

2026 INTO PACK

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WHO IS VENTURE FORTH?

Venture Forth International is the leading specialist in accredited training and legal guiding in the African adventure industry.

Based in Cape Town, on the Southern tip of Africa since 1994, we have qualified more guides than anyone else on the continent.

Beyond being an accredited training provider, the various branches of Venture Forth are:

GUIDE COURSES TO TECHNICAL ADVENTURES

OBSTACLE COURSE DESIGN AND ASSEMBLY

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITIONS

JOURNEYS AND PRESIDENT PROGRAMS

RETAILER FOR ADVENTURE GEAR

ADVENTURE CONSULTATION

EXPEDITION GAP YEAR



WHAT IS EXPEDITION GAP YEAR?



Our **Expedition Gap Year** is a two-pronged program. This is both a career-in-a-box solution to launch the student into the adventure and tourism industry, as well as being a place where people can discover themselves.

This is the gap year run by professional guides. You, the student receive certificates for each course completed.

All the courses offered by **Venture Forth** and our sister company, **Wild Medix**, are packed into the **Expedition Gap Year** program. This means everything from acquiring the skills of outdoor survival, going on technical adventures, learning from wilderness medical courses, to going on expeditions is waiting for you.



Expedition Gap Year has a student residence in the coastal town of Kleinmond, Western Cape, South Africa. Students are welcome to bring their own vehicles, but they will be perfectly fine without them. There is a bus that our staff members drive to transport students to and from adventures, shops and home.

The concept of **Expedition Gap Year** is to introduce the student through training and lectures to some of the most respected and experienced subject matter experts. These will be adventure guides, paramedics, doctors, business owners, safari guides, search & rescue, survival experts, self defence instructors, psychologists and alumni of the program itself.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Expedition Gap Year operates from the coastal town of Kleinmond in the Western Cape province of South Africa. However there is a lot of travelling throughout the country via car, train, plane and boat.

The gap year, whilst incredibly fun, is a serious character and skills development course. It will be hard work, long hours, physically demanding and you will miss your mom.

Whether your intention is to use this program to develop a career in the adventure industry or to simply have a year of adventure, you will be expected to conduct yourself in a professional, disciplined manner.

This program includes accredited qualifications. You can fail these courses. Certification requires commitment, hard work, and study.

You need to commit to the whole program and process. There is a code of conduct you will be asked to sign.

You do not need to be fit to join **Expedition Gap Year**, but you will become fit as you embark on adventure after adventure, building new skills and creating life-changing memories.

The exposure to industry experts and representatives will not only empower you with the experience they pass on to you, but also give you direct recruitment possibilities — a feature that separates the **E.G.Y** program from other regular institutions and gap years.

You will share a communal living space with the other students and rotate responsibilities. For example, there will be a cooking team who will prepare breakfast and dinner during week days.

Upon applying for **Expedition Gap Year**, you will be given three character reference forms to be filled out by:
A family member, a friend, and a teacher or authority figure not related to you.

WHAT DO YOU GET FOR YOUR TIME AND MONEY?

- Access to text books and training videos
- Tea, coffee and biscuits at lectures
- **E.G.Y** high quality branded clothing
 - Cap
 - Jacket
 - 3 x action shirts
- **E.G.Y** branded mugs
 - Mug (for at home)
 - Flask (for home away from home)
- **E.G.Y** welcome package

- Training from the most experienced instructors in the industry with a combined experience of over 100 years in the South African and International adventure industry
- Opportunities to travel the country and explore areas only accessible by 4x4, kayaks and rope
- Not becoming merely a number or getting lost in the crowd
- Personal career development advice, career-path planning and support
- Access to over a million rand's worth of adventure gear to use for the year as part of your course and for recreational weekends
- The widest range of adventure guiding skills and scope of practice in a single program along with all the certificates to go with it
- Wifi access at the residence and offices
- 15% off all adventure and medical gear sold in our shop as well unique wholesale access when our suppliers send us '**The List**' (40%-to-60% discounts)
- Have a customised CV made for you at the end of the year, angled towards either applying for university or a job
- Accommodation, permits, tickets and tolls
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner on weekdays and over courses are included.





2026 CALENDAR

Some courses are weather and instructor dependent and may move around during the year.

