



EMEASEC 2014: 27 - 30 October 2014 Cape Town, South Africa

Advice to Foreign Visitors to South Africa by Robert Halligan

South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa, is an amazing, modern, technology-savvy country way better than some of the negative images portrayed in the western press. Located at the southern tip of Africa, its beautiful coastline stretches along the South Atlantic and Indian oceans. To the north lie the neighbouring countries of Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe; to the east are Mozambique and Swaziland; and within South Africa lies Lesotho, an enclave surrounded by South African territory. South Africa, with close to 53 million people, is the world's 24th most populous nation.

South Africa is a multi-ethnic society encompassing a wide variety of cultures, languages, and religions. Its pluralistic makeup is reflected in the constitution's recognition of 11 official languages, which is among the highest number of any country in the world. Two of these languages are of European origin: English and Afrikaans, the latter originating from Dutch and serving as the first language of most white and coloured South Africans. Though English is commonly used in public and commercial life, English is only the fourth most-spoken first language.

About 80 percent of South Africans are of black African ancestry, divided among a variety of ethnic groups speaking different indigenous languages, nine of which have official status. The remaining population consists of Africa's largest communities of European, Asian, and multiracial ancestry. All ethnic and linguistic groups have political representation in the country's constitutional democracy, which comprises a parliamentary republic and nine provinces. Since the end of apartheid, South Africa's unique multicultural character has become integral to its national identity, as signified by the Rainbow Nation concept.

South Africa is ranked as an upper-middle income economy by the World Bank, and is considered to be a newly industrialised country. Its economy is the largest and most developed in Africa, and is the 28th-largest in the world.

South Africa hosts one of the biggest and most successful Chapters of INCOSE.

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About Cape Town

Cape Town - beyond description. From lavish and luxurious to back-packing on a budget, Cape Town has something wondrous for everyone. From the landmark beaches of Clifton and Camps Bay to the vibrant V&A Waterfront and Cape Town city centre - time spent in Cape Town will not be forgotten. Cape Town is the quintessential melting pot: it is a city alive with creativity, colour, sounds and tastes. While walking through the city's streets and meeting its people, you will join those in awe its natural beauty, creative freedom and incredible spirit. Cape Town is a city where the unexpected is always just around the corner.



Cape Town, with 3.8 million people, is the second largest city in South Africa, after Johannesburg. Cape Town is the provincial capital of the Western Cape. As the seat of the National Parliament, it is also the legislative capital of the country.



Inside the Cape Town Stadium. Photo courtesy warrenski

Cape Town is the hub of the dynamic Western Cape Branch of the South African Chapter of INCOSE, frequent events being conducted in Cape Town itself and in the region around Stellenbosch.

About Somerset West

Somerset West is situated in the Hottentots Holland area, about a 30 minute drive from Cape Town along the N2 motorway.

Close to Stellenbosch, this residential centre has a delightful setting and many of Somerset West's residents commute to Cape Town daily. Somerset West was named after an English governor of the Cape Colony during the 1800s, Lord Charles Henry Somerset, with the suffix 'West' being added to differentiate it from Somerset East, another South African town in the Eastern Cape.

Somerset West lies within easy reach of several beaches bordering the Atlantic Ocean and lying within False Bay. The nearest, the beach at Strand, approximately 6 km from the centre of the town, is popular with families and holidaymakers.

Somerset West is home to the wine farm, Vergelegen, an impressive 18th century farmhouse built in Cape Dutch style. The farm is now owned by a subsidiary of the large mining company Anglo American, who have restored the farmhouse to its original magnificence and continue to produce some of South Africa's best wines there.

About the Stellenbosch Region

Stellenbosch, about 15 minutes by car from Somerset West, is the second-oldest and undoubtedly the most scenically attractive and historically preserved town in southern Africa. The name conjures up images as few other towns or cities can. History is reflected in the neo-Dutch, and modern-Victorian architecture that encompasses simple lines, fine detail and elegant proportions that bear witness to a proud and dignified heritage. Set snugly against the foothills of majestic mountains, a more idyllic setting is difficult to imagine. The unsurpassed scenery, with views over vineyards, mountains and orchards, offers excellent photographic opportunities.



