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TRIP DOSSIER

South Africa: Best of Kruger and Mpumalanga (KM) (8 DAYS LAND ONLY) Lodge Safari

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MPUMALANGA - 'THE PLACE WHERE THE SUN RISES!' is considered to be one of the most geographically diverse and unbelievably beautiful places in South Africa.

Mpumalanga lies in the east of South Africa, north of KwaZulu-Natal and bordering Swaziland and Mozambique. In the northeast, the land rises towards mountain peaks and then terminates in an immense escarpment. In some places, this escarpment plunges hundreds of metres down to the low-lying area known as the Lowveld.

People are drawn to Mpumalanga by the magnificent scenery, by the fauna and flora and by the saga of the 1870s gold rush era and a wealth of fascinating tribal legends. Mountains, panoramic passes, valleys, rivers, waterfalls and forests characterise the landscape.

Kruger National Park.

Where nearly 2 million hectares of unrivalled diversity of life forms fuses with historical and archaeological sites - this is real Africa.

The world-renowned Kruger National Park offers a wildlife experience that ranks with the best in Africa. Established in 1898 to protect the wildlife of the South African Lowveld, the Kruger National Park is unrivalled in the diversity of its life forms .

Truly the flagship of the South African national parks, Kruger is home to an impressive number of species: 336 trees, 49 fish, 34 amphibians, 114 reptiles, 507 birds and 147 mammals. Man's interaction with the Lowveld environment over many centuries - from bushman rock paintings to majestic archaeological sites like Masorini and Thulamela - is evident in the Kruger National Park. These treasures represent the cultures, persons and events that played a role in the history of the Kruger National Park and are conserved along with the park's natural assets.

Grading: *Anyone in good health with a sense of adventure should be able to take part. There's no real physical difficulty involved, but as in much of Africa – rough roads in the national parks, limited facilities and basic accommodation may require you to adjust your levels of expectation.*

NB: *Although it is our intention to operate this itinerary as printed and detailed below, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of alterations to flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure such as accommodation, or other operational factors. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops may vary from those outlined. Included meals are indicated in the daily itinerary i.e. (B LD - Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner).*

Day 1: Johannesburg

You are collected at O R Tambo airport and we drive to our guest house in the northern suburbs of

Johannesburg, set in a secure golf estate, and check in.

Johannesburg is an extraordinary city, born just over 125 years ago, when one of the world's richest gold-bearing reefs was discovered under the sweeping savannah plains.

The area of Johannesburg began on a vast undulating grassy plain, interspersed with ridges and *kopjes* (small hills) in an area known as the Witwatersrand, named after the white water springs that coursed the land. It wasn't until George Harrison, an Australian prospector, arrived here that the mineral wealth of the Witwatersrand became apparent. In 1886, after George sold his gold claim for just £10, Johannesburg was born. He may never have envisaged the

significant world history that would unfold here in the province of Gauteng, place of gold.



Guest house in Johannesburg.

We have optional excursions that we can offer you to do or we can relax in the garden or swim in the pool at the guest house in Johannesburg.

Guest house 1 night; (D) South African Braai



Day 2 & 3: Sabi & Blyde River

Today we start our safari after a scrumptious breakfast and travel from Johannesburg to Mpumalanga.

We stop over at Dullstroom. The village, situated at 2100m above sea level in the Steenkampsberg range, dates back to the early 1880's, when Dutch settlers came to the area. The town derives its name from one Wolterus Dull, chairman of the Dutch immigrants. The "stroom" (stream) refers to the abundance of water in the area: The Crocodile River, which runs through the Kruger National Park, has its origin in Dullstroom.



Beautiful Pilgrim's Rest.

In the afternoon we visit Pilgrim's Rest. Mining in this region of Mpumalanga dates back many centuries, when unknown miners worked quartz reefs in the area for gold. Proof of these diggings can still be found in this area.

The history of this small delightful village dates back to 1873 when a miner, Alex Patterson, discovered alluvial gold on the farm named Ponieskrantz. He had left the Mac-Mac area to search for a place that was less congested. Though the discovery was kept as a secret, the inevitable happened when a second prospector, William Trafford, also discovered gold close by.

