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Tour Notes

Saint Helena – Undiscovered South Atlantic

Tour Duration – 8 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●● | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●●○ | Wildlife ●●●○○

Tour Pace

Busy

Tour Highlights

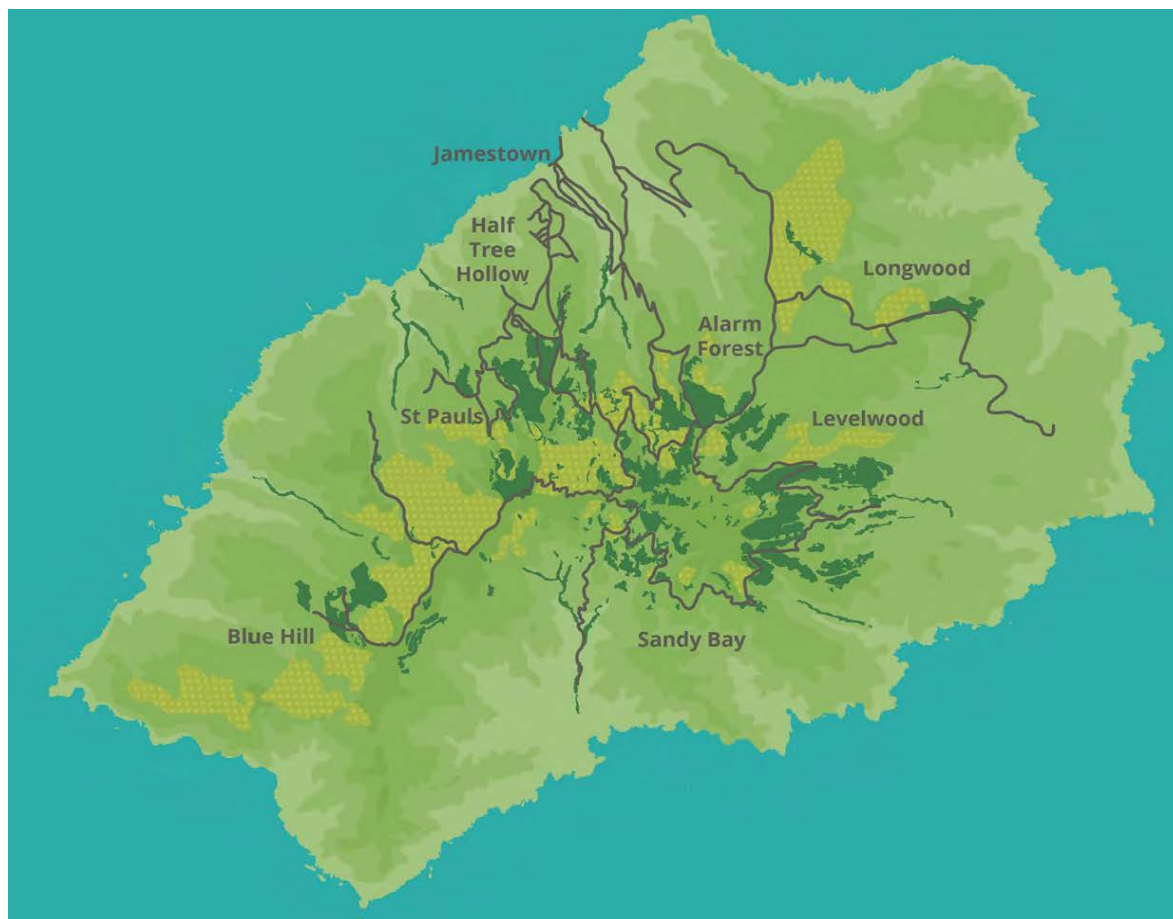
- ✓ Uncover a truly off the beaten track destination, one that few people can boast that they have visited
- ✓ Explore Jamestown and climb the almost vertical 699 steps up Jacob's Ladder for superb views of the lower town and sea beyond
- ✓ Trace the paths of Saint Helena's famous figures like Darwin and Napoleon
- ✓ Explore rugged terrain and diverse wildlife, including rare bird species
- ✓ Take a boat cruise off the island. Home to huge schools of dolphins, as well as turtles, and Devil Rays, the deep blue waters are teeming with life
- ✓ Enjoy a private tour of the Governor's residence, Plantation House and meet the famed Jonathan, a 190-year-old giant tortoise
- ✓ Hike to Blue Point which offers coastal views over Sandy Bay beach and of rolling countryside
- ✓ Visit one of the island's coffee plantations to view how one of the world's rarest coffees is grown and processed





