



shapshap
adventure travel

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20 Day South African Explorer- camping

Local Payment

There is no LP on this tour.

Countries Visited

South Africa x 3, Lesotho and Swaziland

Vehicle

Overland Truck

Malaria

Prophylactics are required for the last leg of the tour.

Departure Point

8.00am from 1st Floor,
Leader House,
40 Shortmarket Street,
Greenmarket Square,
Cape Town,
South Africa.

End Point

The Airport Grand Hotel,
100 North Rand Road,
Bardene,
Boksburg,
RSA. Tel: +27 (0) 11 823 1843
www.legacyhotels.co.za

What's included

Meals as indicated on the itinerary, accommodation, registered guides, transport and selected activities as per itinerary.

What's excluded

All items of a personal nature, alcohol, snacks, souvenirs, tips and optional activities (see list for an indication of prices).

Health

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies that you may have.

Visas

Please note that these are your responsibility. Some Nationalities require visas for Lesotho and Swaziland. See Pre Departure Booklet for more information.

Climate

The African sun is very strong, please use a factor 30 sunscreen and wear a hat. You should drink at least 3 liters of water per day to avoid dehydration. African winters are cold. Please see Pre Departure Booklet for detailed information.

Currency and Banking

South African Rand is the best currency to use on this route. Please see Pre Departure Booklet for detailed information on each country. Travelers Cheques can take a long time to change into cash and often incur unreasonable charges. Credit Cards cannot always be processed – especially in remote areas.

Vaccinations

None required by law, but please see the Pre Departure Information booklet for more information on vaccinations in Africa.

Onward Travel

This tour can be linked to the Okavango Expedition.

Pre and Post Tour Accommodation

If you require accommodation before or after your tour we can arrange this for you. We can also arrange airport transfers – contact us via info@shapshaptravel.com.

Arrival

Please be sure to arrive 1 day before your tour is due to depart. This will avoid any problems such as lost luggage, misplaced bags or any unpredictable problems such as airline strikes or delayed flight arrival.

Departure

Please book your flight to depart the day after the tour officially ends. This is to account for any delays that we may experience due to unpredictable road conditions.

Note: All information is subject to change without prior notice. Travel times can change depending on road or weather conditions, etc. These are used as a guideline only.

Did you receive your Pre Departure Information Booklet?

If not please contact us at info@shapshaptravel.com and we will e-mail you the document; alternatively you can also download the document from our website at www.shapshaptravel.com.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Country	Area	Activity	Price Range
South Africa	Oudtshoorn	Tour of Ostrich Farm	R100 to R150
South Africa	Bloukrans Bridge	World Highest Bungee Jump	R590 to R650
South Africa	Drakensberg	Horse Riding - Per Hour	R120 to R150
South Africa	Knysna	Lagoon Cruise	R80 to R150
South Africa	Knysna	Knysna Forest Entrance Fee	R10 to R40
Lesotho	Malealea	Pony Trekking	R220 to R310

Lesotho	Malealea	Village Walk - 1 hour	R10 to R15
South Africa	Durban	Dinner at local restaurant	R150 to R300
South Africa	Kruger NP	Sunset Game Drive 3-Hours	R140 to R180
South Africa	Kruger NP	Dawn Game Walk 2 to 3 Hours	R270 to R300
South Africa	Timbavati	Local Village Tour	R100 to R150
South Africa	Tsitsikamma NP	Treetop / Canopy Tour	R395 to R495
Swaziland	Mlilwane NP	Horse Riding	R100 to R400
Swaziland	Mlilwane NP	Mountain Biking	R85 to R150
South Africa	Johannesburg	Dinner at local restaurant	R150 to R300

Note:

There are more optional activities being created every day- we have listed only the most popular. If there is something specific you would like to do then speak to your guide as they will be able to assist you.

DAY 1 STELLENBOSCH WINE ROUTE/SWELLENDAM

After a short briefing we leave Cape Town and travel a short distance to Stellenbosch. On the way we stop at a wine farm to sample some regional wine. We also visit the Cheetah Breeding project to admire these beautiful animals. We continue our journey to Swellendam where we will overnight.

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Kam'bati Camp, Swellendam www.kambati.co.za

Facilities: Drinkable water, good ablutions, hot showers.

Included Activities: Wine Tasting and Entrance to Cheetah project.

