

# South Africa - Kruger National Park

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Bargain Mammal Tour

## Outline itinerary

**Day 1** Depart London.

**Day 2** Dullstroom.

**Day 3/8** Kruger National Park.

**Day 9** Depart Johannesburg.

**Day 10** Arrive London.

## Departs

February, October and November \*

\* See website for special family departures

## Focus

Mammals and other wildlife

## Grading

Grade A - mostly vehicular safaris.

## Dates and Prices

Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) (tour code ZAF04) or see the current Naturetrek brochure

## Highlights:

- Six nights in the world famous Kruger National Park
- Explore the upland grasslands of Dullstroom
- Up to 40 species of mammal typically recorded
- Open vehicles in Kruger National Park
- White Rhinoceros, Lion, Leopard and African Wild Dog all possible
- Abundant and colourful birdlife
- Night Drives in Kruger National Park
- Expertly guided by local South African naturalists



From top: African Elephant, Lion, White Rhinoceros.  
Images courtesy of Shutterstock Images & Paul Stanbury



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**NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.**

## Day 1

## In flight

We leave London Heathrow this evening on board a South African Airways' or British Airways' scheduled flight bound for Johannesburg.

## Day 2

## Dullstroom

We will arrive at Johannesburg International Airport this morning after our overnight flight. Here we will be met by our South African specialist wildlife guide, who will accompany us for the duration of this tour, and head off on the 3-hour drive to our first overnight stop. The drive will take us through highveld grassland and agricultural lands in an easterly direction. The terrain is not particularly exciting initially and we will be travelling at speed on the motorway which can make wildlife in a new country a little frustrating, but a few short birding stops may be made en-route to Dullstroom.

The quaint little town of Dullstroom is our first stop on the tour and we should arrive in time for lunch. The afternoon will be spent looking for mammals and birds in the vicinity of the town. The habitat here is mainly montane grassland interspersed with rocky ridges and marshes (called vleis in South Africa) and is entirely different to the Kruger National Park and thus holds wildlife we will not see elsewhere on this trip. These include both the beautiful Grey Crowned Crane, as well as the Blue Crane and mammals including Blesbok, Grey Rhebok and Mountain Reedbuck.

## Days 3 - 8

## Kruger National Park

After an early breakfast we will leave Dullstroom and continue on to the Kruger National Park. Our route will take us over the Abel Erasmus Pass, which brings us down off the escarpment and onto the savannah of the north-east. We then enter the Kruger via Orpen Gate, where the mammal viewing will begin. It is a fifty-kilometre drive to Satara, which could take us a good few hours due to all the new things to be seen enroute. We should arrive in camp in the late afternoon and have time to check-in and freshen up before our evening meal in the camp's restaurant.

Each morning we will make an early start (after a cup of coffee, of course!), hoping to leave camp as soon as the gates open. Being out early allows us to make the most of our time here, as animal activity generally coincides with the cooler hours of the day. Our morning drives will be of around four hours' duration and we will return to camp for a late breakfast. After breakfast there will be an opportunity to walk around the camp grounds, looking for birds such as Crested Barbet, Green Wood-Hoopoe, Brown-headed Parrot, Arrow-marked Babbler, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Black-headed Oriole and others. Camps can provide wonderful photographic opportunities, as the birds tend to be fairly accustomed to people. After the walk there will be a lunch and rest break, followed by an afternoon excursion in the vehicle, once again looking for exciting mammal species. This will be the standard daily program for the duration of the tour, although when moving between camps there will be more time spent in the

vehicle. There are also optional sunset drives available, which entail a three-hour drive in an open-sided 21-seater vehicle, driven by a National Park guide. These cost in the region of 250 Rand per person, and allows one to be out after dark when the big predators are most active and many nocturnal creatures emerge from their daytime retreats.

African Elephants are common throughout the park, and are normally encountered on a daily basis. We should encounter both large breeding herds, made up of family units of cows and their calves, as well as small groups of bulls, who for the most part are not permanent members of any herd. Cape Buffalo are also common throughout, although the Satara region is particularly suited to these bulk grazers and on occasion herds of over 500 individuals can be seen here. Buffalo are generally gregarious, with large mixed-sex herds commonly encountered, but small groups of mature bulls are also common. White Rhino are surprisingly common in the south and central regions of the Kruger, and are also often seen on a daily basis. Black Rhino on the other hand are rare and are only seen occasionally, usually in the south of the park. Consider yourself to be very lucky if you do see one of these impressive animals!

Southern Giraffe, the most southerly occurring Giraffe subspecies, is common throughout the park, particularly in the Acacia veld of the Satara region, and we are sure to have plenty of encounters with these graceful creatures. Grazers such as Blue Wildebeest and Burchell's Zebra also occur throughout Kruger, but are more common in the Satara region where the basaltic soils result in open plains and prolific grass growth.

