

KWAZULU-NATAL NATURE SAFARI

9 Days

Begins in Durban **Highlights** Hluhluwe-Imfolozi, isiMangaliso, St Lucia, Mkuzi, Ithala, Shakaland

Here is an opportunity to experience the 'Kingdom of the amaZulu' - that north-eastern corner of KZN where the spirits of Shaka Zulu, Dingane, Cetshwayo and Dinizulu silently watch over the land of their birth. Rolling savannah, well-managed game reserves and never-ending golden beaches, as well as a vibrant folklore and culture are all part of this land where Black, White and Asian cultures meet, creating a veritable rainbow of multi-ethnic reality where visitors are always welcome. Names like Bonamanzi, Hluhluwe and isiMangaliso happily merge with others such as Vryheid, Richard's Bay and St Lucia, leaving us in no doubt of the kaleidoscope of landscapes and people we find here. The Kingdom of the Zulus awaits...

HLUHLUWE-IMFOLOZI PARK & ISIMANGALISO WETLAND PARK - Days 1, 2 & 3

Upon arrival in Durban, we head up the North Coast, past Stanger, over the Thukela River and directly to Bonamanzi Game Park, deep in the heart of Zululand. Here, we check in to Lalapanzi Camp for a 3-night stay in comfortable 3-star chalets. Bonamanzi is located within a 4 000 hectare privately owned wildlife reserve, abounding in big game, and boasting some 340 listed bird species. The Hluhluwe River flows through the park, hence the name "Bonamanzi", which literally translated means "Look - water!" Our days at Bonamanzi are devoted to exploring nearby game reserves and scenic wonders of the region.



Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park, synonymous with rhino conservation and translocation is among the oldest proclaimed wildlife refuges in South Africa, and is now a conservation island, surrounded by human habitation and agricultural areas. The area was originally reserved as the exclusive hunting ground of Zulu Royalty, dating back to the 1820's and the reign of Shaka Zulu, making this the first conscious conservation effort in Zululand. The park now boasts all of the 'Big 5', and has one of the the highest white rhino populations in the world. The topography of Imfolozi Game Reserve ranges from the Imfolozi River floodplain to undulating grassland which extends into Acacia savannah and woodland. It is one of the world's top spots for viewing nyala, and is a prime birding destination - home to 340 bird species. We explore the park, spending quality time on game drives, quietly watching nature at work and learning about the dynamics of natural ecosystems.



The isiMangaliso Wetland Park is South Africa's third-largest protected area, encompassing 280 km of coastline, from the Mozambican border in the north to Mapelane, south of the St. Lucia estuary. The park was proclaimed a world heritage site because of its rich biodiversity and great variety of ecosystems, ranging from coral reefs and sandy beaches, to subtropical dune forests, savannah and wetlands. Animals occurring in the park include elephant, leopard, black and white rhino, buffalo, and in the ocean, a variety of marine life, including four turtle species. The park is also home to 1,200 Nile crocodiles and 800 hippopotami. We explore the area, and take a leisurely boat cruise enjoying what this unique and multi-faceted sanctuary has to offer.

Stay at Lalapanzi Camp, Bonamanzi (3 nights)



MKUZE - Days 4 & 5

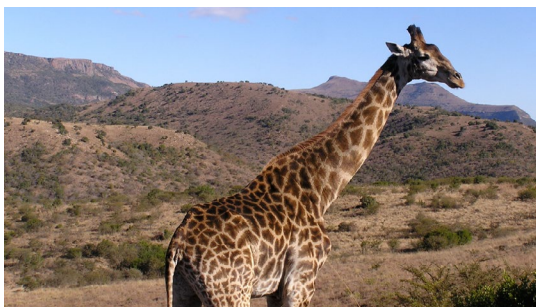
We head northward to Mkuze Game Reserve, where we check into the chalets in the unfenced Mantuma Camp. This reserve was proclaimed in 1912, and comprises 40 000ha in extent. This perennial favourite with nature lovers, forms part of the Greater isiMangaliso Wetland Park and is home to the "big 5". Prolific herds of Zebra, Blue Wildebeest, Impala and Nyala can be seen as well as Kudu, Eland and the little Suni Antelope. Many bird species have been recorded here, and several bird-hides can be visited. During our stay here we explore the many tracks and waterholes in the reserve, taking our time to observe interesting wildlife behaviour.

