

TRACKS SAFARIS

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RHINO CONSERVATION SAFARI

KWANDWE GAME RESERVE - SOUTH AFRICA

3 NIGHTS/4 DAYS



Kwandwe Private Game Reserve flanks both the north and south banks of the Great Fish River, which meanders for 30km (19 miles) through this pristine, private wilderness where the Big Five once again roam freely.

Kwandwe currently supports a healthy, growing population of rhinoceros and notably of the highly endangered black rhino since its successful introduction to the reserve in 2000. The succulent thicket of Kwandwe provides black rhino with ideal nutrition and it is in this type of vegetation that their reproduction is at the highest level in Africa. The Great Fish River Game Reserve neighbouring Kwandwe also has the third most important population of black rhino in Southern Africa, demonstrating the pertinence of this region in black rhino conservation. This programme provides a DEEP insight into Kwandwe's black and white rhinos and their differing behavioural patterns along with the growing issues of Rhino poaching and the necessary monitoring and reaction measures needed to keep these diminishing populations from being targeted by rhino horn smugglers. The programme allows guests the opportunity to get involved in all activities used in the prevention of rhino poaching including the tracking, notching, micro chipping and darting of the rhinos at the reserve.



The Rhino Conservation programme recommended from May - September

ACCOMMODATION AT KWANDWE PRIVATE RESERVE

Great Fish River Lodge



ECCA LODGE



UPLANDS HOMESTEAD



MELTON MANOR



ITINERARY

DAY 1 On arrival guests are shown to their lodge (for groups of 8 people, we would recommend staying at Melton Manor) to unpack and unwind after the journey. Enjoy an afternoon tea before heading out on the first game drive. This allows guests to check out the lie of the land and get to know the reserve before the programme starts the following day. Spot some of the incredible game which is resident to the reserve, whilst the guide points out topography, flora and fauna. On return from the afternoon's activities take a long hot bath before dinner.

Dinner at Melton Manor is shared around the dining room table or the enormous farmhouse table al fresco on the outside terrace. The interactive, contemporary farm-style kitchen is abuzz with chefs cooking up wholesome and always delicious farmhouse dishes with Eastern Cape flair.

With sweeping views of the afro-montane forests, Melton Manor at Kwandwe is a contemporary frontier farmhouse with a modern touch. The per suite or sole-use safari villa, where the smallest detail of your stay is planned according to your specific wishes, is perfect for family holidays, parties or groups of friends.

The welcoming u-shape and four ensuite bedrooms are cleverly designed around the central courtyard and its large, inviting swimming pool, while the interiors humorously combine traditional mid-20th century furniture with the latest in South African design.

DAY 2 Wake up and have a quick cuppa before heading out with Angus Sholto-Douglas (co-owner and conservation manager) of Kwandwe and Bulalani the game ranger along with a guard to track a rhino on foot and by vehicle. Learn about poaching issues, behaviour, identification, habitat, and biology.

Enjoy a bush breakfast prepared for you by the staff maximising the stunning scenery that surrounds you.

In the afternoon guests will be given all the full briefing for the next day's activities including an explanation of how the dart system works and a summary of the populations and the individual animals that guests will be looking to notch and microchip. Enjoy sundowners and canapés on the floating pontoon to finish the day before heading back to the lodge for another delicious dinner.

DAY 3 Today guests will be introduced to the wildlife vet who will be performing the operation. The vet will talk you through the procedure, brief guests on the drugs that will be used, the darting equipment, and give a safety briefing.

Taking to the skies in a helicopter, the vet will locate, dart and sedate the rhino whilst the rest of the team travel overland, accompanied by Angus Sholto-Douglas who will explain the entire procedure, outlining what to look for in a successful rhino anaesthesia and allocating specific roles. Those lucky enough may even get a turn in helicopter (although this cannot be guaranteed).

Once safe to approach the sedated rhino, the participants join the specialist ranger team and play their role in administering medication, taking measurements for scientific and medical purposes along with DNA samples for the national database and monitoring the animal whilst under sedation. They will also have an opportunity to drill the rhino horns for the insertion of microchips into the horns and perform ear-notching procedures for future identification - both essential tasks to ensure the preservation of these magnificent animals.

Share stories of your days adventures round the dinner table before returning to your suite where you can find a bubble bath ready and waiting!

DAY 4 Today guests will track the rhino that was sedated and monitored the day before to ensure the animal is stable following the procedure. This is the final stage of the rhino programme. The afternoon can be spent at guests' leisure. Enjoy a spot of fishing, or a guided bushwalk followed by a delicious picnic. Guests have the opportunity to visit Mgcamabele community centre, and also the chance to meet some local residents.



ABOUT KWANWE

- Member of Relais & Châteaux.
- Sole-use safari villa option – includes private ranger/host, tracker, butler, chef and exclusive use of an open 4x4 safari vehicle.
- Excellent nocturnal viewing – aardwolf and armadillo are regularly seen
- Historical and cultural trips to Grahamstown and surroundings.
- Game-rich country with Big Five (black & white rhino, elephant, lion, buffalo and leopard) as well as a remarkable variety of predators and general game, including cheetah, kudu, springbok, eland, red hartebeest, giraffe, black wildebeest and gemsbok.
- Malaria-free destination.
- A paradise for birdwatchers, the fish eagle and endangered blue crane are among a wide variety of birds found on the Reserve.
- The perfect add-on to an itinerary featuring Cape Town and the Garden Route.
- On 30km of privately owned Great Fish River frontage.
- Specialist Safaris: Frontiers at Kwanwe, Carnivore Research at Kwanwe, Photographic Safaris and Rhino Capture and Research.
- Ideal for families and small groups of friends travelling together.

GETTING THERE

From Cape Town International Airport or Johannesburg you would take a scheduled flight to Port Elizabeth Airport (1 hour flight from Cape Town, 1.5 hours from Johannesburg). From Port Elizabeth we would

recommend taking a scheduled flight directly to Kwandwe (30 minutes) where you would be collected by a member of the Kwandwe team. There is also an option to drive from Port Elizabeth, which is roughly a 1hr 45 minute journey. We would recommend taking the 09h00 SAA flight from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth which will give you enough time to catch the connecting flight to Kwandwe which departs at 13h15. From Johannesburg we recommend the 10h15 SAA flight to Port Elizabeth which again would give you enough time to connect with the flight to Kwandwe. Flight times are subject to change.

This safari can easily be combined with Cape Town, the Garden Route and the winelands. Since your entry point and travel hub is Johannesburg this safari has endless possibilities for extensions.



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