Route: Cape Town to Swellendam. ± 300km

Travel time: ± 7-9hrs

The heart of South Africa's wine industry, Stellenbosch is a place of great beauty and culture that's steeped in South African tradition. The Stellenbosch Wine Route is arguably the country's most famous, and the Stellenbosch Wine of Origin area includes 106 cellars - most of which are open to the public. Enjoy a day's wine tasting and wine buying and you'll sip more than our great South African wines - you'll taste our South African way of life. If you are in Cape Town for a few days before your tour we recommend you take a full day tour to this area, if you are interested in wine it is really too big to cover in the short time we have available on the tour www.wineroute.co.za.

We set off east towards the small town of Swellendam. Nestling at the foot of the Langeberg Mountains, Swellendam has much to offer visitors who have an interest in history, nature and outdoor activities. Situated on the N2, approximately 300km from Cape Town and George, Swellendam is the perfect choice for a halfway stopover or as a base from which to explore the area. For three months in 1795, Swellendam was one of the capitals of the world. Its citizens, enraged over the misrule by the Dutch East India Company, dismissed their magistrate, declared an independent republic and appointed a president. After British occupation, the rebel republic faded away. The town was named after the Dutch Governor Hendrik Swellengrebel, and his wife, Helena Ten Damme. Annual rainfall is spread over the year (55% winter and 45% summer). There is little wind and temperatures are moderate. There is no shortage of water and gardens are lush and luxuriant. The cost of living is reasonable and the town is clean, efficient and well run.

DAY 2 OUDTSHOORN

We drive inland to the Cango Caves where we take a guided tour. While in the area we have the opportunity to visit an Ostrich farm for a quick tour. *Optional Activities: Ostrich Farm visit and Ostrich riding.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Kleinplaas Holiday Resort Campsite www.kleinplaas.co.za

Facilities: Drinkable water, good ablutions, laundry facilities, swimming pool.

Included Activities: Cango Caves tour www.cangocaves.co.za

Route: Swellendam to Oudtshoorn. ± 250km

Travel time: ± 6hrs

Oudtshoorn – Ostrich Capital of the World

Oudtshoorn is known as the ostrich feather capital of the world. It was named after Baron Pieter von Rheede von Oudtshoorn, who died in 1773 on his way to the Cape to become Governor. The town was founded in 1847. The town is situated 300 m above sea level, with the Swartberg Mountain range to the north and Outeniqua range to the south. Arbeidsgenot, the home of Cornelius Jacob Langenhoven was built here. Langenhoven was the author of the old South African National anthem, "Die Stem" which still forms part of the new National Anthem. Ostrich feathers were obligatory items of high fashion just before world war one. The great feather boom began around 1870. At its height there were more than 750 000 domesticated ostriches in the little Karoo area and feathers were being exported at the rate of about 450 000kg's a year. Then came world war one and then austerity became a way of supporting the war effort. Many farmers went bankrupt in this time. In later years the industry revived with the demand for ostrich leather, biltong, eggs and feathers. At present there are about 90 000 Ostriches in the Little Karoo.

Cango Caves

Common myth has it that the Caves were first explored by a local farmer named Jacobus van Zyl (after who the first chamber, van Zyl's Hall, was named) – although research fails to reveal anybody by that name in the Cango area in the 1770's. And besides – we now know that the Caves have been known to man since the Early Stone Age. Still, even if there never was a Jacobus van Zyl, the Cango Caves have been at the forefront of tourism in South Africa since the end of the 17th century: the first to be protected by environmental legislation and the first to employ a full-time tourist guide, they remain South Africa's oldest tourist attraction. In the 19th century, entrance to the Caves cost 5 rix dollars – the modern equivalent of about R500.00 – but that even didn't deter some destructive tourists and many carted away parts of the delicate stalactites and stalagmites for souvenirs or engraved their names onto the walls. In response, the governor of the Cape Colony, Lord Charles Somerset, published the first Caves Regulation in 1820. The 1st law designed to protect an environmental resource in South Africa; it banned the collection of souvenirs, provided for fines for anyone caught damaging Caves formations and prescribed an entrance fee which had to be paid to the District Officer – who was made responsible for enforcing the rules.

Many of the most significant discoveries in the Caves were made by its first full-time guide, Johnnie van Wassenaar – who served for 43 years: from 1891 until his retirement in 1934. He opened many side chambers and introduced thousands of people to Cango 1, which remains the only part of the Caves which the public may visit. Importantly, though, it is clear that the Caves were known to man long before Europeans first landed at the Cape: recent finds – of some tools left behind in ancient hearths in the Cave mouth – prove that humans have lived and sheltered here for at least 80 000 years. The Cango Caves reveal

their secrets painfully slowly. Where once we thought that they'd been inhabited for a thousand centuries, recent archaeological finds have now proved that they've sheltered us for more than 80 000 years. Where once we thought that they were only about one kilometer in length, we now know that they extend for well over 5 kilometers – and that they could be even bigger still! But the Caves' history and their size are just two of their many mysteries. The skeletons of three genets (small cats) have been found in Cango 2: is there another secret entrance to the Caves? Or were these unfortunates drowned and left behind by receding floodwaters? And how did the skeletons of bats – which have also been found in Cango 2 – become enclosed in calcite many hundreds of even thousands of years ago?