Oak-lined streets, where jagged lines of trees etched against white walls transform the streets of Stellenbosch into soft, shady tunnels, offer welcome relief from the warm sun. A stroll along the streets and secluded lanes, mingling with the locals at an open-air coffee shop or bistro, or titillating your taste buds with fine local fare or international cuisine at one of the many restaurants and eateries, are a few of the many pleasures of Stellenbosch. In an atmosphere where art, music, theatre, outdoor living and adventure reigns, what more could anyone want? A small-town atmosphere and leisurely lifestyle surrounded by nature's bounty characterise Stellenbosch, yet Stellenbosch is no more than half an hour's drive from the cosmopolitan buzz of Cape Town. And endless stretches of pristine white beach are within 15 minutes' drive.

The town's academic history has its roots in the early nineteenth century when the forerunner of today's internationally renowned centre for education, the Stellenbosch University, was established. South Africa's first undergraduate Winter School on Systems Engineering took place at this university in June 2013.

Stellenbosch is a centre for 'clean' industry and is a sought-after location for business, ranging from entrepreneurs to major international companies, many of which have their head office in the Town of Oaks.

The mild weather and unique terroir are ideal for wine-growing and the region has amassed many international awards over the years. The first Wine Route was established in 1971 and comprised 17 cellars; today the Stellenbosch American Express® Wine Routes boasts more than 200 members. Brandy, one of South Africa's finest products, is distilled in many cellars throughout these winelands.

See more at: <http://www.thewesterncape.co.za/town.php?town=33>

Some Practical Stuff:

- **Anyone for a Show?**

Cape Town is a vibrant centre in South Africa for music and theatre, with world-class productions commonplace. Significant venues include The Fugard Theatre in District Six, Theatre in the District, Alexander Bar Upstairs Theatre, Richard's Supper Stage, Theatre on the Bay, the Baxter Theatre, Jou Ma Se Comedy Club, The Artscape Theatre, Villa Pascal Theatre, The Maynard Open-Air Theatre, and, near Somerset West, The Barnyard Theatre. Somerset West itself boasts the Playhouse Theatre.

- **Arriving at Johannesburg International Airport**

You may arrive in South Africa at the OR Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg. This airport is very well served by many international airlines, including Air China, Air France, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Emirates, Etihad Airways, Iberia, Lufthansa, Qantas, Qatar Airways, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Singapore Airlines, South African Airways, Swiss, TAP-Air Portugal, Thai Airways, Turkish Airlines and Virgin Atlantic.

The OR Tambo International Airport is large, modern and efficient. Upon arrival, most visitors will take the "Other Passports" lane towards the right hand side of Immigration. The queue can sometimes appear very long, but clears very quickly.

There are frequent, economic flights between Johannesburg and Cape Town, on South African Airways and British Airways, together with low cost carriers.

- **Arriving at Cape Town International Airport**



Cape Town airport offers an excellent entry point to South Africa, as well as being within 20 minutes by motorway of the Conference venue. This airport is served by many international airlines, including Air France, Alitalia, Austrian Airlines, British Airways, Comair-Delta, Lufthansa, South African Airways, Swiss, Turkish Airlines and Virgin Atlantic.

Like OR Tambo International Airport (Johannesburg), clearing immigration and customs in Cape Town is straight forward and quick.

- **Buying Airline Tickets**

Tickets to and from South Africa can be easily purchased online via the usual booking engines. The cheapest fares for flights within South Africa may be obtained on the domestic airlines' websites, however, consider any need to allow time to recheck baggage at your point of entry if transferring to a domestic flight on another airline.