What they had found in this beautiful valley, drew optimistic gold panners and prospectors from all over the country and the world (news of gold strikes of this magnitude travel fast!).

On 22nd September 1873 Pilgrim's Rest was officially proclaimed a gold field and the scatter of tents and rudimentary shacks soon grew into a flourishing little village

complete with sturdy brick houses, church, shops, canteens, a newspaper and the well-known Royal Hotel.

The diggers called it Pilgrim's Rest because here, at last, after so many false trails and faded dreams, they had truly found their home.

In due course the alluvial deposits were depleted and the locals turned to forestry. This village, whose residents still number in the hundreds, has been painstakingly preserved as a "living museum" and is a major South African tourist venue.

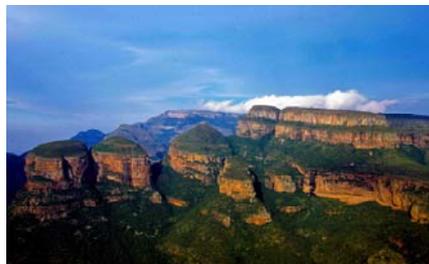
On our second day we visit the scenic sights of Blyde River Canyon including the Potholes and Three Rondavels.



Blyde River Canyon



Blyde River



The Three Rondavels.

In the afternoon we visit the Lone Creek Waterfall. Along the edge of the escarpment, we visit God's Window (time and weather permitting) and the scenic gorge with the Pinnacle Rock.

The entire Mpumalanga area offers exceptional opportunities for bird-watching, hiking, horse-riding and fishing. Streams once panned for gold have become the haunts of eager anglers and lazy trout. Steeped in the history of pioneers, hunters and fortune seekers, fascinating gold rush towns abound. Mpumalanga offers something for everyone.

We overnight in the Sabi area.

Lodge; 2 nights (2 x B, 2 x D)

Days 4-6: Kruger National Park

After breakfast we continue our safari to the Kruger National Park.



African Hunting Dog.

The first explorer to set foot in the region was the Dutchman François de Cuiper who led a Dutch East India Company expedition to explore the region. However, the expedition was attacked and driven back by local tribes-people near Gomondwane. Only around 1838 were Voortrekker expeditions led by Louis Trichardt and Hans van Rensburg able to successfully establish forward outposts. Hundreds of Europeans and farmers came to the Lowveld lured by rumors of gold and the great quantity of valuable commodities such as ivory and skins. This caused the number of game to dramatically decrease due to hunting and trading of animal skins and horns.



Leopard



President Paul Kruger was told about the rapid destruction of wildlife in the area by hunters, after which he succeeded to persuade the Transvaal parliament to establish a protected area for wildlife in the Lowveld region.



Elephant in Kruger National Park.

The very first ranger in the reserve was Paul Bester who made his residence in a rustic rondavel (hut) which is now the site of the headquarters camp, Skukuza. Documents concerning the History of the Kruger National Park can be viewed at the Skukuza Library.

We do a morning game drive to our camp and settle into our chalet. Looming several hundred feet over the Olifants river bushveld is this eponymous hilltop rest camp, which provides an authentic experience of this area's rugged wildlife, varied flora and exquisite panoramic view. Park officials warn that certain creatures which inhabit the park could prove dangerous if not approached or handled correctly. These may include bats, spiders, snakes, and scorpions.

In the afternoon we do a game drive to learn more of the fauna and flora before returning to our camp and sundowners under the African skies.



Black Rhino Kruger Park.

All the remaining days in the park we go on morning and afternoon game drives exploring different

areas of the park. The Kruger National Park is the second-largest game reserve in Africa and the largest in South Africa. Keeping in theme with the name of the camp, the area plays host to a multitude of elephants. Baboons, vervet monkeys, fruit bats and thick-tailed bush babies all reside in the Olifants area, as well as lion, leopard and Cape Clawless otter. Situated in rugged veld on rhyolite and basalt soil, Olifants river rest hosts lowveld cluster-leaf, raisin bush and mopane. The camp itself exhibits an abundance of trees and plants, including a variety of aloe species. Probably the only accessible sesame bush in the Kruger National Park can also be seen here, as well as sjambok pod (yellow flowers), weeping boerboon (red flowers) and tree euphorbia can all be sighted in the area depending on season.