DAY 3 KNYSNA

We return to the coast via some lovely country roads and camp near picturesque seaside village of Knysna. *Optional Activities: Canoeing, hiking & the lagoon cruise.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Dorms: Highfield Backpackers www.highfieldsbackpackers.co.za

Facilities: Shared Ablution, swimming pool, bar, pool table.

Route: Oudtshoorn to Knysna. ± 150km

Travel time: ± 4hrs

One of the Garden Route's most popular places is the Knysna Lagoon, an excellent venue for water sports. The lagoon is guarded by two sandstone cliffs known as The Heads. There are spectacular views from the Eastern Head. The town is renowned for its beer and oysters. Visitors are welcome at Mitchell's Brewery, and you can sample oysters at the Knysna Oyster Company. Millwood House Museum covers the region's history. The Angling Museum is housed in the Old Gaol complex in Queen Street. Local craft centres and art galleries are well worth a visit. Noetzie, the Buffalo Valley Game Farm and the Featherbed Nature Reserve are additional attractions.

DAY 4/5 BLOUKRANS / TSITSIKAMMA NATIONAL PARK

It is a short drive to the Storms River and Bloukrans Bridge. We will spend time exploring this coastal region and the Tsitsikamma National Park. The hiking here is some of the best in South Africa. *Optional Activities: Bungy jumping (highest in the world), treetop canopy tours, hiking.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Tube'n Axe Campsite www.tubenaxe.co.za

Facilities: Drinkable water, bar, good ablutions, hot showers, laundry, Internet.

Included Activities: Tsitsikamma National Park Entrance Fee

Route: Knysna to Tsitsikamma. ± 90km

Travel time: ± 2- 3hrs

Tsitsikamma National Park

Tsitsikamma National Park is the third most frequently visited out of the twenty national parks in South Africa. The Park conserves a considerable portion of the natural biota (all living organisms) of the Garden Route. The primary vegetation biomes consist of Mountain Fynbos, Coastal Fynbos, Afromontane Forest and the Marine herb land-, inter-tidal-, and sub-tidal zones. The mean annual rainfall is 1200 mm. Tsitsikamma National Park protects a wonderland of inter-tidal and marine life. This is one of the largest single unit 'no take' (including fishing) Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in the world, conserving 11 percent of South Africa's Temperate South Coast rocky shoreline and provides a 'laboratory' for fisheries baseline research on endangered line fish species. In 1964 when it was proclaimed,

it became the first Marine National Park to be proclaimed in Africa. In the forest there are several massive trees, the tallest of these is 36 m, some are more than 1000 years old. The forest has more than 30 species of indigenous trees. Tsitsikamma National Park is situated at the heart of the picturesque tourist region known as the **Garden Route**, found in the Southern Cape of South Africa.

DAY 6 ADDO ELEPHANT NATIONAL PARK

The journey continues into the Eastern Cape where we enter the Addo Elephant National Park where we are surrounded by these magnificent creatures. Game driving in the National Park will allow us to take some wonderful photos.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Addo Elephant Park www.sanparks.org/parks/addo

Facilities: Drinkable water, bar, shop, restaurant, good ablutions, hot showers.

Included Activities: Afternoon game drive.

Route: Tsitsikamma to Addo. ± 300km

Travel time: ± 4-5hrs

Although the Addo Elephant belongs to the same species as the African Elephant, it is smaller, with more rounded ears and the females generally have no tusks. The park was named after the KhoiKhoi name Kadouw, which they gave to a forting place over the nearby Sundays River. The bush here is a combination of Acacia, Spekboom, Gwarrie and Boerboom. The English name for the Spekboom is "Elephants food".

