

Post



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# Arriving in Johannesburg - July 30, 2025

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## ***SUMMARY***

We arrived in Johannesburg at around 7:30 in the morning. We had booked a hotel at the Jo'burg airport for the preceding night and so we're able to get into our room immediately. The InterContinental Airport Hotel was very nice and super convenient, a 2 minute walk from the terminal. It took us much longer to walk from our gate to baggage claim! We spent a lazy day eating and enjoying the gym and pool facilities and fighting off the urge to nap. - Karen

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## ***DETAIL***

Seven hours later we're awakened by either the cabin lights or the food trolley clanking down the aisle. There's no alcohol on offer this time, thankfully. Karen partakes of an omelette and I have the "Full English Breakfast" (scrambled eggs, sautéed mushrooms, roasted tomato, sausage, and baked beans). Most importantly there's coffee. It's half past three in the morning. We'll be landing around six, at sunrise.

On the interactive map we can see all of the small African countries over which we're flying, plus features like the Okavango Delta (which we'll be visiting) and the Limpopo River, made famous to us by Rudyard Kipling.

As we get closer to Joburg the sky starts to lighten and the cloudless sky paints a perfect spectrum of intense color from deep red to dark blue. The captain informs us that it'll be 8°C when we land (~46°F). I'm underdressed but it'll be warming up. I'm confident it'll feel delightful coming from the heat of Texas in July.

Off the plane we look for the promised greeter with a piece of paper that says "Farnsworth" but see none. Nor do we see such a person after we've gone through immigration and (with our retrieved luggage) customs. Thankfully getting through the airport is easy and signs lead us to our hotel, a short walk (1 minute) from the airport's main entrance.

It's just 7 am by the time we get to the check in counter of the InterContinental Hotel. Karen earlier paid for a room for last night so that we can get in right away rather than having to sit around for 8 hours. Our room is indeed ready and waiting. We're here two days before the start of our safari to give our body clocks time to adjust (and in case there are any problems in transit). The desk clerk kindly kept us in our same room for all three nights we'll be here, despite the safari room being a lesser level one.

Breakfast is included so we dropped our bags and head off to their Quills dining room for another meal. The breakfast on offer has lots of variety: meats, fish, hearty breads, cheeses. Plus anything from their long menu. It's a bit much, really. All good though. Two more mornings like this will be OK.

Back in our room we unpack, shower, and chill. Later we change and head up to the eight floor to workout and then swim. Back in our room we chill some more, slightly dazed from the lack of proper sleep. Messaging we compare notes with Tricia and Don who are in Cape Town.

I read up on "Joburg" (AKA Jozi or Jo'burg) and find it's the most populous city in South Africa, with a population of 5.5 million in the city proper and nearly 15 million in the greater Johannesburg area overall. That classifies it as a megacity, but in all of Africa Joburg is only the seventh most populous.

Lots of mining goes on here, and business generally. It's thought that the city's name comes from key people central to early mining operations. They were all Dutch and were all named John or Johan or Johannes, and thus the city's name. Famous residents of city include Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. It was the epicenter of the anti-apartheid movement in the 70s and understandably lots of the tourist spots key off of that. We read that Johannesburg is the world's fifth most dangerous city (in terms of crime rate). We decide to just stay at the hotel and read about that online.

This city, and this hotel, are key entry points for people like us, here to enjoy a safari (camera only). We'll chill here one more day and then fly on a short ways to safari camps in Botswana.

Before our 6:00 dinner reservation here at the hotel we head outside for a walk. The temperature is in the low 60s and it's already getting towards dusk. Here, today, the sun sets at 5:40 pm. Sunrise is at 6:45 am. That means we have just under eleven hours of daylight. It's definitely winter. In Botswana, further north and thus a bit closer to the equator, we'll have 20 additional minutes of daylight.

We get our table for dinner and order drinks from Cello ("Sell-oh") our charming native waiter. I get a Namibian beer (definitely a first for me) and Karen has a glass of rosé. We reflect on the day and scour the dinner menu. We also look at a different "all day" menu (it's no longer offered after six). Among other things on offer is "Bunny Chow" which we heard about from brother-in-law Don. It's Indian curry butter chicken served in a bread bowl with rice. Hm.

Our dinner's very good and like so much here, not terribly expensive. Of course we're at a nice hotel adjacent to a huge airport, so it's not cheap, but for what it is, this part of the world is a price performer generally. All our wines are from South Africa and tasty. I have a white that is a combination of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Different but good.

