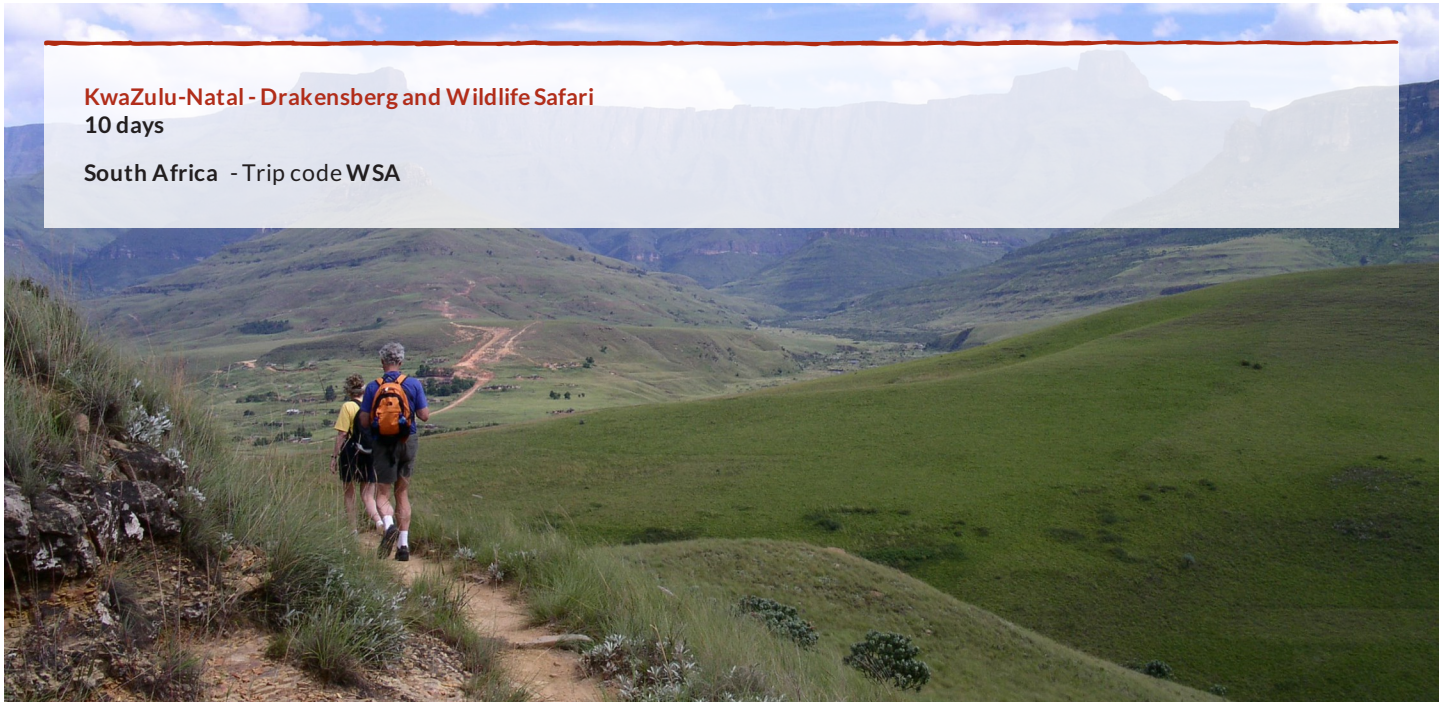


EXPLORE!

KwaZulu-Natal - Drakensberg and Wildlife Safari

10 days

South Africa - Trip code WSA



KwaZulu-Natal - Drakensberg and Wildlife Safari

Get close to nature as we walk through the diverse landscapes of northern KwaZulu-Natal; including the mountainous Drakensbergs, the dry bushland of Hluhluwe - iMfolozi Reserve, and iSimangaliso Wetlands. Hike to a mountain cave, experience a walking game safari in a 'Big Five' reserve and follow coastal trails. En route we also take game drives, spot estuary hippos and crocodiles, and learn some of the region's complex history.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Drakensberg Mountains** - Walk in this beautiful region, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- ★ **Big Five Game Reserve** - Learn about the magnificent South African wildlife on open vehicle game drives. Experience a walking safari
- ★ **iSimangaliso Wetlands** - Discover diverse eco-systems including coastal, wetlands, forest and grasslands co-existing side by side.
- ★ **Saint Lucia** - View hippos and crocodiles in the river flowing through this relaxed estuary town

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Trip starts in Umhlanga, north of Durban

Our trip starts in Umhlanga, a coastal town between King Shaka International Airport and North Durban. If you arrive early you may wish to explore the area, including the nearby Umhlanga Rocks beach.



