



SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

2026 ASTRO-TOURISM CONTENT CREATORS #JOYJOURNEY

28 FEBRUARY to 9 MARCH 2026



Your Joy Journey begins in Gauteng, South Africa’s vibrant gateway, where city energy meets the cosmos. In Johannesburg, innovation, culture, and history unfold beneath some of our most accessible night skies. This is where curiosity is sparked through immersive planetarium experiences, expert insights into the Southern Hemisphere skies, and African narratives that translate science into compelling, shareable stories. Gauteng sets the tone for the journey ahead, linking South Africa’s urban heartbeat to the universe above and providing a strong narrative foundation for content creation.

As the journey unfolds into the Free State, the rhythm slows and the skies open wide. Framed by sandstone cliffs and sweeping plains, this is a place of space, stillness, and reflection. Here, the stars are understood through cultural interpretation, storytelling, and lived experience. Through indigenous knowledge, oral traditions, and ancestral navigation, guests experience how communities have long read the night sky as a guide to seasons, survival, and meaning. With minimal light pollution and expansive horizons, the Free State offers an intimate setting for creating visual and narrative content that connects land, culture, and sky.

The journey then moves into the Cape Winelands, with Stellenbosch offering a moment of grounded connection between earth and sky. Set among vineyards and protected landscapes, this chapter explores sustainability through land stewardship, natural cycles,



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and conscious travel. Here, stories unfold around conservation-led wine experiences, responsible farming, and the relationship between climate, soil, and time - reinforcing how the same natural forces that shape the night sky also shape the land beneath our feet. Stellenbosch provides space to pause, reflect, and translate the journey into thoughtful, place-based storytelling.

The experience reaches its crescendo in the Northern Cape, home to South Africa's darkest skies and one of the world's most significant astronomy destinations. In and around Sutherland, silence becomes part of the experience, allowing science, scale, and observation to take centre stage. From encounters with world-class research facilities to immersive dark-sky moments in the Karoo, this is where South Africa's role in global space science comes sharply into focus. Beneath the Milky Way, where stories are captured, sustainability is actively practised through light-conscious travel, and the universe feels within reach.

Together, this journey across multiple provinces reveals South Africa as a destination where science meets soul, where ancient wisdom and modern discovery coexist, and where the night sky becomes a powerful canvas for storytelling. Guided by the stars and rooted in African storytelling, we look forward to seeing South Africa through your lens as you capture, create, and share moments that inspire wonder, spark curiosity, and invite the world to **Come Find Your Joy**.

#JoyJourney #SouthAfricaAwaits #ComeFindYourJoy #AstroTourism #SustainableTourism

WELCOME TO THE GAUTENG PROVINCE, JOHANNESBURG

Gauteng is South Africa's gateway to the universe.

Here, cutting-edge science, innovation, and storytelling intersect under some of the country's most accessible night skies. Johannesburg anchors the journey, intellectually connecting urban life to the cosmos and setting the scientific foundation for everything that follows.

This is where guests learn how to read the Southern Hemisphere skies, why Africa matters in global astronomy, and how cities can still engage meaningfully with the stars.

DAY 1: SATURDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2026

- On arrival at the OR Tambo International Airport, guests will be welcomed by the appointed Tour Operator.
- Transfer to the Hotel, check-in & refresh
- Lunch and Afternoon at leisure
- Evening Welcome Dinner & Programme Briefing
- Overnight: Johannesburg at the Southern Sun Hyde Rak (4 star)

DAY 2: SUNDAY, 1 MARCH 2026

- Breakfast at the Hotel
- Transfer to the Wits Anglo American Digital Dome
- Curated flagship visit to the Wits Anglo American Digital Dome (Planetarium / Science Centre) featuring an immersive planetarium experience
- Media interview opportunities with astronomy specialists
- Curated lunch at a contemporary Johannesburg venue, offering local flavours and a relaxed setting for lifestyle content, interviews, and daytime social capture.
- Afternoon at leisure/content creation
- Dinner at a Rooftop or garden featuring a guided urban stargazing and light-pollution contrast experience, highlighting what is visible from cities versus dark-sky destinations.
- Overnight: Johannesburg at the Southern Sun Hyde Rak (4 star)

WELCOME TO THE FREE STATE, BLOEMFONTEIN

The Free State is the emotional bridge of the journey.

Here, the pace slows, horizons widen, and the sky becomes personal. With low light pollution and deep cultural roots, this province reconnects astronomy to ancestral knowledge, ecology, and storytelling.

This is where you stop observing the sky and begin to feel part of it.

DAY 3: MONDAY, 2 MARCH 2026

- Breakfast
- Check out and settle all personal accounts.
- Transfer to the OR Tambo International Airport for the flight to Bloemfontein
[SA Airlink departing Johannesburg at 09:15 am and arriving in Bloemfontein at 10:25 am](#)
- Morning visit to Franklin Nature Reserve:

Guided drive or a light nature walk highlighting:

- Local biodiversity and endemic plant species
- The relationship between ecology, seasons, and celestial cycles
- Sustainability and conservation awareness
- Landscape photography
- Check in at the Hotel and enjoy a relaxed lunch
- Freshen up
- Transfer to the Naval Hill
- Visit the iconic Nelson Mandela statue, a powerful symbol of South Africa's democratic journey and Bloemfontein's historical significance. Photo opportunity and short walk-around.
- Drive up to Naval Hill, the highest point in Bloemfontein.
- Arrive before sunset for golden-hour views of the city.
- Visit the Naval Hill Observatory Planetarium (Digital) – show time TBC
- Transfer to the Boyden Observatory
- Dinner
- Overnight in Bloemfontein at the Protea Hotel Willow Lake (4 star)

