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A BLACK TOURIST'S GUIDE TO SOUTH AFRICA

"South African Airways invites 139 distinguished Americans....."

Perhaps the Airways felt awkward about specifying "distinguished white Americans". Perhaps we misjudge them and they are equally eager to welcome black Americans. If so it might be sensible of them to issue a "GUIDE TO A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE BLACK TOURIST IN SOUTH AFRICA".¹ For the convenience and information of ALL AMERICANS, we have sketched the outline of what such a guide book would look like: no doubt the South Africans will be able to add a great deal to our brief beginning.

Please remember that under the law of South Africa you may be stopped at any time by a policeman and asked to produce proof of your right to be walking in the streets of Johannesburg or any other South African city. If the policeman chooses to disbelieve your statement that you are an American, he is entitled to arrest you. Once arrested you will not be released until you have proven to the satisfaction of the South African authorities that you are an American.

Arriving at the Airport

At most South African airports blacks may not use the regular bar lounges, restaurants or restrooms. In some cases there will be alternative facilities provided; watch for the signs... most places will be clearly marked: "Ladies Rest-Room: Europeans Only" and "Non-Europeans only".²

Traveling about South Africa

All trains, all taxi-cabs and most buses are segregated. There are special buses and bus-stops for blacks. Non-white taxi cabs are clearly marked "Second-Class Taxi".

The railway system is also segregated. (The Railways and South African Airways are both Government owned and operated.) Railway stations overpass bridges etc. have clearly marked separate Non-European and European entrances. Care should be exerted when using these as there have been several criminal prosecutions, convictions and jailings of Africans who made mistakes. The trains themselves are also segregated.

Accommodations in major cities

There is no normal accommodation for blacks at ordinary city hotels. In the larger cities such as Johannesburg, there are a few special hotels for

¹We have assumed that all laws which apply to Africans in South Africa will also apply to Afro-Americans visiting South Africa. If they do not for any technical reason, the difference will be unnoticable, because any non-white tourist will be always called upon by the authorities to explain, justify and identify himself, particularly in reference to the "Pass Laws".

²European = White; Non-European - Black, Asian, or Colored.

"Non-Europeans" within the city area. Visits to smaller towns may be more difficult as there are no such special hotels there. Invitations to stay with private families or friends should be checked with some authority. The law specifically forbids any black "occupying" in a declared white area except as a servant; it also prohibits non-resident blacks from living for more than 72 hours in another area without a permit.

Restaurants and Pubs

No non-whites may eat in an ordinary restaurant, sit down in a coffeeshop, go to a regular movie, theater, concert hall or night-club. There are a few "eating houses" and segregated cinemas for "non-Europeans only" in the city areas. In general, non-white tourists should remember that South African non-whites live in special controlled segregated townships, usually 15-20 miles away from the city itself. The few entertainment and service facilities that there are for blacks tend to be situated in those townships, but as mentioned above, visitors to those townships must get permits to enter them.

No non-white may enter a public Pub .. there are special Beer Halls run by the City Government, in which only municipally brewed beer is sold. No women are allowed.

Shops

Most shops and department stores will serve black customers though they may have to wait a long time. It is not customary to allow non-whites to try on clothing, etc. Some Dry Cleaning establishments will not accept "black clothing" or will handle such clothing separately. Beauty shops, barber shops etc. will not accept non-white clients. The use of elevators in many apartment houses and office buildings is restricted .. those for blacks being marked by signs such as "Non-European and Goods".

Post Offices

Post offices facilities for everything from buying stamps to sending cables are all segregated. There are special "blacks only" lines in most banks. The corner telephone box will be marked - one "European Only" and maybe one "Non-Europeans".

Places to visit

There are interesting museums, galleries and other tourist attractions such as visits to the gold mines, in many of the major cities, but trips to these places should be planned ahead... many of them have a special "African visiting day" once a week. Black tourists would not be welcome on the wrong day.

Swimming Facilities

Summer visitors should remember that all public swimming baths and other sporting facilities are closed to non-whites. South Africa has beautiful beaches. Non-whites may visit these as long as they do not wander outside the areas specifically assigned to them. In the Cape area recent visitors have sometimes noticed the Police with large dogs patrolling the beaches to ensure that the restrictions are followed.

Parks & Game Reserves

Some parks allow non-whites to enter, though most benches are marked "Whites only" and lawns often bear signs which forbid blacks except in their capacity as Nursemaids to European children.

Visits to other places such as the magnificent game parks are also possible - naturally the numerous well-equipped tourist camps are all closed to non-whites, but there are some segregated facilities available.

In Case of Illness...

In the event of a visitor falling sick or having an accident, there are special Non-European hospitals and Non-European ambulances. No ambulance for whites may carry a black, even in cases of life or death.

It is important for visitors to remember that segregation in South Africa is segregation by law, so that there may well be serious consequences for using the wrong door or sitting in the wrong seat.

This guide has been prepared for tourists - it does not therefore touch on the rigid and fundamental political, social and economic discrimination which oppresses the African and other non-white people of South Africa. What we have talked about are just the most superficial consequences of being black in South Africa. But it might be relevant for any American, black or white, to think about the nature of the South African "way of life" before accepting that warm welcome being extended by the South African government and its airline company, South African Airways.

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