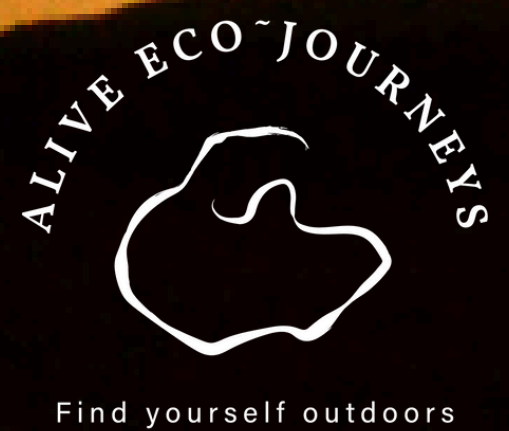
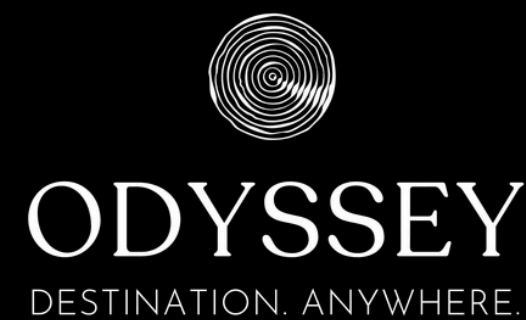


The Karoo and Beyond

Astral Horizons Alive Eco-Journey

3 August - 9 August 2026



*Cast your eyes to the stars, plant your feet on the ground,
lose and find yourself in breathtaking African skies.*

Did You Know? The Evolving Landscape of Well-Being Travel!

In 2026, the travel industry is experiencing a captivating shift toward well-being experiences that connect us with nature. A remarkable 58% of travelers are actively seeking well-being travel options that emphasize rejuvenation and mindfulness, showing a profound desire for experiences that nurture both body and soul. As nature becomes a focal point, activities like birdwatching and foraging are increasingly popular—drawing interest from 43% of all travelers looking to engage in gentle, restorative pursuits. Additionally, some countries are implementing "green prescriptions" or nature prescriptions, encouraging individuals to spend time outdoors for improved mental and physical health.


With a striking 76% of global travelers also now prioritizing eco-conscious choices in their travel plans, options such as eco-certified lodges and community-led tours are gaining traction, empowering you to support conservation efforts while enhancing your own well-being.

As we all seek to restore ourselves amidst the beauty of nature, the intersection of personal health and environmental stewardship is more significant than ever. Discover the magic of this evolving trend in well-being travel—where every journey invites you to embrace a healthier you and a healthier planet!

**“I am glad I was able to participate...
such a beautiful thing to combine
psychology with nature!”**

~ Anisa, Eco-Journeyer





Odyssey and Alive Eco-Journeys are collaborating to present an extraordinary inner and outer journey that immerses you in Africa's stunning landscapes, both on the ground and in the sky, alongside its vibrant culture. This uniquely curated seven-day experience traces South Africa's astronomical frontier, stretching from Cape Town's iconic coastline into the otherworldly expanses of the Karoo. Along the way, you'll explore crisp desert skies and rich cultural legacies while learning nurturing nature connection techniques and robust mental health skills that will enhance your wellbeing.

This is a tour with a twist. It's an invitation to revitalize your spirit and reconnect with your life-force through adventure in natural spaces, play, and meaningful interactions within your fellow Alive Eco-Journey community. With some of the clearest stargazing on the planet, you will traverse timeless terrain – from Victorian rail towns to silent national parks and open-air lodges carved into ancient stone.

Don't miss this opportunity to cast your gaze to the stars while planting your feet on the ground as you draw inspiration for life from the breathtaking African skies.

Arno Smit

Odyssey

Founder

Track and Sign Specialist
Wildlife Ethics Specialist
Conservation Programme Developer
Field and Research Trainer



Arno Smit is a passionate conservation and travel professional with extensive experience in ethical wildlife tourism. He has worked across South Africa developing conservation-focused programs for students and international groups.

With a strong emphasis on responsible travel and wildlife protection, he ensures each itinerary supports education, conservation impact, and authentic local experiences. Arno is hands-on, detail-oriented, and deeply committed to meaningful, sustainable travel.

