

Kruger National Park Safari

14 day

Days 1 to 4. Thursday 10th October to Monday 14th October 2024
Johannesburg Airport to Kruger National Park – Southern section.

You will be met at Johannesburg International Airport. We will head for the Kruger National Park via the Malelane Gate.

The Kruger National Park is one of the most famous National Parks in the world and the oldest one in Africa. It is 350km long from north to south, at most 60km in width and covers a surface area of 1,948,528 hectares. (Just slightly smaller than Wales at 2,064,100 hectares!) The park is home to an unparalleled diversity of fauna & flora. There are over 300 different types of trees, 507 species of bird, 147 species of mammals, 49 species of fish, 33 types of amphibians and 114 reptilian species in the park. The Kruger National Park is a superb example of a rich African savanna biome.

Father of the park

When the area between the Sabie River and the Crocodile River was proclaimed a game sanctuary in 1902, the post of chief game warden was given to a Major James Stevenson-Hamilton. He was destined to become known as the 'father' of the Kruger National Park. Stevenson-Hamilton was given vague instructions to prevent poaching in the sanctuary. By 1903, with only two game wardens he had so sternly enforced the poaching laws that he was nicknamed siKhukhuza 'he who sweeps clean'. The European form of this name Skukuza, was later given to the Park's headquarters. Stevenson-Hamilton retired in 1946.

We will go for early morning game drives around the local area looking out for many of the bird and mammal species that are found in the area. Natal Francolin, Crested Francolin, African Hawk Eagle, Brown-headed Parrot, Red-chested Cuckoo, African Cuckoo, Diderick Cuckoo, White-throated Robin-Chat, Lesser Honeyguide, Grey-headed Bush-Shrike, Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike, Cape Glossy Starling, Blue Waxbill and African Firefinch, to name but a few of the 507 species seen in the park to date!

After breakfast we will go for game drives around the local area. We will ascertain which local roads have been the most rewarding during the course of the morning, with the view to finding Rhino, Elephant, African Wild Dog, Bushbuck, Klipspringer and Rock Hyrax. A late afternoon drive along the Timfeneni Loop road to the Gardenia bird hide might show us some new sightings of birds and mammals. The camp has a variety of resident owls and nightjars, and these need only to be listened for to detect their presence.

Our day plan for each day is usually a wildlife watching drive in our own vehicle for a couple of hours before breakfast. Then another drive after breakfast for a couple of hours. After lunch we have some R&R time (Rest & Relaxation!) and then later in the afternoon we go for a third drive birdwatching and wildlife watching.

Berg-en-dal Camp is a beautiful camp situated in a botanical reserve with trees, shrubs and flowering plants. There is a walking trail that follows the perimeter fence and other trails that wind through the large fenced camp. The restaurant looks onto a small dam that continually attracts wildlife to drink and the viewing walkway is ideal to watch birds from. The camp is surrounded by rocky hillsides covered in a mixed broad-leafed woodland known as Malelane Mountain Bushveld. The camp has a souvenir & grocery shop, a large swimming pool, laundry and restaurant & bar.
Accommodation: Berg en dal Camp – 4 x nights

Days 5 to 8 **Monday 14th October to Friday 18th October 2024**
Kruger National Park – Central section.

We will be winding our way north, to Satara Camp, via some of the lesser used roads, stopping at water holes and hopefully chalking up many new bird & mammal species. En route to our camp we will be driving through different vegetation types, each one attracting different birds, mammals and reptiles. We will stop for our picnic lunch at one of the picnic areas. Arriving at our camp in the late afternoon.

Birds seen on previous drives include: Chin-spot Batis, Burchell's Starling, African Hoopoe, Grey Turaco, Grey-headed Sparrow, Red-billed Buffalo Weaver, Dark-capped Bulbul, White-breasted and Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Little swift, Natal Franklin, Yellow-billed Kite, Bateleur, Diderik Cuckoo, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Crested Barbet and Lesser-masked Weaver. Some of the river habitats are heavily wooded. Here we should lookout for Gorgeous Bush-Shrike and Grey-headed Kingfisher. We will also be checking the rocky cliffs of Nwanetsi for Mocking Cliff-Chat and Red-winged Starling.

For our afternoon drive, we will be game and birdwatching around the eastern area of the park on the Gudzani road. We will ascertain which local roads have been the most rewarding during the day, with the view to finding Lion, Leopard and Cheetah. Sharp's Grysbok, Serval, Giraffe and Warthog.

The sunset drive will leave the camp in day light and return after dark, in time for dinner. These three-hour nocturnal drives in the parks open top 4x4, will afford us the chance of seeing birds and mammals not normally found during the daylight hours. Careful spotting with the spotting light, will reveal both owls and nocturnal ground birds such as Coursers and Thick-Knees. Naturally we will also be on the lookout for the nocturnal activities of the major predators of the park. Lion, Leopard, African Wild Cat, Serval and Caracal, as well as Springhare, Large-spotted Genet, Civet, Porcupine, Lesser Bushbaby, Pangolin and the nocturnal Mozambique Spitting Cobra.

On one of our days at Satara we will leave the camp at dawn, with a view to having breakfast overlooking the Olifants River at Olifants Camp. We will explore the Ngotsos and Olifants River systems en route to Olifants Camp. As we drive further north the vegetation becomes dominated by Mopane woodland, which in turn attracts many special birds and mammals. We will be exploring the Letaba, Makhadzi and Olifant River systems, where we may be rewarded by some special sighting of the African

Wild Dog and some of the rarer antelope species like the Sable Antelope, Roan Antelope, Lichtenstein's Hartebeest, Nyala, Klipspringer, Sharpe's Grysbok and Reeduck. It can be very rewarding to wait silently next to one of the numerous waterholes to see what will appear.