In 1919 a Professional hunter, Major Jan Pretorius, was hired by the administration of the Cape Province to destroy the entire herd that inhabited the area at the time. It took him a year to kill 120, but he was then stopped due to a public outcry. Only sixteen Addo Elephants remained, but they were peppered with bullet holes, panic stricken, vengeful and cunning. And they declared war on man. In 1931 the area was proclaimed as a national park. The Elephants, however, were still on the war path, destroying crops and attacking anyone who came near. Finally, in 1952, one of the beleaguered farmers of the area suggested that a fence made up of tram rails and lift cables be erected around the park. This finally kept the Elephants secure and out of the surrounding farming area. Black rhino was reintroduced in 1961- the first in the Cape for a hundred years.

DAY 7/8 HOGSBACK

After a final game drive in Addo we depart the National Park and drive, via Port Elizabeth, to Hogsback. The following day your guides will lead you on a relaxing hike in the surrounding forest. *Optional Activities: Horse riding, mountain biking.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Away with the Fairies Campsite www.awaywiththefairies.co.za

Facilities: Drinkable water, bar, good ablutions.

Route: Addo to Hogsback. ± 450km

Travel time: ± 8-9hrs (via P.E)

The town of Hogsback nestles on the slopes of the Amatola Mountains and is particularly renowned for its indigenous forests and its fairytale landscape. The Amatola Mountains rise from the dry grasslands and hot valleys, their green flanks an oasis of jeweled colors and coolness. Paths lead through the indigenous rainforest that crowds the slopes, to waterfalls sparkling down the cliffs. Misty rainbows lead to the pots of gold and fairy hideaways. The Hogsback Mountain, 1937 meters high, overlooks a handsome forest where azaleas, rhododendrons, daffodils and many other species of European plants and fruits grow as well

as a profusion of berries. Paths have been laid out through the forest and breathtaking views greet the climber after an easy hike to the top of the peaks. The Xhosa call it Qabimbola (red clay on the face) because the clay dug from the pits is red and is used for facial decoration and skin protection. Rumor has it that J.R.R Tolkien was inspired in part by the Hogsback when he created his classic Lord of the Rings trilogy. This wonderland caters for many outdoor activities from angling to rock climbing. The magnificent Amatola Mountains and the Hogsback have this Pan-like ability to lead you astray and lose track of time as you are lulled by the awe-inspiring beauty and the whispering cool breezes.

DAY 9/10 LESOTHO

Today we leave South Africa and enter Lesotho. The next day we get up early and those going on the Pony Trekking will ride into the remote hills of Lesotho accompanied by local guides. If you remain behind you can visit the local village or craft market. *Optional Activities: Pony Trekking Excursion, Hiking.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Malealea Campsite www.malealea.com

Facilities: Drinkable water, bar, restaurant, basic shop, generator for electricity.

Included Activities: Local school and village visit

Route: Hogsback to Malealea Lodge. ±510km

Travel time: ±11–12 hrs plus a border crossing (Long Day)

Border posts: South Africa: Maserubrug, Tel.: +27 (0) 51 924 4300, Open: 24 hours

Lesotho: Maserubridge, Tel.: +26 (0) 2 313 796, Open: 24 hours

LESOTHO

Landlocked in the centre of South Africa, Lesotho is one of the few countries in Africa with natural boundaries created by tribal demands rather than those imposed by colonial decree. There are few natural resources and population pressures have decreased the agricultural potential, but the country has an almost overwhelming natural beauty coupled with welcoming, generous people. Much of Lesotho is covered by the high Maluti Mountains, and indeed even the lowlands, where most of Lesotho's 1.5 million people live, only fall to 1,300 m above sea level - The Highest Lowest Point of any country in the world. The Maluti mountains are a rugged, wild range, ideal for trekking holidays, though they inevitably create their own climate, which can lead to sudden temperature drops, low cloud and thunderstorms. The visible history goes back at least 30,000 years, with cave paintings and other Bushman relics found in numerous scattered sites.

Southern Africa was inhabited by dispersed nomadic hunters, the San, for many thousands of years, and their artistic talents have shown us many sides of their way of life, from dancing, hunting and fishing to scenes from semi-settled family life. However the San (known as Bushman by white settlers, and as Baroa by the Basotho tribes of Bantu origin), were persecuted from the moment they were seen by outsiders and long ago retreated to the Kalahari sands, their last refuge. In the early 19th Century, at the height of power of Shaka, king of the Zulu, many of his subjugated chiefs took flight in an attempt to form their own dominions. The result was a period of terror throughout central southern Africa known as Difaqane, or "Time of Calamity", and a scattering of the Sotho-speaking tribes of the highveld. The Maluti mountains formed a natural defence against marauding invaders, and many small tribal groups attempted to take refuge in the region. One such group, led by the enterprising chief Moshesh, selected a small steep-sided plateau at Butha-Buthe which they successfully defended for two years before moving to a better fortress at Thaba Bosiu - "Mountain of the Night". For ten years Thaba Bosiu proved impregnable to all-comers and the name rapidly gained fame. Fugitives from Difaqane flocked to the Mountain at Night and were incorporated into the tribe.

