



What is the objective of Platteland Tours?

To visit the smaller Platteland towns in Southern Africa, drive on the back roads, enjoy the beauty of the country, overnight and dine in the small 'dorpies' (towns) and spend some tourism money there – helping them to recover from losses incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to continue business in general. It is a 'feel good' tour, visiting places and driving on roads you've never been on before in our beautiful Southern Africa. We do not visit many big cities regularly as part of the road trips.

Why do you call it a Road Trip and not a tour?

The 'official' vague definition of a Road Trip is: "It is a trip over a long distance normally undertaken by vehicle and across provincial or state borders. Many times without a specific destination or planned route or stoppages." We want to keep that mystique flavour about Road Trips, but obviously cannot follow it to the word – hence, we do the planning and you just ride, without knowing too much of what is lying ahead.....

Why self-drive guided Road Trips?

Many vehicle owners have told us that they love travelling but do not like sitting in a bus, train or flight with a big group of people. However, they would love to drive their own vehicle, like to enjoy the safety of travelling in a group and benefit from the experience of a tour leader. Our target market is the **non-4x4** society. I.e.: You can travel with almost any vehicle with us on tour.

Is Platteland Tours a new company?

Yes & No! The founder and owner of Platteland Tours was also the founder and owner of **JB Train Tours** (Since 1975). The latter had to close early 2020 primarily due to two reasons: The Covid-19 pandemic and no more any long-distance passenger trains available and running in South Africa – our previous niche and expertise.

Where do we go with the Road Trips?

We can go to any place in Southern Africa because we are familiar with it after many decades in the tourism industry, but we have decided to concentrate on Southern Africa for now – to rediscover our own country, spend our money locally and help people in tourism to recover.

However, we have identified the following destinations for the short term, plus a few more for the medium term, and eventually quite a lot on the long term. Our tours vary from three to fifteen days.

Short term:

- > Gauteng to the Cherry Festival outside Ficksburg - 3 Days
- > Gauteng to Namaqualand Flowers (in season) – 8 Days
- > Gauteng to Namibia – 15 Days
- > Gauteng to Botswana & Victoria Falls – 14-Days
- > Gauteng to eSwatini & Lowveld – 5-Days
- > Gauteng to Lesotho – 7-Days
- > Gauteng to Mozambique – 10-Days

Medium term:

- > Gauteng to the Cederberg
- > Gauteng to Zimbabwe
- > Gauteng to Namibia (alternative route)
- > Gauteng to 'your suggestions'
- > Mountain Passes
- > Gauteng to Transkei & Eastern Cape
- > Mountain passes in the Western & Southern Cape

Starting points of road trips

All the tours (for now) will depart in or close to Gauteng, South Africa, however tour participants may join en-route at places convenient and practical. If there is a need in future we can consider departing from other provinces as well.

The Routes

We have carefully selected all the routes after doing various recces. We endeavour to show you and to take you to places you haven't seen before or perhaps have visited a long time ago. Have you ever been to:



Koingnaas? Rooiberg? Nieu-Bethesda? Hondeklipbaai? Leydsdorp? Melkriver? Wupperthal? Haenertsburg? Cornelia? Hogsback? Hoedspruit? Rhodes? Bethulie? Wakkerstroom? Koppies? Lutzville? Etc.

We do NOT follow the shortest route from town to town. Sometimes it would be the more scenic or more interesting route to drive. This is after all a Road Trip.

You should not get lost when travelling with us as you will be part of a group travelling together in a convoy, because we make use of Very High Frequency (VHF) two-way radios to keep you informed. But if you do get lost, we'll look out for you!

You are welcome to leave the Road Trip en-route and join again later but we do not encourage it. When you are not part of the convoy, we can't take care of you and you could be missing out on beautiful places and tourist spots en route!

The condition of the roads

We've driven all the routes during our recces. The condition of the roads varies between very good and average. Good tar and dirt/gravel roads will be used, and we will travel over mountain passes. The condition of a dirt or gravel road can change substantially within one day's rainstorm, however any 4x2, SUV or sedan vehicle with high ground clearance (hence one does NOT need a 4x4) should be able to travel on all these roads. Unless otherwise indicated on the relevant Road Trip's Info Doc. Low profile tyres are not recommended.

