

## Walking and Wildlife in South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA - TRIP CODE WSA

WALKING AND TREKKING

### Why book this trip?

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This walking holiday in South Africa showcases the diverse landscapes and wildlife of the KwaZulu-Natal region with mountain hikes, bushland walks and wetland boat rides. Hike to a mountain cave, experience a walking game safari and follow coastal trails.

- **Drakensberg Mountains** - Walk in this beautiful region, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- **Hluhluwe - iMfolozi Reserve** - Search for the Big Five on a walking safari and open vehicle game drive
- **Saint Lucia** - Explore the iSimangaliso Wetlands and see hippos roaming the streets!

**INCLUDED MEALS**

Breakfast: 8  
Lunch: 3  
Dinner: 5

**TRIP STAFF**

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

**TRANSPORT**

Bus  
4WD  
Minibus

**ACCOMMODATION**

1 nights  
comfortable  
guesthouse  
5 nights  
comfortable lodge  
2 nights simple  
lodge

**WALKING**

**GRADE:**  
Moderate

**GROUP SIZE:**

10 - 16

## Itinerary

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

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### DAY 1 - Trip starts in Umhlanga, north of Durban

Arrive in Umhlanga, a coastal town between the International Airport and North Durban.

For those arriving on time our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 7pm for the welcome meeting. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to arrive in Umhlanga at any time. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive at King Shaka International Airport (DUR) which is around 20 minutes' drive from the hotel. Should you miss the meeting, your leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, perhaps you might choose to explore the area, including the nearby Umhlanga Rocks beach.

**ACCOMMODATION:**

The Sandringham (or similar)

**Grade: Comfortable Guesthouse**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## **DAY 2 - Lagoon Walk. Drive to the Drakensbergs and explore local area on foot**

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 Sungubala, situated in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Maloti- Drakensberg Park. Drakensberg is the world's oldest mountain range and derives its name from the Afrikaans word for 'Dragon Mountains'.

After settling into our chalet style lodge accommodation we set out to start exploring the area, following the road to cross the stream we take the ascending path to Bush Buck Ridge to reach a natural pool. We follow this river back to the lodge.

Today's morning five kilometre walk is expected to take around two hours, along a flat coastal path. The afternoon's five kilometre walk is expected to take around two hours with 220 metres of ascent and descent.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Sungubala Eco Camp (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

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## **DAY 3 - Hike to Echo Cave and Bishops Inkaba**

Today we also have the opportunity to take two walks. This morning's walk takes us from the lodge following an ascending trail with a short steep zig zag section to the hilltop. Continuing through a grove of bottlebrush trees and indigenous forest to reach Echo Cave. We make our way back to the camp passing through a fern forest.

In the afternoon we have a shorter walk from the lodge to Bishops Inkaba River. After a swim in the pool below the falls we walk back through the indigenous forest and descend on a fairly steep path to Jackal

Hill.

Today's morning 12 kilometre walk is expected to take around three hours, with 220 metres of ascent and descent. This is a fairly steep trail but offers great views over the mountains. The afternoon's 10 kilometre walk is expected to take around two to three hours with 140 metres of ascent and descent. There is a short steep zig zag section up to Rustlers Gap.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Sungubala Eco Camp (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

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#### DAY 4 - Full day hike in the Drakensberg Mountains

Our walk today takes us along a trail from the lodge to cross Sunday Falls stream from which we reach the park boundary. Walking via Tiger Falls and down through the bush we make our way to Castle Rocks and Surprise Ridge. En route we have a picnic lunch while admiring the views.

Today's 17 kilometre walk is expected to take around six to seven hours with 140 metres of ascent and descent.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Sungubala Eco Camp (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

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## 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. For the next two nights we stay in chalets, these are simply furnished and built in a traditional style with brick structures under a thatch roof. Here the group can enjoy great views over the park and a traditional braai (Barbecue).



ACCOMMODATION:  
Mpila Camp (or similar)



Grade: Simple Lodge



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND DINNER

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## DAY 6 - Walking safari 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 and if we are lucky a sighting of the famous Big Five: lion, elephant, buffalo, leopard and rhino. This afternoon you can travel further into the park, through the dry grassland and woodland, on an optional game drive in an open vehicle. 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)



## Grade: Simple Lodge



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

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### **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. 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)



## Grade: Comfortable Lodge



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 8 - Boat ride and walk through iSimangaliso Wetlands Park. Optional visit to Cape Vidal**

This morning we take a boat ride through iSimangaliso Wetland Park looking for animals such as reedbuck, buffalo and monkeys, and the 526 bird species that live here. 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. Disembarking from the boat we explore the park on foot following bush trails back to St. Lucia village.