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Saint Helena Map



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Comfortable 4 star hotel
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum 12
Start Point: Johannesburg, South Africa
End Point: Johannesburg, South Africa
Transport: International flight from Johannesburg to Saint Helena and return, minibus, or similar vehicle for transfers, guided excursions, and tours
Country Visited: South Africa (Johannesburg only) - departure and arrival point, and accommodation and other services not included, Saint Helena Island



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Saint Helena – Undiscovered South Atlantic

For those travellers who enjoy getting off the beaten track, the British overseas territory of Saint Helena – one of the remotest places on earth and now reached via a weekly flight from South Africa, is a must visit destination.

The tropical island of Saint Helena, secluded in the Atlantic Ocean, offers a pristine paradise steeped in history. Despite its remote location, recent accessibility has opened it to tourism. Visitors can trace the paths of famous figures like Darwin and Napoleon, explore its rugged terrain and diverse wildlife, including rare bird species and the famed Jonathan, a 190-year-old giant tortoise. Saint Helena's rich history, from Boer prisoners to Napoleon's exile, adds depth to its allure. During our week on the island, we will uncover Saint Helena's extraordinary sights and natural wonders, and we will experience the genuine hospitality of the local people as we embark on a journey filled with intrigue and wonder.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not routinely send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf.

Itinerary

Day 1: Johannesburg to Saint Helena

Check-in at Johannesburg's O.R. Tambo International Airport for our Airlink flight to Saint Helena, which enroute includes a refuelling stop in Walvis Bay, Namibia. Including the stop the flight will take about 6.5hrs and we will land at Saint Helena's airport which opened in 2017 at around 1.30pm local time. We will be met on arrival and transferred the 10 miles from the airport located on the eastern side of the island to our hotel in Jamestown on the northern and leeward side of the island. Check-in at our centrally located hotel and our home for the next 7 nights. This afternoon, if time allows, we will meet our local guide and enjoy a walk through the island's capital, Jamestown and discover the stories that this historically rich Georgian styled town has to offer. Visit the Castle with its tropical gardens, St James Church (the oldest Anglican Church in the Southern Hemisphere), the famous Jacob's ladder which ascends 699 steps above the town and the Court House. Overnight Mantis St Helena. (B)

Saint Helena

Saint Helena Island, a British Overseas Territory in the South Atlantic Ocean, holds a storied history that stretches back centuries. Discovered in 1502 by Portuguese navigator João da Nova, it later became a vital outpost for ships traveling between Europe and the East Indies. Renowned for being the remote exile site of Napoleon Bonaparte from 1815 until his death in 1821, the island played a crucial role in shaping world history. Its rugged terrain and isolated location posed challenges for settlers, yet its fertile valleys supported agriculture and sustenance for inhabitants. Over time, Saint Helena developed a unique culture blending European, African, and Asian influences. Despite its small size and isolation, it became strategically important during the British Empire's expansion, serving as a key naval base and provisioning station. Today, Saint Helena remains an intriguing destination, offering visitors a glimpse into its rich history, vibrant culture, and stunning natural landscapes beyond its renowned beaches.



