

# Organic Farming



## Overview

<b>Location</b>	Closest town: East London (about 60km away), South Africa.
<b>Duration</b>	2 - 12 weeks.
<b>Dates</b>	All year round.
<b>Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minimum age: 18.</li><li>• You must have an Upper Intermediate level of English.</li><li>• Special skills: You need to be physically fit, energetic, playful and ready to participate actively. Previous experience of farm work is always an advantage but not a must.</li></ul>
<b>Documents required</b>	Enrolment form, curriculum vitae, letter of motivation, passport copy, proof of medical insurance.
<b>Day of arrival</b>	Tuesday.
<b>Day of departure</b>	Tuesday.



## Highlights

- Volunteer in the Transkei, also known as the Wild Coast, the most rural Xhosa area in South Africa.
- Experience the amazing beaches of the Wild Coast.
- Learn about life on a South African Smallholding.
- Farm holistically, applying techniques of biodiversity and astrological farming to rehabilitate the farm, its soil and unique ecosystem.
- Join excursions outside of the project.
- Get in contact with the local Xhosa community.
- Make new friends from all over the world.

## Project information

This project is located on a rural, gravel road, approximately 20km from the Wild Coast towns of Kei Mouth/Komga in the Eastern Cape. The nearest city/airport/bus station is in East London, 60km away.

You will have the opportunity to develop new skills and experience life on a South African smallholding in one of the most beautiful, untouched areas of this diverse country. The farm is located on the Wild Coast, in the Eastern Cape Province, which is malaria free. The project aims to farm holistically, applying techniques of biodynamic and astrological farming to rehabilitate Mpetukop Farm, its soil and its unique ecosystem. In keeping with these goals, there are both animals and plants on the land which are rotated, creating a mutually beneficial ecosystem, which supports a diversity of species, with the aim of improving the soil for future generations.

You will be involved in learning traditional farming methods as well as Permaculture, the concept of food forests, companion planting and many other techniques. You will learn enough to enable you to create your own productive gardens, whether you live in the city or the country. The main emphasis is on the production of vegetables, herbs and fruits according to the natural rhythms of the earth. All volunteers will have some involvement with fruit, herb and vegetable production on the farm as this is the main aspect of life on Mpetukop. You will experience everything from growing seeds to packaging and selling the final product. You can also learn how to make your own dairy produce from hormone-free milk from the local dairy as well as how to make butter, jams and preserves from home-grown produce, and herbal remedies.

## Programme details

You will be working closely with the owners of this project; they are extremely passionate and knowledgeable. You will get to learn a lot about Permaculture, growing by astrological charts, companion planting and many other aspects of free-range farming. You will also get to help with the horses, pigs and chickens. You will be working side by side with local people and will also get the opportunity to interact with some of our Xhosa neighbours'. On the negative side, some work (such as weeding or digging) may be repetitive or hard physical work.

Pigs are born throughout the year. Other animals like goats and horses (although they don't breed horses) will usually be born around September – October.

## Your role

A possible work schedule could be:

- 07.30 – 08.30 Working on the farm, assisting with daily farm jobs like feeding, watering, checking animals and enclosures, checking on plants and infrastructure.
- 08.30 – 10.00 You will be assigned tasks according to the needs of the farm, depending on your individual interests and expertise. Tasks include digging, planting, picking, spraying, preparing beds, mulching, etc.
- 10.00 – 10.30 Breakfast.
- 10.30 – 13.00 You will be allocated tasks, which will range from working in the fields to clearing alien plants, or preparing preserves and other produce, such as butter and cheese.
- 13.00 – 14.00 Lunch.
- 14.00 – 16.30 You will either continue with tasks from the morning or may be asked to work on specific projects, some of which may be projects started by previous volunteers. Examples of projects are: building a solar shower, improving and developing volunteer accommodation, constructing fences, painting, etc.

Sometimes you will go out to harvest poles and droppers for fencing or even go to collect sand or other materials. Additionally, you will participate in the school project next door to the project. Every Thursday you will visit the school and work there in the garden for an hour or two. If you would like to bring a small donation, they always greatly appreciate stationery and sports equipment.

Usually you are given time off on Saturdays and Sundays but activities are arranged if required.

**It is important to note that this description serves as an example only. The daily tasks and challenges depend on the volunteer, the time of the year and the work that needs to be done. The final job description can therefore vary substantially from the above.**

## Getting to and from the project



The Organic Farming project is based approximately 20km from the Wild Coast towns of Kei Mouth/Komga in the Eastern Cape of South Africa.

You need to arrive on a Tuesday at East London airport where you will be collected, either by someone from the project, or a professional shuttle driver. Transport is provided on both your arrival and departure



during office hours between 08:00 and 17:00 – morning arrivals and departures are preferred. The project runs from a Tuesday to a Tuesday, and you will start your volunteer placement with an orientation on the afternoon of your arrival.

