



Which is the Best Season to Visit South Africa on Safari? May vs September

Description

Which is the Best Season to Visit South Africa on Safari?

Since we host safaris in both April/May and September/October we get asked frequently which is the best choice for a photo and wildlife safari. The short answer is that they are both great times to visit South Africa and see wildlife. Given this, there are differences which I will point out. (please note: This information is specific to the Kruger region of South Africa and does not at all describe conditions in other African countries)

[Learn about our Safaris at AfricaWildSafaris.net](http://AfricaWildSafaris.net)

Weather

Dry season starts in May and ends in October so both the April/May and September/Oct safari sessions are going to be dry and most often with no rain at all.

May begins the South African autumn while September is a warm and dry spring month that grows to summer temperatures by early October. The seasonal "rains" start in mid October

Daytime temperatures are very comfortable for both safaris with guests wearing tshirts and shorts. There may even be a few hot days.

Night time temperatures are very warm and mild in September/Oct. Low and overnight temperatures are more variable in the April/May/June season as cold fronts are possible.

In both seasons: After warm afternoons, the evening temperature stays comfortable for dining outside with the additions of just a light jacket or top.

Mornings before 9am will be the coldest periods. But the sun quickly warms everything. Days are almost always clear.

Average daytime or high temperatures in both seasons are 70 °– 88°F (20 -30°C)

Overnight and morning temperatures in September will only get down to a low of 55°F (15 °C) on the coldest days. April tends to be the same

In May temperatures will get down to the low 50°F (10 °– 13°C) during a cold spell , but more typically are around 55°F (15°C)



May 1st



Oct 2nd



May 4th



Sept 27th



Guests on morning game drive , late September

Animal Behavior

The wildlife in South Africa is present all year around as there is not much migration. The variety of species is large in our area and stays consistent through the year. In Kruger there is some movement of wildlife herds toward water sources and any remaining grazing, the the habitat is such that food is readily available in most every habitat so large migration is not necessary.

The peak of dry season: September/October will find animals congregating around watering holes which makes for some varied and exciting encounters. You can almost park at a water source and have the animals come to you. Wildlife is not active in the mid to late afternoon except at watering holes.

In April/May the food is still plentiful but grass is starting to die off but the wildlife is still active and easy to find since food is everywhere. Animals and especially grazers are in good condition this time of year.

Some animals enter mating season in May such as impala. The large herds and politics of the activity makes for interesting wildlife observation.

Many animals have babies all through the year. Some herd animals do not give birth until the rains start in October/November.



May 7th



Oct 7th



Oct 2nd



May 11th

Changes in Surroundings

April is when the rain and high summer temperatures cease so the grass begins to die down (or gets eaten down). The green color of the landscape begins to yellow and some trees show a bit of color as the leaves fall in late May. As the grass falls flat in May it becomes easier to spot the wildlife.

Insects only thrive in moist weather so as soon as the rain stops in early April, they disappear. A cool night here and there also spells their demise. We have very little problems with bugs, flies, and mosquitos in both the April/May and Sept/Oct sessions.

