

LONELY PLANET on TALK language and TALK Tourism

TALK is featured in the 5th edition of the Lonely Planet publication - see what they have to say about us.

Facts for the Visitor - Courses - Language (p77-8):

For intense cerebral activity and possibly the most rewarding people-friendly activity you can do, contact the TALK project (tel/fax 011-487 1950, 18a Gill St, Observatory, Johannesburg, 2198 [...]).

TALK stands for Transfer of African Language Knowledge, and began as a project helping people learn South African indigenous languages. Its method is to pair a student with a mother-tongue speaker, and the two are encouraged to participate in everyday activities together. Most of the fee goes to the mother-tongue speaker. This is a great way to learn not just a language but a culture.

TALK also arranges 'immersion visits' where you spend time living in a community while learning the language (or just experiencing the culture - it's up to you). This can be anything from a weekend in Soweto to a month or longer in KwaZulu-Natal. Costs vary widely but include a contribution to the family with which you're staying, a fee for the TALK helper, and food and transport (which might involve hiring a car if you're going to a remote rural area). Two weeks in a remote village might cost about R6000 all up.

TALK can organise just about anything for small groups, including meals with African families and visits to townships, with the emphasis on people-to-people contact.

Visiting Soweto (p538)

It may seem grotesque to treat Soweto as another tourist attraction but to really appreciate South Africa you have to visit. At present, the easiest, safest and ultimately the best way to visit is on a tour, so a tour it must be. It's still risky to drive around by yourself, and you're almost guaranteed to get lost.

If you're interested in something along the lines of cultural immersion rather than sightseeing contact the TALK project (see Courses in the Facts for the Visitor chapter) for details of its Soweto homestay and tour programs.