



First Time Visiting SA

The Michaels Wedding 2026

Flights

South Africa has two options to fly into, Johannesburg (OR Tambo International Airport) or Cape Town International Airport. If you fly into Johannesburg, and connect to Cape Town, you will need to collect luggage and clear customs/immigration before going to check in for your next flight.

Cash and Card Facilities

Card and contactless are widely accepted in SA (including Amex more recently). We normally use our Starling card and incur no international fees (unlike HSBC!!). The same applies for Monzo and Revolut. There are a few scenarios where it is helpful to keep cash and we wanted to make you aware of these:

1. Parking guards — many areas where there is free street or off-road parking will be guarded by someone who has informally designated themselves as a car guard. While you should never feel pressured to pay them, it is courteous to ask them to look after your car and tip R10 — R20 (50p-£1), or more if you're feeling more generous! South Africa has terrible inequality and unemployment is high, so most car guards are simply trying to earn a living to support their families, and appreciate your support.
2. Petrol attendants — unlike the UK/Australia where you would fill up your car with fuel yourself, South Africa has paid employees at every petrol station who will do this for you (please don't try to do it yourself!). They will ask what fuel you require and how much you require (either in Rands or litres, or you can just ask them to fill the tank up). They will also often ask if you would like them to check the tyre pressure, oil and water (we use distilled water instead of coolant in cars), and to clean the windscreen. All of these are offered free of charge, but best practice is to tip (I would recommend R20/£1 at least), as their base salary is small and rely on tips (and make our lives much easier!).
3. Begging - while this is personal preference, and people have different attitudes, we would encourage you to only give money to beggars where you feel comfortable to do this. South Africa unfortunately is a very unequal society, and you will see this in abundance in Cape Town, where there is both extravagant wealth and extreme poverty, so many people are simply trying to make the best of a bad situation, and even R20 or R30 can help buy a loaf of bread and make a difference to someone. However, be careful not to take your wallet out in public as it makes an easy target for snatching — having a small amount of money available in a side pocket or pocket can easily prevent this scenario. If you do want to help, consider having money easily accessible, and trust your instincts — if you feel unsafe, leave.

Power Cuts

As some of you may know already, South Africa experiences something called “load-shedding” which are scheduled power cuts. Many places now have backup generators or are solar powered, so sometimes “load-shedding” goes by unnoticed. It also varies in how regularly the scheduled cuts are so in Feb 2026 there may be none! But if there are, please make sure to charge electronics etc when the power is on.