By 1830 the tribe had become a large cohesive unit, newly-proud people who just a short time before had been skulking in the surrounding hills and valleys to escape slaughter and famine. They began to call themselves Basotho, or Sotho people, and to refer to their small kingdom as Lesotho. Moshesh, by now known as Moshoeshoe, grew in stature as his military skill and diplomacy matured, and his kingdom remained unconquered until shortly before his death, in 1870. The British were called in to rescue the situation after the successful Boer invasion of 1868 and the protectorate of Basutoland was declared soon after. Multi-party politics took hold in the 1950's and independence was eventually wrested from the British in 1966. There followed the almost inevitable 20 years, conflict in-fighting and coups d'etat. When the long-time strongman, Chief Jonathan, turned towards Marxism and a one-party system South Africa imposed a full blockade on land-locked Lesotho, and probable instigated the coup of 1986 that overthrew Jonathan and re-instated the authority of King Moshoeshoe II, (great-great-great grandson of Lesotho's founding father), as Head of State. Since then the government has remained successful, stable, and popular. Development is moving ahead apace, particularly that funded from South Africa, and Lesotho is showing signs of an ability to exist without outside assistance. Moshoeshoe II died in a car accident in January 1996 and has been succeeded by his son Chief Letsie III.

DAY 11/12 SOUTH AFRICA – DRAKENSBERG

We return to South Africa where we drive to the Royal Natal National Park. We spend the next two days exploring mountain paths and enjoying the beauty of the Drakensberg.

Optional Activities: Horse Riding, Hiking.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Amphitheatre Backpackers www.amphibackpackers.co.za

Facilities: Bar, restaurant, swimming pool, climbing cave and internet

Included Activities: Royal Natal National Park Entrance and Guided walk to Bushmen Paintings

Route: Malealea Lodge to Royal Natal. ±550 km

Travel time: ±8-10 hrs plus a border crossing (Long Day)

Border posts: Lesotho: Vanrooyenshek, Tel: +27 (0) 51 583 1525, Open: 06h00-22h00

South Africa: Vanrooyenshek, Tel: +27 (0) 51 583 1516, Open: 06h00-22h00

UKHAHLAMBA DRAKENSBERG PARK - ROYAL NATAL

Royal Natal boasts some of the most splendid mountain scenery in Africa. The main feature is the world famous Amphitheatre, a rock wall approximately 5km in length, and 500m high. Above the amphitheatre is Mont-aux-Sources peak where, as its name implies, the Orange River starts its long journey to the Atlantic ocean and Thukela river cascades down the face of the amphitheatre, in one of the highest waterfalls in the world, on its way to the Indian ocean. The most popular activity at Royal Natal is undoubtedly hiking. A comprehensive hiking guide is available for purchase at the Visitor Centre, at Thendele camp office and at the main entrance gate. The brochure shows a map of the park and the network of hiking paths which visit every part of the park from the gentle walk to Fairy Glen to the challenging hike up the Crack and down the Mudslide.

The Drakensberg Mountains of South Africa (or uKhahlamba -the Barrier of Spears) is a 200-kilometre-long mountainous world heritage site. The largest proportion of the South African component of this area falls in the kingdom of KwaZulu-Natal. Bushmen are believed to have survived here until 1878 and their paintings can be viewed at four sites. A number of hikes are available. In 1906 the Natal Government Minister of agriculture and lands proclaimed as a national park the unoccupied area below the amphitheatre. The area was initially 3330 hectare in extent. More land was added to obtain its present size of 8094 Hectare.

DAY 13 KWA-ZULU NATAL COAST - DURBAN

Our journey takes us through some amazing scenery on our way down to the KwaZulu Natal coast. In the late afternoon we enter Durban. This evening it is possible to go out for a meal at one of the excellent Indian restaurants. *Optional Activities: Dinner and night out in the city.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hostel (Dorm room): Happy Hippo www.happy-hippo.info

Facilities: Hot showers, TV room, pool table, shared ablutions.