Eagle Owl

White-fronted Plover and White-crowned Lapwing (Plover) can both be seen in the riverbed. Pel's Fishing-Owl can be found on the Olifants river near Balule, along with several stork, heron and kingfisher species. White-backed night heron and (in 2002) the rare (to the park) Black Egret have also been seen in the park at very specific locations.

Olifants Camp, en-suite bungalows; 3 nights (3xB, 3xD).



Zebra Kruger Park.

Day 7: Johannesburg

After breakfast we do a game drive out of the park on our way to Johannesburg. We should arrive in Johannesburg the late afternoon.

Guest House: 1 night (1xB)



Day 8: To the Airport

Transfer to the airport for your return flight home. End of our service.

(B)

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Since January 2003, Barefoot Safaris has donated £10 for every person we take to Malawi and Zambia, to assist with the funding and development of **Chanyoli School**. Parents and school staff have recently fired 60,000 bricks and began building this year. You may like to bring some books or school equipment to assist this very deserving project and see for yourself how well received it is. Any donations in cash are always welcome.

We also support the **SOS Children's Village**, which you can visit in Lilongwe. They would be most grateful for any children's clothes or toys that you might donate.



Price Includes:

- Accommodation on a shared basis.
- Entrance Fees
- All transfers as per Trip Dossier.
- All activities in this suggested itinerary
- Park fees and departure tax
- Meals as per itinerary
- Transportation in Safari Truck
- Professional Guide

Price Excludes:

- International & Domestic Flights
- Unspecified Meals
- All Beverages
- Sleeping Bags (and small pillow) for camping
- Optional Extra Activities & Entrance Fees
- Visas
- Curio's, Gratuities, Telephone calls etc.
- Travel Insurance

**** Excursions:** A qualified grade 1 safari guide from Barefoot Safaris will accompany clients on all excursions except where it is necessary to employ a guide from local parks.

- Please feel free to add on to this tour with any of the other possible tours we offer in the area.
- The accommodation specified in the itinerary is a guide only and subject to availability. Alternatives will be of a similar standard if required.
- The Dollar rate is just an indication of the price at the current exchange rate, it cannot be guaranteed until a confirmed booking is made

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Climate: South Africa's wet season runs from mid October or early November to March or April. During the rainy season, daytime temperatures are pleasantly warm, but low lying areas can sometimes be humid. The heaviest rain is confined to the highlands, while while the lakeshore is much drier.

The dry season tends to be cooler and generally runs from May to early October. During the dry season, daytime temperatures in the lower areas are fairly consistent at 21°C to 26°C. In the highlands daytime temperatures can be considerably cooler ranging between 10°C and 20°C.

Nights can be particularly cold during the dry season, so warm clothing is essential. Kruger's can be cool and dry season runs from May to Aug; the hot and dry from Sep to Oct, and the wet season from Nov to Apr.

Baggage:

- One piece of main luggage only (**max 12kg**), this should be a soft bag rather than a hard suitcase, so it can be easily stowed and not take up too much room in the vehicle or in the tent. Space in the vehicle is restricted.

- A day sack (large enough to carry your camera, water bottle, & binoculars etc) is also essential.
- Sleeping Bag

Clothing and Footwear:

- For comfort in the heat, lightweight cotton is best. Brightly colored clothing is not appropriate for safari because it is easily seen by animals and has the added discomfort of attracting insects (wear muted tones in natural colors i.e. beige, khaki, olive, etc, but **not** army-style camouflage clothing).
- A long-sleeved shirt is essential to protect neck and arms while on game walks/drives.
- Long trousers and socks for evenings.
- Windproof/waterproof jacket.
- Lightweight trail boots.
- Trainers or sandals for relaxing.
- Sunhat.
- Swimming gear.
- Warm mid layers i.e. fleece or jumper for cool nights and early mornings
- Kagoul if you are travelling during the rains.