Called a “Flying psychologist” by MSF, **Penni Cox** has worked all over the world as a mental health professional. She has worked with individuals and teams from Afghanistan to New York, from adolescents in private clinics to the top female leaders’ retreat dignitaries hosted by the UN Deputy Secretary General.

She is happily occupied with supporting any individual in their journey of self-awareness and growth, and - after 20 years in this business - is proud to be formally collaborating with nature - who through her own admission - is the better therapist



Penni Cox

Alive Eco-Journeys

Founder

Registered Counselling Psychologist
Nature Connection Eco-therapy Practitioner
Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Practitioner
Former UN Staff Counsellor

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival in Cape Town – Orientation & Welcome

Welcome to South Africa. Upon arrival at Cape Town International Airport, you'll be greeted by your Odyssey guide and AEJ Eco-therapist, and transferred to a comfortable guesthouse or lodge in the city. Depending on arrival time, enjoy a short orientation tour of the city, or simply unwind and take in views of Table Mountain. Over dinner, your guides will introduce the group and outline the journey ahead – a week of extraordinary skies, solitude, and soulful inner and outer landscapes.

In search of my metaphor - starry night

Day one we work together to discover the healing metaphor that you will be working with throughout the week as you embark on your Alive Eco-Journey.

Day 2: Cape Town – Lord Milner Hotel, Matjiesfontein

Depart Cape Town and journey northeast through the vineyards of the Cape Winelands and the semi-arid landscapes of the Karoo. Your destination: the historic town of Matjiesfontein, founded in 1884 as a Victorian health retreat and once a strategic stop for the British military.

At the heart of this time-capsule town is the Lord Milner Hotel, your accommodation for the night, built in 1899 and still preserving its charm with period décor, wide verandas, and antique touches.

Explore the village's quirky museums, the historic railway station, and enjoy the famously brief but entertaining red double-decker bus tour. Beyond the charm, Matjiesfontein is regaining modern scientific importance — a NASA-affiliated site is currently being developed nearby to assist in observations for the next moon landing.

Then to now - witnessing my path

As we engage in a day of history, we gently reflect on where we came from, and pay tribute to the path that brought us here.

Day 3: Lord Milner Hotel, Matjiesfontein – Sutherland + Southern African Large Telescope (SALT)

After a leisurely breakfast and final stroll through Matjiesfontein, you continue north into the rugged Roggeveld Mountains, arriving in Sutherland by midday. This remote mountain town is South Africa's astronomy capital, situated at 1,500 meters above sea level with minimal light pollution. Upon arrival, check into your warm and welcoming guesthouse and enjoy time to explore the town or simply breathe in the dry mountain air.

Arrive at a secluded spot in the wilderness for a beautifully prepared picnic — set against the dramatic Cederberg scenery. Surrounded by silence, fresh air, and vast views, this is a moment to slow down and fully take in the remoteness of the place.

ITINERARY

In the afternoon, visit the Southern African Large Telescope (SALT) — the largest single optical telescope in the southern hemisphere. Enjoy a guided tour through the SALT visitor center and observe the scale of South Africa's astronomical ambition. As darkness falls, head just beyond the town for an evening stargazing session. Using powerful telescopes under expert guidance, you'll witness the celestial spectacle of the southern sky — from Saturn's rings to the Milky Way stretching overhead in breathtaking detail.

Pollution free, more space for me - letting go

As we journey to a space where the skies are pristine and free of light pollution, we begin to detox from the pollutants in our life opening up new insight and personal clarity that we desire.

Day 4: Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve

Wake early to the golden light of sunrise over the desert horizon. After breakfast, continue westward into the Cederberg region, a land shaped by wind, time, and ancient geology. By midday, you arrive at Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve, a breathtaking private reserve nestled in a surreal landscape of sandstone formations and rolling plains. Famous for its cave-style and open-air suites carved into natural rock, Kagga Kamma offers comfort and luxury blended seamlessly with the wilderness.

Beyond the scenery, Kagga Kamma is a place of deep cultural resonance. The San people (Bushmen), among the earliest inhabitants of Southern Africa, left behind a rich archive of rock art here, much of it still visible in the surrounding hills. After check-in, enjoy a guided nature drive or relax in the lodge's open spaces. End the day with a sundowner drink at a remote lookout before dinner under the stars.

