

EXPLORE!



The Kingdom of Swaziland

8 days

South Africa, Swaziland - Trip code SAZ

The Kingdom of Swaziland

Discover the last true monarchy in Africa on this all-encompassing adventure through Swaziland. The country offers travellers the chance to really get under the skin of Africa and marvel at its culture and natural beauty. On this trip we get up close and personal with rhino in Mkhaya National Park, explore tranquil Mlilwane as zebras and nyala pass us by and drive up to Execution Rock for sundowners and incredible views.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Mlilwane** - A secluded wildlife sanctuary beneath the Nyonyane Mountains of Swaziland
- ★ **Overnight stay** - with the Shewula Mountain Community
- ★ **Game drives and walking safaris** - in Mkhaya Game Reserve, a great place to spot black and white rhino
- ★ **Incredible scenery** - of Malolotja Nature Reserve
- ★ **Traditional culture** - of Swaziland and its beautiful people

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.

TRIP PACE:**Moderate**

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

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 - Join trip Johannesburg and drive into the Kingdom of Swaziland

We join our trip in Johannesburg where you will meet your Explore Leader and then we will make our way to the Kingdom of Swaziland. A scenic journey which takes us from the low plains of South Africa to the mountainous Highveld of Swaziland. Nestled between South Africa and Mozambique, Swaziland has somehow kept its independence and maintained its traditions and culture with the King leading the country as the last true monarch in the world; to the casual observer it would seem unchanged for centuries. However as we will find over the next 8 days, the country has been a leading light in conservation in Southern Africa. Our base for the next two nights are log cabins in the Malolotja Nature Reserve, one of the most impressive mountain parks in Southern Africa. We will have some time for an orientation walk after arriving.



Accommodation: Malolotja Mountain Log Cabins (or similar)



Standard Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - Morning walk to highest waterfall in Swaziland, afternoon optional zip line, hikes or ancient rock art

This morning we explore this beautiful nature reserve, we start by making our way through the park to the Malolotja Falls; at 95m they are the highest waterfalls in Swaziland. Whilst hiking across the green rolling hills your leader will be spotting some of abundant bird life found in the park, including endangered blue swallow, Denham's bustard and southern bald ibis. After lunch the afternoon is free for you to continue the exploration of the reserve and your leader will advise you of many short walking trails found in the area. For the thrill seekers there is the option of taking the famous Malolotja Canopy Tour, featuring 11 wooden platforms joined together by zip lines, an unforgettable experience. There is also an option to take a short excursion to the ancient Sangweni San Rock Art site just outside the reserve near Maguga Dam.



Accommodation: Malolotja Mountain Log Cabins (or similar)



Standard Cabins



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 3 - Visit oldest mine in the world, afternoon walking safari in Mlilwane

We spend our last morning in the Highveld visiting the Lion Cavern, the oldest mine in the world. This iron ore mine has been dated by archaeologists to around 43000 years ago and we will have a tour with a local guide. From the mine we visit the Ngwenya Glass Blowing Factory where highly skilled artists blow amazing glass crafts which are for sale in the factory shop. This is an important site as the glass used is 100% recycled and collected from used glass bottles in Swaziland. Leaving the green mountains behind us, we make our way to the renowned Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary. Mlilwane is where conservation started in Swaziland and we will spend the afternoon on a walking safari through this beautiful park, looking for zebra, antelope, wildebeest and a myriad of birdlife.



Accommodation: Mlilwane Beehive Huts/Rondavels (or similar)



Standard Beehive Huts



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 4 - Morning free for optional activities, afternoon sunset safari and trip to Execution Rock

The morning is free for you to choose how you would like to explore Mlilwane, by foot, by bike or by horseback. All are available and offer unique ways of viewing game or just enjoying the beautiful countryside. Of course you can also just relax in our traditional beehive huts if you desire. In the afternoon we will take a game drive around the park and as the sun starts to go down we will head up the iconic Execution Rock, the mountain that dominates the landscape. Legend has it that centuries ago those who committed serious crimes against the King would be hauled to this peak and thrown from the cliff edge to their death. The summit offers 360 degree views of the entire Ezulwini Valley and is a great way to end the day - for us at least!



Accommodation: Mlilwane Beehive Huts/Rondavels (or similar)



Standard Beehive Huts



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 5 - Local craft markets, drive to community village for overnight stay

Leaving Mlilwane we stop at local craft markets and have a chance to either buy or just see what the local communities make and sell. This area is famous for its candle making and we will visit a local workshop before heading to the Savanna Research Camp in Mbuluzi Game Reserve. At the camp we will have a conservation talk with a local specialist, understanding the history of nature conservation in Swaziland and the challenges facing the country and its wildlife today. We then make our way up the Lubombo ridge to the Shewula Mountain community to stay with our hosts for the evening. Swaziland is famous for its pristine culture and this is a fantastic way to experience this and enjoy the company of the local community. At Shewula Mountain Camp we will have the opportunity to sample delicious traditional Swazi cuisine including "tinkuku" a kind of casserole and "mgomeni" a delicious Swazi bean dish. We will also try some of the locally home brewed sorghum beer that is popular in the area.