There is no restaurant in the camp, so your guide will prepare meals, including al'fresco lunches and a braai under the stars. The quiet nights in the bush are special, with the night sounds of Africa lulling us to sleep.

Stay at Mantuma Camp, Mkuze Game Reserve (2 nights)



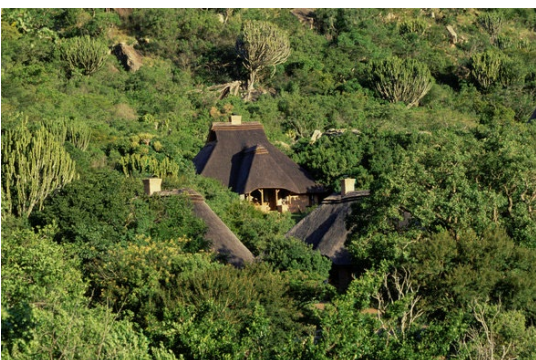
ITHALA GAME RESERVE - Days 6 & 7



We head inland along the course of the Phongolo River to Pongola, the centre of a massive irrigation-farming district. We now leave the sub-tropical areas, and ascend the hilly grasslands of the hinterland. By late afternoon we reach Ithala Game Reserve, home for the next two nights. We stay in spacious bungalows at the award-winning Ntshondwe Camp, which subtly blends into the natural vegetation on the slopes of the Ngotshe Mountains. The visitor centre has an excellent restaurant and an open game viewing deck which overlooks a small pan.

We take our own vehicle on Ithala's tracks and trails to enjoy its lush valleys, rolling grassy hills and endless vistas. There are opportunities to stop at viewpoints, and take short strolls at the wooded picnic sites. The abundant bird life along the river adds plenty of interest to the nature enthusiast. The reserve contains most of the commonly encountered savannah and grassland game, with elephant, buffalo and white rhino having been re-introduced. Ithala's topography extends over lowveld and densely vegetated riverine valleys, to high-lying grassland plateaux, ridges and cliff faces. Giraffe are so numerous that they have been selected as Ithala's logo. The absence of lion makes for a relaxed air among prey species such as zebra, blue wildebeest and a wide variety of antelope. In the late afternoon your guide will be leading nature walks around the camp area highlighting local plants, trees and bird life. Evening drives in an open vehicle are offered as an optional extra by the Park, for a chance to encounter some interesting nocturnal wildlife.

STAY AT NTSHONDWE CAMP, ITHALA (2 nights)



ZULU CULTURE & THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS - Day 8

We maintain the relaxed tempo of the tour, and head south for Shakaland and via Vryheid, the largest town in

northern KZN with its interesting mix of Zulu, German, Afrikaans and English cultures. We descend from the high country of the interior, passing by numerous cultural and historical sites, deeply steeped in myth and legend. These include 'Emakhosini' (the Valley of the Kings), the site of Dingane's royal residence at uMgungundlovu and that of Cetshwayo at Ondini. In the early afternoon, we arrive at Shakaland, with its focal point of Zulu culture. The lodge was constructed on the set of the epic movies "Shaka Zulu" and "John Ross", and here we find many opportunities to learn more about the proud Zulu people, their traditions and folklore.

