.

Our next stop is the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve and Cape Point. The reserve is a wildflower, bird, and animal paradise on 77 sq km (30 sq miles) of the Cape Peninsula. The reserve is also home to eland, springbok, bontebok, baboon, and zebra. Within the reserve are Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope, the most southwesterly point on the African continent.

After a break for lunch and free time at Cape Point, we head north again, stopping briefly at the Cape of Good Hope, before continuing back up the Indian Ocean side of the peninsula, passing through Simonstown, founded by the Dutch in 1741 as a naval depot and named for Simon van der Stel, governor of Cape Colony from 1679 to 1697. Today Simonstown is famous for its distinctly English architecture and atmosphere, and the southernmost train station on the continent.

We complete our loop around the peninsula, past the well-watered eastern slopes of Table Mountain, Constantia, Bishops Court and the campuses of the University of Cape Town.

Overnight in Cape Town. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 31 *The Cape Winelands*

This morning we travel the short distance to Stellenbosch, South Africa's second oldest colonial settlement. After a little spin around the town, we'll park in the centre of town and allow some time for some independent, on-foot exploration. You will notice some of the finest examples of traditional Cape Dutch architecture along the town's famous oak-lined streets.

We continue to one of the area's many wineries for a cellar tour and tasting. The Cape vineyards were originated at Constantia by Jan van Riebeeck in 1685 and were advanced in 1688 by Hugenot refugees who brought their vine seedlings and skills with them from France. The Cape's different soils and climatic variations allow a wide variety of wines to be pressed. Along our route today we will see several wine estates with their delightful Cape Dutch houses, thatched roofs and decorative gables.

Today we include lunch at one of the area's wine estates. After lunch we'll continue our scenic drive through the area before heading back to Cape Town for dinner on your own.

Overnight in Cape Town. Meal plan: Breakfast and lunch.

Day 32 *Cape Town: Table Mountain & City Tour*

We will start our day with a gondola trip to the top of Table Mountain,* a sandstone plateau rising up above the city. The top is approximately 3km wide and at its highest point, Maclear's Beacon, rises to 1085m / 3,580 ft. Over the centuries it has become one of South Africa's most famous landmarks. The steep cliffs and rocky outcrops of the mountain play home to a number of animals and approximately 1,470 species of plants -- more than the entire British Isles!

After descending the mountain we tour Cape Town, the seat of the Parliament, which holds a six-month session here each year. We will see the Houses of Parliament, the Malay Quarter with its narrow streets and minarets; the Castle of Good Hope, South Africa's oldest building; and visit the South African Museum.

We also visit the National Botanical Gardens of Kirstenbosch, with over 4,000 species of indigenous plants (2,600 are endemic to the Cape Peninsula). The garden's history dates back to the 1660s, when the first Dutch settlers arrived in the Cape. Governor Jan van Riebeeck planted a barrier of Wild Almonds to protect settlers' cattle from the original inhabitants of the area -- and part of this hedge is still in the garden!

* NOTE: The order of our Cape Town sightseeing may vary depending on weather. Table Mountain is particularly susceptible to cloud and mist and may be accomplished elsewhere in our program at the discretion of your Tour Leader.

Overnight in Cape Town. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 33 *Departure*

Departure from Cape Town.

BON VOYAGE! Meal plan: Breakfast.