Accommodation: Shewula Mountain Huts (or similar)



Simple Cabins



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - Shewula village walking tour; afternoon sunset safari

This morning we will have some time to wander through the local village on a guided tour and meet some more of the community and see their homes and livelihoods. We will also visit a traditional herbalist doctor, known locally as Sangoma. We then journey south to Mkhaya Game Reserve. Well known for its black and white rhino population, the reserve is also home to buffalo and leopard along with many of southern Africa's endangered and rare wildlife including sable and roan antelope, tsesebe and eland. We will take a game drive in the hope of spotting some of these animals before arriving at our lodge where we spend the next two nights.



Accommodation: Stone Camp Lodge (or similar)



Premium Lodge



Single room available




Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner


DAY 7 - Game drives and walking safari to spot rhino in Mkhaya Game Reserve

We are up early today and out game driving in open top land rovers, hoping to spot hyena, giraffe, hippo, kudu and many more. There is also an abundance of birdlife to find here, including narina trogon, pink-throated twinspot and nightjars. During the late morning we will join park rangers on a guided walking safari giving us the opportunity to be out of the vehicle, on foot and appreciating the Swazi bushveld and its wildlife from a more intimate perspective. After relaxing after lunch we will head out again this afternoon on safari in this private reserve. There is also a "hide" at our lodge, which we can try out tonight to get more great sightings of rhino and other game.



Accommodation: Stone Camp Lodge (or similar)

 Premium Lodge

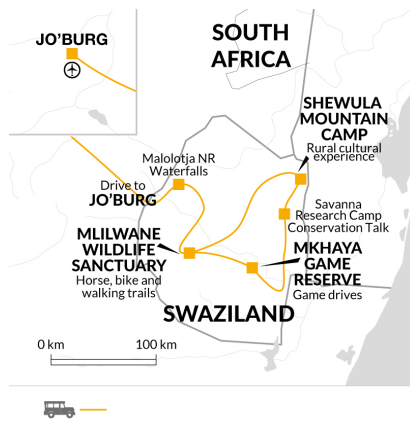
 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 8 - Morning safari then return to Johannesburg to end the trip

This morning is our final safari of the trip before we make our way back to Johannesburg airport where the trip ends.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

This is the most comprehensive itinerary of Swaziland on the market and has been designed for lovers of Africa's beautiful scenery and culture. For those wanting to see more of Southern Africa, this trip can be booked back to back with our Cape Escape trip: <https://www.explore.co.uk/holidaysouth-african-adventure>

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Lunch: 3
Dinner: 7



Transport

4WD
Minibus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Naturalist(s)



Accommodation

2 nights standard beehive huts
2 nights standard cabins
1 nights simple cabins
2 nights premium lodge

Trip information

Country information

South Africa

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

Swaziland

Climate

Can be visited all year round. Most rain falls in the summer months (October-April). The climate during this period is generally hot and humid in the lowlands with temperatures sometimes up to 40°C. Winters (June-August) are much drier and colder, but still pleasant for travel. The high veld has a temperate climate. Average daily sunshine hours are high throughout the year. 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

English, Swati

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Malolotja zip line canopy tour - R650 per person

San Bushman rock art tour - R50 per person

Mlilwane mountain bike tour - R130 per person for 1 hour self guided

Mlilwane mountain bike hire - R180 per person for 1 hour guided, R280 per person for 2 hours guided

Mlilwane guided walking trails - R225 per person

Above prices are advised in the the South African Rand.

Clothing

Clothing should generally be lightweight for the day. A few warm fleeces and long trousers are strongly recommended as nights can be very cold, especially from May to August and in the highlands of Swaziland. A waterproof and windproof jacket are also recommended, particularly between October and April. Avoid brightly coloured clothing for game viewing. Take a swimming costume. Please note that it is forbidden to wear camouflage clothing in Swaziland.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes or lightweight boots for the treks, trainers or sandals for relaxing/travelling.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

Take a tough soft bag or holdall (or rucksack with detachable frame) suitable to be carried by 4WD vehicle. Total allowance: 44lb/20kg maximum (due to weight restrictions on our vehicle). Also take a daypack for items needed during any short walks and game drives (20-30 litre).

Equipment

Bring a torch, water bottle, sunhat/sunscreen and insect repellent. Binoculars are essential for game viewing and a 300mm lens is recommended for photography. Walking poles are recommended for some of the hikes. Mosquito nets are not required as the accommodation provides screening where necessary.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

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 £15 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.

Country Information

South Africa

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.

Swaziland

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

£10

Dinner price

£15

Water price

£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Lilangeni but South African Rand is accepted

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged. Please note that the banks and Forex Bureaus do not accept US Dollar notes pre-2002. Take your money in a combination of cash and an ATM card.

Where To Exchange

On arrival.

ATM Availability

Cash can be conveniently drawn on credit/debit cards from ATM's.

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are usually accepted in large shops and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

We do not recommend to take travellers cheques as these are quite difficult to exchange.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

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.

Please note that at some of the cabins we use in the national parks in Swaziland share a bathroom between two cabins.

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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.

Swaziland: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

South Africa: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, US and Canadian citizens.

New Zealand passport holders do require a visa, please consult your local consulate for full information. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. Please ensure you have the correct multiple entry visa, especially if you are visiting another country on your itinerary and will need to re-enter South Africa - this includes visiting Swaziland. 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.

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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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

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. If you are travelling to other areas in South Africa please check with your doctor about malaria requirements. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Swaziland

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 Swaziland if you have travelled from or via a country where yellow fever is endemic. We recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid, polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