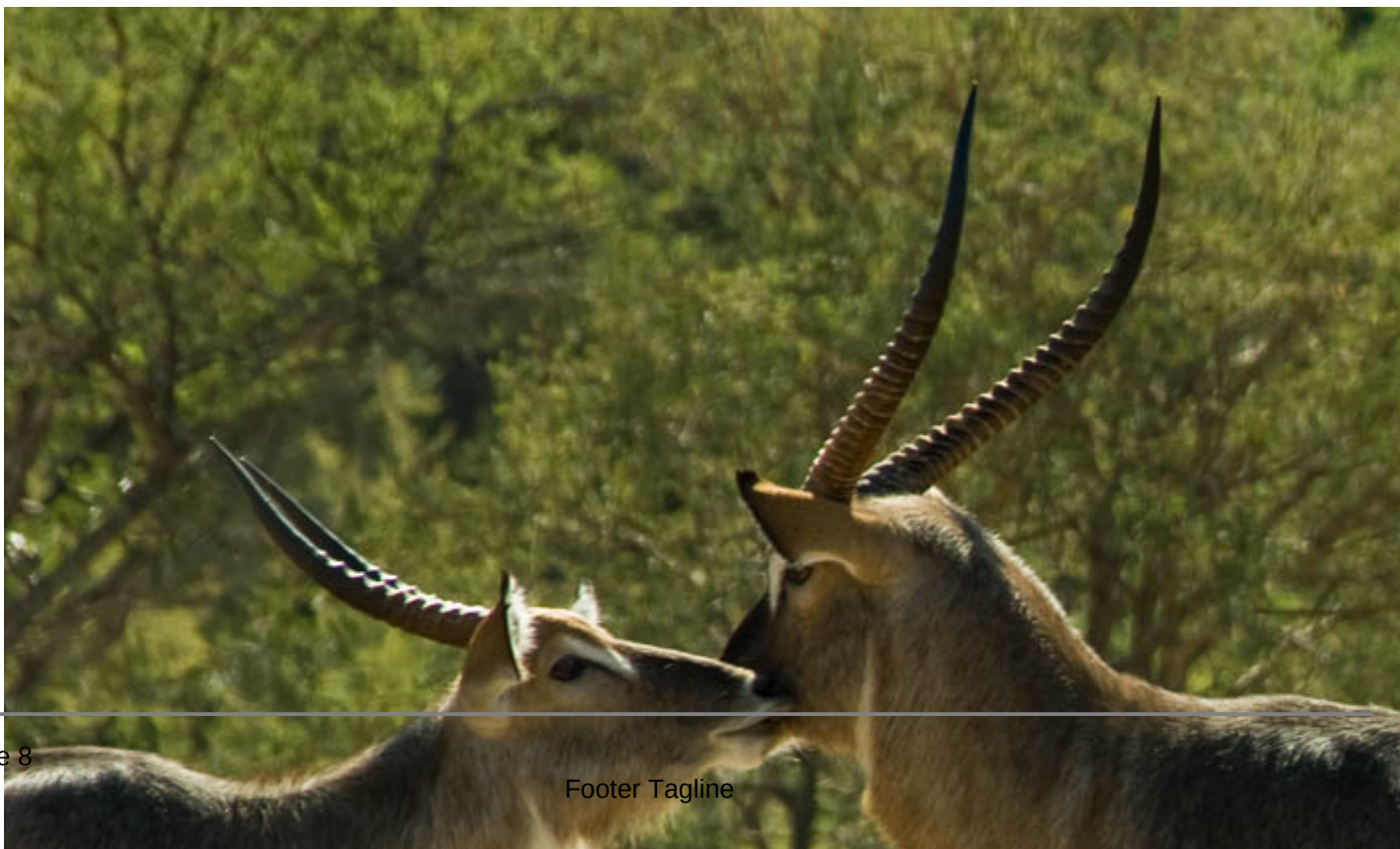
When you arrive in September, the trees are bare or in bud and there is hardly any grass to speak of so it is very easy to see wildlife. Dust is more of a presence in this season. Your photos will have more muted tones in the background since much of the landscape and foliage is straw colored.



