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## South Africa Big 5 Safari

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*Kruger National Park - Madikwe Game Reserve*

*8 Days / 7 Nights*



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## Overview

South Africa is one of the continent's premier destinations for game safaris. South Africa has a scattering of diverse parks and reserves known the world over for superb big game viewing and luxurious lodge accommodation. For many, a safari in South Africa is synonymous with the [Kruger National Park](#), the country's largest and best known game reserve. However, South Africa has many excellent safari destinations ranging from the [Madikwe Private Game Reserve](#) set on the edge of the Kalahari to the Big 5 reserves of the [Eastern Cape](#) and sub-tropical [KwaZulu-Natal](#).

All main safari animals are easily seen in certain places. Kruger Park offers excellent general game viewing, in Sabi Sand, the main focus is on seeing the big five; it is famous for its leopards. Seeing these normally shy cats is almost guaranteed here. Wildlife is scattered in Kgalagadi, but sightings in this arid environment tend to be exciting. Madikwe in the North West is home to the rare African Wild Dog.

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## Day 1-5: Kruger National Park Information, Kruger National Park



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## Kruger National Park

At more than 2 million hectares the Kruger National Park is one of the world's largest game reserves and a truly remarkable destination. Kruger National Park is one of the largest game reserves in Africa. It covers an area of 19,633 square kilometres (7,580 sq mi) in the provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga in northeastern South Africa, and extends 360 kilometres (220 mi) from north to south and 65 kilometres (40 mi) from east to west. Areas of the park were first protected by the government of the South African Republic in 1898, and it became South Africa's first national park in 1926.

To the west and south of the Kruger National Park are the two South African provinces of Limpopo and Mpumalanga. In the north is Zimbabwe, and to the east is Mozambique. It is now part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, a peace park that



links Kruger National Park with the Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe, and with the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique.



The park is part of the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere an area designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as an International Man and Biosphere Reserve (the "Biosphere").

The largest game reserve in South Africa, Kruger National Park is basically a synonym for the word "safari." Home to over 500 bird species, 100 reptiles, nearly 150 mammals, multiple archaeological sites, and a stunningly diversity of trees and flowers, Kruger is the country's flagship national park. Certainly it ranks with the best in Africa and is the flagship of the country's national parks - rated as the ultimate safari experience.

This is the land of baobabs, fever trees, knob thorns, marula and mopane trees underneath which lurk the Big Five, the Little Five (buffalo weaver, elephant shrew, leopard tortoise, ant lion and rhino beetle), the birding Big Six (ground hornbill, kori bustard, lappet-faced vulture, martial eagle, pel's fishing owl and saddle-bill stork) and more species of mammals than any other African Game Reserve.

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#### ACTIVITIES:

##### Game Drives

Game drives are what the Kruger National Park is all about. If you're on a kruger park safari then the highlight to any day is venturing out on the back of an off-road vehicle, binoculars clutched in one hand whilst the other hangs on for all you're worth to the constantly rolling vehicle as it makes its way through the bush in hot pursuit of the latest pride of lions, sighted feeding on a kill just over the rise.

For those booked on a safari or into a private game lodge, regular game drives with an experienced ranger are part and parcel of your trip, and for those on self-drives through the Kruger National Park, Olifants, Mopani and Letaba restcamps provide night drives, whilst most of the restcamps offer early morning, mid-morning and sunset game drives. For the most part game drives last around 3 hours, and private lodges and game farms usually include a coffee break, breakfast or sundowners in the bush as part of the game drive experience.



Bush Walks - Nothing can possibly beat the heart stopping excitement of tracking rhino, elephant and lion on foot through the heat of the bush. But it's also one of the most incredible ways to learn about the fragility of the ecosystems of the Kruger Park and to see the smaller, but in no way less exciting, animals and insects of the park like termites, spiders, snakes and plants that tend to be ignored when on the more fast paced game drives. Bush walks can last up to four hours and stops are made to allow replenishment and a chance to take in the beauty of an area.

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## Day 5-8: Madikwe Game Reserve

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### Madikwe Game Reserve



The Madikwe Game Reserve is the newest of South Africa's prime safari destinations. A public-private partnership resulted in the creation of this Big Five game reserve on almost worthless cattle farms and today it is home to 66 mammal species. Madikwe is a haven of amazing diversities. The landscape has mountainous areas, plateaux, rocky hills, a perennial river, seasonal wetlands, a variety of sandy and clay areas, bushveld, Kalahari veld and savanna areas. The rich diversity of vegetation ensures a wide range of game and the topography offers ideal game viewing opportunities in a malaria-free environment

Madikwe Game Reserve is currently the fifth largest game reserve and is also one of the lesser-known parks in South Africa. This makes it a hidden-gem as it is regarded as one of the best conservation areas in Africa and offers the Big 5. The park offers a number of luxurious lodges as well as community lodges in a malaria-free zone.

There is a good chance of seeing the Magnificent Seven which comprises the Big Five as well as the rare and endangered wild dog and cheetah. The reserve is home to the largest elephant population outside the Kruger National Park, black and white rhino, and the biggest disease free herd of buffalo in the country. In addition to these, one may see brown and spotted hyena and all other South African predators. A multitude of plains game includes giraffe, zebra, springbok and sable. There are also large populations of wildebeest, impala and warhogs. For bird watchers Madikwe is an unmissable destination with the latest official bird list boasting an incredible 340 species. Days are spent on specially equipped safari vehicles searching out the animals, or on foot for a closer look into the animal kingdom.

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## Day 8: Departure

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After a heart African Breakfast you will board your charter plane back to O.R Tambo international Airport in Johannesburg for your flight home.

