

# South Africa

CAPE BIRDS & FLOWERS

LIMOSA HOLIDAYS | TOUR INFO PACK



*African Penguins coming ashore at Boulders, in Western Cape Province © Callan Cohen*

**2017**      **Saturday 2nd - Thursday 14th September (13 days)**  
**2018**      **Saturday 1st - Thursday 13th September (13 days)**  
**with Alastair Kilpin as principal guide**

*We travel to South Africa's wildlife-rich Western Cape Province at the best time of year for seeing its abundant birds and amazing wildflowers. A host of regional endemic birds - from African Penguin and Black Harrier through to Cape Sugarbird and Cape Rockjumper... Plus a world-class seabird pelagic, Southern Right Whales off The Cape, Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, the iconic Table Mountain and vast swathes of colourful wildflowers as the spectacular Cape Floral Kingdom hits peak of flowering. And with our itinerary freshly honed this year, it's an all-round wildlife experience that's hard to beat!*

- For birdwatchers and naturalists, September is the best time to visit Western Cape
- Mouth-watering list of regional endemic birds
- Black Harrier, Blue Crane, Cape Rockjumper, Cape Batis, Orange-breasted Sunbird
- World-class Cape Town pelagic boat trip - up to 30 species of seabirds
- See Southern Right Whales, Eland and other unique African mammals
- Timed to catch the legendary Cape Floral Kingdom at the height of spring flowering
- World famous Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens - and the remarkable Karoo
- Expertly led by our top-rated South African naturalist Alastair Kilpin

## What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Flights - London Heathrow to Cape Town, nonstop with British Airways
- 10 nights accommodation at comfortable guest houses and lodges in South Africa
- All main meals included - with drinking water provided during the day
- Pelagic boat trip off Cape Town for seabirds
- All excursions, local travel, park entry fees, tour based tips and taxes

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## Outline Itinerary

- Day 1:** Fly London Heathrow-Cape Town
- Days 2-4:** Arrival in Cape Town morning of Day 2. Cape Peninsula and seabird pelagic. Cape Peninsula (3 nts)
- Day 5-6:** Cape Town to West Coast National Park. Langebaan (2 nts)
- Day 7-8:** We head to the flowering desert, the Tankwa Karoo. Ceres (2 nts)
- Days 9-10:** We leave Ceres and head across the mountains to the indigenous forests of the Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve. Grootvadersbosch (2 nts)
- Day 11:** Overberg wheatlands to De Hoop Nature Reserve. Night De Hoop area.
- Day 12:** De Hoop Nature Reserve and return to Cape Town for flights home.
- Day 13:** Morning arrival London

## Tour Overview

The wildlife of western South Africa is extraordinary. Nowhere else in Africa offers such a high level of endemism in such a uniquely accessible setting. No fewer than 47 of South Africa's 58 endemic and near-endemic bird species occur in the region, as well as 70% of all southern Africa's 180 endemic birds - many of which we shall see on this exciting tour! Complementing its unrivalled birdlife is the scenic and botanical wealth of Cape Province, which contains two of Africa's four plant biodiversity hotspots - the renowned Cape Floral Kingdom and the Karoo, the world's richest area for succulents.

The coastal endemic birds, including African Penguin and African Black Oystercatcher, are rivalled by spectacular offshore concentrations of albatrosses. In the *fynbos* vegetation, often against a backcloth of dramatic mountain scenery, we will look for Cape Rock-jumpers and Ground Woodpeckers hopping on the rocky slopes above, and Cape Sugarbirds and Orange-breasted Sunbirds flitting among the flowers.

The Karoo semi-desert offers many fine endemics, too. We have a good chance of seeing four bustard species, along with graceful Blue Cranes, South Africa's national bird. Few sights can rival that of the striking Black Harrier quartering low over the West Coast shrublands and we'll make a special effort to find this stunning species - our September 2016 group saw no fewer than 15 of these magnificent birds!

Smallest of the world's six floral kingdoms, the Cape Floral Kingdom is one of the richest on earth. Comprising largely *fynbos* vegetation, this tiny pocket lying at Africa's southernmost extremity holds an incredible 8,700 species of plants! Bordering it to the north is the Succulent Karoo, a winter-rainfall desert that can also burst into flower unpredictably at this season. For many species, September sees the peak of flowering.