An enriched life – nourishing gratitude

Having detoxed our systems from some personal pollutants, we continue the journey by turning our gaze to the inner and outer resources present in our life and seek to foster gratitude along the way.

Day 5: Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve

Wake before dawn and step into the stillness of Kagga Kamma as the first light spills across the ancient sandstone formations. The landscape slowly comes alive in soft hues of gold and amber, with wide open plains, weathered rock towers, and endless skies creating a sense of deep time and quiet wonder. A guided morning walk offers the chance to connect with this unique environment, noticing small details in the rocks, plants, and animal tracks as the sun rises higher.

Return to the lodge in the afternoon for well-earned downtime. Relax, journal, rest, or simply enjoy the calm of the surroundings as the heat of the day settles in.

As evening approaches, gather for a special fireside experience. If conditions allow, a bonfire becomes the heart of the night — a place for storytelling, stargazing, and learning about the ancient relationship between people, fire, and the land. Simple, interactive fire-based activities and shared reflection under the stars make for a memorable and grounding end to the day in this extraordinary landscape.

ITINERARY

As evening approaches, gather for a special fireside experience. If conditions allow, a bonfire becomes the heart of the night — a place for storytelling, stargazing, and learning about the ancient relationship between people, fire, and the land. Simple, interactive fire-based activities and shared reflection under the stars make for a memorable and grounding end to the day in this extraordinary landscape.

My Ecological (wild) self – tapping into intuition

Today's journey which includes our flagship "Silent Stroll" and solo time in nature is a very special day that sees us reconnecting with the authentic part of our self (Ecological Self) - the home of intuition. Just as the terrain we walk in is vast and wide, so space will open for you to truly rediscover your wisdom.

Day 6: Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve

Spend the full day exploring Kagga Kamma's natural, historical, and astronomical richness. The day includes:

- A guided morning nature drive to learn about the semi-arid fynbos biome and the wildlife that thrive in this unique ecosystem
- Visits to prehistoric San rock art sites, learning about their cultural meanings and the stories they tell
- A late afternoon game drive, where you may spot species like eland, zebra, ostrich, and more in their natural environment

Optional activities like quad biking or spa treatments are available in the afternoon, or simply rest in this ancient, quiet land.

After dark, Kagga Kamma becomes one of South Africa's finest natural observatories. With its in-house observatory and minimal light pollution, enjoy a final guided stargazing session – an unforgettable celestial farewell, where constellations, planets, and deep sky objects feel almost within reach

Come alive! Sparking joy

Over the Alive Eco-Journey, we have paid tribute to our past, detoxed from pollutants, nourished inner and outer resources as well as gratitude, and sparked intuition. Life is certainly an adventure filled with lessons, discoveries AND FUN! So today, we play!!

Day 7: Kagga Kamma Nature Reserve – Return to Cape Town

After breakfast, say farewell to the desert and begin your return to Cape Town. The journey takes you through scenic farmland and the folds of the southern Cederberg, with stops along the way to stretch, photograph, or enjoy local coffee and snacks.

Arrival in Cape Town is expected by late afternoon. The tour concludes with drop-off in the city (accommodation for this night is not included but can be arranged on request).

Wild By Design, Eco-Journey Reflections

As we return to Cape Town, we reflect on our personal metaphor and integrate the Alive Eco-Journey into practical steps for the path going forward.

PACKAGE DETAILS

Inclusions

- 6 Nights accommodation in guesthouses, lodges, and eco-reserves
- Daily breakfast and dinners
- Expert local guide and Eco-therapist throughout the journey
- All Alive Eco-Journey activity materials
- Private transport with driver/guide throughout
- Entry fees to all national parks, reserves, and observatories listed
- Guided visit to Southern African Large Telescope (SALT)
- Stargazing experiences in Sutherland and Kagga Kamma
- Guided cultural/nature activities at Kagga Kamma
- Game drives at Kagga Kamma
- Support for conservation and heritage sites visited