Phase 1: 62 days
Sat 31 January
Thur 2 April

- Introduction lectures & 'The Quest'
- Paddling course
- 1st Aid Lv3: Wilderness 1st Responder
- Mountain Walking Course
- Foundational Courses
- Training around the Western Cape

Easter Holiday: 17 days | Fri 3 April — Sun 19 April

Phase 2: 68 days
Mon 20 April
Fri 26 June

- EQ courses
- Sea and River courses
- Cultural and Nature courses
- Wilderness Gastronomy course
- Exposure to other adventure companies
- Expedition 1

Winter Holiday: 23 days | Sat 27 June — Sun 19 July

Phase 3: 66 days
Mon 20 July
Wed 23 September

- Survival courses
- Professional Mountain courses
- Business lectures
- Recce and exploration trips
- Winter courses
- Expedition 2

Spring Holiday: 11 days | Thur 24 September — Sun 4 October

Phase 4: 40 days
Mon 5 October
Fri 13 November

- Career guidance
- Technical Canyoneering course
- Trad Climbing course
- Work experience
- 4x4 course
- Expedition 3

E.G.Y 2025 COURSES

Professional Mountain Exploration Courses:

- Multi-Pitch Rock Climbing
- Abseil Guide >60m
- Technical Canyoneering
- Intro to Snow & Ice
- Traditional Climbing

Sea and River Courses:

- Flat Water Paddling
- Sea Kayak
- River (Swift Water)

Canopy and Obstacle Courses:

- Zip-Line
- High Ropes Challenge
- Low Ropes Challenge

Overland and 4X4 Courses:

- 4X4 Operations: Basic and Advanced
- Heavy-Duty Drivers (optional extra)
- Professional Driving Permit (optional extra)

Cultural and Nature Courses:

- Nature Interpretation
- Basic Photography
- Basic Filmmaking
- Cultural Tour Guide

Firearm Training (Optional Extra):

- Personal Firearms Competency for handgun, Shotgun and Manual Rifle
- Legal Aspect of the Firearms Control Act

Foundational Mountain Exploration Courses:

- Multi-Day & Off-Trail Mountain Walking Guide
- Single-Pitch Rock Climbing
- Abseil Guide <60m
- Non-Technical Canyoneering
- Spelunking (Caving)

Wilderness Gastronomy Courses:

- Hunting & Gathering with Survival Skillset
- Glamping Recipes and Resources
- Light Weight & Hiking Meals

Emotional Intelligence Courses:

- Expedition Psychology Course
- Critical Thinking & World Views Course
- Whole Brain Leadership Test
- ABL Learning & Facilitation Course
- Wilderness Therapy Course

First Aid and Survival Courses:

- Wilderness First Responder Lv.3
- Medical Expedition Course
- Self-Defence for Wilderness Encounters
- Bushcraft with Survival Skillset

WHAT GEAR WILL YOU NEED?

Apart from your normal casual wear for class and travel, you will need some other items on your adventures.

Note that all you need to really start is a pair of boots and a raincoat. The rest you can build up during the year. Venture Forth can equip you with a large backpack, day back, sleeping bag and tent at no extra cost. You will also be able to purchase equipment through Venture Forth at greatly reduced prices. Brands such as: **First Ascent, Vango, Black Diamond, Singing Rock, Sea to Summit, GSI, Beal, Jet Boil, Buff, Osprey, Condor, Hydroflask, Boreal, La Sportiva, Pickled Steel, Medev, Fire Maple, Scarpa and VSSL** to name a few.

Clothing Required

- Good quality hiking boots
- Running shoes
- Velcro sandals
- Flip flops / crocs
- Thick hiking socks
- Thin hiking/running socks
- Long hiking pants
- Hiking shorts
- Long/short-sleeve shirts
- Swimming clothing
- Warm clothing for winter
- Beanie
- Waterproof jacket and pants
- Hat, cap and sunglasses
- Gloves
- Clothing hangers

Equipment Required

- Large expedition backpack (65L)
- Day backpack (20-35L)
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping bag liner
- Torch and headlamp
- Powerbank
- Travel towel
- Toiletries
- Bedding
- Knife and multitool
- Lunch boxes
- Dry bag
- Notebook and pens
- Laptop (if you have one)
- Suncream
- Charging cables and adapters