Our tour will introduce you to the best of the endemic birds and characteristic habitats of the Western Cape - at the very best time of year. We've reworked our itinerary for this year's tour whilst retaining all the key sites, so we spend less time travelling and have fewer changes of hotel. We'll visit the world famous botanical gardens at Kirstenbosch, take a day-trip off Cape Town (weather permitting) on one of the world's most celebrated pelagic boat trips in search of seabirds and Southern Right Whales, and explore some of western South Africa's finest reserves and national parks - all while staying at a selection of the region's most charming lodges and guesthouses.

Limosa has been operating a wide-ranging programme of birding tours to South Africa since 1998 and our 2017 and 2018 trips will be our eighth and ninth *Cape Birds and Flowers* tours. Guide Alastair Kilpin's foundations are in the biodiverse Cape region of South Africa, where he grew up. He specialises in guiding bird and wildlife tours throughout South Africa and the Afro-tropics - including this tour and our trips to Kruger & Drakensberg and to Namibia.

All in all, South Africa has that rare combination of scenic splendour and wonderful wildlife, coupled with good food, great accommodation

and excellent field guides that makes for a truly marvellous birdwatching holiday. Backed by the exclusive services of our specialist local agents in Cape Town and with one of the country's top-rated wildlife experts to guide us, this 13-day tour to South Africa offers an unrivalled wildlife experience!

## Daily Itinerary

### Day 1

#### FLY CAPE TOWN

Our September tour to South Africa begins with a British Airways nonstop overnight flight from London Heathrow to Cape Town.

### Days 2-4

#### CAPE PENINSULA, CAPE TOWN

#### SEABIRD PELAGIC BOAT TRIP &

#### HOTTENTOTS HOLLAND MOUNTAINS

We arrive in Cape Town on the morning of day two, where Alastair will be waiting to welcome us at the start of our *Cape Birds & Flowers* tour. Considered to be one of the most scenic stretches of coastal landscape in the world, the Cape Peninsula is among Africa's premier tourism destinations. For birders, it provides an excellent introduction to the exciting and varied birdlife of Cape Province, as well as easy access to a good selection of *fynbos*, forest and coastal endemics.

Our base is not far from the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens, on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain. Widely recognised as one of the finest botanical gardens in the world, Kirstenbosch would be an essential destination for its pleasing landscapes and spectacular floral displays alone. But the well-maintained gardens and adjacent *fynbos* and indigenous forest also support a diverse selection of bird species. Here we hope for point-blank views of several *fynbos* endemics, such as Cape Sugarbird and Orange-breasted Sunbird, as well as a number of forest species including Forest Canary and Cape Batis.

The rugged coastline and windswept moorlands of the Cape of Good Hope Reserve at the southwesternmost tip of Africa are now incorporated into the Table Mountain National

Park. This spectacular reserve is excellent for seawatching and one of the best places to see the *fynbos* endemic, Cape Siskin, which is best searched for in the vicinity of the cliff view points at Cape Point. We should also see the remarkable Bontebok antelope, once one of the world's most threatened species with less than fifty individuals remaining. Returning from the Cape of Good Hope, Boulders Beach is the site of the larger of the two mainland colonies of the endearing and globally threatened African Penguin. Over 1000 pairs nest here, peering suspiciously from their shallow, sheltered burrows at their now considerable following of human visitors!

It is possible to see over 100 species of birds in a day at the extensive Strandfontein sewage works, arguably the best waterbird locality close to Cape Town. We'll spend a few hours here on one of our days in Cape Town, where specialities include Greater Flamingo, Great White Pelican, Maccoa Duck, African Marsh Harrier, African Swamphen, South African Shelduck and African Fish Eagle.

We will plan to head out to sea on the first day of suitable weather, taking one of the Cape's world famous seabirding trips.<sup>\*1</sup> Pelagic species - those that breed on land but otherwise remain at sea - congregate around the trawlers, making them easy to locate and approach. The high point of a pelagic birding trip is sure to be that of wallowing behind a trawler with up to 5000 seabirds squabbling for scraps in its wake. At this time of year, day-trippers regularly see up to 30 different species, making it arguably the World's most memorable yet easily accessible seabirding experience. We should also see Southern Right Whales from the boat, for the females migrate to the Cape to calve in the shallow waters here.