After lunch there is the option to visit Cape Vidal where you can walk along the coast to Mission Rocks

or spend the afternoon swimming or snorkelling in the Indian Ocean.

Today's 10 kilometre walk is expected to take around three hours.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

St Lucia Safari Lodge (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Lodge**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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**DAY 9 - Drive down coast, walk the Dune forest trail at Mtunzini. Trip ends at Durban Airport**

Early this morning we travel south along the coast to Mtunzini. Here we walk along the Siayay coastal 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.

Our last walk covers five kilometres over mainly flat terrain and takes approximately one hour.

After lunch at a local restaurant we continue to King Shaka International Airport (DUR) where the trip ends at 2.30pm. The earliest your flight can depart is 5pm.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### 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. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	3 Pin Round	Christian	Afrikaans, English

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## 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.

St. Lucia:

Boat trip on Lake St. Lucia R300;

Full day Cape Vidal excursion (includes lunch) R775;

St. Lucia night drive to spot turtles (Nov-Mar) R950;

Whale watching (June-Nov) R1190 pp;

Night game drive in St Lucia Wetland Reserve R575

Please note all above activities are dependent on minimum numbers.

### Clothing

Bring light and comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the temperature. The weather conditions in the mountains can be changeable, and it can become cool, especially at night, so bring warmer layers. Tops made from wicking materials which keep you drier and warmer are recommended as a base layer, and walking trousers are preferable to trousers of heavier material such as jeans. A waterproof jacket is essential at all times in case of rain and wind. Avoid brightly coloured clothing for game viewing.

- Breathable wind and waterproof jacket (you may also wish to bring waterproof trousers)
- T-shirts
- Long sleeved tops
- Sunhat
- Long trousers
- Shorts (if you prefer to walk in them)
- Swimwear and towel
- Midlayer Fleece/pullover



- Socks (liner and thicker pair)
- Insulated jacket

## Footwear

We recommend you bring walking boots with ankle support- leather or fabric are both fine. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or closed sandals for relaxing and general wear (open toe sandals can only be worn in some places). We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

## 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. A 20-30 litre day sack is recommended. You will need to carry what you need for the day which may include a raincoat, jumper, camera, sun-cream, water and picnic lunch. On hot days you will carry fewer clothes but more drinking water.

## Equipment

- Sunglasses
- Sun cream
- Small Torch (with spare batteries and bulb)
- Camera
- Walking poles (if you usually use them)
- Personal toiletries
- Personal first aid kit - On each walk a first aid kit is carried but you should have your own blister kit, supply of plasters, aspirin and other essentials.
- Insect repellent
- Small waterproof dry bag (for items such as your mobile phone)
- Reusable water bottle (minimum 1 litre)
- Binoculars

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, get 15% discount on a Water-to-Go bottle [www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore](http://www.explore.co.uk/about-us/responsible-travel/water-to-go-discount-with-explore)

## Tipping

### Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

## 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. In order to make things easier for you, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow £25.00 per person for group tipping.

## 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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£6	£12	£1.2	£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 at the airport.

#### Where To Exchange

Most towns or cities, your tour leader will advise you. If your trip is wildlife based and visits rural regions we strongly recommend to exchange money at the airport upon arrival for your trip.

#### 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.

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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, 4WD, Minibus

### Accommodation notes

South Africa has a good tourism infrastructure and generally good service standards. Our accommodation throughout this tour is varied to reflect the many aspects of this beautiful country. We use a combination of hotels, guesthouses and characterful park lodges. Some of the properties are owner-occupied and give a real taste of traditional South African hospitality.

In St Lucia we stay at a local style lodge within the wetlands area. In the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi game reserve we stay at Mpila or Hilltop Camp. You be staying in two bed thatched chalet, built in a traditional style with brick structures under a thatch roof, the rooms are kept nice and cool thanks to the high ceilings so air conditioning is not necessary. Due to availability of rooms some of the group may be housed in large fixed permanent tents (en-suite) at the same site. We self cater whilst at the lodges, employing local chefs and support crew who prepares the meals with fresh produce and the group can enjoy traditional braai (Barbecue).

## South Africa

### Food and drink

Dietary requirements: Most restaurants and hotels in South Africa do not have a wide selection of vegan and vegetarian choices. There is usually a choice of salads and one main vegetarian and/or vegan main dish on the menus, but choice will be limited especially in more remote locations. If you have specific dietary requirements we do recommend for you to bring some food with you.