Venture Forth Provides the following, but you are welcome to bring your own

- Tents
- Camping mattresses
- Pot sets
- All technical equipment
- Harness
- Helmet
- Life jackets & PFDs
- Group equipment
- First aid kits
- Camping chairs

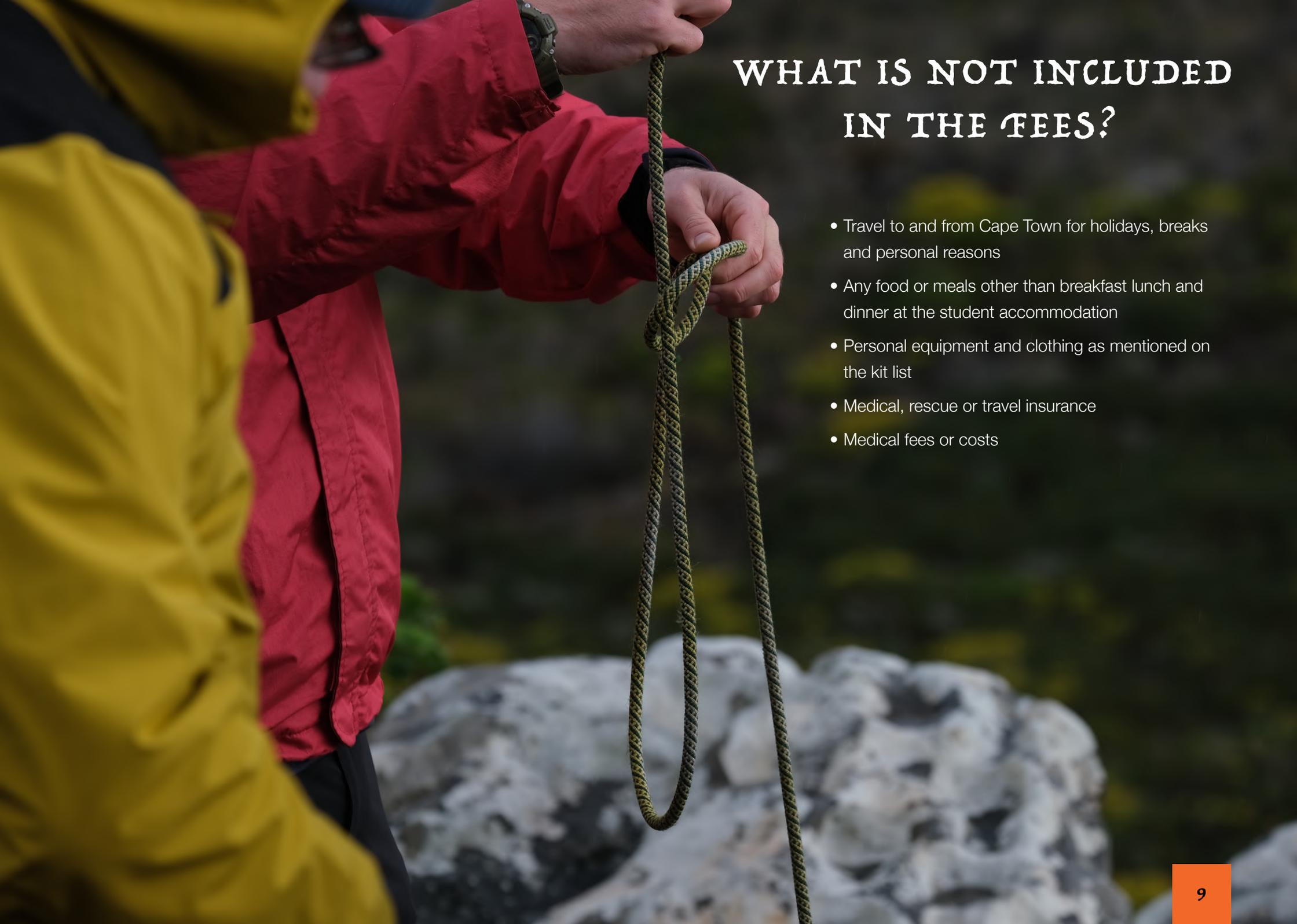
WHERE DO YOU TRAVEL?



You will get to know South Africa well and become familiar with the 9 provinces.

