



Off the Mat Into The World

Global Seva Challenge 2010 South Africa Bare Witness Tour

February 5-19, 2011

Itinerary

Day 1 – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5: Depart for South Africa

Today your South African volunteering adventure begins as you depart your hometown and fly to Cape Town.

DAY 2 – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6: Arrive in South Africa

Welcome to Cape Town, arguably one of the most beautiful cities in the world. You'll be met at the airport by an OTM Representative and transferred to your accommodation. Most flights from the US arrive in Cape Town in the evening so a light dinner will be provided.

DAY 3 – MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7: Orientation: historical and current issues

Begin the day with a yoga session, followed by breakfast. You will then be taken on a walking tour of District Six, and hear the stories of how communities were split up and relocated during the forced removals of the Apartheid era. Understanding their history will help you to appreciate the conditions these communities now face. In the afternoon you will tour the townships as an introduction to where you'll be volunteering and attend an orientation workshop to introduce you to the current social issues facing local communities. The carers from Linawo children's homes will share their stories of life in the home, community and South Africa. You'll also have the opportunity to prepare for any maintenance projects you will be participating in during your stay.

DAY 4 – TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8: Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)

After yoga in the morning you will visit the TAC, who since 1988, have become the world's most effective advocates for increased access to treatment, care and support services for people living with HIV, and have developed campaigns to reduce new HIV infections. They are the leading civil society force behind comprehensive health care services for people living with HIV and AIDS in South Africa and hold government accountable for health care service delivery, as well as campaign against official AIDS denialism and challenge the world's leading pharmaceutical companies to make treatment more affordable. In the afternoon you will also spend some time volunteering at Linawo Children's Home or at TAC.

DAYS 5 & 6 - WEDNESDAY 9 & THURSDAY 10 FEBRUARY: Volunteering

These 2 days will involve continued volunteer service. Your mornings will entail yoga sessions and volunteer work on various maintenance / cleaning projects that Linawo Children's Home may have at the time. This could include painting, cleaning or planting vegetable gardens, amongst other things. In the afternoons, when the children are back from school, you will assist with homework before running an activity programme. On Wednesday evening you will attend an African drumming workshop, where you will learn to identify your own natural rhythms and experience the harmony and energy of taking part in a drum circle. It's also great for stress relief!



DAYS 7 & 8 - FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11 AND 12: Volunteering and Homestays

After a further day of volunteering on Friday, you will be transferred to homestay accommodation, where you will stay in pairs with a family in their home in the township. This is a fantastic way to experience true South African township culture and enjoy the warm hospitality and community spirit of township life. On Saturday morning you will take the children from one of the homes on a day outing and help them to appreciate the joys of being out and about and having fun. (4 days volunteering at Linawo)

DAY 9 – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13: A truly local day!!

During apartheid times the church played a very important role in township communities, providing support and hope to many people suffering from the ill effects of prejudicial apartheid policies. Missionary schools provided centres of education for township children. As a result, the majority of community members in the townships profess to be Christian and church is an essential part of township culture. To experience this aspect of township life, you will begin the day with a vibrant multi cultural, multi racial church service within the Cape townships and get to meet more local South Africans. After church, you'll have lunch at the well known Mzoli's Restaurant & Butchery within the local community and get to try out foods from a different culture. After lunch, depart for the famous African curio market to browse and shop for unique African items. After checking back into your hotel accommodation you will spend the evening experiencing some of South Africa's best musicians at an outdoor sunset concert at the world renowned Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.



DAY 10 – MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14: Exploration of Cape Town

Spend the day experiencing the beautiful outdoors. After a morning yoga session you'll be exploring the mountains that surround the city and end up on top of Table Mountain. There'll also be time to relax on the white beaches and end the day with a beautiful African sunset from one of the best vantage points in the City.

DAY 11 - TUESDAY, FEBRUARY, 15: A visit to their past

After a morning yoga session and a good breakfast, you will take the Mamas from your homestays and travel to Robben Island and the notorious prison – home to former President Nelson Mandela for 17 years. The island provides an insight into South Africa's Apartheid history as well as a glimpse into the future especially concerning racial reconciliation. The prison guides are all ex-political prisoners of the island and will share their experiences of prison life during Apartheid as they guide you around. You will have the evening at leisure to explore the V & A Waterfront (South Africa's number 1 attraction) and enjoy a relaxed dinner overlooking the harbour before returning to your accommodation.

DAY 12 – WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16: YouthAIDS

After your morning yoga session and breakfast, you will spend the rest of the day at YouthAIDS South Africa. YouthAIDS is an HIV/AIDS education and prevention initiative that raises much needed funding for HIV/AIDS awareness programmes across the globe. YouthAIDS programmes offer creative interventions that are appropriate to the specific health needs and cultural settings of each country in which it works. In the evening, the group will board a yacht for a sunset cruise in Table Bay.

DAY 13 – THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17: YouthAIDS & Sightseeing

You will start the day with a morning yoga session then spend the rest of the morning finishing your work at YouthAIDS South Africa. In the afternoon you will have the opportunity to explore more of Cape Town. You will be free to choose from various tours or just spend the afternoon relaxing and doing nothing.

Sightseeing options include:

WINE TASTING:

Taste award winning wines on a day trip to the scenic Cape Winelands. We can also arrange wine tasting on horseback – riding through the vineyards is one of the best ways to experience the stunning scenery of the Winelands.

SCENIC PENINSULA TOUR:

Revel in breathtaking scenery on a day trip around the Cape Peninsula, visiting Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, as well as the endangered African Penguin colony at Boulders Beach.

DAY SAFARI:

Spend the morning at a nearby nature reserve and view some of Africa's wild animals including the 'big 5' on a guided game drive on an open safari vehicle.

DAY 14 – FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18: Departure day

After packing your things, there will be some free time to do some last minute sightseeing or shopping. The group will then share a final lunch together before the flight back home. Alternatively we can arrange an overnight or day Safari...

DAY 15 – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19: Arrive Home

Today you will arrive home after what will hopefully have been a truly rewarding and enjoyable trip to South Africa.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION:

FRIDAY – MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18-21: Overnight Safari

Extend your trip to include an overnight safari. After a last morning yoga session, you will be transferred to a nearby nature reserve where you can spend some time in the countryside amongst the beautiful Cape mountain scenery and experience Africa's wild animals up close and personal. You will be taken on guided safaris in an open game viewing vehicle. Guided nature walks and/or game viewing on horseback are also available when you stay overnight. Experience the bright stars of the African night sky and fall asleep to the sounds of roaring lions and other night noises of the African bush. All meals included. On Sunday you will be transferred back to Cape Town where you will catch your flight back to your hometown, arriving home on Monday, February 21.

This trip is in conjunction with Off the Mat Into the World, a non-profit under Engage Network. The hosts are renowned yogis, Seane Corn and Suzanne Sterling. Each participant must raise \$20,000 to go on the trip. Proceeds will help build a children's home in South Africa and also pay for the air and ground arrangements for the participant.

**For more information, go to
www.offthematintotheworld.org**