Route: Royal Natal to Durban. ±350 km

Travel time: ±5-6 hrs

Durban is the metropolitan area comprising of Durban, Pinetown, Inanda and Umlazi, with close to two million people living here. The first European settlers were mostly survivors of shipwrecks. One of these survivors, Rodrigo Tristaa, survived a wreck in 1552 of the Portuguese galleon Saint John, and was the first to make his home here. Vasco Da Gama had applied the name Natal (nativity) to this stretch of coast (first seen on Christmas day 1497). The entrance to the bay was known as Rio de Natal (river of the nativity). The Zulu nation's formation provided wealth for a trade market in this area. The merchants set up a harbour where the base of trade with Zulus could be formed. Durban was thus created by a population of 26 hard-living traders and ivory hunters. It was named on 23 June 1835, after the governor of the Cape, Sir Benjamin D'Urban.

DAY 14 ISIMANGALISO (GREATER ST LUCIA) WETLAND PARK

We drive up along the KwaZulu Natal coast to the well-known Greater St Lucia Wetland Park. We take a boat cruise on the lagoon and will spend tonight near this amazing wetland. *Optional Activities: Traditional Zulu Village visit.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Dorms: Bibs International backpackers www.bibs.co.za

Facilities: Drinkable water, good ablutions

Included Activity: Sunset Lagoon cruise

Route: Durban to St. Lucia. ±280 km

Travel time: ±4-5 hrs

Greater St Lucia Wetland Park

The St Lucia site consists of thirteen contiguous protected areas with a total size of 234,566 hectares. The site is the largest estuarine system in Africa and includes the southernmost extension of coral reefs on the continent. The site contains a combination of on-going fluvial, marine and aeolian processes that have resulted in a variety of landforms and ecosystems. Features include wide submarine canyons, sandy beaches, forested dune cordon and a mosaic of wetlands, grasslands, forests, lakes and savanna. The variety of morphology as well as major flood and storm events contribute to ongoing evolutionary processes in the area. Natural phenomena include: shifts from low to hyper-saline states in the Park's lakes; large numbers of nesting turtles on the beaches; the migration of whales, dolphins and whale-sharks off-shore; and huge numbers of waterfowl including large breeding colonies of pelicans, storks, herons and terns. The Park's location between sub-tropical and tropical Africa as well as its coastal setting has resulted in exceptional biodiversity including some 521 bird species. This is a **UNESCO World Heritage site** and you can learn more at <http://whc.unesco.org>

DAY 15/16 SWAZILAND– MLILWANE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Today on our way to Swaziland we take a morning game drive in Hluhluwe/ Umfolozi National Park. We enter Swaziland where we will experience some more of Southern Africa's cultural diversity. *Optional Activities: Mountain Biking, Hiking, Horse Riding.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Beehive huts: Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary www.biggameparks.org

Facilities: Drinkable water, swimming pool, bar, supply shop, restaurant.

Route: St. Lucia to Mlilwane. ±280km

Travel time: ± 4-5hrs (including a border crossing & game drive)

Border posts: South Africa: Mananga (Komatipoort), Tel: +27 (0) 13 790 7075, Open: 07h00-18h00

South Africa: Jeppes Reef (Malelane), Tel: +27 (0) 13 781 0382, Open: 07h00-20h00

Swaziland, Tel.: Matsamo Tel: +268 678 145, Open: 08h00-16h00

Swaziland

The smallest country in the southern hemisphere, Swaziland has been independent since 1968. It is one of the only three monarchies left in Africa. The King, appointed in accordance with Swazi tradition, is the Executive Head of State. If he is absent, or unable to perform his duties, for any reason, the Queen Mother acts on his behalf. Swaziland is a small landlocked kingdom, bounded on all sides by South Africa except for roughly 100km of border with Mozambique in the east. Swaziland's natural resources are extremely well managed, and despite the country's size it lays claim to some of the best game reserves and national parks in southern Africa. Elephants, lions and rhinos have been reintroduced after being wiped out.

Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary

Mlilwane, Swaziland's pioneer conservation area, is a beautiful, secluded sanctuary situated in Swaziland's "Valley of Heaven", the Ezulwini Valley, in between Mbabane and Manzini. With 24-hour access to the Sanctuary, guests are free to enjoy the neighboring tourist hubs of Ezulwini and Malkerns, with their many unique attractions and craft shops. From the western boundary, the huge Usutu Forest provides a dramatic backdrop stretching into the distant hills.

The Sanctuary covers 4,560 hectares and comprises of a southern and northern section. The southern section is predominately open grassland plains with middleveld vegetation, stretching up onto the striking Nyonyane Mountain with its exposed granite peak known as the "Rock of Execution". Nyonyane is where ancient San once lived and where Swazi Royal graves are situated giving historical significance. Behind these mountains, the stunning Mantenga waterfall and beautiful Usushwana Valley form the divide, before stretching up to northern section, which includes one of the highest surrounding points at Lumphohlo. Tourist activities are concentrated in the southern section, with only guided trails entering the pristine mountains of the north. Mlilwane means Little Fire, being derived from the numerous fires started by lightning strikes on the Mlilwane Hill.