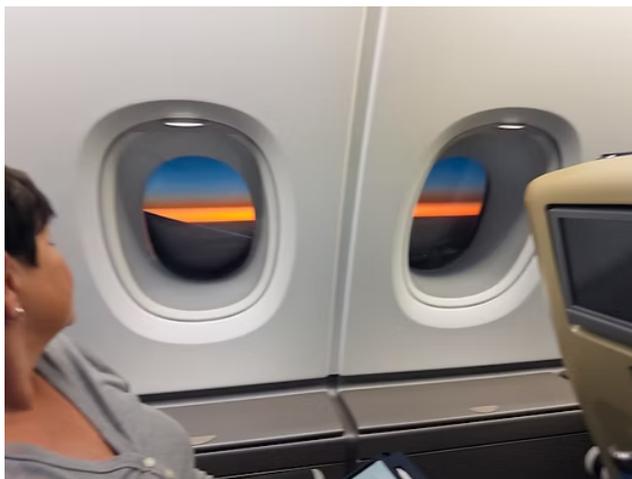
Eventually we're off to sleep, thankful to be sleeping in a real bed again.

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## Photos



With the lights still dimmed they bring us our breakfast on the plane. Karen gets something healthy but I opt for the full English Breakfast, which is very good and has lots of veggies and fruit.



As we make our approach into Johannesburg the sky starts to lighten and we get a rainbow of colors before the actual sun appears.



Through Immigration and Customs we walk a half block out of the airport to our hotel. The plantings out front remind us of Dr. Seuss. We're not in Kansas anymore!



Our room! That's what we want to see. We explode out of our suitcases, er, safari duffels, and check out the bed.



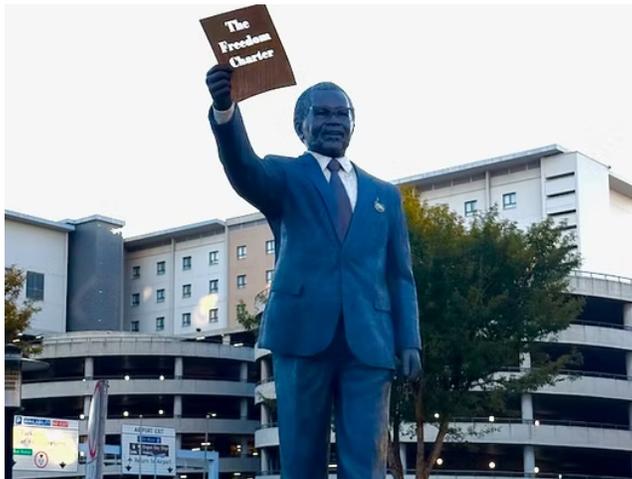
The room is clean. The windows, too, other than where some poor bird banged into the window, perhaps being fooled by the reflection of the sky. It left all the dust from its feathers in a perfect bird print.



We need to recharge all our devices. An early step in our arrival procedure is plugging in the oh so weird plug adapter to then plug in our device chargers.



To help recharge ourselves we visit the pool and do a little bit of exercising in the hotel gym.

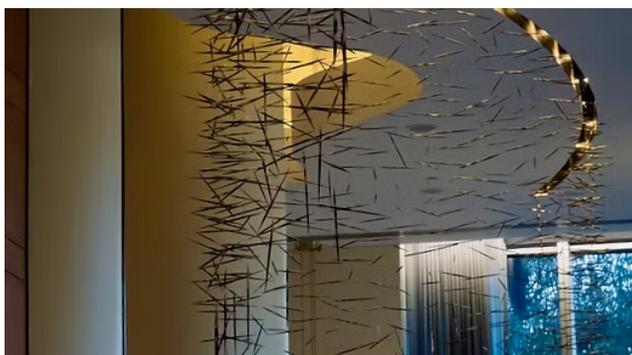


Walking around outside the O. R. Tambo Intercontinental Airport we get to see a larger than life statue of Mr. Tambo.



Our hotel looks handsome against the

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Dinner is at the hotel's dining room, Quills. There's a 20 meter long sculpture/mobile hanging from the ceiling, made (seemingly) of porcupine quills. They're much too large to be real quills, but they're striking, nonetheless.



Good food, good wine, and great service. Very jovial waiters here.

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