



Tel: 01273 647210

i-to-i

Live with Lion Cubs in South Africa



Overview

Want to spend your days looking after lion cubs?

At this wildlife reserve and lion breeding centre in South Africa you will be spending your days looking after these incredible lion cubs as well as helping out on a whole range of duties throughout the reserve. Set in a stunning location the reserve is home to a number of lion cubs - as well as older lions. After spending time here we're certain you won't want to go home. What we can guarantee is that you'll fall in love with these incredible animals!

Trip Highlights:

- Experience the best that Tanzania has to offer in just 4 weeks
- Safari in N'gorongoro Crater and Lake Manyara
- Stay in a traditional Masai village
- Trek in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro (or even climb the whole thing!)
- Give something back whilst volunteering at our community projects in Moshi
- Traditional African drumming and dance lesson
- Visit the Coral Islands Marine Park off the coast of Dar Es Salaam
- Spice Tour and a tour of Stone Town on Zanzibar
- Relax on the idyllic northern beaches of Zanzibar



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Fast facts

Project duration: 2 weeks

Location of project: Near Johannesburg, South Africa

Arrival airport: Johannesburg (JNB) arrive by 4.15pm at the latest

Working hours: Approximately 7am to 4pm daily with occasional work until 7pm - time off arranged in country

Activities: Playing, bathing, feeding and caring for the cubs, preparing food for the bigger cubs, raking and cleaning enclosures, mending and painting fences

Getting to the project: Working with the lions and general maintenance around the reserve

Requirements: Minimum age 18

What's included

Accommodation: Shared room in chalet on-site at the project

Food: All meals are included and prepared for you

Airport pickup: Included on arrival date - flights should be booked to depart after 5pm

Training: In-country orientation and briefing on arrival at the project

Support: Pre-departure helpdesk, Local in-country team and 24hr emergency support

What's not included

Flights, Insurance, Visas, Return airport transfer

Accommodation

You will be staying in 'rondavel' style huts on site at the centre which are on a shared two or three person basis. The rondavels are well equipped and have modern amenities such as hot running water, showers and Western style toilets. There are two swimming pools on site along with a lounge with television and a beautiful garden for you to relax in during the afternoons.

Whilst staying on the reserve in the North West Province, all meals are included and prepared for you. The bathroom facilities include hot water, shower and western style toilets. Valuables can be locked up in your room or in the office safe. There is a local town around 30 minutes away so if you need to stay in touch with family or friends from home, then telephone and internet facilities are nearby. There is WIFI available after 16H30 from the office, at request.



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We'd recommend you bring a strong pair of gloves (such as gardening gloves, or rubber gloves) for handling chickens etc when working with the ranger team.

Itinerary

Day 1 (Monday) – Arrive into Johannesburg Airport (airport code JNB)

Today you will be met at the airport and taken straight to our backpacker's hostel in Pretoria. You'll need to arrive in before 4.15pm so that you're all ready for the orientation which kicks off at 5pm. The journey from the airport to Pretoria should take around 45 minutes. The orientation is a crucial part of settling in to life in South Africa and will take you through what it's going to be like at your project, do's and don'ts, how to stay safe and it's your prime opportunity to ask any burning questions that you haven't yet had answered. After the orientation you'll have dinner prepared for you and have some time to relax and prepare before your first day at the project tomorrow.

If you aren't able to arrange a flight to get you into Johannesburg before 4.15pm then we'd recommend you fly in a day early. We can arrange an early airport pick-up for you including one night's accommodation, please give us a call for more information.

Day 2 (Tuesday) – Introductions at your project

The following morning you will be taken from Pretoria to the North West Province where you will be based. The project is 1-2 hours drive away, around 70km north of Johannesburg. The project and accommodation are on the same site so you won't be late for work! Take time to get to know everyone and settle in, because this is your home for the rest of your stay.

Your first full day will be all about settling in at the reserve and getting to know how things operate, but it's fairly laid back overall. The staff at the reserve are always happy to answer any questions that you might have.

You will have an amazing experience here including hands on feeding and caring for the lion cubs. However, don't forget that the animal enclosures will also need to be kept in good order, so expect to get dirty! General maintenance of the enclosures and facilities will also be one of your roles around the park.

Days 3 to 7 (Wednesday to Sunday) – Keep up the good work

Now you're a fully fledged member of the team, you can aim to be on duty from around 7am to

4pm daily. You'll be up with the birds in the morning but the afternoons are normally yours to relax by the pool on the reserve. You will sometimes be asked to work until 7pm as the cubs need constant attention...it's hard work, but someone has to do it.



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This project is quite laid back and structured with you in mind. Part of this experience is what you put in, but it's also about what you want to get out of it.

Time off is arranged in country and is flexible. You will be able to take 1/2 days off on the weekends after the cubs have been fed. These days are your valuable time off to rest and explore. You probably won't want to move away from the swimming pool at your accommodation but if you can tear yourself away, take time to explore the surrounding area. Around the North West Province there is a cheetah centre, crocodile farm, cultural village and plenty of curio shops to browse, so you won't be bored!