<sup>\*1</sup> *Pelagic boat trip - please note: we have a very high success rate at finding trawlers that the seabirds follow, but this is never guaranteed! Note also that the pelagic is entirely weather dependent and we won't go if conditions are unsuitable. For anyone who prefers not to join the boat trip, today offers an ideal opportunity to enjoy some private sightseeing in Cape Town or maybe to return to wonderful Kirstenbosch.*

Across the sandy, low-lying flats that lie east of Cape Town, a barrier of mountains interrupts the landscape - the haunt of the Cape Rock-jumper and other *fynbos* endemics. Our first stop will be to explore the mountain *fynbos* at Rooiels, a classic Cape birding spot in the Hottentots Holland Mountains. We'll search a rocky ridge, keeping alert for the loud piping call of the rock-jumpers and looking out for Cape Grassbird, Orange-breasted Sunbird, Neddicky and Karoo Prinia. Victorin's Warblers can be heard singing from the denser vegetation of the hill slopes.

Nearby, at Betty's Bay the jumble of lichen-splattered boulders provides a safe roost for good numbers of terns, gulls and cormorants, and is where we will search for a number of endemic or localised coastal species. These include the Benguela endemics Cape, Crowned and Bank Cormorants, Hartlaub's and Kelp Gulls, and African Black Oystercatcher. The highlight here though is the nesting African Penguins that rest on the slipway or waddle ashore to their burrows in the village.

This area is also remarkably diverse in *Erica* species and we'll see many mountain *fynbos* specials. It's also an excellent area to see and understand the critical effect fire has on these ecosystems.

Throughout our stay of three nights here, we will be based at a comfortable guesthouse on the Cape Peninsula, which has superb birding from the garden! *Three nights on the Cape Peninsula*

### Days 5-6

#### WEST COAST NATIONAL PARK

The southwestern Cape's western seaboard, stretching along the Atlantic shores from Cape Town northwards to the Olifants River, is best known for its superb beaches, bountiful sea-life, internationally-recognised coastal wetlands and spring wildflower displays - which are nothing short of spectacular!

The birding here is wonderful too, with an abundance of migrant waders and other waterbirds to watch for, plus the rewarding *strandveld*, where highlights could well include the quiet elegance of a Black Harrier, hunting low over the scrublands of the West Coast

National Park, or a secretive Chestnut-vented Warbler or Bar-throated Apalis.

We'll drive up from Cape Town, birding our way along the coast and eventually ending up in the West Coast National Park, which we will have ample time to explore. Southern Black Korhaan is a notable local speciality, and we should see waterbirds such as Great White Pelican, Greater and Lesser Flamingos, and Chestnut-banded Plover. *Two nights Langebaan (at the edge of West Coast National Park)*

### Days 7-8

#### TANKWA KAROO

After enjoying some final birding on South Africa's West Coast, we'll head towards Ceres, which will be our base for two nights as we explore the Tankwa Karoo and adjacent areas.

The Tankwa Karoo is best known for the unpredictable yet spectacular spring floral displays that provide such a colourful yet ephemeral façade to a fascinating region. This winter-rainfall desert is home to a unique arid-land flora that is unparalleled globally in terms of its diverse mixture of both species and growth forms. The region forms the largest portion of the Succulent Karoo Biome, recognised as the only desert biodiversity hotspot on earth and hosting the world's greatest variety of succulent plants.

The parched brown expanses, aloe-lined escarpments and lonely isolated hills of the provide an apt setting for some sought-after dry western endemics and a whole new view of the botany! Emerging from the hills and onto the semi-desert plains of the Tankwa Karoo, one enters a whole new habitat for birds, too - where almost everything is an endemic! We'll take the R355 towards Calvinia, famous as 'the longest road in South Africa uninterrupted by a town' (250km in all).

Common birds of the relatively moist scrublands just north of the road fork are Pale Chanting Goshawk, Karoo Lark, Karoo Chat, Rufous-eared Warbler, Grey-backed Cisticola and Yellow Canary. We'll search for Karoo Eremomela; a co-operative breeder, it occurs in small, agitated flocks that remain constantly on

the move, thoroughly gleaning low bushes before the birds follow each other onwards. And we'll visit a special rocky hillside where we might even see the elusive and little-known Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, one of the tougher Karoo endemics to set eyes on!