Accommodation: Beside Still Waters Guesthouse (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Lagoon Walk. Drive to the Drakensbergs. Walk to Dorree Falls

Our first gentle walk begins near our hotel. Known as the Lagoon Walk, the path starts as a wooden boardwalk then cuts through a section of coastal forest down to the beach. As this is a nature trail many of the trees are labelled. (Look out for the 500 year old white stinkwood tree!). If you are lucky you may also catch glimpses of bushbuck, duiker and other small animals and birds that the forest is home to. On returning to our hotel we head by minibus towards the Drakensberg Mountains - approximately a three and a half hour drive. Our base for the next three nights is Didima in Cathedral Peak Valley, situated in the uKhahlamba Drakensberg National Park and part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Maloti- Drakensberg Park. Cathedral Peak (3304m) is a distinctive free-standing mountain with unforgettable views down over the region. After settling into our chalet style lodge accommodation we set out to start exploring the area, following a walking trail along a river then a stream to Dorree Falls. Nearby we climb a long series of steps to a local cave still showing the rock art of the ancient San people who once lived in this region. Our first walk today is five kilometres and takes approximately two hours, along a flat coastal path. Our second walk to Dorree Falls is five and a half kilometres, also taking two hours. The approximately total ascent and descent is approximately +/-310m.



Accommodation: Didima Resort (or similar)



Standard Cabins



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 3 - Hike to Baboon Rock. Explore local area on foot

Today we also have the opportunity to take two walks. In the morning we travel a short distance to the start of the trail to Baboon Rock. From here we descend Nxwaye Valley then climb up to Ganabu Ridge to the distinctive rock. In the afternoon we have a shorter walk from the lodge via local landmarks: Lower Valley, Neptunes Pool and Marble Baths. Our morning walk is 15 kilometres and takes approximately four hours. Total ascent and descent is +/- 700m. This is a fairly steep trail but offers great views over the mountains. If we do the complete walk in the afternoon it is just over five kilometres and takes two hours. The total ascent and descent is +/- 200m.



Accommodation: Didima Resort (or similar)



Standard Cabins



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Full day hike to Sherman's Cave, Oqalweni Valley and One Tree Hill

Our walk today takes us along a trail from the lodge past Sherman's Cave (a low overhang that acts as an overnight shelter for hikers) where there are great views down to the valley below and hill beyond. From here we continue around the top of Oqalweni Valley and back down One Tree Hill. En route we have a picnic lunch while admiring the views. We walk for 16.5 kilometres today, taking approximately six hours. The total ascent and descent is +/- 550m



Accommodation: Didima Resort (or similar)



Standard Cabins



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 5 - Visit Blood River Battlefield. Drive to Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Reserve

Leaving the Drakensbergs behind we drive east through the towns of Ladysmith and Dundee, and stop at the battle site of Blood-River. Here we will learn about events that took place during the war between the Zulu and Voortrekker Boers, particularly the battle fought on this spot on 16th December 1838. Today 16th December is commemorated as the 'Day of Reconciliation'. Later we drive approximately another two and a half hours to Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Reserve. This Big Five game reserve - historically the hunting ground of past Zulu kings, are Africa's oldest national parks. As we drive to our lodge within the park we hope to be lucky and spot some game en route.



Accommodation: Mpila Camp (or similar)



Simple Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 6 - Walking safari and game drive in Big Five Game Reserve

Waking up early to the sounds of the bush we spend today finding out more about the magnificent animals that call this park home. In group of a maximum of eight visitors we join the wardens for a walking safari, looking for tracks and signs of animals. We also travel further into the park, through the dry grassland and woodland, on a game drive in an open vehicle hoping to see the famous Big Five: lion, elephant, buffalo, leopard and rhino. This reserve is at the forefront of conservation and is credited with saving the black and white rhino, whose future is still uncertain, from certain extinction. Today's walking safari is approximately seven kilometres and takes one and a half to two hours through uneven dry terrain.



Accommodation: Mpila Camp (or similar)



Simple Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 7 - Morning game drive. Arrive to St Lucia. Free afternoon

Today we have another early morning game drive in an open vehicle, hoping to see new animals. If circumstances allow it may be possible to have another walking safari instead. Late morning we drive towards the coast and Saint Lucia, a small coastal town famous for its river crocodiles and hippos. The afternoon is free to explore the area. Local optional excursions include an estuary cruise, and a night game drive in the nearby wetland reserve. Be aware of the hippos that can wander the streets of Saint Lucia (an extraordinary sight) especially at night and do not approach them.



Accommodation: St Lucia Safari Lodge (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Drive through iSimangaliso Wetlands Park. Walk at Cape Vidal

This morning we drive through iSimangaliso Wetland Park looking for animals such as reedbuck, buffalo and monkeys, and the 526 bird species that live here. By the sea there may also be hippos and crocodiles, as well as pods of dolphin and in season humpback whales and loggerhead turtles. Game fishing is popular due to the presence of fish such as marlin. iSimangaliso Wetland Park is a World Heritage Site and the third largest protected area in South Africa, with different ecosystems: swamps, lakes, beach, coral reef,

wetlands, woodlands, coastal forests, grasslands uniquely existing side by side. At Cape Vidal we have a picnic lunch but be aware that the local monkeys may be eyeing up your food! After lunch we walk along the coast between mission Rocks and Cape Vidal before return to Saint Lucia by minibus. Our coastal walk today is approximately 15 kilometres and takes approximately four hours. The terrain is uneven and involves some rock scrambling for short distances.