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### Essential Information

## Government Travel Safety 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)

Regulations affecting all children aged under 18 years that are travelling to, from or via South Africa have been updated (Nov19). The law states that visa exempt children travelling for tourism purposes with one or both parents and/or an adult who is not a biological parent require to present a valid passport for each child on arrival. We strongly recommend you to refer to the South African House website for full information and to travel with a copy of these requirements.

South Africa: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, US and Canadian citizens. New Zealand ordinary passport holders do not require a visa, all other passport holders please consult your local consulate for full information.

Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office for a multiple entry visa.

All visitors should ensure their passport is machine readable, has a minimum of 6 months validity from your arrival date into the country 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. You will require one blank visa page in your passport with a minimum validity of 6 months. 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 be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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.

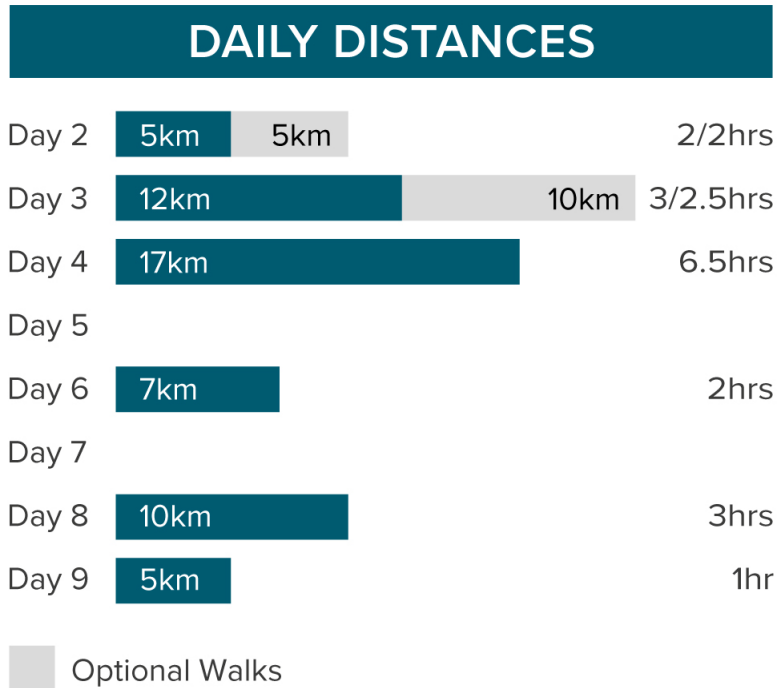
According to various travel health sources, the Western Cape is not regarded as a malaria risk area. If you are travelling to other areas in South Africa please check with your doctor about malaria requirements.

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.

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### Walking and Trekking information



### Walking grade

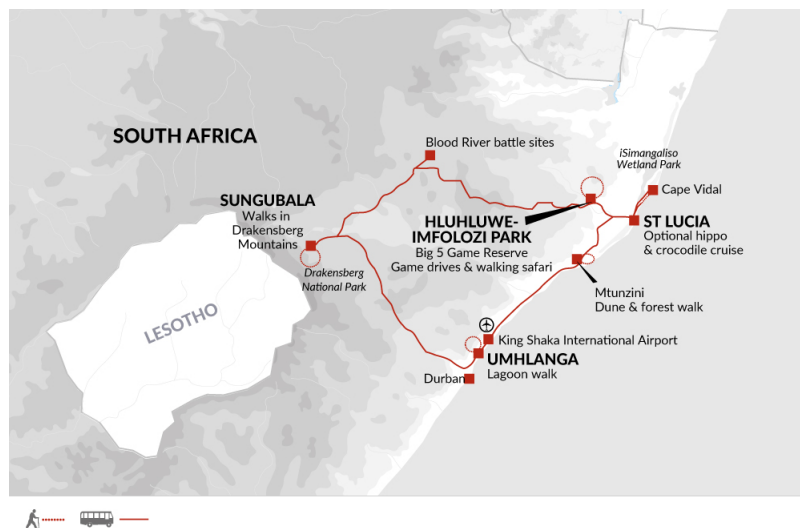
Moderate

### Trek details

Walks on 5 days for between 2 to 6 hours, with a shorter walk on the last day. Follow paths through forest and grasslands and along beaches.

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### Extend your trip



Why not extend your holiday with an extension to the thundering Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. Click [here](#) for details.

## Why book this trip

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

## Reviews



AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE



AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS