

## [ GETTING THERE ]

Wondering where the lions are? Direct flights from New York to Johannesburg will get you to their dens.



SAA FLIES NON-STOP DAILY BETWEEN New York and Johannesburg. As well, there's another daily direct flight from Washington (though it's a longer flight, as it stops briefly in Dakar, Senegal). If you can, business class is the way to go for the 15½-hour flight from New York. Because the seats are arranged side-by-side (configured 2-2-2), you can talk to your partner more easily than on some other airlines, where seats are laid out in a herring-bone style. But if you don't know your seat mate and want privacy, you need only to raise a small divider.

Best of all? The seats go back a full 180 degrees, so you can actually sleep on a flat seat-bed, and, for extra comfort, you're given a thin cushioned mattress pad, as well as a soft, big pillow and cozy duvet. I also liked the cute beige socks in the amenity kit – with brown non-slip stripes on the soles, they reminded me of the zebras we'd be seeing on our safari.

And don't get me talking about the South African wine selection onboard in business class! An elegant 2007 Bosman Cabernet Sauvignon, matured in small French barrels for 18 months, went down very smoothly with the beef tenderloin I chose for lunch. Half-way through the flight, a warm spinach-and-egg quiche was quietly served in the darkened cabin to passengers who weren't asleep – along with more wine.

Since my husband and I had one business class and one economy ticket between us on our recent African trip (and we traded seats on the return), I also experienced economy class and I can say that it was considerably better than some other international economy flights I've taken. According to SAA, their flights offer more leg room (34 inches of seat pitch), and every little inch makes a difference. Economy passengers also receive amenity kits with eye masks, ear plugs, toothpaste and toothbrush – and the same zebra socks. And all seats have their own on-demand televisions too.

Once in Johannesburg, the airline flies to nearly 20 destinations in South Africa and more than 25 cities across the rest of the African continent. We flew South African Airways from Johannesburg to Sabi Sand Game Reserve in South Africa, and then SAA again to Livingstone, Zambia, to visit Victoria Falls.

On the return to North America, SAA's new Baobab Business Class Lounge in Johannesburg is a pleasant place to while away the time after checking in. As SAA is a member of Star Alliance, Gold members can use the lounge even if they're not flying business class.

We hope to return to South Africa one day again, and when we do, we'll have no hesitation booking South African Airways again.