You will visit the following areas and more

- Table Mountain
- Peninsula Mountain Areas
- Cederberg
- Storms River
- Ceres
- The Hex River Mountains
- Kogelberg
- Grabouw
- Du Toit's Kloof Mountains
- West Coast
- East Coast
- Garden Route
- Spice Route
- Stanford
- Hermanus
- Betty's Bay
- Swellendam
- Oudtshoorn
- Swartberg Mountains
- Parys and the Vaal River
- Gariiep Dam
- Magaliesberg
- Drakensberg
- Magoebaskloof
- Clarens
- Bains Kloof



WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE FEES?

- Travel to and from Cape Town for holidays, breaks and personal reasons
- Any food or meals other than breakfast lunch and dinner at the student accommodation
- Personal equipment and clothing as mentioned on the kit list
- Medical, rescue or travel insurance
- Medical fees or costs

WHERE DO YOU STAY AND WHAT DO YOU EAT?

The E.G.Y program runs from the coastal town Kleinmond, Western Cape, South Africa. Your accommodation for the year is a shared space with your fellow students which has strict rules, cleaning schedules and staff members who oversee the venue.

The venue's kitchen is equipped with everything you need. Included is a food budget released each week for the team that is cooking.

There is a bed for you, equipped with bedding and pillows.

While staying at the student venue, you and your fellow students will be divided into 4 groups for responsibilities, rotating every week:

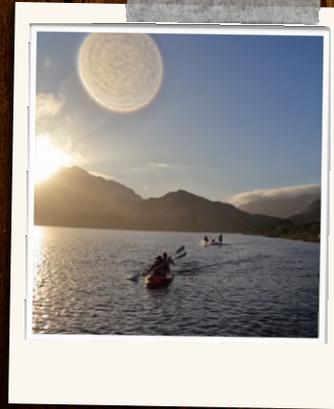
1. Cooking team - responsible for budgeting, planning and preparing breakfast and dinner for the house during weekdays
2. Cleaning team - responsible for making sure all dishes and surfaces are clean for the cooking team, before and after meals
3. Living area team - responsible for ensuring the lounges and outside area are clean and tidy
4. Bathroom team - responsible for the cleanliness of the bathrooms

Each student cleans his or her own room on a weekly basis.

When travelling and on practical exercises, you will mostly camp out on a self-catering basis. Venture Forth will provide suitable tents, mattresses, and cookware.

When on work experiences with actual clients, you will eat with the group and other staff if catering is part of the package.

When at formal lectures, we provide tea, coffee and milk. Sugar is for the weak, but we provide that too.



HOW DO YOU APPLY FOR E.G.Y.?

Reading this info pack is the first step.

Step 2: Visit the **apply** page on www.expeditiongapyear.com to fill in the **Applicant's details** form. Then complete the character reference form and have 3 people fill it in; a family member, a friend and an authority figure such as a teacher or coach. You can also speak to Zane Stathakis who is the co-ordinator for the program and is happy to meet with you over coffee, video call and Whatsapp.

Zane Stathakis:

Cell: +27 63 308 8867

Email: info@expeditiongapyear.com

Once you have completed the online application form and have chosen your preferred payment option, you will be contacted by Zane and receive the corresponding invoice from info@expeditiongapyear.com

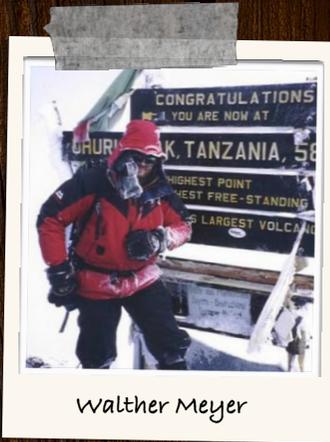
Step 3: Send your proof of payment to info@expeditiongapyear.com with the student's full name as the subject: e.g. Jane Doe PoP.

You will receive a confirmation email and the student will receive an acceptance letter with further details.

Step 4: Communicate with Zane regarding travel arrangements and if you need collection from Cape Town International Airport.



WHO RUNS EXPEDITION GAP YEAR?



Walther Meyer



Zane Stathakis

Walther Meyer, founding partner and managing director of Venture Forth and Wild Medix is the formal lead for **Expedition Gap Year**.