As we head north, bushes are few and far between and the ground gleams with the mineral patina of the desert pebbles. This is classic Tractrac Chat country: birds are most often spotted as they flush near the road and display their white rumps as they fly a short distance to perch again on a fence or low bush. Spike-heeled Lark is also regularly seen. From this point on, we'll be alert for Black-eared Sparrow-lark, a nomadic species found throughout the Karoo and which often moves around in flocks. It is also worth keeping an eye out for pairs of superbly camouflaged Karoo Korhaan. We might also find Springbok, an antelope occurring in the arid areas of southern Africa.

If we are lucky enough to visit after recent rain, we will see that pools forming close to the road invariably attract South African Shelduck and thirsty flocks of Namaqua Sandgrouse. We'll search for Namaqua Warbler in the watercourses and if we're really fortunate, may even spot a Burchell's Courser on the plains in areas where we've seen them in the past. *Two nights Ceres*

### Days 9-10

#### GROOTVADERBOSCH FORESTS

Today we'll head across the mountains to Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve. In the late afternoon, we will arrive at our accommodation for the next two nights, a comfortable guest farm at Grootvadersbosch. The endemic Forest Buzzard (recently split from Mountain Buzzard) often soars below our hillside cottages - and the home-cooked meals are always excellent!

The vast wilderness of the Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve incorporates a 250-hectare indigenous forest, the largest in the southwestern Cape and certainly the region's richest in bird diversity. A number of more characteristically eastern species reach their western limit here - and most are not too difficult to find with a little patience and persistence.

Forest edge areas are the favoured feeding habitat of several seedeaters, including small flocks of Swee Waxbill, Forest Canary and Cape Siskin. This is also a good place to look for foraging Black Saw-wings, and for birds of prey. African Crowned Eagle reaches its western limit at Grootvadersbosch and is sometimes seen overflying this ridge, while commoner forest raptors include Forest Buzzard, and Black Sparrowhawk and African Goshawks. The most numerous and conspicuous small birds in the forest are Sombre Greenbul, Cape Batis and Bar-throated Apalis. Before long however, we will intercept a bird party, adding the likes of Olive Woodpecker, Terrestrial Brownbul, African Paradise Flycatcher, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler and Greater Double-collared Sunbird.

While many of these birds are very vocal, some species - such as Olive Bush-shrike - are inconspicuous lurkers and we may well need to invest a little effort before obtaining good views. Other species we might see today include the ever-elusive Knysna Woodpecker, Knysna Warbler and Grey Cuckooshrike. *Two nights Grootvadersbosch*

### Day 11

#### OVERBERG & DE HOOP NATURE RESERVE

In the early morning, we'll head off into the lowlands in the direction of De Hoop Nature Reserve. The superficially sterile monoculture of the Overberg wheatlands harbours a surprising diversity of birds, including such desirables as Black Harrier, Blue Crane, Karoo Korhaan and Grey-winged Francolin. Agulhas Long-billed Lark is endemic to this area and among the world's most localised lark species.

The area is pleasantly scenic, with only the scatter of fiery red aloes across the winter hillsides destroying the illusion of a restful southern European landscape. Isolated in the moist grasslands and lowland *fynbos* of South Africa, 'Stanley's Bustard' is currently classified as a subspecies of Denham's Bustard, whose range extends into East Africa. In spring, the displaying males retract their heads and inflate their white throat pouches before strutting about in this voluminous 'Mae West' state!

The whole of the Overberg region is good raptor country; Secretarybird, African Marsh Harrier and Black Harrier are regularly seen. Common and characteristic species of the agricultural lands include Large-billed and Red-capped Larks, Capped Wheatear, Cape Longclaw, African Pied Starling, Cape Crow, Pin-tailed Whydah, Yellow Canary and, particularly in stubble fields, the wonderfully named Cloud Cisticola.

We head to De Hoop Nature Reserve, its 36,000 hectares of lowland *fynbos* and coastal dunes east of Cape Agulhas encompassing a low *fynbos*-clad mountain (Potberg) and a coastal lake. The cliffs on the southern side of Potberg mountain are renowned for hosting the Western Cape's last breeding colony of Cape Vulture, while the coastal thickets of the lowlands conceal such desirable endemics as Southern Tchagra and, more rarely, Knysna Woodpecker.

