

# volunteer

## southern africa

### **LIVING WITH CHEETAHS – PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE**

The following information is provided to give volunteers insight into our **Living with Cheetahs** program. Please read this guide thoroughly prior to your arrival and contact us if you have any questions.

This incredibly unique project is located in Bela Bela in the Limpopo province of South Africa. **Living with Cheetahs** is an extraordinary program that breeds rare and endangered species (including cheetah and African wild dog). We also want to promote public awareness with a focus on the younger generation of the pressing need for wildlife conservation. Our program plays a role in conservation biology by helping maintain adequate gene pools of rare and endangered species. We want to continue supporting future breeding projects at the centre and re-establish endangered wildlife species back into areas where they once occurred naturally.

Volunteers will learn the processes involved to care for endangered species and become responsible for the continued development of these animals. Our reserve is home to over 40 cheetahs of all ages, and are also home to other wild African animals including eland, hartebeest, blesbok, giraffe, hippo, warthog, ostrich, zebra, impala and many more.

Volunteers will live in a volunteer house with 3 bedrooms with 2-4 beds in each room, 1 bathroom, a fully equipped kitchen, a lounge area, and a lovely boma and braai area where volunteers can spend time getting to know one another. A housekeeper will be cleaning the volunteer house to maintain a comfortable environment for the volunteers and Wifi will be available free of charge at the accommodation.

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# 1. SAFETY GUIDELINES

Our main focus is our animals. We strive to insure that they have great lives while living on our property. Volunteers will gain exposure to animals through maintenance, building, caring for, feeding, and interacting with the animals. Though some of our animals are used for human interaction, it is imperative to remember that they are still wild animals. Volunteer safety and wellbeing is of utmost importance to us and our staff, which is why we ask you to follow certain rules and regulations at all times.

By adhering to these guidelines, you ensure both your safety, and the safety of other team members and animals.

## **Camps:**

- Never enter ANY camps or enclosures without a team leader or person of authority.
- Gates to all camps are locked at all times, these locks will be checked daily by staff to ensure safety.
- Do not stick your hands or any personal items through the fence of the animal enclosures.
- When going into a camp, be sure to wear closed-toed shoes and remove objects that may dangle e.g. camera cords, bracelets, necklaces, sunglasses, etc.
- Stay within the boundaries of the property.

## **Animals:**

- Be aware that you are working with wild animals. Some animals do not like to be touched or handled in any way. Not all of the animals on the farm are tame, so please do not approach any animals unless your volunteer leader gives you approval.
- If you feel uncomfortable in any situation, please let your leader know immediately so they can remove you from the situation.
- Remember that a “tame” wild animal can be more dangerous than a “wild” wild animal, as the “tame” wild animal has lost its fear for humans.
- Please respect all animals on the farm, big and small.
- Do not walk around the farm on your own, especially at night. We are home to hippos, which are extremely dangerous animals that roam the premises at night.

## **Drugs, Smoking and Alcohol:**

We have a zero tolerance policy for any and all drugs. If this rule is broken, the volunteer(s) will be removed from the program, as well as the property. There will be no refund for those who are asked to leave due to ignoring or breaking this rule.

- Smoking is not permitted anywhere under a roof.
- Smoking is only allowed in designated areas.
  - If/when you do smoke, please dispose of cigarette butts in garbage bins and do not under any circumstances litter cigarette butts. Upkeep of our land is of great importance to us and the animals.
- A responsible level of drinking during free time is allowed for volunteers over the age of 18 (in South Africa, the legal age for alcohol consumption is 18).
- If you have been drinking alcohol, even if you had only one drink, you will be prohibited from going near any animals until the alcohol is fully out of your system. Please remember that these are wild animals and you must be coherent at all times.

**General Safety Tips:**

- Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner at all times.
- Traveling alone in the dark is not recommended, even on the property.
- Always be aware of your surroundings. You are living amongst wild animals.
- Do not leave your belongings unattended.
- If leaving the game reserve, do not wear your camera around your neck. Keep money and valuables in a safe, secure place.
  - Do not carry a large amount of cash on you.
- Keep your volunteer housing locked at all times to ensure that your valuables, passport, and money are safe at all times.
  - We do not take responsibility for stolen or lost belongings.
- South Africa has a very high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. We do not recommend promiscuity and suggest being careful when it comes to situations where exposure to HIV/AIDS may occur.

**Important South African Laws:**

- The legal driving age in South Africa is 18 - you must have a valid driver's license in order to operate a vehicle while here.
- It is illegal to not wear seat belts - this concerns both the driver and all passengers.
- The legal age to purchase alcohol and cigarettes in South Africa is 18.
- It is illegal to drink alcohol in a public space.
- It is illegal to buy, sell, carry, or use drugs, including marijuana.
- The legal age of sexual consent is 18. Engaging in sexual activity with anyone younger than 18 is a criminal offense.

## 2. PROJECTS

We strive to make the most of each day, both for ourselves and for the animals on the farm. We ask that volunteers do their best in assisting staff with the various projects that will improve the living conditions of all of our animals, as well as the areas utilized by guests and staff on the property.

Projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Construction of enclosures, "furniture," and toys for animals
- Maintaining of roads (filling, scraping, leveling)
- Removal of intruder plants and alien species of plants
- Cutting grass and overall maintenance in the animal enclosures
- Trimming or planting of trees
- Preparing the food for the animals
- Feeding the cheetahs (happens daily)
- Caring for and rehabilitating sick and injured animals

### 3. SCHEDULE

**Monday:** Volunteer arrive and get settled in

**Tuesday through Saturday:**

A typical day will consist of eight hours of work, which will vary from cheetah stimulation and enrichment activities, cleaning animal enclosures, assisting in the preparation of food and feeding the cheetahs, taking care of the sick and young animals, gardening, fence-checking, and general reserve maintenance including cleaning.

**Sunday:** Volunteers have Sundays off to relax or go on prearranged excursions!

This program is designed to be both educational and fun. You will certainly have the “once-in-a-lifetime” experience that you have been awaiting.

### 4. WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

Our mission at **Living with Cheetahs** is to breed rare and endangered species and to support scientific investigations into all aspects of these species. We are looking for volunteers who are passionate about animals and conservation to assist us with our job. It is our passion to work with these beautiful animals, which can entail getting our hands dirty! For many volunteers, this experience is unlike anything they have done before, so we ask that you come with an open mind and a willingness to learn and contribute!

### 5. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Protect yourself against the sun – use sunscreen and a hat.
- Washer and dryer units are available to do laundry.
- Volunteer accommodation will be cleaned by housekeeping.
- All program information is confidential.
- Should you wish to have a visitor, please arrange these visits with management.
- The reserve is private property and the speed limit is 20km/h at all times.
- Please treat all fellow volunteers, management and personnel with respect.

### 6. WHAT TO BRING

- Casual field clothes appropriate for weather at the time of volunteering
- Rain boots and a rain coat are recommended for summer months (September to March)
- Sweatshirts or warmer jackets are recommended for winter months ranging from June to August
- Swimsuit and towel
- Toiletries (travel sized shampoo, conditioner, soap, sun screen, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc. as you can buy large ones at the store upon arrival)
- Insect repellent, especially for mosquitos
- Medical aid or insurance card
- First aid kit and personal medication

- Medications
- Headache tablets
- Allergy medicine
- Band-Aids/plasters
- Antiseptic ointment
- Proof of tetanus inoculations
- Laptop, cell phone, and other electronics if desired
- Money (cash or debit/credit card) for souvenirs and additional food, drinks, or outings

## **7. MENU**

Volunteers will be given three meals on a daily basis. Meals vary from day to day, but include the following:

### **Breakfast**

- Cereals with whole or skim milk
- Toast
- Fruits
- Porridge or oats
- Breakfast sandwiches

### **Lunch and Dinner**

- Fresh salad
- Meats – chicken, steak, lamb
- Hot dogs
- Pap
- Sandwiches
- Pizzas
- Bread rolls
- Lasagna
- Chicken or steak fajita wraps
- Burger bar

*\*Please let us know about any dietary restrictions prior to your arrival.*

## **8. CANCELLATION POLICY**

When possible, the client will be moved to another suitable date.

Cancellations made 61 or more days prior to the start date of the booking will be subjected to an administrative fee to cover the bank charges involved with refunding the client, as well as program reservation.

Cancellations made 60 days or less prior to the start date of the booking will be subjected to a 50% fee of the total booking rate (the package rate). The remaining 50% of the booking rate, with exception of an administrative fee, will be transferred back into the bank account it came out of.

Cancellations made 30 days or less prior to the start date of the booking will be subjected to a 100% fee of the total booking rate (the package rate). In other words, you will not be refunded.

**9. INDEMNITY**

This is to acknowledge that I am well acquainted, fully aware of, and appreciate the real dangers and risks that are associated with game reserves and/or game lodges arising from the presence of wild and dangerous animals, reptiles, birds and insects and the real risk of suffering bodily harm, injury, death and/or loss to property which may arise as a result of an encounter with and/or the presence of wild animals, and/or reptiles and/or birds whilst on the premises of the reserve/lodge.

I hereby waive all claims of whatsoever cause of nature howsoever arising against the owners of the reserve/lodge, their associates, employees and/or any person connected whether directly or indirectly with the running of the reserve / lodge and fellow guests/invitees which I may have arising out of harm, injury, death or loss suffered whilst on the premises or property of the reserve/lodge and whether arising from an act of commission or omission on the part of those hereby indemnified or anyone of them.

I indemnify and hold harmless and free, the owners of the reserve/lodge, their associates or employees and/or any person connected whether directly or indirectly with the running of the reserve/lodge and fellow guests/invitees from any and all claims of whatsoever cause or nature which may arise on behalf of my spouse and I, common law wife/husband, my children, whether minor or adult or relative and/or persons accompanying me to the reserve/lodge whether as my invitee otherwise or at all who suffer injury or loss whilst on the premises or property of the reserve/lodge and whether arising from an act of commission or omission on the part of those hereby indemnified or anyone of them.

In the event of injury, the reserve/lodge may, at its discretion and without prejudice and without admission of liability, arrange and pay for emergency medical treatment for and behalf of any guest.

**SIGNATURE:** .....

**DATE:** .....