No sandy roads, deep river crossings or technical challenging routes will be done. If circumstances warrant it, we may detour from the official route on short notice. If you don't want to drive on the dirt/gravel roads, you will unfortunately not be able to join the road trip as this is part of the route and in some cases we stay in guest houses on farms.

Vehicles

You will drive your OWN vehicle (Aircon friendly!) You decide how many people per vehicle (any size vehicle). Please ensure that your vehicle is road worthy and in a good riding condition.

A minimum of 6 vehicles and a maximum of 14 vehicles per Road Trip will be accommodated. If your vehicle has a breakdown whilst on the Road Trip, we'll assist as much as possible to ensure that you are safe and that you and your vehicle are taken care of to continue with the tour if possible. Kindly note that the Road Trip has to continue and won't be able to wait for a broken-down vehicle before it can continue.

Sharing your vehicle with friends and/or family will reduce your tour (vehicle) costs per person substantially as you will be able to divide the fuel & toll gates costs.

Driving speed

We drive all the time within the official speed limits. However, we expect all vehicles to travel at the speed of the tour leader. I.e.: No 'crawling' on the highways neither speeding when inappropriate. On the main roads our maximum cruising speed is 110 km/h.

Please note: No alcohol consumption during the driving period allowed. I.e.: No drink & drive.

Included in the tour price

If the inclusions differ it will be mentioned on each tour's Info Page.

- > A tour leader with his/her own vehicle
- > All administration and leading of the tour (incl. booking of accommodation, meals, excursions, etc.)
- > Good accommodation (at least B&B)
- > Daily breakfast and certain dinners
- > Use of a high frequency two-way radio per vehicle to use during the Road Trip
- > Lots of relevant info and daily briefings on the tour
- > Limited vehicle breakdown support
- > New friends
- > New routes
- > Lots of photos taken on tour



Excluded from the tour price

If the exclusions differ it will be mentioned on each tour's Info Page.

- > Meals & drinks on tour
- > Fuel & toll gates for vehicles
- > Comprehensive travel insurance
- > Gratuities
- > Entry fees to venues or places of interest
- > Breakdown recovery costs
- > Personal expenses

Accommodation

Good 'Platteland' accommodation. One or two persons per room (according to your preference, please indicate on the booking form, single supplement apply). Breakfast is included in your accommodation fee at all the accommodation venues where we overnight. On some tours some dinners are included as well. Individual guest houses and small lodges are preferred to big hotels on most of the Road Trips.

Allocation for rooms will be done by the service provider - hence we can't guarantee that friends and/or family will be allocated next to one another. You're welcome to request this on your booking form, however it can't be guaranteed. Rooms could also differ from one other.

Note: We have negotiated very good accommodation rates for these Road Trips. ALL the service providers 'came to the party' and are eagerly awaiting you at their accommodation. Let's support them. Pay your service providers with a smile!

Children's prices

There are unfortunately no standard set rules for children's accommodation prices. At some places you'll have to pay the full price, whilst at others, you'll pay a reduced price if a room is shared with the adults. Normally children from 12 years of age and older will have to pay the same as an adult.

Please enquire with us for full details per Road Trip.

Meals

Other meals (over and above the breakfast) on the Road Trip are optional, though dinner will be available at the accommodation venues where we stay or in a restaurant close by. Either A la Carte or buffet or set menu. We suggest you budget for +-R350 per person per dinner. Dinner is optional.

Lunch will be enjoyed en route. We do **not** stop for official lunches. You may bring your own 'padkos' but consider buying en route from the locals. Think quirky road stalls!

What to take on tour (suggested)

Your vehicle, your family and/or friends, pocket money, a smile and goodwill. Some other extras could include: Sneakers (walking shoes), a hat, binoculars, toilet paper, wet wipes, a coffee flask, camera, torch and sunglasses.

Radio communication

We'll supply a high frequency two-way radio per vehicle to be used for the duration of the tour for us to communicate with you en route. (It remains our property) We don't use it for telling jokes or talking nonsense! It is charged via your vehicle's cigarette lighter. Please make sure that your lighter socket works **before** departure.

Who may go on tour?

Anybody who'd like to travel in a group and who would like to see new and interesting places (the 'Platteland'), staying in good accommodation and sharing goodwill with everyone on tour and en-route. Women-only are more than welcome to come along on any of our Road Trips.

Who should NOT go on tour?

Moaners, whiners, anti-gravel road users, people driving at 80 km/h on a 120 km/h highway, people drinking alcohol whilst driving and drivers without a valid driver's license. People talking about their illnesses, medicines, pills and operations they've had.

Where to spend your money

We would like to encourage everyone on tour to spend their money en-route. Buy your drinks, biscuits, biltong, rusks, crisps, chocolates, etc. en route and make your contribution in helping the people in the 'Platteland'.

How will you benefit by going on our Road Trips?

- > Driving on roads you've never been on before by enjoying beautiful back roads
- > See towns and places that you normally just speed past
- > Stop at interesting shops and road stalls
- > Eat good and interesting 'platteland' food
- > Meeting likeminded people, perhaps staying friends afterwards
- > No planning of routes and organising of accommodation – we do it on your behalf
- > No getting lost
- > A very affordable way of going on holiday
- > Lots of laughter
- > More affordable compared to any organised bus, train or flight tour package
- > Joining and/or leaving en-route at your place of choice
- > **Driving in a safe environment within a group**
- > Feeling good about your country & region
- > Driving and appreciating your own vehicle
- > Put the air-con or heater on the temperature you prefer
- > Smoke in your vehicle if preferred to do so
- > Listen to your own music
- > Making use of your tour leader's knowledge and experience
- > Having good memories when looking again at all the pictures taken on tour



Travelling in South Africa during COVID-19 (when still applicable)

Holidays, travelling, socialising and public accommodation have changed substantially since COVID-19 made its mark in the world. However, we believe that people would still like to travel – both long and short distances. They would still like to see, experience, smell, taste and enjoy something new and different.

Our self-drive guided Platteland Road Trips will allow a person to still do the above, but in his own vehicle – either with family and friends in the same vehicle (to reduce costs and to minimise the possible effect of COVID-19) or on its own.

You are responsible to apply and respect all the relevant COVID-19 regulations in place at that point of time, if still applicable.

Make a difference

You are welcome to bring along any clothing for all ages, toiletries and stationery (pens & paper), magazines, books, etc. that you are willing to donate to the locals en-route. We have an arrangement with all the overnight venues to distribute it on your behalf. No sweets to begging children en route, please,

How to book

Complete the Booking Form (one per vehicle) and e-mail it to us **with** your deposit's Proof of Payment (PoP). Your booking will be confirmed once the money shows in our bank account.

Deposit

25% of the tour fees when the booking is done. See further payments and the cancellation policy below.

Outstanding balance

The balance of the tour fees needs to be paid by latest six (6) weeks before departure date of the relevant tour. The PoP needs to be sent to Platteland Tours as well.

Cancellation Policy

If the tour is cancelled by the tour operator **prior** to the departure date, you'll be refunded in full. Subject to conditions of the service providers.

If you cancel:

- > More than 60 days before the departure date, you'll receive 90% back of money paid to us
- > More than 30 days before the departure date, you'll receive 50% back of money paid to us
- > 30 days or less before the departure date, you'll receive 20% back of money paid to us



If you find a replacement in your place, there will be no refunds, and you'll collect the money directly from your replacement.

These percentage (%) penalties are to cover our costs that we've incurred by taking care of your booking. In some cases, certain service providers will only refund a certain percentage as well.

Insurance

Please ensure that you and your vehicle are insured. We recommend a Comprehensive Travel Insurance – speak to your advisor or we can recommend a suitable company to you.

Indemnity

Once you have signed the Booking Form you confirm that you've accepted all the conditions. However, our intentions are NOT to put you, your passengers or your vehicle in danger at any time. This is a road trip, you are driving and **you** must be responsible.

Looking forward in welcoming you on tour and to become a member of the 'Traveling Family'.

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