Late in the afternoon, we will drive down to the dunes where, from a prominent viewpoint over the Indian Ocean, we'll spend time watching the Southern Right Whales – with calves often alongside their mothers at this time of year. Further out, Humpback Whales can flash the white undersides of their tails and fins as they breach. *Night De Hoop area*

## Day 12

### DE HOOP TO CAPE TOWN

We'll enjoy some morning birding in the area in search of any specialities that we might not have had time to try for yesterday. De Hoop's main entrance gate is located on a range of limestone hills, from which the road winds down onto the lowland *fynbos*-swathed plains below. The *fynbos* is interspersed with open pasture-like areas, relics of attempted agriculture prior to the proclamation of the reserve. Bontebok, Eland, Cape Mountain Zebra, Chacma Baboon, Angulate Tortoise and Ostrich all favour these pastures, ensuring both an exciting and varied finale to our tour.

We'll then drive back through the farmlands - perhaps seeing a few more bustards and cranes - before heading to Cape Town. We say farewells to our guide and check-in for our British Airways evening flight to London.

## Day 13

### ARRIVAL IN LONDON

Morning arrival at London Heathrow, where our September birdwatching and wildlife tour to South Africa's Western Cape Province concludes.

## Trip Information

**Group Limit** Max of 12 participants & 2 leaders; or 7 participants & 1 leader (AK);

**What to Expect** A 13-day tour to South Africa in search of the special birds of the Western Cape, and including a world-class pelagic boat trip off Cape Town for seabirds (weather dependent). Wildflowers should be at their best (mid Aug-end Sep) when we visit, but please keep in mind that flowering periods can vary between years depending on the timing of the rains. Our improved itinerary for 2017-2018 means fewer changes of hotel and significantly reduces the amount of time spent travelling.

**Birds** 220-250 species

**Mammals** 15-25 species

**Plants** The sky's the limit! ...

**Accommodation** 10 nights accommodation in South Africa, where we stay at a hand-picked selection of charming hotels, guest houses and lodges, with all rooms en suite where possible.

Note that this special tour takes us into some of the most remote rural areas of the Cape and on one of the isolated accommodations here it may *sometimes* be necessary to share a bathroom with another member of the group (for a max of 1-2 nights) – but the bedrooms are separate and participants tell us that the opportunity to stay in such a splendid area more than makes up for any inconvenience!

**Meals** All main meals are included in the tour price, commencing with lunch in South Africa on Day 2 and concluding with lunch there on Day 12. Food is good-excellent throughout. Breakfasts and dinners will be usually taken at our accommodation, with lunches either as picnics in the field or at the lodges.

**Walking** Easy. Short walks over easy terrain. Wear comfy walking shoes or lightweight boots.

**Weather** Even though it is early spring when we visit, the Western Cape climate is very variable. September days are usually warm and sunny, and the famous Cape flora should be putting on a spectacular show (unless the preceding winter has had exceptionally low rainfall). However, it can still be chilly at times, especially in the evenings and early mornings, and on some trips the distant high peaks have been snow-capped adding an extra chill to the breeze. At the time of our visit, typical midday temperatures range from 15-25C (59-77F), but it's worth bringing some extra warm clothes for the evenings when the temperature can drop to around 5C (41F), especially at night. We are likely to experience some showers at this season, encouraging the wildflowers to bloom in profusion.

**Flights** We fly from London Heathrow to Cape Town, nonstop with British Airways.

**Ground Transport** Travel will be by 14-seater minibus but we limit each vehicle to a maximum of 7 participants, allowing everyone to have a guaranteed window seat and for extra space in the vehicle for day packs. Roads are good, but expect to travel over some unmade dirt roads in the parks and reserves.

**Boat Trip** The Cape Town pelagic boat trips are acclaimed as among the world's finest for seabirds - with up to 30 species possible. Note that the operation of this boat trip is entirely weather dependent, and individual participants will have the opportunity to decide whether or not to sail on the day. Depending on the size of the group, we will probably be aboard a small fishing boat (please note: with larger groups, two boats may sometimes be used). We expect to be on board for around 7-8 hours, during which time the vessel typically travels up to around 20 miles offshore. Sea conditions can vary from calm to relatively rough at this season, but the boat won't sail if it is unsafe to do so.