Exclusions

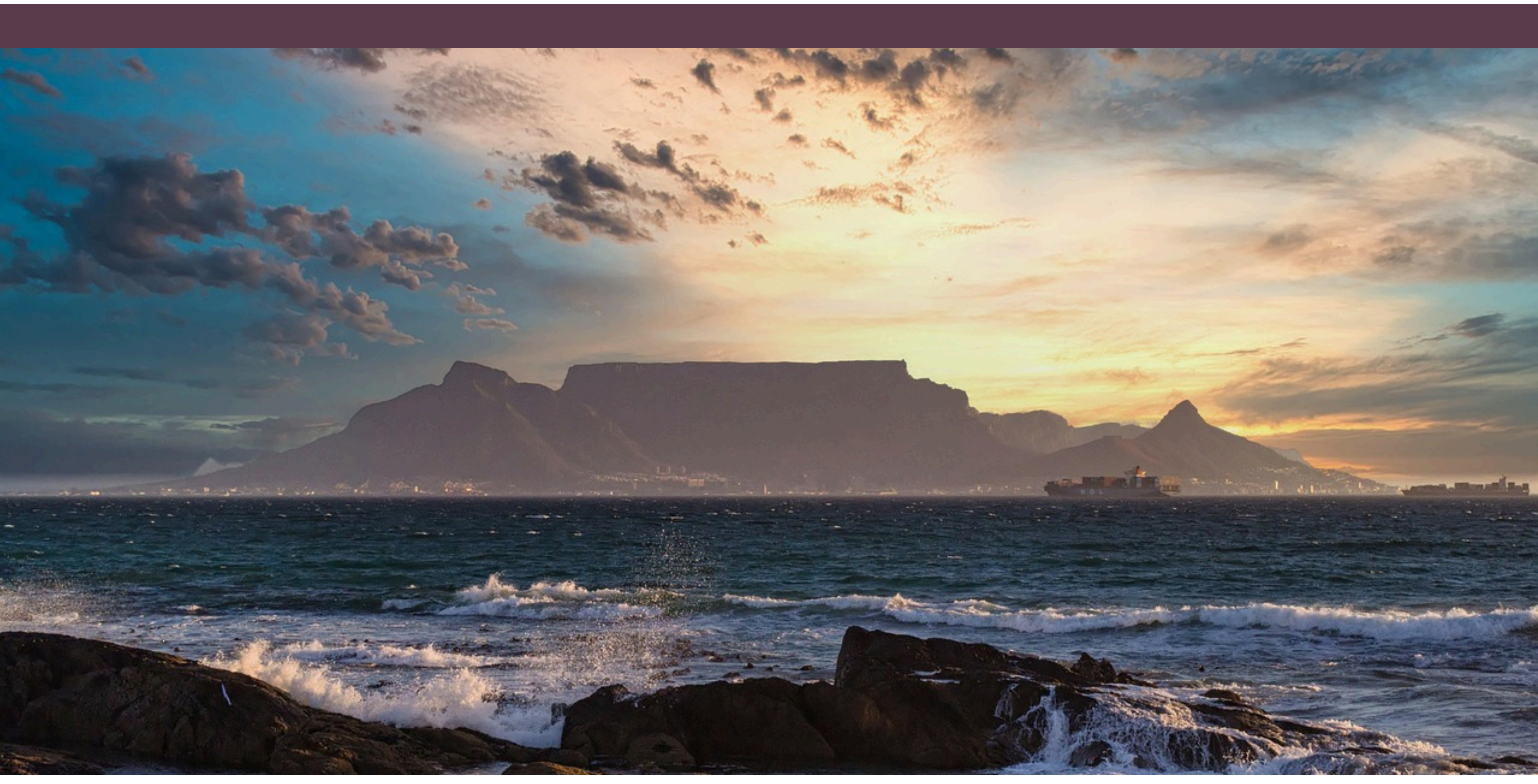
- Flights to/from Cape Town
- Travel insurance (mandatory)
- Meals not specified above
- Personal expenses and gratuities
- Optional activities not listed in itinerary
- Accommodation after tour concludes

Rates

€3819 per solo traveller

€3699 per person sharing

Minimum 8 participants required for guaranteed departure





**We invite you to enjoy South Africa's
healing hospitality and beauty with us.**

**Enquiries:
arno@wildlife-research.com**