Lions are also found throughout Kruger and we will hope to have some fantastic Lion sightings in the Satara region, where the good population of large grazers supports several prides and Spotted Hyena clans, lions and hyenas being the two top predators of the African savannah. They are also often encountered along the Sabie River in the Skukuza / Lower Sabie region, where the permanent water attracts prey species such as Impala in abundance. Leopards can be encountered throughout the park, but have a preference for areas with large trees, rocky outcrops and other forms of cover. They are particularly common (relatively speaking, of course!) along the Sabie and Sand Rivers in the Skukuza region and along the Crocodile River in the far south, but don't be surprised with a sighting or two in the Satara region either. Cheetah have huge home ranges and cover a lot of ground, making predictions about their movements and whereabouts very difficult indeed. Add to this the very low density (only 200 or so in the Kruger as a whole) and it adds up to an uncommonly encountered animal. Still, there is always a chance and one should always be on the lookout for this elegant cat. Although they do prefer more open habitat they move through areas of thicker vegetation as they wander about in search of prey and in fact prefer hunting Impala, their primary prey species, from the edge of small clearings. Wild Dogs are another sought-after, but rare, species that occur in the Kruger, with the Skukuza region offering the best chances. As with cheetah they have large home ranges and cover a tremendous area in their daily movements, so it is all down to luck with these animals.

Two species of diurnal primates - Vervet Monkey and Chacma Baboon - are common in the park and we should have numerous close-up encounters with these endearing creatures.

Small predators and other unusual mammals can also be seen in the Kruger, and these include Honey Badger, African Wild Cat, African Civet, Small and Large-spotted Genets, Slender, Dwarf and Banded Mongooses, Porcupine, Lesser and Thick-tailed Bushbabies, Epauletted Fruitbats and many others.

While sightings of big predators and unusual mammals are the highlight of any stay in the Kruger, the 'bread-and-butter' sightings of a whole host of other species of birds and mammals will add up over the seven days to make for an incredibly rewarding wildlife experience, one that won't soon be forgotten.

NB - Our 6 nights in Kruger National Park will be split between three of the Park's rest camps. We try to get our groups into Satara, Skukuza and Lower Sabie/Berg-en-Dal/Pretoriuskop, but on occasion room availability may dictate that we switch one (or very rarely more) with a similar alternative. You can be assured, however, that any alternate lodge or camp will be of the same standard as the original and all are in excellent areas for mammals and other wildlife.

## Day 9

## In Flight

We must sadly leave the park today, but should still have time for a final morning's game viewing before breakfast and departure for Johannesburg, with exact times depending on departure times at the airport (usually mid-evening).

## Day 10

## London

We will arrive back at London Heathrow early this morning.

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## Tour grading

Grade A. This is a traditional wildlife tour with no strenuous walking involved. However, do be prepared for some lengthy drives; apart from within camp compounds, walking is not permitted within the park and our safaris will be by vehicle. We regard the tour as suitable for all ages and for all degrees of fitness. However, you must be prepared for a dawn to dusk programme of action-packed mammal and wildlife viewing (though there is nothing to stop you taking a day, or part of the day, off to relax at camp!).

## Food & accommodation included in the price

All accommodation in South Africa is included, together with breakfasts. **Lunches and dinners are not included**, and will be taken at the varied restaurants, shops and bars of Dullstroom and the Kruger rest camps. You are likely to spend £100-£150 on the tour on these meals, depending on your appetite! Our accommodation will consist of simple, but comfortable, twin bedded chalets, known locally as Rondavels. All rooms have private facilities and single occupation may be reserved on payment of the supplement outlined on the first page of this itinerary.

## Your transport

We use 10-seater Toyota Quantum minibuses for our journey to Kruger National Park and for our time exploring around Dullstroom. In these we can carry up to 6 passengers, plus your naturalist guide who is also your driver. On arrival into Kruger we will switch to open safari vehicles which have three rows of stepped seats, great visibility and a sunshade/roof to protect the group from the worst of the midday sun.

We will use these open vehicle to explore Kruger National Park before switching back to the 'closed' Toyota Quantums for the long journey back to Johannesburg Airport at the end of the holiday.

## Mammal & Bird lists

Where available these are automatically provided on booking, and will gladly be sent to you before, if you wish for a more detailed preview.

## Your safety & security

You have chosen to travel to South Africa. Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website – [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-africa](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-africa) or telephone 0870 6060290 prior to travel.

## How to book your place

In order to book a place on this holiday, you will need to read our main Naturetrek brochure and complete and return the enclosed booking form, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost. If you do not have a copy of this brochure, please call us now on 01962 733051. You may also book by telephone, paying a deposit with a credit or debit card, or book online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

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