**Insects** Mosquitoes are not a problem on this tour, and there is no malaria risk.

**Photos** Good-excellent opportunities to photograph birds, flowers and other wildlife. Highly scenic, too!

## Tour Cost <sup>\*2</sup>

**2017** (13 days): £4395  
Land only cost: £3495  
Deposit: £600  
Single Supp: £375

**2018** (13 days): £4395  
Land only cost: £3495  
Deposit: £600  
Single Supp: £375

### Cost includes

Services of our expert guide/s; flights London-Cape Town; 10 nights accommodation in South Africa; all main meals (with drinking water provided); minibus transport; Cape Town pelagic boat trip; all excursions, permits/entry fees, tour based tips & airport taxes; map and Limosa checklist of bird & mammals for the tour.

### Cost excludes

Insurance, drinks, airport meals/snacks & other items of a personal nature.

<sup>\*2</sup> 2018 prices provisional, TBC summer 2017

## About Your Guides

**Alastair Kilpin** Alastair works closely with Limosa's Callan Cohen in South Africa and some of you might have already travelled with him on our various tours to Tanzania, Namibia and South Africa. His foundations are in South Africa's biodiverse Cape region, where he grew up. Soon after leaving university, Alastair started guiding in South Africa's eastern regions, where the mix of birding, mammals and rich botanical life got him hooked on travelling and birding around Africa and further afield. Together with his wife Petro, he has run lodges and trained guides in Tanzania's Serengeti (he lived in East Africa for three years), and in South Africa's

Kruger National Parks. They have now returned to the Cape, where they live on a farm with their young family. Alastair is one of the region's top tour guides and naturalists, and he rates patience, persistence and an appreciation for the natural world as key to great birding. He led this tour for us in September 2016 and is very much looking forward to a re-run again this year!

A **second leader (tba)** will be added as tour size warrants.

## What You Say

*"The flowers were stunning! Wave on wave of brilliant colours. Our guides [Alastair & Callan] knew the names of them all, how they were pollinated and how seeds were dispersed. I knew it would be good but not that good! Sea trip exciting with the albatrosses plus one shark! Great views of two whales in the bay. Enjoyed Verreaux's Eagles, Black Harriers, penguins."*

### RC, Cape Birds & Flowers tour

*"This was my second visit to the SW Cape area and, as my first was 38 years ago, this was both a trip down memory lane and an opportunity to see lots of species I'd missed last time. It did not disappoint. The pelagic was one of my most memorable birding experiences and the drive down through the Karoo, with desert in bloom, was unforgettable. Both leaders knowledge about birds, flowers and other aspects of natural history were as good or better than other top bird guides I've travelled with. They were also fascinating on South African history."*

### DC, Cape Birds & Flowers tour

## Financial Security

Limosa Holidays is a fully bonded Tour Operator and a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO). We hold an ATOL (Air Tour Operators Licence) granted by the CAA, providing for your protection in the event of Limosa Holidays' insolvency. Our licence number is ATOL 2950.

For tours not including the cost of a flight from the UK or for holidays booked by you as 'Land Only', all payments made to us are fully bonded through the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT). Our ABTOT membership number is 5230. For details please see our brochure or website: <http://www.limosaholidays.co.uk/financial-protection>

## Limosa Loyalty Discount

We are proud of the number of loyal customers who travel regularly with us. As our way of saying 'thank you', we offer a **Frequent Travel Discount**. Under the scheme, everyone who takes four trips with us is entitled to claim a 5% discount on their 5th trip<sup>\*3</sup>. Remember to request your discount at time of booking!

<sup>\*3</sup> **Please note:** This offer applies to the basic tour cost only and excludes certain commission-based trips, extras such as additional flights, private extensions and cancellations. Discounts cannot be given in lieu of tour deposits or off the cost of single room supplements.

## How To Book

Check availability on our website or with our office. We are happy to hold Provisional Reservations for up to 7 days. After this, we do require a Booking Form and deposit to confirm your place on tour. Any unconfirmed space will be released.