After breakfast at Olifants camp we will head further north to Letaba Camp. Spotted Hyaena, Blue Wildebeest, Kudu, Waterbuck, Warthog, Tree Squirrel, Vervet Monkey, Slender Mongoose and Black-backed Jackal are on our mammal list for the day! We will look out for them on the surrounding savanna plains, which also play host to Kori Bustard, Secretarybird, Black-bellied Bustard, Ostrich and Ground Hornbill.

Satara Camp is one of the most attractive camps in the Kruger Park and the second largest camp in the park. The chalets and cottages are set within a setting of mature trees and natural bush and the gardens are planted with flowering shrubs and aloes. The gardens within the camp have prolific birdlife and the small waterhole in front of the restaurant attracts a constant stream of wildlife. The calls of owls and nightjars at night time are punctuated intermittently by the whoop of hyaena, the screech of jackal and the roars of lion.

Our cottages are on the perimeter of the camp and are all en-suite, with a private terrace area, air-conditioning and a small kitchenette. There is a swimming pool in the camp as well as a restaurant, bar, a well-stocked grocery shop, tourist gift shop and an information centre. There is plenty of opportunity for walking, birdwatching and photography within the large camp. There are resident Honey Badgers and African Wild Cats that live within the safety of the camp. These mammals are tolerated in the camp as they keep the rodents and snakes at bay!

Accommodation: Satara Camp – 4 x nights – full board

**Days 9 to 13. Friday 18th October to Wednesday 23rd October 2024
Kruger National Park – Eastern section.**

The open savanna habitat of the eastern area of the park with its large trees, high population density of herbivores and attendant predators, is prime habitat for large raptors. Many of the parks large raptors can be seen in this area, including Martial Eagle, Tawny Eagle and Steppe Eagle. Kills attract White-headed Vulture, Lappet-faced Vulture, White-backed Vulture, Hooded Vulture and sometimes Cape Vulture. We will plan to be at Satara Camp for breakfast. After breakfast we will be winding our way south, to the Lower Sabie Camp. We will be stopping at many water holes and hopefully chalk up many new bird & mammal species. We plan to have lunch on the deck overlooking the Sabie River at Lower Sabie Camp.

We will have an afternoon at leisure while we are at Lower Saboe Camp and in the evening we will have another chance to go on an evening game drive with a parks ranger. African Civet, Small-spotted Genet, Porcupine, Aardvark, Scrub Hare and Lesser Bushbaby are all on our list of possibilities.

There are many productive roads in this area. The Salitje Road, which takes us through prime Cheetah country. The dam causeway over the Lower Sabie River is a good spot to look for waterbirds including African Jacana, Goliath Heron, Green-backed Heron, Wire-tailed Swallow and African Fish Eagle. The main road to Skukuza follows the Sabie River which attracts a variety of storks, including Marabou Stork, Yellow-billed Stork, African Openbill, Woolly-necked Stork and Black Stork. The Nkuhlu Picnic Spot is a great place to stretch the legs and also where we look out for the Half-collared Kingfisher. The Lake Panic bird hide near Skukuza is an excellent spot for some bird photography from the hide. Malachite Kingfisher, Blue Waxbills, Water Thick-knees and Purple-crested Turaco can be seen here.

The roads south of the camp take us through patches of open grassveld, which will afford us a good chance of seeing the illusive Cheetah. The 'Big 5': Lion, Elephant, Buffalo, Leopard and Black Rhino are also well represented in this southern area of the Park. We will spend a day exploring the southern reaches of the Park towards Crocodile Bridge. We will be looking out for the birds and mammals that may have eluded us.

Lower Sabie Camp has some pleasant gardens that overlook a dam in the Sabie River. The restaurant viewing deck has great views over the dam, with Hippopotamus and Nile Crocodile being residents to the dam. Virtually all the mammal species in the Park need to drink and there is a constant procession of wildlife in the early morning and at dusk. Like Satara Camp, the gardens within the camp have prolific birdlife and the dam in front of the restaurant attracts a constant stream of birdlife. Our cottages are on the perimeter of the camp and are all en-suite, with air-conditioning, a small kitchenette and a private terrace area. There is a small swimming pool in the camp as well as an excellent restaurant, and a well-stocked grocery shop and tourist gift shop.

Accommodation: Lower Sabie Camp – 5 nights – full board

DAY 14.

Wednesday 23rd October 2024

An early morning game drive and our last opportunity to spot any birds or mammals that may have eluded us. We will be making our way through the park stopping here & there to see what we can find. The southern area of the park receives more rain than the central area, which makes the water holes more permanent. We will be stopping at these water holes and hopefully chalking up many new bird & mammal species. We will exit from the park and drive to the airport.

Full board:

- ❖ All accommodation. (Accommodation is in National Parks Camps. All rooms are en suite).
- ❖ All meals:
 - Breakfasts are full English or Continental.
 - Lunches are usually a light lunch or a picnic al fresco!
 - Dinners are a la carte or a set menu.
- ❖ Gratuities on all meals.
- ❖ All entrance fees including the National Parks conservation fee.
- ❖ 2 evening 4X4 game drives with a park's ranger.
- ❖ A cool box in the vehicle containing soft drinks and bottled mineral water.
- ❖ Large natural history reference library in the vehicle.
- ❖ Tour program, including a full itinerary with local information, bird & mammal check lists, maps, diary and note paper.
- ❖ Transport in comfortable Microbus with air conditioning.
- ❖ Accredited driver / guides.