

# BIG SKIES RESEARCH

## Information sheet



# RESEARCH CAMP

## At a glance

<b>COUNTRY:</b>	South Africa
<b>REGION:</b>	Northern KwaZulu-Natal
<b>OPERATIONAL:</b>	All year round
<b>TYPE OF CAMP:</b>	Indigenous architecture inspired tented camp. En-suite bathrooms.
<b>NO. OF ROOMS:</b>	4
<b>WATER:</b>	Bottled drinking water provided, Filtration system for tap water
<b>MAX. GUESTS:</b>	8 adults sharing.
<b>PLUGS:</b>	220V plug points



## Overview

Nestled atop a captivating dune with the Indian Ocean's vast expanse stretching before it, Research Camp marks an exceptional jewel in the Big Skies Collection. Originally designed as a creative and research retreat for delving into Maputaland's rich ecological and cultural tapestry, it now also welcomes guests seeking an exclusive, self-catered escape. Accommodating one group at a time, and up to a maximum of eight guests in 4 x twin rooms, Research Camp combines privacy with the simplicity of camping, offering an intimate connection to the natural wonders and artistic inspirations of the area.

We designed Research Camp to be self-catered, therefore, guests are responsible for all food, drinks and vehicle transfers. Guests require 4x4 vehicles to explore the area.



## Purpose

At Big Skies, we value a holistic model of tourism, a model that emphasises community, environmental conservation and an outstanding guest experience. The most important members of our community are the people who work in and live near our camps. They are the original custodians of the land and the people who know it best. By partnering with local communities, we have been able to benefit from their profound knowledge of the area we have a presence in, and offer incredible experiences to our guests. The warm hospitality that you'll experience in our camps has been extended to us from the earliest days of Big Skies and given us the privilege of feeling that we also belong here.



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## Access

Approximate driving times to/from our secure Manguzi parking lot (no stops or other variables like weather, traffic, etc. taken into consideration):

- Durban Airport +/- 5 hours
- Richards Bay +/- 3 – 3.5 hours
- O.R. Tambo International Airport +/- 9 -10.0 hours

4x4 vehicles are required to access the camp and to transfer between the camp and the beach. There is no transfer offering for guests at Research.

## Climate

The Maputaland region has a tropical to subtropical climate. All year round air and sea temperatures are relatively stable. Temperatures range from 16 to 25° C in the winter season (between May and August) and in the summer months from 23 to 33° C (between September and April). Rain falls in the summer months with afternoon showers and storms passing into blue skies.

## Experiences

All experiences at Research are unguided. However, the beauty of Maputaland is that you can do as much or as little as you wish. Relax on the beach, stroll through the trees in search of brilliant butterflies and birds, or head to Lake Sibaya, the largest freshwater lake in southern Africa. Depending on the season, you can watch prehistoric loggerhead and leatherback turtles dig their nests in the sand, and humpback whales migrate along the coast. For a fully immersive experience, take the plunge and enjoy some of the world's best snorkelling at Lala Nek. The flourishing reefs are home to amazingly diverse marine life, including mention octopus, eels and nudibranchs. Back on dry land, spend time with our neighbours at the KwaMpukane community centre and learn more about the culture of the people and the stories and traditions that pass magic on to the next generation. Whatever you choose to do, you can be sure of a fulfilling and enriching time.



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## Charismatic species

**MAMMALS:** hippos at Lake Sibaya; abundant herds of Nguni cattle

**INSECTS:** Gold Banded Forester, Blue Swallow Tail, African Monarch and Natal Tree Nymph butterflies

**MARINE LIFE:** Abundant sea life including sea stars, nudibranchs, half beak, angelfish, clownfish, paper fish, potato bass, rays and turtles.

**BIRDLIFE:** Palm-nut vulture, rosy throated, Cape and yellow throated longclaws; narina trogon, southern banded, black breasted, martial and crown eagles; gorgeous bush shrike, Livingstone and purple crested turaco, common whimbrel

**IN SEASON:** Humpback whales (June to October), Leatherback & Loggerhead turtles (mid-November to mid-March).

## Community focus:

KwaMpukane, KwaMqobela and KwaZibi are all home to communities of Tsonga people, the original custodians of the land upon which Little Gugs stands. At Big Skies, we value above all the generosity and resilience of these communities and centre community relations and ownership in our business model.



## Currency

The currency in South Africa is the South African Rand, denoted by the symbol R. We recommend guests travel with sufficient currency (credit card facilities available) to cover any extras at the camp – such as wellness treatments, gratuities and any turtle experiences.

## Gratuities

These are at guests' discretion. We recommend from

- ZAR 100 to ZAR 300 per day for general staff
- ZAR 120 per guest per day for guides

## Conversation focus:

We're conscious that our impact must always be a positive one. That's why we focus on plant-based cuisine, renewable energy, and a level of comfort that's entirely in keeping with our setting. Although we ask for very little from our environment, we're given an abundance – and that's something we want to share with you.

