

Youth Trail Programme

South Africa May 2011



May 6th 2011 - May 23rd 2011

This is a journey into one of the wildest places on the planet, where nature rules and humans are just visitors who leave no trace of their passing through. It will give an opportunity to also understand social issues in South Africa, build a love of the wild, develop leadership and new perspectives about life, improve self knowledge and intercultural awareness.

The Wilderness Foundation UK delivers wilderness programmes that directly link to social need, particularly with young and disadvantaged youth, peace and reconciliation, and the development of leadership to ensure sustainable futures through a deep understanding of, and connection to the natural world.

Connecting Wilderness and People

Wilderness Trails offer people a unique opportunity to experience wild nature in the simplest form – carrying all you need in a backpack and sleeping under the stars. The Umfolozi Game Reserve is the largest reserve in Kwa-Zulu Natal, covering an area of almost 118,560 acres. This rugged terrain is enclosed by the White Umfolozi and Black Umfolozi rivers and contains the largest herd of White Rhino in Africa. Other wildlife to be seen include buffalo, cheetah, leopard, hyena, various species of antelope, crocodile and over 300 bird species. The trail is through its remote wilderness area – far from tourists and development.

Your journey begins with an evening flight on 6th May departing the UK for Johannesburg. You arrive on 7th May and will be met by a local representative who will assist the group with their flight to Durban, home of the Wilderness Leadership School, for your overnight stay. The group will stay the night at the Wilderness Leadership School with a BBQ under the stars, time to become acquainted with their guides and settle into South Africa after a long flight.

On the 8th May you will repack into our backpacks and then start your journey after breakfast to the **St Lucia Wetlands**, a World Heritage Site, which was the home of one of the greatest battles to save wild nature from mining in the 1970s. St Lucia is home to a wide range of game, crocodiles, large pods of Hippo and some of the best bird life in Africa.

Two nights will be spent here, camping in this remote wilderness, preparing for the next stage of the journey to the Umfolozi Game Reserve, where the group will spend five days without mirrors, daily pressures or watches.



On the 10th May the group will transfer to the Imfolozi Game Reserve, home of our first wilderness trails programme and the first area to have declared wilderness in Southern Africa. Here they will spend four nights and five days living close to wild nature, exploring the wilderness on animal game paths, keeping watch at night and having the opportunity to understand the ancient links between people and wild nature.

All that is needed is carried in packs, water is collected from the rivers and purified, and we practice leave no trace ethics.

Leaving Imfolozi on the 14th May, the group will travel to the Drakensberg Mountain Wilderness, another World Heritage Site, now known as the Ukhulhamba –Drakensberg National Park, an area with rich mountain climbs and one of the best places to see San-Bushman rock art. This is the tougher part of the trip with magnificent paths leading into the mountains, and three nights will be spent living in caves, sheltering in tents or sleeping in the open.

On the 17th May, the group will overnight at a comfortable guest lodge where they have time to wash, sort out their clothing and equipment, say goodbye to their wilderness guides and prepare for their Zulu Homestay at the Mabandla Community.

On the 18th May, after breakfast the group is collected by African Insight, and will travel to Mabandla in the Southern Drakensberg for their home stay. They will be there for four nights, living in pairs or in triples with a Zulu family. They will work on a local project linked to the community. This is often agreed nearer the time of departure, depending on what projects are needed and current.



"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of the birds, the ebb and flow of the tides, the folded bud ready for the spring. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter." Rachel Carson

General Information

Visas

If you have a British passport you will not need a visa for South Africa. This is issued on arrival at the airport. Please do visit the SA High Commission website for more information if you are on a different passport, or contact us in the office and we can help.

Health

We advise you to seek advice for visiting South Africa. MASTA is a premium health advice service and their website address is www.masta-travel-health.com. They will be able to give advice as link you to local clinics.

The areas we will be visiting in South Africa are low risk for malaria , however it is important to make your own decision with the help of MASTA. If you decide to take an anti-malarial we suggest you take Malarone which although more expensive does not require you to take for a long period after leaving the malarial area.

Passports

You will need a valid passport for up to at least six months. You must make sure that you have at least two blank facing pages. This is essential for South African passport control.