- **Cell-phone Connection**

SIM card prepaid starter kits are available for around R1. You will need a passport and a proof of residential address and your service has to be registered before you can call or receive calls. If you visit a Vodacom or MTN store on arrival at the airport with your passport and drivers licence, you can be connected on the spot. Have the seller demonstrate that you can make calls with your newly purchased service. You can buy credit for prepaid phone services just about everywhere.

- **Currency**

South Africa's currency is the rand, which offers visitors great value for money. The rand comes in a range of coins (R1 = 100 cents) and note denominations of R10, R20, R50, R100 and R200. As at 3 March, 2014, 1 EUR = 14.83 rand, 1 USD = 10.77 rand.

- **Departing South Africa by Air**

Security and immigration on departure at South African airports generally take 5-20 minutes. An allowance of 30 minutes is suggested, to be safe.

Security of baggage at South African airports has improved considerably over recent years. But some theft still occurs - stolen items include anything from electronic devices to designer perfumes. Assume that any obviously valuable object in your checked bags may be stolen, and pack accordingly.

A service to wrap luggage in cling-wrap film is available at major airports. Use this service if you must include valuables in your checked luggage. You may also cable-tie the zip fasteners to deter easy access to the contents of luggage.

- **Disability**

There are facilities for disabled people, although fewer than in many parts of Europe or the United States. Major hotels will have facilities for disabled people. When renting a vehicle, discuss special needs and parking dispensations with the rental car company.

- **Driving in South Africa**

It is compulsory to carry your driving license with you at all times in South Africa. If your driver's licence is in any of South Africa's 11 official languages (e.g. English) and it contains a photo and your signature integrated into the licence document, then it is legally acceptable as a valid driver's licence in South Africa. Otherwise you may need an International Driver's License.



Road traffic in South Africa (and its neighbouring countries) drives on the left. South Africa has an extensive road infrastructure including national highways and secondary roads. Speed limits are 120km/h on highways, 100km/h on secondary roads, and 60km/h in urban areas. Roads in the Cape Town/Somerset West area are all of a high standard of surface and signage.

Driving in South Africa is generally easy compared to driving in many countries, the main unusual feature being the propensity of some drivers to travel at very low speeds on national highways (and elsewhere). Be careful to avoid rear-end collisions! Keep left, pass right. A special kind of intersection is the 'four way stop' where the car that stops first has right of way.

As you would do in any other country, always be alert when driving. The safest way is to drive defensively and assume that the other driver is about to do something stupid / dangerous / illegal. You may well be right!

The wearing of seat belts is compulsory. The front seat occupants of a car are required to wear seat belts while traveling. For your own safety, it is recommended that those in the rear seats do so as well.

Should you find yourself waiting at a red traffic light late at night in an area where you do not feel safe, you could (illegally) cross over the red light after first carefully checking that there is no other traffic. If you receive a fine due to a camera at the traffic light, you can sometimes have it waived by writing a letter to the traffic department or court explaining that you crossed safely and on purpose, due to security reasons. The fact remains that, for whatever reason, you have broken the law. Do not make a habit of this!

When stopped at a traffic light at night, always leave enough room between your car and the car in front of you so you can get around them. It is a hijacking manoeuvre to box your car in. This is relatively prevalent in the suburbs of Johannesburg.

Law enforcement (speed and other violations) is usually done by portable or stationary radar or laser cameras. In general, the police are reasonably honest, and they do respond to politeness and deference to their authority. Not speeding is a safe policy, in more ways than one!

Road tolls are being introduced in cities in South Africa - check with your rental car company as you rent.

- **Electricity**

The South African electricity supply is 220/230 volts AC 50 Hz. Mains power outlets are mostly to a standard rare in the rest of the world; see the graphic.



Power adaptors may be bought on arrival at OR Tambo International Airport (Johannesburg) or Cape Town International Airport, or in advance at <http://www.amazon.com/Grouped-Adapter-Africa-Ireland-Certified/dp/B000BMC57I>. Accommodation providers may provide adaptors, but it would be unwise to rely on them doing so unless you check in advance.