DAY 17 SOUTH AFRICA - KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

We return to South Africa and drive to the Kruger NP for two unforgettable days of game viewing. Kruger National Park is home to Africa's **Big 5** as well as a multitude of other beautiful African animals, both small and large. *Optional Activities: Night Drive and Dawn Game Walk.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Berg en Dal (Or other SANP site) www.sanparks.org/parks/kruger

Facilities: Good ablutions, hot showers, bar, shop, mail box, restaurant.

Route: Mlilwane to Kruger. ±300 km (additional drive to the gate)

Travel time: ±5-6 hrs plus a border crossing

Border posts: Swaziland: Golela, Tel: +268 (0) 34 435 1070, Open: 07h00-20h00

South Africa: Bothashoop, Tel: +27 (0)17 826 0400, Open: 08h00-16h00

Day 18: KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Skukuza (Or other SANP site) www.sanparks.org/parks/kruger

Facilities: Good ablutions, hot showers, bar, shop.

Route: Game driving through the park for the day

Kruger National Park

On 26 March, 1898, President Paul Kruger signed a proclamation for the founding of a government game park in the Eastern Transvaal, between the Crocodile and the Sabie Rivers, covering an area of about 18 000sq kilometers. This area had attracted most intensive hunting by man which drastically reduced the animal population in the area. Mosquito and Tsetse fly however, prevented human settlement in the area. Traders used the routes through the area, including the well-known trader Juao Albasini. He sent so many porters carrying goods along the path that he created a depot and staging post near Pretoriuskop. The area stayed untouched until after the Anglo-Boer war. At the end of this conflict, the new British administration accepted the idea of a game sanctuary and appointed a warden for what was called Sabie Game reserve. They appointed Major James Stevenson-Hamilton. He selected as his headquarters what is now named Skukuza, named after the African name the locals gave him (he who sweeps clean). Stevenson-Hamilton was the first to raise the idea that the area should be opened for viewing by the public, instead of the proposed plan of opening it for hunting. Thus, during the winter months of 1923, South African railways introduced a novel tourist service – a round-in-nine tour by train, which included a night transit through the park. This changed to stop in the reserve, where a ranger took guests on a short walk.

The name, Kruger National Park, was first used in print on 14 Dec 1925 in a leading article in "Die Burger", a Cape Town morning paper. On 31 May 1926, Mr Piet Grobler moved in Parliament the second reading of the National parks act. There were no dissidents. Under the administration of a board of control, comprising of ten members, the park was launched. The first road in the park was laid down from Sabie Bridge to the Olifants River, the second from Sabie Bridge to Pretoriuskop and the third from Sabie Bridge to Crocodile Bridge. The first three tourist cars entered the park in 1927, using the entrance at Pretoriuskop. Among the passengers was a seven year old, Douglas Jackaman, who was so impressed by what he saw that he later became a camp manager in the park. No accommodation was provided for the visitor's; they made their own camps in thorn-bush enclosures. Visitors also carried weapons for their protection.

In 1944 a cordon system was introduced between the park and local farms to decrease the impact of foot and mouth disease on the parks wildlife. Stevenson-Hamilton retired through the years of the Second World War, through which time the park was closed. The park was again opened to the public in 1946 under new control. Stevenson-Hamilton, aged 90, died of a stroke on 10 Dec 1957. His ashes and those of his wife Hilda were scattered in the park on 10 April 1979 at an outcrop of granite south of Skukuza. The world-renowned Kruger National Park offers a wildlife experience that ranks with the best in Africa.

This national park of nearly 2 million hectares, Kruger National Park, is unrivalled in the diversity of its life forms and a world leader in advanced environmental management techniques and policies. Approximately 145 mammal species can be found in the park. Kruger has a list of almost 500 bird species, some of which are not to be found elsewhere in South Africa. There are 336 tree species in the park.

DAY 19 WILDLIFE REHABILITATION CENTRE

With our minds full of memories of the most famous nature conservation area in the world, we leave the Park. En route to tonight's camp we visit a Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Dorms: Timbavati www.timbavatisafarilodge.com

Facilities: Good ablutions, swimming pool, drinkable water, bar, restaurant, hot showers.