may 19th



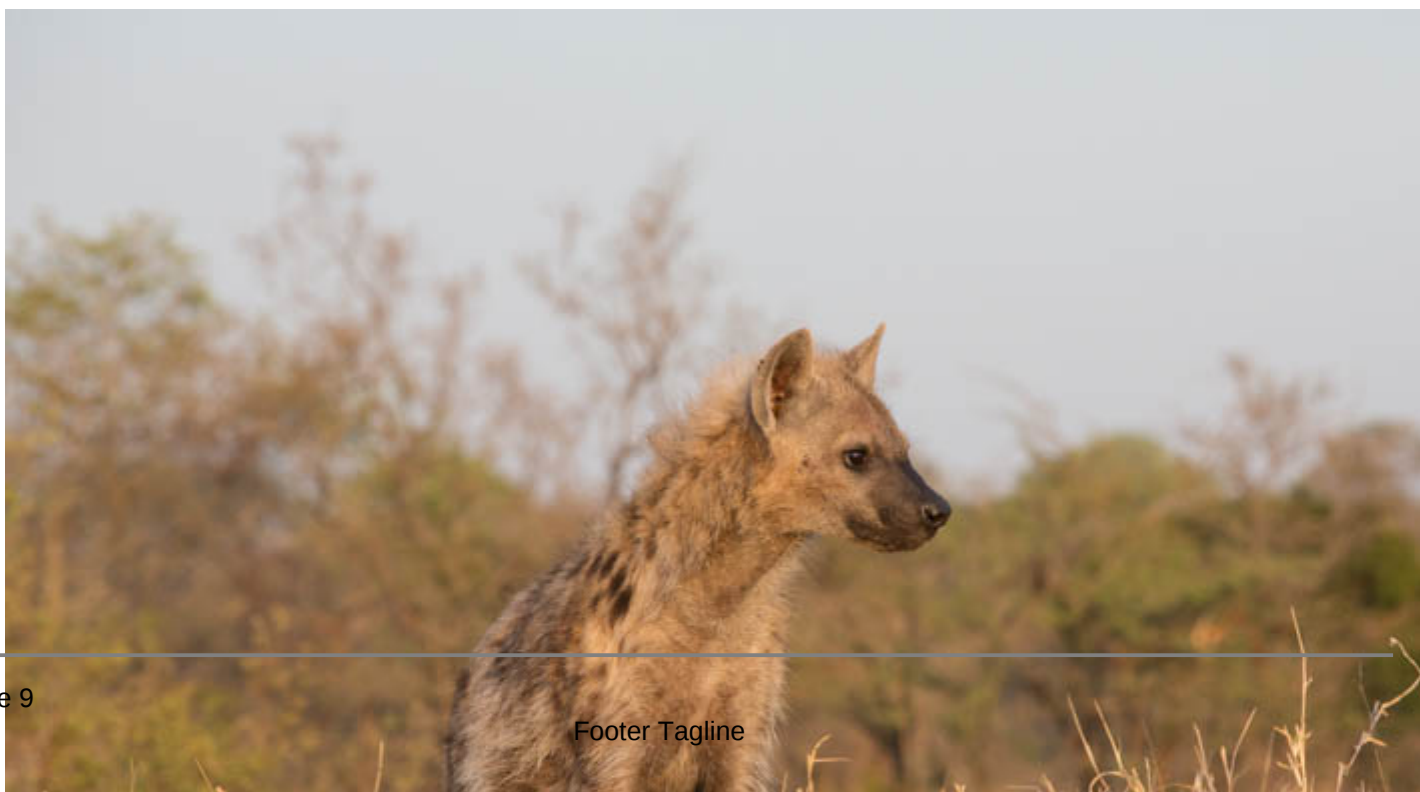
Oct 4th



May 9th



April 20th



Oct 11th

Travel

If you plan to catch the whale season down in Cape Town, they are present from June – November. This is the same season as the visiting great white sharks to the Simons Town Seal Island area. A safari in May with an extension to Cape Town works in both seasons.

Lodges and parks tend to be busier in the August – January season.



May 9th



May 7th

Really, you can not go wrong with either season: it is what works best for your schedule. The wildlife will be great either way. We have repeat guests who have come in both seasons and do not favor one or the other : I enjoy them both equally.

Join us for a safari and found out for yourself.

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1. Preparing for Safari
2. Researching a Safari
3. The Safari Experience

Tags

1. best season for safari
2. best weather in South Africa
3. choosing a safari
4. featured
5. photo safari
6. photographic safari
7. South Africa Photo safari
8. when to travel on safari

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