- **Entry Requirements**

For visa requirements, contact your nearest South African diplomatic mission. South Africa requires a valid yellow fever certificate from all foreign visitors and citizens over one year of age travelling from an infected area or having been in transit through infected areas. Infected areas include Zambia and Angola in southern Africa.

- **Health**

South Africa has been well known for its medical skill since Professor Christiaan Barnard performed the first successful human heart transplant in 1967. There are many world-class private hospitals and medical centres around the country, such as those of the Netcare Group, especially in urban areas. State hospitals can also offer excellent care, among them Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town. Seek advice from your accommodation provider or Conference organisers if you need medical attention.

- **Hotels and Guest Houses**

Hotels in South Africa are usually very comfortable and well-priced. Most hotels have a parking lot which is gated and guarded 24 hours. If you are well-dressed and appear respectable, the guard on duty will usually take your word that you are a guest (and if your appearance does arouse suspicion, showing your room keycard or your reservation will be sufficient).

Guest houses often provide outstanding accommodation and a cultural experience, at very reasonable rates. A guest house is either a converted house or manor, etc. adapted to accommodate overnight guests, or it may be a purpose-built facility. A guest house is run as a commercial operation and is often owner-managed. A guest house has areas that are for the exclusive use of the guest. The owner/manager either lives off-site, or in a separate area within the property.

- **Measurements**

All measurements use the metric system; distances on road signs are in kilometers (1.6 km =1 mi) and fuel is sold by the litre (3.8 litres=1 U.S. gallon).

- **Parking a Car**

For all street parking, and with some unmanned car parks, you will normally get someone coming to you and offering to "Watch your car, boss?" Some will be paid security staff, some won't be. Annoying as it may be, it is best to go along with it, paying ZAR2 to ZAR5 when you return to your car. Make sure you keep coins for this purpose.

Never under any circumstances leave valuables in the car, including the boot (trunk).

- **Refuelling a Car**

Fuel stations are full service, with lead free petrol, lead replacement petrol and diesel available. Pump attendants will offer to wash your windscreen and check oil and water in addition to just filling up the car. It is usual to tip the attendant approximately ZAR5. Most fuel stations are open 24 hours a day.

- **Religion**



About 80% of South Africa's population is Christian. Other major religious groups include Hindus, Muslims, Jews and Buddhists. Places of worship are easily accessible from the Conference location. Ask your accommodation provider, search the web, or check with Conference organisers.

- **Renting a Car**

Renting a car in South Africa is easy. Rental costs can range anywhere from US\$15 per day and upwards of US\$200 per day depending on the car group, location and availability. Some major rental agencies are First Car Rental, Avis, Hertz, Budget Car Hire, Europcar, Tempest Car Hire, Thrifty Car Rental, and Dollar Rent A Car. The car rental agencies maintain branches around South Africa, including smaller towns and game reserves and national parks. Rental for pick-up and return to Cape Town International Airport is a breeze!

Most rental fleets in South Africa have largely manual transmission vehicles; vehicles with automatic transmission are more limited and tend to be more expensive.

- **Restaurants**

South Africa is a culinary paradise, no more so than in the Somerset West/Stellenbosch area. High to outstanding standards of food, wine and service are the norm, at amazingly low prices by international comparison.

- **Security in General**

Use common sense and take basic safety precautions. Keep valuables locked away and don't wear expensive watches or jewellery, flash expensive cameras, or walk in deserted or visibly low-income areas. Do not accept offers from friendly strangers. Taking an evening stroll or walking to venues after dark can be perfectly OK, or very risky. If in doubt, ask your accommodation provider or Conference organisers for safety guidelines.

- **Security When Driving**

Most visitors to South Africa have no problems whatsoever regarding security when driving in the country. But, the threat from criminal elements is higher than in, say, Oslo or Munich.

