

...Travellin' Round



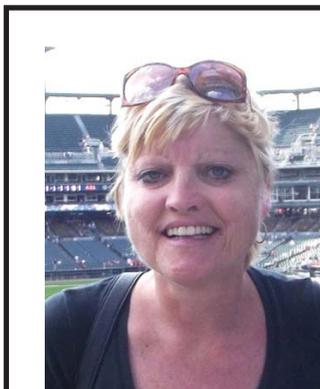
by Terri Finnie,
Blowes Travel Consultant, Stratford Office

South African Safari

We all know the definition of 'bucket list'—a number of experiences or achievements that a person hopes to have or accomplish during their lifetime. Many of the experiences will include trip destinations we wish to visit. My husband and I were fortunate to travel to one of our bucket list destinations recently—South Africa and Victoria Falls. The escorted tour was organized by Care-free Journeys (a Blowes Travel custom group tour) in conjunction with South African Airways and Lion World Travel. We were not disappointed!

After the long flight from New York to Johannesburg we connected to our first destination in South Africa—the lovely city of Cape Town (pictured above)! Our home for the first four nights was the Table Bay Hotel located on the historical Victoria and Albert waterfront with easy access to shops, restaurants and unique entertainment. Some of the group toured to the top of Table Mountain by cable car—a view not to be missed! Ferry tours to Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela spent 18 of his 27 years in prison, was another option. We spent our first full day visiting the famous Cape Winelands region including Stellenbosch and Franschhoek to test the local favourite—Pinotage. The next day we enjoyed a scenic drive along the coast to the Cape of Good Hope which is the most south western corner of the African continent. We spotted whales, baboons and a wild ostrich family. The highlight was our stop at Boulder's Beach with its famous African penguins!

After Cape Town we boarded our



Terri Finnie



Blowes Travel and Cruise Centres Inc

a tradition in travel since 1949

London (Byron) 519-472-3232

London North 226-289-2821

Strathroy 519-245-2201

And offices in Stratford – Mitchell – Listowel

TICO 1890474

flight to Hoedspruit, one of the many smaller airports within Kruger National Park. It is here that all of our visions of South Africa became a reality! The safari truck that we used over the next four days of our game drives picked us up at the airport and took us directly to the Kapama Southern Camp Lodge. We encountered a herd of elephants along the way! Kapama owns four resorts of various accommodation (some tented, others suite)



spread throughout the 15,000 hectares they own and manage within Kruger. All of their properties include accommodation, all meals and two daily game drives of 3 hours each. Generally there are no more than 6 to 8 passengers per vehicle with the same guide and tracker for the duration. Francois and Orise made sure we spotted the African 'Big 5' within 2 days—rhino, elephant, buffalo, lion and leopard! In addition we saw impala, wildebeest, wart hogs, water buck, reedbuck, kudu, hyenas, jackals, the serval cat, hippos, hares, zebra and my personal favourite—the giraffe!

As a lover of birds I was also treated to the beautiful Lilac Breasted Roller! During our free time at Kapama, side tours to the Elephant Sanctuary or the Endangered Species Centre were offered. We toured the Endangered Species Centre and learned about the efforts to restore the cheetah population in Kruger. We were saddened to learn about rhino poaching, a big issue in all of Africa's national parks, and the breeding of lions for pleasure

South African Safari (Continued)

shooting! Kapama also offered hot air balloon tours over the park and had a wonderful pool and spa for those seeking rest and relaxation. The food at Kapama was plentiful and delicious. Our evening meal was spent outdoors at the barbecue or 'Boma'. We enjoyed wonderful soups, salads and desserts made with local ingredients. In addition to seafood, beef and other staples we enjoyed oxtail, kudu and ostrich—all accompanied by wonderful South African wines!

The time came when we had to leave Kapama and board our flight back to Johannesburg. Upon arrival we had a quick tour of the largest populated area in South Africa with a stop at the large FNB stadium. The stadium resembles an African pot and was used when the country hosted the world cup of soccer in 2010. Our guide took us to the suburb of Soweto—infused with the history of the struggle against apartheid. We viewed Nelson Mandela's home from 1946 to

1962 which is now a museum. We learned about the rich gold mining history of the area.

Our last stop was Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. Victoria Falls is the only waterfall in the world with a length of more than a kilometer. It is known locally as 'the smoke that thunders'. We walked the length of the falls and took a helicopter tour to gather it's full beauty! It is located on the Zambezi River on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. The town of Victoria Falls is a step back in time. We stayed at the historical Victoria Falls Hotel originally built in 1905. Afternoon tea is a must. Other side trips included bungee jumping, rafting and sunset cruises on the Zambezi. A trip to Chobe National Park, located in Botswana, famous for its elephants and rhinos is easily accessible.

Our bucket list trip came to a close. We knew South African Airways would return us safely and on time to North America with their comfortable friendly service. Now, when can we return?