Accommodation: St Lucia Safari Lodge (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 9 - Drive down coast. Dune forest trail at Mtunzini. Continue to Umhlanga

After a free morning in Saint Lucia, we travel south along the coast to Mtunzini. Here we follow a dune forest trail. If we are lucky we may see bushbuck and red, grey, blue duiker. We also follow a board walk through Raphia Palm Forest, a swamp forest rich with palms, where we may see Palmnut vultures. We then continue back down the coast to La Lucia / Umhlanga. Our last walk covers five kilometres over mainly flat terrain and takes approximately one hour.



Accommodation: Beside Still Waters Guesthouse (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 10 - Trip ends in Umhlanga

Our trip ends today after breakfast in Umhlanga.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES



Optional Walks

Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

Walks on 4 days for between 4 to 6 hours, with 2 other shorter walks. This walking trip has been graded as moderate.



Why book this trip

This trip showcases the diverse landscapes and wildlife of KwaZulu-Natal, some of the best in South Africa.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 9
Lunch: 3
Dinner: 4



Transport

Bus
4WD
Minibus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Camp Crew
Driver(s)
Safari Guide(s)



Accommodation

3 nights standard cabins
2 nights standard guesthouse
2 nights simple lodge
2 nights standard lodge

Trip information

Country information

South Africa Holidays & Tours

Climate

Mild throughout the year and can thus be visited year round. The Western Cape has a Mediterranean-type climate, with warm, dry summers and cold winters with rainfall. Summer runs from November to March, with temperatures averaging 22oC to 34oC. The months of April and October are generally warm and sunny. Winter is also a good time to visit as towns and sites are not so crowded and the countryside is more verdant, but it can be cold. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

3 Pin Round

Religion

Christian

Language

Afrikaans, English

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

St. Lucia: Boat trip on Lake St. Lucia R220; Full day Cape Vidal excursion (includes lunch) R695; St. Lucia night drive to spot turtles (Nov-Mar) R950; Whale watching (June-Nov) R960 pp; Night game drive in St Lucia Wetland Reserve R485. Please note all above activities are dependent on minimum numbers.

Clothing

For walking: Bring light, windproof water proofs and layers for warmth as the weather conditions in the mountains can be changeable. It can also be cool in the evenings. Wicking shirts are recommended as a base layer, and walking trousers are preferable to trousers of heavier material such as jeans. General: Clothing should generally be lightweight for the day. However warmer layers and long trousers may be needed at nights and in the mountains which can be cold, especially from May to August. Avoid brightly coloured clothing for game viewing. You may also wish to bring a swimming costume.

Footwear

Bring well-worn in walking shoes with good ankle support. You may also wish to bring comfortable closed shoes for relaxing. Open toe sandals can be worn in some places.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

Bring a tough soft bag, holdall or rucksack that can be easily loaded into our vehicles, and a large enough daypack to carry items needed on our hikes and game drives.

Equipment

For walking: Your day pack should be large enough to carry your water bottle, waterproofs, warm layers, snacks, camera, etc. You may also wish to bring walking poles. General equipment: Bring a torch, sunhat, sunscreen, sunglasses and insect repellent. Binoculars are recommended for game viewing and a 300mm lens for wildlife photography. Please note: While tap water in South Africa's urban area is drinkable, some people may take a few days to acclimatise and thus may experience traveller's tummy. Therefore we recommend that your water bottle is a reusable filtered water bottle such as the ones featured at [Water-to-Go](http://www.watertogo.eu/): <http://www.watertogo.eu/>

Tipping

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. You should allow £20-£25 for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

South Africa Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£6

Dinner price

£12

Beer price

£1.2

Water price

£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Rand.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Take your money in a combination of cash and an ATM card. Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged.

Where To Exchange

Most towns or cities, your tour leader will advise you.

ATM Availability

Cash can be drawn on debit cards from ATM's in most South African towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

In large shops and restaurants.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, 4WD, Minibus

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

On day five and six & you stay at Mpila Camp. Your two bed chalet style simple accommodation has en-suite shower rooms.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Travelling with Minors via South Africa (including transits)² Regulations affecting all children aged under 18 years that are travelling to, from or via South Africa are in place. The law states that parents and/or guardians are requested by the airline and/or South Africa immigration officers to provide additional documentation for each child they are travelling with. Please refer to the South African House website and your airline for full requirements: http://outhafricahouseuk.com/visas/vis_forcit.html South Africa: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visitors should ensure their passport is machine readable and has two blank pages when entering and leaving South Africa. The South African Immigration officials will not allow child/infant pages to be used for this purpose and visitors without the stipulated blank pages will be denied entry. Swaziland: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click [here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

South Africa Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Please note that you will be required to supply a yellow fever certificate that has been issued at least 10 days prior to arrival in South Africa if you have travelled from or via a country where yellow fever is endemic. We recommend protection against hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid, polio and diphtheria. According to various travel health sources, the Western Cape is not regarded as a malaria risk area. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.