DAY 4: TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2026

- Breakfast
- Check out and settle all personal accounts.
- Transfer to the Bram Fischer International Airport for the flight to Johannesburg/Cape Town
[SA Airlink departing Bloemfontein at 07:50 am and arriving in Johannesburg at 08:40 am](#)
[FlySAFAIR departing Johannesburg at 10:15 am and arriving in Cape Town at 12:35 am](#)
- Lunch on arrival in Cape Town (venue to be confirmed)
- Check in to the Hotel
- Afternoon at leisure: Dedicated time for content capture, story editing, media uploads, interviews, and personal downtime.
- Dinner
- Overnight in Stellenbosch at the Protea Hotel Stellenbosch and Conference Centre (3-star)

DAY 5: WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2026

- Breakfast
- Hot Air Balloon Experience (weather-dependent)



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- Morning at leisure
- Picnic Lunch at Cavalli Estate: A relaxed outdoor picnic at Cavalli Estate, a **WWF Conservation Champion**, showcasing responsible farming, biodiversity protection within the Cape Floral Kingdom, and sustainable design. This low-impact lunch connects guests to the land and the conservation practices that support sustainable tourism.
- Segway experience at the Spier Wine Estate
- Dinner and Sustainability-led wine tasting with Carmen Stevens
- Overnight in Stellenbosch at the Protea Hotel Stellenbosch and Conference Centre (3-star)

WELCOME TO THE NORTHERN CAPE, SUTHERLAND

The Northern Cape is the soul of South Africa's astro-tourism promise.

With some of the darkest skies on Earth, this is where silence, science, and scale converge. In Sutherland and the Karoo, South Africa steps confidently onto the global astronomy stage.

This is not just stargazing; it is deep-space immersion.

DAY 6: THURSDAY, 5 MARCH 2026

- Breakfast
- Check out and settle all personal accounts
- Scenic drive from Cape Town → Sutherland
- Lunch at a local Sutherland venue, introducing Karoo hospitality and regional cuisine, followed by a Dark-Sky Orientation Walk focused on light-conscious travel and night-sky etiquette.
- Check-in & refresh
- Guided visit to the South African Large Telescope (SALT), Africa's largest optical telescope and a cornerstone of international astronomical research.
- Expert-led astrophysics session
- Low-light evening dinner introducing the discipline of dark-sky travel, followed by a stargazing preparation briefing and orientation to professional night-sky observation practices.
- Quiet-hour protocol (dark-sky protection)
- Overnight: Sutherland, various self-catering units recommended by the Northern Cape Tourism Authority

DAY 7: FRIDAY, 6 MARCH 2026

- Breakfast
- Sustainability and responsible astro-tourism session covering light pollution mitigation, dark-sky conservation, and ethical night-sky tourism practices.
- Unhurried lunch in Sutherland, offering time for rest, reflection, and content editing ahead of the final dark-sky experiences.
- Community engagement experience with local Sutherland residents, sharing stories of life under dark skies and the cultural significance of the night sky in the Karoo.
- Indigenous star-lore storytelling session
- Evening dark-sky dining experience followed by a guided silent night-sky observation, designed to encourage reflection, presence, and uninterrupted Milky Way viewing.
- Quiet-hour protocol (dark-sky protection)
- Overnight: Sutherland, various self-catering units recommended by the Northern Cape Tourism Authority

DAY 8: SATURDAY, 7 MARCH 2026

- Breakfast
- Scenic drive from Sutherland → Cape Town
- Check in at the Hotel and Lunch
- Afternoon at leisure: Dedicated time for content capture, story editing, media uploads, interviews, and personal downtime.
- Dinner
- Overnight in Cape Town at the City Lodge V&A Waterfront (4-star)

DAY 9: SUNDAY, 8 MARCH 2026

- Breakfast
- Morning reflection & content wrap-up
- Media debrief session identifying story angles, editorial opportunities, and long-form content themes aligned to astro-tourism, sustainability, and cultural heritage for print, digital and social platforms.
- Relaxed lunch providing time for reflection, informal conversation, and content editing ahead of the evening programme.
- Farewell dinner, marking the close of the shared journey and celebrating the stories captured along the way.
- Overnight: Cape Town at the City Lodge V&A Waterfront (4-star)

DAY 10: MONDAY, 9 MARCH 2026

- Breakfast
- Check out and settle all personal accounts.
- [Scheduled transfers \(pick up times to be confirmed\) to Cape Town International Airport for onward journeys home.](#)

Thank you for journeying with us.

May the stories you share from your Joy Journey inspire your audiences to discover the beauty, culture, and people of South Africa.

Hambani kahle (Go well).



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****Tour Operator Quotes must include:**

1. Daily Lunch budget including refreshments = R450.00 per person (including gratuity)
2. Daily Dinner budget including drinks = R550.00 per person (including gratuity)
3. Daily Nightlife/Entertainment = R400.00 per person (including gratuity)
4. All transfers, entrance fees and activities as per the itinerary
5. Uncapped on-route WIFI connection for the duration.
6. Onboard refreshments = R150 per person per day
7. A local Tourist Guide for the duration of the Brand Experiential

Total guests = 20