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The Mantis Hotel, Jamestown

Mantis St Helena is a 30-bedroom boutique hotel set in the original East India Company's officers' barracks built in 1774. The hotel boasts a large restaurant, cocktail bar, guest lounge and two spacious outdoor terraces. Offering newly built contemporary rooms, the Mantis has set a new accommodation standard on the island. Situated in the capital Jamestown, a few minutes' walk from the sea front, museum, archives, shops, bars, restaurants, and transport links, the Mantis is the perfect choice for our week's stay on the island.

Please note that the hotel does not have any lifts (elevators). However, a small number of rooms can be accessed without the need to use stairs. Please contact us at the time of booking if you have any accessibility needs so these can be discussed in advance with the hotel.

It should be noted that contrary to some reports that you may read online the hotel does accept Visa and Mastercard debit and credit cards. However, American Express is not accepted.

Day 2: Saint Helena – Boat Cruise

After breakfast we will take a boat cruise off the island, where we expect to see large schools of Bottlenose and Rough-Toothed dolphins as well as turtles and Devil Rays. From the boat we will have a scenic view of the Island's coastline and we can see some of the old fortifications and outposts that are still standing. Return to port for lunch at a local seafront coffee shop before heading back to our hotel. Enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure. Overnight Mantis St Helena. (BL)

Day 3: Saint Helena – Island Tour

After breakfast we will be collected for a full day tour including a packed lunch. Discover the island by 4x4 vehicle or depending on group size, by minibus. Stop at Deadwood Plain which was the campsite of Boer prisoners of war during the Anglo Boer War of 1900-1902, then to Flagg Staff which gives us wonderful panoramic views across the island. Later we visit Levelwood, home to the Bell Stone – a rock which when struck rings like a bell. We wind our way to the southwest point of the island for incredible views over the Atlantic Ocean, which stretches unbroken for 2,700 kilometers in every direction. Learn about and see the island's natural and historical attractions along the way. Overnight Mantis St Helena. (BL)

Day 4: Saint Helena – Plantation House

This morning a private tour of the Governor's residence, Plantation House, awaits. Built in 1792, it has been the home to the island's governors. Perhaps an even more famous inhabitant though is Jonathan, a giant tortoise who approaching 200 years old, lives in the grounds and is said to be the world's oldest living land animal. After a packed lunch we visit St Paul's Cathedral, High Knoll Fort, and the Boer War cemetery before returning to the hotel. Overnight Mantis St Helena. (BL)

Day 5: Saint Helena – Free Day

Today is at leisure to explore at your own pace. Highly recommended is the very well curated Museum of Saint Helena which not only traces the varied history of the island, but also has artefacts from the number of wrecks that dot the coastline over the last 500 years. You may also like to book another optional boat cruise, or swim in the Atlantic – or in the large public swimming pool that sits near the harbour and is a great place to meet local islanders. Overnight Mantis St Helena. (B)

Day 6: Saint Helena – Hike to Blue Point

After breakfast we will set off for a hike to Blue Point which offers coastal views over Sandy Bay beach and Lots Wife ponds area as well as the rolling countryside of Blue Hill. Enjoy a packed lunch whilst out hiking. In the afternoon visit one of the island's coffee plantations to view how one of the world's rarest coffees is grown and processed, before returning to the hotel. Overnight Mantis St Helena. (BL)



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Notes

The hike to Blue Point will normally take around two hours from the start point and return. There are some relatively minor up and down sections involved, but compared to other hikes on the island it is less strenuous and can comfortably be completed by most travellers of moderate fitness. If you have any concerns these can be discussed locally.

Day 7: Saint Helena – Longwood House

This morning, we will visit Longwood House, which is one of the best Napoleonic museums in the world. Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled to Saint Helena in 1815 and died on the island 6 years later. After a packed lunch we will visit the Millennium Forest where we can contribute to restoring the island's endemic forest by planting an endemic tree. Return to our hotel for our final night on Saint Helena. Overnight Mantis St Helena. (BL)

Day 8: Saint Helena to Johannesburg

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before we are transferred back to the island's airport for our return Airlink flight to Johannesburg. Unlike our flight over, the return journey does not require a refuelling stop, so is non-stop and takes just under 5 hours. Unless you have organised flights or additional services with Undiscovered Destinations, the tour arrangements end upon arrival in Johannesburg. (B)

Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Economy class flights from Johannesburg to Saint Helena and return, including a checked-in luggage allowance of 20k.