Walt joined Venture Forth in 1997. He trained in the USA as a technical alpine leader on snow, rock, and ice before returning to SA to run Venture Forth. With over 30 years of personal mountaineering and adventure experience, Walt has climbed and guided in Southern and Eastern Africa, South America, the USA and Canada, and is one of only three people in the country holding all available national qualifications in mountain guiding.

Walt is the most experienced trainer and assessor of adventure guides in South Africa. As a firm believer in the power of adventure, he is actively involved in the development of the adventure guiding and outdoor education industry.

He also spent many years on the road as an active volunteer for the government emergency services in the Western Cape and founded the first wilderness first aid training company in South Africa — Wild Medix.

Zane Stathakis, professional guide, is the full-time co-ordinator for **Expedition Gap Year**.

Zane was the first Venture Forth student of the guide school program in 2019. He then freelanced across the country in various expeditions and guided trips. Having formally joined Venture Forth in 2022, he now runs the exploration of new routes for existing and developing adventures as well as facilitating various technical adventure courses.



COST AND PAYMENT OPTIONS

Total cost of the Expedition Gap Year program: R195,500. (\$10,682.98* / €8,290.43*)

Early Bird Options

Option 1:

10% discount Saving: R19,550. (\$1,068.30* / €829.04*) for a deposit of R50,000 (\$2,739.22* / €2,120.32*) before Saturday, October 31st 2025. The remaining R125,950. (\$6,900.11* / €5,341.07*) will be paid over 11 months of 2026, January-November, i.e. R11,450. (\$627.28 / €485.55) per month. Or you can choose to start payment from the month after you have made the deposit.

Option 2:

R10,000. (\$547.85* / €424.06*) **deposit payable upon registration for the program.**
15% discount Saving: R29,325. (\$1,606.56* / €1,243.56*) for full payment before Saturday, 31st October 2025. The total amount payable after the deposit is then R156,175. (\$8,555.97* / €6622.80*)

Standard Payment Options

Option 1:

R10,000. (\$547.85* / €424.06*) **deposit payable upon registration for the program.**
The remaining amount R185,500. (\$10,162.52* / €7,866.37*) is to be divided into 11 payments from January to November 2026, R16,863.64 (\$923.87* / €715.12*). January's payment to be received no later than the 15th, and thereafter payments to be made by the 30th of every month.

Option 2:

R10,000. (\$547.85* / €424.06*) **deposit payable upon registration for the program.**
The remaining amount R185,500 (\$10,162.52* / €7,866.37*) to be divided into quarterly payments of R46,250. (\$2,533.78* / €1,961.29*) payable on 15 December 2025, 31 March 2026, 30 June 2026, 30 September 2026.

NB: * The foreign pricing of the US Dollar and Euro is as per the exchange rate on 25 March 2025, and will need to be adjusted to match the South African Rand at the time of each payment. Please note that fees paid are non-refundable.

ABOUT VENTURE FORTH INTERNATIONAL

Based in beautiful Cape Town on the southern tip of Africa, Venture Forth was founded in 1994 as a specialised mountain guide service and an accredited mountaineering school.

Using our experience gained in the mountains across the world, we have expanded our adventure portfolio to include services such as corporate team building and youth outdoor education.

We pride ourselves on being a dynamic and professional company with the flexibility to serve our clients' adventure, travel, and training requirements with dedication and enthusiasm.

Whether you want to take a half-day hike up Table Mountain, start rock climbing, or go on a high-altitude expedition, we would like to meet you and make it a reality.

Your safety and enjoyment are our top priorities.

Venture Forth has had a 100% safety record since its inception in 1994, and all our guides, instructors, and facilitators are highly qualified and experienced in their respective fields.

We like to believe that our products are so good because of the passionate and friendly outdoor people who make Venture Forth work. Our permanent and freelance staff all work to the same high standards and together we form a team with diverse skills, broad adventure experience, unequalled ability, and the highest qualifications.

All our guides are Registered Adventure Tourist Guides with the Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism, and all mountain guides and instructors hold qualifications in mountaineering from CATHSSETA and the SA Mountaineering Development & Training Trust (MDT). Venture Forth guides are all trained in first aid and rescue procedures, and most are qualified emergency care practitioners — providing you with peace of mind on any adventure and for all eventualities.