Following weeks

- Caring for the small cubs: mainly bathing and feeding the cubs, as well as extensive interacting with guests and tourists on 'cub team' day.
- Larger cubs: meat allocation, weighing and cubing meat and keeping record of all milk/meat consumed daily.
- Ranger team: Collecting vegetables, chickens, carcasses from local farmers and feeding the large and mature lions.
- Mending and painting fences.
- Raking and cleaning lion enclosures.
- Clearing and maintenance of farm needs Preparing food for the animals (handling meat).

Your remaining weeks will be filled with caring for the cubs, cutting up meat for the bigger cats and any other activities needed by the project. Days off will be arranged according to the needs of the project but you can just ask if you want to take specific time off.

Your Last Day (Monday)

At the end of your project a member of the team will help you arrange your onwards transfers to Johannesburg airport for a local fee so please arrange this with them in country. Please ensure that you allow sufficient time for checking in when booking your onward flight, usually we advise to make sure that your flight departs after 5pm.

Project

What does the project do?

The main source of income for this project is through eco-tourism which in turn helps the ongoing research to be carried out. The project works directly with the University of Pretoria and together they are at the forefront of white lion research; they are the only facility



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worldwide that practices principles of ethical breeding as part of their white lion breeding programme. They have also participated in research on Lion AIDS and TB in lions and have hosted several film crews for documentaries from around the world. More recently the project has also launched a cheetah breeding programme with particular emphasis on ethical breeding. An exciting fertility research project on big cats is presently being undertaken at the project, with several prominent researchers and professors from South Africa and Europe involved. This project is working to strengthen the gene pool, as inbreeding within the lion population is becoming a big problem, making lions susceptible to disease and viruses.

The project is endorsed by the Veterinary Faculty at the University of Pretoria at Onderstepoort, the Zodiac Animal Clinic and Old Chapel Veterinary Clinic in Pretoria. There are also site inspections carried out by the Department of Nature Conservation at least twice a year to ensure that all animals are well looked after.

When the big cats grow up many of them will remain as part of the ongoing research projects; some are kept for breeding and others are released into enclosures. Some animals will be rehomed at other reserves in Africa. These reserves are checked out first to ensure they are reputable and have no links to the hunting industry. Each animal is then tagged using the ecoscan radio frequency identification tag system so they can be tracked to ensure no animal ends up being used for unethical purposes.

Why does the project need volunteers?

The lions, cubs and other animals all need a huge amount of care and attention and this is where you come in! During your time at the reserve you will be working hand in hand with the rangers to ensure that all the wildlife in the reserve are fed and looked after and that the reserve itself is well maintained. Everyone at the reserve is committed not only to the welfare and research of these wonderful animals but also to ensuring that you have the opportunity to learn more about the lions, the challenges facing them and how the reserve operates.

Activities and schedule

Your working hours are flexible but will typically be from 7am to 4pm with occasional work until 7pm looking after the cubs. Time off can be arranged, but you will generally get 1.5 days off per week.

You will be helping to raise the cubs - along with making sure that all the other wildlife and facilities at the reserve are well looked after and maintained (including cutting up meat for the larger cats). Don't forget that you may also be involved in cleaning out the enclosures and will probably get dirty in the process!

Please note that the weather can become quite cold during the months of May to September, please remember to bring some warm clothes with you.



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Country Information

Located at the southern tip of Africa, South Africa is a beautiful country - proving to be a great place for travellers to explore. With an abundance of wildlife, fantastic scenery, amazing cities (think Cape Town and Johannesburg) and beaches that are world renowned as the best spots for surfers, if you're looking for an adventure this year head to the amazing South Africa!

Best time to go...

Naturally South Africa's seasons are the reverse of the northern hemisphere. Summer is from November to March and cooler temperatures hit from June to August (bearing in mind it's still 10-15c in winter!). Temperature wise, spring (September to October) and autumn (April to May) provide a happy medium.

Getting around...

Flying is the most convenient way to travel between the main destinations, whilst land transportation can efficiently pick up the rest of the mileage for exploration in and around. The country boasts a comprehensive bus network that covers the main cities, and car rental is a good option too! If you're looking for an adventure, we'd definitely recommend driving along the Garden Route!

Flights and Insurance

Insurance

It's important that you get adequate travel insurance for your i to i Volunteering experience and as many of you will be working this often means standard policies won't work. The good news is that no matter where you're coming from we have already found a policy to suit you.

The best time to get your insurance is when you book your project as this means you can get a fully tailored policy exclusive to i to i Volunteering, just ask your consultant for further details at the time of booking.

Flights

As with insurance we advise you get these booked as early as possible to avoid high prices and to make sure you arrive on the right day. The i to i Volunteering team is right up to date with the best deals no matter where you're flying from; their insider knowledge could save you some time and money.