Arrival and departure airport transfers

7 nights' accommodation at the Mantis Hotel, Jamestown

Meals as shown (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch)

Guided tours and excursions shown in the itinerary with an English-speaking guide

Except where indicated, entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

Excluded:

International flights to/from South Africa

Travel Insurance

Visas – when applicable

Drinks

Tips (Discretionary)

Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to any of the places that we visit on this itinerary.





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It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore, please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at various times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis, please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

At Undiscovered Destinations we know our travellers prefer to stay in comfortable, mid to higher range accommodation, preferably with local character. Where possible this tour is based on using smaller centrally located hotels but given the need for us to block book a number of rooms this is not always possible. Some of the hotels will be resort style, which is common for some of the places visited on this tour.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drinks

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B) and dinner (D). Please note that lunches when provided maybe a picnic. Unless stated drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements, you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs, and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten. We would suggest you budget an average, minimum per day, of £30.00 per person to include meals and drinks not included within the itinerary.

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is common practise in the places we visit. If your local guide has been helpful, then you could think about tipping. For a one day tour or excursion we would suggest a minimum of \$10 or the equivalent in local currency for your guide but of course, do tip more or less as you wish. It is at your discretion.



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Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: Although ATMs are not available on Saint Helena, the local bank can advance cash against credit or debit cards.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit and debit cards are accepted at the hotel used on this tour, the Mantis Hotel Mantis, but are unlikely to be accepted at other establishments.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: British Pounds Sterling is accepted in shops and restaurants, but change will often be given in Saint Helena Pounds.

Where to Exchange: Your local guide will advise, but often money can be exchanged in the airport upon arrival, otherwise at the island's bank.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights (except for this tour from Johannesburg to Saint Helena and return). Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining Your Tour Abroad

The joining point for this tour will be Johannesburg's O.R. Tambo International Airport, where you will check-in for the flight to Saint Helena.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals do not require a visa for a short term tourism visit to South Africa.

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals require an entry permit to visit Saint Helena. Please follow this link for further details and to make an application - <https://evisa.sainthelena.gov.sh/>.

As it is the travellers' responsibility to ensure that they meet all entry requirements it is essential that you check the rules and any other conditions at the time of booking and again when making your balance payment. In addition, we would strongly advise that you make a final check around two weeks before your arrival. This is important as requirements can change at short notice. Undiscovered Destinations, when possible, will provide guidance about entry rules, but in the first instance please contact the relevant authorities, including the applicable embassy or consulate for assistance. Contact details can be found by visiting the following websites.



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British Nationals - www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

US Nationals - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Australian Nationals - www.smartraveller.gov.au/

Other nationals should check the latest requirements with the authorities in their home country, or with the destinations nearest embassy or consulate

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively, UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most of our destinations we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice, and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, you may be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. The use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended, and we recommend that you take professional advice about malaria prophylactics.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you are travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from National Travel Health Network & Centre (NaTHNaC) on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you will need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you are travelling to.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

In general, a good time to travel is from November to March when any rainfall will be fairly minimal, and temperatures will be warm.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy.



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Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared and to be adequately immunized with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have.

Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended. Lighter shoes or sandals are fine for travelling between destinations.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

Excursion Times and Duration

Please note that the approximate departure times and tour durations when shown in the itinerary are given in good faith but should only be used as a guide. The information provided may vary depending on the interests of the group, road traffic conditions, comfort breaks and photo opportunities.

Electric Supply and Plugs

Three-pronged UK style plugs are used on a standard 110V network. If required, we recommend that you bring a multi-adaptor.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour, but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated on 4 April 2024.