STAY AT SHAKALAND HOTEL (1 night)



ESHOWE - Day 9

After breakfast we leave Shakaland, and head for Eshowe - the oldest town of European settlement in Zululand. An attraction here is the mystical Dlinza Forest - steeped in myth and legend. The name 'Dhlinza' means 'Place of Meditation', aptly named for its peace and solitude. Depending on our flight schedule, we may have time to visit the aerial boardwalk which takes us high into the forest canopy where many endemic bird species roost and nest. We take our leave of 'The Kingdom of the Zulus' and head for King Shaka International Airport for our outward flight. As always, Landscape staff will be on hand to see you safely to your doorstep.

KWAZULU NATAL NATURE SAFARI - Information Sheet

Please read the following information, and phone us to discuss anything you're not sure of. Please also read our terms and conditions.

PICK-UP

Our transfer service will collect you at your home to take you to the airport. The exact time will be advised when we phone you a few days prior to departure. Landscape representatives will be at the airport to see you safely on to the flight. On arrival, your guide and minibus will be at the airport to meet you. Look for our guide (carrying a Landscape sign) as you exit the baggage area.

LUGGAGE

Allowed - stowed luggage: a soft bag max 15 kg per person.

1 Piece hand luggage 7kg. Strictly forbidden in hand luggage: (1) liquids, aerosols and gels, unless in amounts of max 100ml in transparent plastic. Otherwise they must be placed in stowed luggage. (2) Sharp objects including pins, small scissors, etc. must be packed in stowed luggage.

PAYMENT FOR DRINKS

Drinks at hotels and with meals are for your own account. This includes soft drinks. At hotels you can sign these to your room, and settle on departure. Credit card facilities are available.

At individual restaurants where you may want a drink with your meal, you will be presented with a bill after the meal. Best practice is to keep some cash at hand for this. Landscape will provide water on board our vehicle and at the table during meals.

TIPS AND GRATUITIES

Your Landscape tour leader will tip hotel porters and restaurant staff on your behalf. Please feel free to tip individuals at lodges for any special service. Tipping of your Landscape tour leader is entirely at your discretion, with the following industry guidelines: Landscape tour leader: R50 – R80 per person per day. Safari drivers R20 per trip.

WEATHER

You will be travelling in an area with low winter rainfall, but be prepared for rainy days anyway. The temperatures can be very low at night and in the early morning, especially in Ithala.

CLOTHING

We recommend "casual comfortable" throughout, and recommend dressing with varying numbers of thinnish 'layers': a light fleece / sweater and a warm, waterproof jacket / windbreaker for evenings and early mornings. Comfortable lace-up shoes with good gripping rubber soles are the best (such as athletic trainers or walking boots). Early morning game drives and boat cruises can be cold. Best be well prepared for this, since the wind-chill can be quite severe.

MALARIA

There is a low Malaria risk in the Mkuzi area. Please speak to your health professional if you feel concerned about this.

CURRENCY

Namibian Dollar is equivalent to ZAR, and both currencies can be used.

INCLUDED

- Two complimentary transfers, for example: pick-up from, and return to, your home or hotel in Cape Town / Johannesburg / Durban on first and last day of tour, subject to being within a 40 km radius from the nearest airport.
- Safe, comfortable, air-conditioned minibuses or small coaches.
- Expert and friendly guides who care about your personal enjoyment and welfare.
- Comfortable accommodation with bathroom en suite.
- All meals – breakfast, lunch, dinner.
- Entrance fees (excluding optional extras if any).
- Tips at hotels and restaurants, and for portage.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

It is essential to bring a valid ID document for your flight. SA ID book / card or passport.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Landscape Tours numbers are:

Office: 021 851 7706 Cell: 083 6576 645 (Grant) 083 698 5772 (Michelle)

KWAZULU NATAL NATURE SAFARI

Optional Extras

Night Drive - Mkuze Game Reserve

This 2 - 3 hour night drive is conducted by a Parks guide in an open vehicle, between 19h00 and 21h00. There are good chances of seeing nocturnal animals, not encountered during day drives. Price R350 pp