Equipment:

- A laundry service may be available in some hotels, but we recommend you take biodegradable travel detergent
- Torch (Head torch is ideal)
- Water bottle
- Sunglasses, sunscreen and lipsalve
- Insect repellent
- Binoculars
- Dust can be a problem for cameras; take a dustproof bag

Medicine:

- Basic personal first aid kit
- Any prescription drugs required
- Female sanitary products
- Malaria prophylaxis

Visas and Permits:

South Africa: Holders of UK, USA, CAN, AUS, NZ, IRL, NOR, NL passports do not require a visa.

This information is given in good faith, but may be subject to change without warning. Please note that, where appropriate, obtaining a valid visa is ultimately your responsibility. Please consult a visa agency or the consular authorities 4-6 weeks before departure for the most up-to-date information.

Vaccinations & Health Advice:

Vaccination requirements & other health advice can change, so please check with a specialized travel clinic for up to date information before you depart. For useful advice you can visit The Medical Advisory Service for Travelers Abroad www.masta.org

Nevertheless we recommend that you protect yourselves against: *Malaria, Hepatitis A, and Polio & Typhoid as a minimum.*

Food: Although every effort will be made to accommodate any dietary requirements, the availability of certain products is limited in South Africa. Any special dietary

requirements should be explained to us in writing at time of booking. Gluten free food should be brought with you if required. Decaffeinated coffee should be brought with you if required.

Local Costs: 7 Breakfasts and 6 evening meals are included. You must pay for all other meals yourself (you can eat very well for \$10 a day). Approximate costs are given for guidance only, and may vary widely according to location and type of establishment.

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Coffee/tea | USD\$1.30 |
| Soft drink | USD\$1.30 |
| Medium beer | USD\$2.60 |
| Local snack lunch | USD\$5.00 |
| 3-course dinner* | USD\$17.00 |

*reasonable mid-range tourist class restaurant.

Optional excursions:

Some or all of the excursions detailed below may be available; others not listed may also be available. Approximate per person costs are given for guidance only, and may depend on the number of participants. Your safari guide should be able to assist you in arranging them as well as advise you on any.

| | |
|---------------|------|
| Bush Braai | \$62 |
| Sunrise Drive | \$25 |
| Morning Walk | \$49 |
| Sunset Drive | \$25 |
| Night Drive | \$22 |

Tipping: For better or worse, tipping is an accepted part of everyday life, and - although it is always at your discretion - you will be expected to tip to reward service. Your group leader will give you an indication of when and how much is appropriate. This can vary widely, but please allow USD 25 per person for this tour.

Seasonal changes: Although all rooms/chalets in malaria areas that we use are protected with mosquito netting; there will be insects and mosquitoes about. The camps are essentially "al fresco" so you should be prepared with insect repellent and appropriate long sleeved/legged clothing.

Insects are attracted to lights at night and are especially prevalent during the rainy season. Switching the lights off and placing a hurricane lamp a distance from you will remove the problem.

The evenings and mornings will be chilly from about June to August; so it is advisable to take a light sweater or fleece.

Currency: South African Rand. We recommend that you bring all you need for the trip as cash in US\$ or to make use of your debit or credit card.

NB: Pre 1990 dollar bills are not accepted in most African countries.

Airport Tax: .This should be included in your air ticket. Please confirm with your air carrier



Temperature data for Johannesburg

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Average high °C | 25.6 | 25.1 | 24 | 21.1 | 18.9 | 16 | 16.7 | 19.4 | 22.8 | 23.8 | 24.2 | 25.2 |
| Average low °C | 14.7 | 14.1 | 13.1 | 10.3 | 7.2 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 6.2 | 9.3 | 11.2 | 12.7 | 13.9 |

Temperature data Kruger NP

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Average high °C | 33 | 32 | 31 | 29 | 28 | 26 | 26 | 27 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 |
| Average low °C | 21 | 20 | 19 | 15 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 13 | 16 | 18 | 20 |