So it's best not to tempt fate. Do not leave your anything significant, especially valuables, in plain sight, even when driving in your car, as "smash and grab" attacks do sometimes occur at intersections. Don't have bags visible on the passenger seat or the rear seat, or even on the floors. The same applies, but even more so, when parking your car. Normally keep your car doors locked, and windows closed. Keep an eye out via your mirrors - maintain awareness. Know where to go so that you avoid getting lost or needing a map. GPS can be included in your car rental and can help considerably with navigation. If someone does try to take possessions or even your car, the guidance is to give it to them without a struggle or aggression.

In the cities/towns, you will often get people coming up to your car, trying to sell you anything from fruit to clothes hangers to small electronics and cleaning materials. Official guidance is not to buy from them (it's also illegal).

If you break down, it is not advisable to get out of your car on the shoulder of the road. You're probably safer inside the car with doors locked. Consensus is to pull over as far as you can, put your emergency indicators on, and wait inside the car, with the doors locked, and ring the police on 112 on your mobile. Or ring the conference organisers or your hotel. If it's a tow-truck you need, ring directory enquiries on your mobile, or the number provided by your car rental company – normally in the glove box of your car (called a "cubby-hole" in SA), or on your key ring.

- **Smoking**



Smoking is banned in all enclosed public spaces; these include airports, pubs, shopping malls and theatres. But there are usually designated areas where people can smoke. Under-18s may not enter a designated smoking area or buy cigarettes.

- **Taxis**

You can hire a pre-booked taxi service or a chauffeur driver from the various service providers in the industry. These are fairly safe and reliable, especially if they have an active online presence and have received reviews from reputable sources. The safety of taxi services in South Africa has improved enormously in recent years, and using a hotel-endorsed on-demand taxi service will be ok. Otherwise, caution is recommended.

- **Tipping**

As a rough guide, 10% is expected in restaurants.

- **Travelling Between Somerset West and Downtown Cape Town**

Travelling by car between Somerset West and Cape Town is a breeze, except when the traffic is heavy (week day mornings into Cape Town, evenings in the other direction). A thirty minute drive can become two hours!

- **Travelling With Children**

Most places welcome children and many establishments have special facilities such as family rooms or children's entertainment programmes. Enquire about these when you book.

- **Using an ATM**

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), linked to all major international networks, are available throughout the country and will generally dispense money in a mixture of denominations between R200 and R10, with about 80% of the value requested being high value notes and the rest in smaller denominations. You can use all major credit and debit cards at the ATMs. South African bank ATMs do not charge any fees above those levied by your own financial institution.

It is best to use only ATMs that are inside a mall or other building. Always be careful to make sure no one is watching you enter your PIN, and be vigilant about scams (e.g. machines that seem to eat your card and won't give it back after you enter the PIN). Do not accept help from strangers when withdrawing money at an ATM. If you are approached and offered unwanted help, rather cancel the transaction immediately and go to a different ATM.

VISA and MasterCard are accepted almost everywhere. American Express and Diners Club are also accepted, but not as widely.

Most retail stores accept credit cards and PIN based debit cards as payment. It is best to notify your bank in advance of your travel plans, to avoid rejection of charges.

- **Water**

In urban areas such as Cape Town and Somerset West, tap water is of high quality and safe to drink. It's quite safe to have ice in drinks and to eat salads. However, when travelling to remote rural areas and the bush you should take your own drinking water along or buy bottled water.

- **Wi-Fi on the Run**



Internet Cafes are plentiful around South Africa, and access rates are cheap. Even cheaper and more mobile would be to buy a prepaid cell phone starter pack (less than ZAR10) and access the Internet with GPRS or 3G.

For a really good and flexible connection, consider buying at the airport a pocket Wi-Fi dongle from MSN or Vodacom. The SIM card that you get with the dongle will have a phone number - just like your cell-phone. When you buy and register a data package, the network is simply made aware that your phone number has xMB of data available. You then select the Wi-Fi dongle SSID from your computer, and enter the supplied password. Have the seller demonstrate that you can connect to the internet with your newly purchased service. It can take a few minutes for registration to take effect.