## Accommodation

Your accommodation is within walking distance of the project. You are housed in the farmhouse, or one of the converted outbuildings on the farm. The outbuildings are situated within a fenced garden 50m from the main farmhouse. One side of the house is dedicated to volunteers while everybody shares the kitchen. The rooms are spacious and comfortable. There are single sex dorms for girls and boys with access to the garden. Up to 6 volunteers share a room. The farmhouse has a living room and is equipped with a kitchen. Bedding and towels (if requested) will be provided. For ZAR 15 per load, you can use the washing machine.

There is no WiFi available but a booster antenna means you can connect to the Internet easily with your phone and pay for your own data. The project also provides Internet at R15 for 30 minutes. Furthermore it is possible to use their computer outside of working hours. A telephone is available – you are charged according to Telkom rates for international calls. If you would like to make a local call, this is free of charge. Long distance and international calls can be arranged in advance.

## Meals

Three meals a day are provided. Breakfast includes cereal, milk, yoghurt, fruit, bread, preserves, tea and coffee. At lunch salad, cheese, bread, etc. are available; this could also include leftovers from the previous night's dinner or soup and bread. For dinner you will be provided with basic western meals – pizza, spaghetti Bolognese, nut roast, quiche, curries, braais, etc. All meals are eaten together in the main dining room of the farmhouse. There is a public shopping list available on which you are welcome to include personal preferences. Luxury items will be for your own account, i.e. nuts, dried fruits, chocolate, snacks, etc.

A vegetarian /vegan option is available and it is also possible to cater for special dietary requirements.

You are expected to help either with the preparation of each meal or with the washing and tidying up afterwards.

## Free time

In your free time, you can walk through the forest and surrounding farms, or you can even just relax with a good book, listen to music, or have a good conversation with other volunteers.

There is the chance of taking a day trip to a game reserve on Tuesdays. Furthermore, you can go on a 3-hour game drive (lunch in the area), on a day trip to the wild coast with wild coast horse trails as well as on a historical tour in the area. Those trips will be at your own expense.

If you wish to have a weekend off, it is possible to get transport to the nearby backpackers of Buccaneers in Cintsa. You could also discover Kei Mouth or Morgan Bay at the weekends, to go to the beach, do a bit of shopping, can go rock-climbing or do paintballing. Friday nights out are an option as well – there is a big farm further down the road with many international visitors all year round. Kayaking and horse-riding are available in Kei Mouth/Morgan Bay (approx. 20 km away).



## Local transport

Personal local transport will be provided. You will be taken into East London on Tuesdays should you wish to visit the bank, use Wi-Fi, do some shopping or just chill out in the city for a while. You will be also taken to several activities, i.e. to the beach, kayaking, horse-riding, etc.

## What to bring

There are no special requirements in this regard but we recommend bringing pocket money, toiletries, any medication, older clothes for working, hat, sun screen (in summer), boots or trainers suitable for working, a waterproof jacket, gumboots, warm clothes for the evenings, books/laptop etc. for evening entertainment. All these items (and anything else you might need) are readily available at local supermarkets in South Africa.

While there is no specific uniform, volunteers are asked to wear sensible clothing, e.g. long shorts and closed shoes. Hot pants, string bikinis and flip-flops are not suitable for work.

## Medical insurance

It is required that you take out medical insurance before travelling to South Africa. For stays exceeding 90 days, it is compulsory to take out a South African medical insurance. We recommend NetworX from Compcare, which is specifically designed for people who visit South Africa for 3 to 12 months. You will receive an information leaflet and an application form together with your confirmation of booking.

## Health

No vaccinations are required except for travellers going to the north-eastern areas of South Africa, where anti-malaria precautions are recommended. Clients should consult their doctor for recommendations.

A yellow fever certificate is compulsory for those persons who have travelled from, or intend travelling through, countries in the yellow fever belt:

Africa: Angola, Burundi, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zaire.

South America: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Surinam, Venezuela, Argentina and Paraguay.

Bring medication just in case you suffer from any travel-related illnesses, e.g. stomach upsets, since your body needs to adjust to the change in food and water during your first few days in South Africa.

It is important to keep in mind at all times that HIV and Aids are widespread diseases in South Africa.



## Safety

As there are some animals on the farm (horses, pigs, goats), you must be aware at all times and follow the safety guidelines.

## What's included / not included

### Included:

- Project placement
- Airport transfer on arrival and departure (East London Airport)
- Accommodation (dorm-style rooms, breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- A donation towards the project
- An orientation at the beginning of your volunteering
- Local transport
- Electronic certificate (printed copy on request)
- Local support including a 24-hour emergency number

### Not included:

- Drinks & refreshments
- If you arrive in East London late afternoon, you need to stay overnight at a backpackers or hotel. You will be collected the following day.
- WiFi

## Visa

You can volunteer in South Africa on a visitor's visa for up to 90 days.

Nationals from certain countries (e.g. Brazil, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, France, Netherlands, Spain) will receive their visa when entering South Africa. Other nationals need to apply for a visitor's visa at a South African Embassy in their home country before travelling.

If you come to South Africa on a visitor's visa, you can extend once by another 90 days.

If you plan to come for more than 90 days, you need to apply for a visa at a South African Embassy in your home country. This visa is restricted to registered NGO's and therefore not available for this project.

For the latest information contact the South African Embassy or Good Hope Volunteers.