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Big Cat Sanctuary

“What an amazing experience ! These big cats are such beautiful animals and how they’re cared for yet left to be themselves in this true sanctuary is amazing. It is a beautiful part of the world near the coast with so much to see and enjoy on our days off” **Marijke**



The Big Cat Sanctuary volunteer program is a very special opportunity for anyone who loves big cats, is passionate about their future and wants to give their time and effort to a variety of felines, big and small. With only a handful of volunteer opportunities at any time, you’ll be part of a select and important group of carers. Working alongside the dedicated local team you’ll help with preparing meals and enrichment for the big cats, cleaning and maintaining their enclosures and general farm work.

Ethical and sustainable conservation in every sense, this inspiring non-profit centre is a true sanctuary for all big cats, where no breeding or trading takes place. Alongside donations and fundraising, the project’s main source of income is its daily educational tours, so be ready to share your new-found knowledge with day visitors !

The centre operates a non-contact policy, with animal welfare at the forefront and a focus on enrichment to give these special residents the best captive life possible.

Trip Highlights

- Being part of a genuine, true animal sanctuary in Africa
- Getting to know each and every one of the special residents
- Early morning wake-up calls from the lions, roaring to greet the day
- Chilling out by the pool and an evening sunset social by the braai

Snapshot

- **Start Dates** : Every Saturday, year round
- **Duration** : 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 weeks or more
- **Minimum Age** : 18
- **Pricing:**
 - 2 weeks AU\$2,295
 - 3 weeks AU\$2,945
 - 4 weeks AU\$3,645
 - 6 weeks AU\$4,695
- **Fly In/Out** : Cape Town (CPT)
- **Activities:** feeding and caring for the big cats, preparing food, providing enrichment, site maintenance, cleaning enclosures, assisting with educational tours
- **What's included:** Meals (2 meals daily), accommodation, return airport, 24/7 support
- **What's not included in cost:** Flights, travel insurance, dinners
- **Accommodation:** Twin-share rooms with shared bathroom.
- **Food:** Breakfast and lunch are provided daily, dinner is self-catering





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Itinerary

Day 1-2 (Saturday & Sunday) Arrive at Cape Town Airport (CPT) on Saturday where you'll be met as soon as you leave airside – once all volunteers have arrived, we drive the 2 hours to the sanctuary where you will settle in and familiarise yourself with your new surroundings. If there is enough daylight left then we'll head out for a tour of the centre, otherwise tomorrow. Aside from a trip to town for groceries, there are no activities or jobs scheduled on Sunday, so take the opportunity to relax and of course start to get to know all the big cats.

The Project This genuine, registered sanctuary is home to lions, tigers, leopards and caracals. The resident cats have been rescued from mistreatment in captivity, from hunting lodges or zoos, from illness or injury and here they will live out their lives, cared for and loved. Whilst all animals should ideally be roaming the wild, the harsh reality is that there is very little true wild remaining. Their survival depends on this sanctuary who provide a home-for-life.

You'll wake up to the roar of the lions and fall asleep to the call of the jackals. The working week is Monday to Wednesday, then Friday. Each day begins with a light breakfast followed by a morning meeting to plan and organise the day's events. Duties are allocated, problems are solved and as the staff are physically involved with all processes, help and assistance is never far away. Expect to work around 5 hours each day (mornings only Tuesday and Sunday), generally with a break during the midday heat. The work at the project is largely physical, so pack your muscles and stamina. Each new day brings its challenges, its laughs and experiences and before you know it, you'll be part of the family.

You will prepare your own dinner in the large kitchen or make use of the stunning outdoor braai and pool area. Evenings are generally spent sitting around the fire, possibly with a glass of wine, watching the breathtaking sunsets and chatting about the day's experiences.

Your free days are Tuesdays and Sundays and there are plenty of activities in the local area including hiking, bird watching, whale watching, shark cage diving and much more. There will be a planned excursion each Tuesday, where transport will be provided

Your Last Day (Saturday) At the end of your stay you'll be whisked back to Cape Town in plenty of time for your onward flight. Don't book too early, we recommend flights departing after lunch.

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Accommodation During your stay you will enjoy our modern, cosy home which is situated 5 mins drive / 25 mins beautiful walk from the sanctuary. With 3 bedrooms (2 x twins, 1 x quad-share), 3 bathrooms, a spacious and fully equipped kitchen and dining room to cook and enjoy dinners and games nights together and a cosy living room area with a fire for movie nights or just relaxing with a nice book, you'll be most comfortable here. Outside you will enjoy beautiful mountain views, and we have a traditional South African braai (BBQ) area. There is a lovely dam and large garden with space to play games, walk or sunbathe. While enjoying a peaceful evening outside on the patio, you may just hear our pride of lions roaring in the distance.

Meals Breakfast ingredients are available for you to prepare as you prefer. A vegetarian lunch is cooked for you and is substantial, the main meal of the day. Think veggie burgers, a stir-fry, delicious salads Dinner is self-catering and there are weekly grocery shopping trips for you to stock up on supplies.

Other information:

Winters (May to September) are cold during the day and can be wet – bring warm clothes and a waterproof.

Summer (October to April) is hot and sunny. Bring a hat and sunscreen, and a sweatshirt for cooler evenings.

This is not a malaria area but we recommend packing insect repellent to keep away bugs in the daytime and mosquitoes at night.