### Book Online, by Phone or by Post

You can book and pay the deposit simply and securely **Online** via our website, using the '**Book This Tour**' button on the relevant tour page or the **Booking** tab at the top of the page.

Telephone bookings must be confirmed in writing by completion of a Booking Form (there's one tucked inside every brochure or as a PDF download from our website), which can be mailed to us in the time honoured way.

Be sure to read our **Booking Conditions** and **General Information** (found at the back of our brochure, on our website or available from our office on request) prior to booking.

## When to Book

Early booking is advised since flights and accommodation are much more easily secured well in advance. To encourage early booking, we are pleased to offer an **Early Bird Discount** - see our current brochure or website for details.

Our tours are limited to small group sizes. So they can fill up quickly - sometimes even before our new brochure comes out! Single rooms in particular can often be in short supply and among the first to go, so do try to plan well ahead if you definitely require one of these.

**Last-minute Bookings:** We inevitably receive a few unexpected cancellations over the course of a season so it is always worth enquiring about vacancies on any tour - even for those departing in just a few weeks!

## Payments

The amount of **booking deposit** per person is shown alongside every tour. We accept deposit payments by **debit card, cheque** (payable to Limosa Holidays and drawn on a UK bank in GB Pounds Sterling) and **BACS** (please ask for our bank details). We also accept Visa and MasterCard **credit cards**, with no transaction charge on payment of tour deposits.

Full payment of the **balance** is due not later than 12 weeks prior to departure (20 weeks in the case of certain tours such as cruises or those involving rail travel). We will send you an invoice before the balance is due.

We accept payment for balances (and interim payments) by **cheque, BACS or UK debit card**. We also accept balances (and interim payments) by **credit card or overseas debit card** but with a charge of 2.5% of the transaction amount to help offset card company charges. [Note we do not retain your card details, which are destroyed once used. This means we may need to phone you again for details for subsequent payments.]

Payment by **overseas customers** must be in GB Pounds Sterling and may be made by transfer to our bank (please ask for our bank details), or by overseas debit or credit card with a 2.5%

transaction charge. Please note we do not accept cheques on US Banks in US Dollars, or cheques in Euros or Eurocheques.

**Late Booking Payments:** In order for us to guarantee your airline seats, hotels etc., full payment is required at time of booking for all late bookings (*i.e. bookings made within 12 weeks of departure*).

## Other Things You Need To Know

### Passports & Visas

Your **passport** should be valid for a minimum of 30 days from the date of exit from South Africa.

No additional period of validity beyond this is required, but when travelling anywhere overseas we **always recommend** that your passport has a minimum of 6 months left to run after your intended date of return home in case of unforeseen delay.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE!**

**Your passport should have at least TWO blank pages when you present it at immigration to enter or leave South Africa** (*note: South African Immigration officials will not allow the passport's Child/Infant page to be used for this purpose*).

If you do **not** have at least two blank pages then you might possibly be refused entry and may be returned back to the UK on the next flight.

**Be sure to check your passport complies with this requirement in good time prior to travel.**

• **VISA NOT REQUIRED by UK passport holders for this tour.**

*Holders of non-UK passports should contact the nearest South African embassy or consulate to check whether or not they require a visa/s. If a visa/s is required, you will need to apply locally. If the embassy or consulate requires you to provide a letter confirming that you are booked on an all-inclusive tour, please contact our office and we will be happy to provide one.*

## Health & Vaccinations

**Compulsory vaccinations:** None (but yellow fever certificate is required if arriving from infected areas).

**Recommend immunisations:** hepatitis A, tetanus, polio and typhoid. Consult your doctor for up-to-date advice about diphtheria, hepatitis B and TB, which may be recommended in some circumstances.

**Malaria:** There is no malaria risk on this tour.

A wide-brimmed sun hat is essential on many days, and use of an effective barrier cream and sunglasses are advised.

The above information, together with that contained within our Travel Information sheets (sent to everyone who books), outlines health requirements for this tour. **Please note that these details are given for guidance only - and are only for certain diseases - and you must consult your doctor in good time prior to travel as to what immunisations (if any) are needed for your chosen holiday.**

For full and up-to-date health information we urge everyone to consult **The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) website [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) prior to booking any overseas holiday.** NaTHNaC is funded by the UK Government's Health Protection Agency and provides health information for both health professionals and travellers, with information compiled by its own clinical and scientific team. You can search for individual country requirements, which are updated regularly.