Included Activities: Visit to Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre: www.moholoholo.co.za

Route: Kruger Park to Timbavati. ±310 km (excluding game drive)

Travel time: ±3-4 hrs, including the educational visit

Moholoholo Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre

Moholoholo is nestled in a picturesque setting at the base of the Drakensberg escarpment in the Limpopo Province Lowveld of South Africa. Moholoholo has become a haven for the rehabilitation and care of abandoned, injured and poisoned wildlife. Wildlife is brought to the centre from all corners of South Africa, and once healthy enough are re-introduced into their natural environments. Those creatures, who cannot be returned to the wild due to the nature and extent of their injuries, are cared for at the centre and are used to educate the many people who visit us each year, both from across South Africa and abroad. Another important function of the centre is breeding. Moholoholo have successfully bred and released into the wild the endangered Crowned Eagle, Serval and many others. This Centre is a non-profit organization, relying completely on the support of the public

DAY 20 JOHANNESBURG

We will be travelling along the Panorama Route stopping for some breathtaking views at Blyde River Canyon, God's Window and Bourke's Luck Potholes. The tour ends on arrival in Johannesburg. *Optional Activities: Morning Shangaan Village visit and Dinner Out.*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Own Arrangements/ Post tour accommodation can be booked through ShapShap

Route: Timbavati to Johannesburg. ±600 km

Travel time: ±9-10 hrs. (Long Day)

Panorama Route

In 1840, the Voortrekker leader, Hendrik Potgieter, led a party on an exploratory journey to Lourenzo Marques. The women stayed behind on the height near Graskop and most of the men rode off. The time for their return came and passed. The waiting party became despondent. They named the stream on whose banks they were camped, the Treur (sorrow) and set out for home. Potgieter, however, returned safely, overtaking the women as they were fording the river from then on known as the Blyde (joyful).

The **Blyde River Canyon** is one of the most spectacular canyons in Africa and its cliffs rise between 600m-800m from the riverbed. At the '**Three Rondavels** viewpoint' (also called 'The Three Sisters') is an unforgettable view of three huge rock spirals rising out of the far wall of the canyon. Their tops appear to have a hut-like rounded roof. Where the Blyde River and

the Treur River meet, water erosion has formed one of the most remarkable geological phenomena in the country, known as '**Bourke's Luck Potholes**'. Over thousands of years, surreal cylindrical rock sculptures created by whirling water have formed a series of dark pools which contrast artfully with the streaked white and yellow lichen covered rocks. Following the road and the Treur River south, there are further viewpoints; Wonder View, **God's Window** and the Pinnacle. The Three Rondavels are named after the Swazi Chief - Maripi's wives. From the lowest to the highest, they are Magabolle, Mogoladikwe and Maserote.

Johannesburg

Gold was discovered in March 1886 on the Witwatersrand by George Harrison. Two Commissioners, Johan Rissik and Christiaan Johannes Joubert were sent from Pretoria to inspect this discovery and to assess its profitability. They reported back that it was of enormous long-term economic value. The farms along the line of reef were declared to be public diggings and F.C Eloff, private secretary to the State President, Paul Kruger, sent to find a central site suitable for a town. He found a vacant piece of ground; a Government owned farm named Randjieslaagte. Surveyors were instructed by the government to lay this farm out as a future town. They completed their work on 03 Dec 1886. The name Johannesburg was written for the first time on their plans of streets and stands. Only five days after the completion of the survey the first 986 stands were auctioned for the sum of R13000. The first building to be erected was a corrugated iron hut.

Tour Ends

We will drop you off at The Airport Grand www.legacyhotels.co.za/content.aspx?h=6. We suggest you book accommodation here for this evening. If you choose to stay elsewhere you will need to arrange a transfer to that hotel. The Airport Grand is about 5km drive from OR Tambo (Johannesburg) International Airport. If you are flying out the following evening we recommend the day tour of Johannesburg city and Soweto as an informative and enjoyable way to spend the day.

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING SHAPSHAP

At the end of your tour you will be provided with feedback forms. These forms are confidential and should be given to your crew in a sealed envelope. If you are not sure of the confidentiality of the feedback form please feel free to email us as well on info@shapshaptravel.com. Please make sure to also complete the feedback form as we use the answers on these forms to improve and maintain our service levels.

Accommodation providers are subject to change without notice, the accommodation listed in this dossier is our preferred supplier, but sometimes due to availability, we are unable to make use of the property listed in this dossier. If we cannot use the accommodation provider as listed we will substitute another property of similar standards, however, en-suite facilities are not always guaranteed.