Travel Arrangements to South Africa

You will be responsible for your own travel arrangements to Durban in South Africa.. Travel can be through a variety of reputable airlines, such as Virgin, SAA, BA, Emirates, Air France, Lufthansa, KLM etc. Flights can either be direct or via major European cities.

Please coordinate with our team so that we can try to get everyone out as close together as possible..

Travel Arrangements on reaching South Africa

Once you reach Durban we will be in charge of all your travel arrangements. Transport is usually by mini-bus. If you decide to take up the community volunteering options we will then organise for our partners African Insight to make special arrangements with you on a personal basis or for a bigger group.

Escorting

Our leaders will be accompanying you on your trip who will be available to help with any problems you may encounter, and ease your trip for you. Our team in South Africa handle many journeys of this nature and are geared up to support you and your leaders.

Group Size

The wilderness trail part of your journey is limited to eight participants in each group, and a minimum of six, and will be accompanied by two armed wilderness guides.

Types of Accommodation

We make use of a variety of venues. Ultimately, we seek simplicity with comfort, hot showers and good food. We like places that fit our strict environmental ethics and have some kind of inspiration to them. For example, one of our favourite venues is based in thick indigenous coastal forest and is a rewilded area from previous sugar cane plantation. It has a protected, totally wild beach where we can swim and watch the sun set over the Indian Ocean with no company of humans, just the resident Fiddler Crabs who live in the sand.

Fitness

Our trails are designed for the capabilities of anyone who is reasonably fit and healthy. We do however not recommend this trip for anyone with severe back problems as you will be carrying a backpack for five days. Carrying a pack can be a new experience for people – but one easily adapts and our packs are designed for maximum comfort and back support.

It is worth considering that the change in climate particularly hot weather can affect your performance. If you have a medical condition which could be adversely affected by exercise or any worries about your medical fitness you must consult our GP.

More guidance on health will be sent to you following your registration.

We advise you to do some initial fitness preparation prior to the journey and this can be simply a walk three times a week for a period of up to three months before departure.

Food

We all love our food and need it more than ever when active and in the outdoors. We ensure that food on trail is sustainably sourced, nutritious and delicious. Our guides are fantastic cooks producing meals on a small camp fire with two pots. Trailists can offer their help in food preparation which is always welcome.

We are experienced in dealing with a myriad of diets. Please make sure you detail any specific dietary requirements when filling in your booking and medical forms.

Clothing and Equipment

We will provide you with the basic equipment you require, such as backpacks, sleeping bags, ground sheets, sleeping mats, cooking and eating utensils. You will be responsible for your personal requirements such as clothes, toiletries and medication. We will provide you with a comprehensive equipment list and hold an information evening where we can discuss this in more detail and answer your questions.

Indemnity Forms

To take part in a wilderness trail in any of the state parks in South Africa you are required to complete an indemnity form to be handed in at the gate of the park on arrival. This is a statutory requirement and without it you will not be allowed to proceed with your trail.

We will issue these when we receive your booking form and ask for this to be completed in advance. We will keep a copy here and you/leader will take the original to South Africa with you.

Insurance

Participants need to take out comprehensive travel insurance and to bring their certificates with them when travelling to South Africa.

We often use Direct Travel Insurance (www.direct-travel.co.uk.)

How do the payments and sponsorship work?

You will have paid a £250 non refundable booking fee. After that we ask for the full cost to be paid in full at least 8 weeks before departure. We are happy to accept payments in installments if this makes it easier.

Fundraising Support

On registration you will receive a fundraising pack which will give you lots of ideas and things you can do to raise money for your trip. We will also run a workshop for participants where we can support your fundraising and also give you an opportunity to swap ideas with others.

Pricing Information

Unless otherwise stated, the prices quoted in this document include the following:

Local transport from and to Durban, South Africa

All your food

Entrance fees

Full information pack, including kit&equipment lists

Guides

Accommodation within the programme

The trail and Mabandla Home stay

The prices exclude the following unless stated:

Flights to and from Durban, South Africa

Tipping

Items of a personal nature

Immunisations

Personal Insurance

Disclaimer

At the time of sending this to you all our prices and information are correct. They are however subject to alteration without notice.

For further details please contact:

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