## Your Safety & Travel Advice

An unavoidable aspect of travelling abroad nowadays is the threat it may pose to your safety and security. The UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) encourages British nationals to be better prepared for their overseas trips with a view to avoiding common travelling traumas, risks and dangers. In order for you to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination it is **strongly recommended** that you refer to the relevant FCO Travel Advice - [www.gov.uk/foreign-](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-)

*travel-advice* - both prior to booking and regularly before you travel.

It is standard Limosa policy for our office to send a copy of the relevant FCO Travel Advice about the tour to all participants along with their Final Letter (ca. 2-3 weeks prior to the trip).

**'Travel Aware'** - staying safe and healthy abroad - is a travel safety campaign run by the FCO, and another useful resource. Go to: [www.gov.uk/travelaware](http://www.gov.uk/travelaware)

## Travel Insurance

Good travel insurance is **essential** before setting off on any overseas trip. In common with all responsible tour operators, **it is a condition of booking** that all clients are fully and adequately insured before travelling overseas with us.

Your travel insurance should cover against cancellation, curtailment, missed departure, delay, personal accident, death, loss of baggage and valuables (see note below), personal liability and legal expenses.

Most importantly, your insurance must cover you fully in respect of medical care and repatriation should you become too ill to continue with the tour, including the cost of emergency evacuation by helicopter or air ambulance should this be necessary. Note that passenger liability insurance covering the transportation that we hire, particularly in Third World countries, may be inadequate; it is therefore important that your insurance cover includes sufficient provision for your dependents in the event of an accident.

**We recommend that you obtain travel insurance as soon as possible after booking** your holiday to ensure you are protected right from the word go in the event of unexpected cancellation prior to departure due to accident or illness. You must inform your insurers of any pre-existing medical conditions (including those of persons not necessarily travelling but upon whom your holiday may depend) that may require treatment during a period of overseas travel or might cause you to cancel the trip.

**Once you have arranged your insurance, please be sure to send us the following essential details:** name and contact details of your insurance provider, your policy number, expiry date and your insurers 24hr Emergency Assistance number.

### **Important Things to Note about Insurance**

- Travel Insurance does **not** normally provide sufficient cover for valuable optical equipment, which is often best protected under your own household insurance policy. If in doubt ask your insurers for advice prior to travel.
- Most travel insurance policies limit the amount of cover, typically up to a maximum tour cost of £5000 per person. If the tour you are booking exceeds this amount (as in this case), additional cover can usually be provided upon payment of additional premium. **We recommend all travellers check their individual policy limit to ensure the full cost of their holiday is covered.**

**Arranging Your Insurance:** due to UK Government legislation, under Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulations, we are not allowed to offer or recommend travel related insurance to customers. Premiums can vary widely according to your age, needs, health, choice of destination and other factors, while many people nowadays have Annual Travel Insurance cover. For these reasons, we leave you free to shop around and pick your own policy, one best suited to your own individual needs.

## **General Information**

### ***www.limosaholidays.co.uk***

Our website gives easy access to detailed tour itineraries (Tour Info Packs), trip reports, trip photos and the latest Limosa News.

### **Special Diets & Other Requests**

We pass on all such requests to the airlines, hotels and other suppliers, and do our best to

ensure (but of course cannot guarantee) that your needs will be met. Please be sure to tell us about these (in as much detail as possible) at the time of booking, to allow good time to make the necessary arrangements.

### **Smoking**

Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. For the enjoyment and comfort of all, we ask that smokers refrain from smoking in proximity to the group and respect our NO SMOKING policy in the vehicle, at meal times and when watching wildlife.

### **Any Questions?**

If you have any questions at any time, you'll find our office staff friendly, efficient, approachable - and just a phone call away, eager to assist you in every way. Our office is open 09.00-17.00 hrs Mon-Fri, and can also be reached by fax and email. In the event we are unable to take your call, please leave a message on our answerphone (24 hrs) and our office will contact you as soon as we can.

***Thank you for your interest in our tours.  
We do hope that you will be able to join us  
- and we look forward to hearing from you  
again!***

*revCC/CK200617*