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Highlights

- ☐ Experience an unparalleled wildlife perspective, living and working on a 40,000 hectare private reserve in the iconic African wilderness, exploring both on foot and from vehicle.
- ☐ Play an active role in conservation projects, learning new skills and protecting these incredible environments and the animals that call them home.
- ☐ Take part in countless exciting activities of your choosing, from underground caving to microlight flying and everything in between.
- ☐ Travel and get to know the country and it's breathtaking natural beauty, including the world-renowned Kruger National Park and the Drakensberg mountain range.
- ☐ Meet new people, experience new cultures, and forge long-lasting friendships and memories.

Structure and Summary

Your 3-part experience of a lifetime will be focused on adventure, travel, safaris, conservation work and activities. You'll be sharing your home with the resident wildlife, getting an amazing opportunity to live, work and explore in the African bush and the surrounding area.

Weeks 1 and 2 are focused on wildlife and conservation. You'll be taking part in guided bush walks and safari drives, as well as getting stuck in with an assortment of different conservation projects.

Week 3 is an action-packed travel and adventure week. You'll leave your home away from home to travel and stay in new exciting areas of South Africa, with sights that will leave you breathless and activities that will get the adrenaline pumping!

Week 4 is the final week and dedicated once again to wildlife and nature. You'll continue your work with conservation and have some more incredible animal encounters that will give you stories to take home.

Trip Details

Here's a detailed description of the package itself, and an idea of the many things you can look forward to throughout your trip.

Please keep in mind that although you will get to do everything listed, the order of experiences might vary depending on conditions such as weather, the availability of organisations we work with and the activities of the animals themselves.

Day 1: Arrival and Induction

You'll arrive at Hoedspruit airport between 10am and 3pm, and from there you'll be collected and driven to the reserve.

On the way, we'll stop at a shop and services for you to pick up anything you might need. Please be aware that this will be the only chance you'll get over the next few days to go to any shops, so now is the time to make up for any forgotten toothbrushes or toiletries!

(For those wondering, South African supermarkets are very well stocked, and you will find most common international goods and brands, or at least a local brand alternative.)

The rest of the day you will have a chance to recover, rest up, unpack and get your bearings. Over dinner we'll give you the full introduction, cover a few of our rules regarding health and safety, introduce ourselves and get you familiar with the plans for the next week. The evening will be spent around a welcome fire under the beautiful African sky!

You'll also be given the chance to access the Wi-fi to update any family members or loved ones that you've arrived.

Day 2: Introduction Drive and Camera Traps

A somewhat leisurely start to the trip, you'll be given the full tour around the reserve and your first chance to glimpse some of the wildlife you're sharing your home with. Make sure your cameras are charged!

Once back, you'll be given a talk about the first conservation programme you'll be working on — camera trap surveys. Your guides will give you an in-depth explanation regarding the objectives and methods of the programme. After helping set the cameras



up at camp you'll be taken out and help install them in their positions.

Day 3: Anti Poaching Walk and Sunset Drive

The day will start with a morning anti-poaching walk through the bush. This involves looking for signs of suspicious human activity along fences, as well as spotting and removing any illegally placed snares. Without your intervention such traps would indiscriminately kill wildlife, so this is very important!

In the evening there will be a sunset game drive around the reserve, where you'll have a chance to see a variety of crepuscular animals (those more active at dawn and dusk), as well as the beautiful golds of African sunset.

Tip: Refillable water bottles are essential for most walks as well as any game drive. Plastic bottles are available on site but functionally any bottle that you can clip or attach to a belt is preferable.

You'll be sent an equipment list when you make your booking with us to give you an idea of what to bring.

Day 4: Community Visit and Bush Games

An exciting trip to a local community development project where you'll be lending a hand with the various projects they run, such as sustainable agriculture and hydroponics, building houses and community buildings. You will also have a chance to interact and get to know the community living there, hopefully building cultural bridges and emphasising the importance of sustainability and eco-tourism along the way.

Upon arriving back that evening, we will have friendly bush Olympics to help with teamwork and bonding!

Afterwards an optional extra activity: you can sit with your guides and ecologists as they go through some of the more "behind the scenes" stuff, like conducting surveys, capturing data and writing reports. They will show you software and tools that help keep the fieldwork running smoothly.

This might interest some of you, but we appreciate it may not appeal so much to everyone!

It's not a requirement, so we won't push it on anyone, but of course if you do find it beneficial then your guides will be happy to teach and show you as much as you need.

Day 5: Kruger Park Day Trip



An early start this morning, so get some rest the night before! You'll be hitting the road before 6am and for good reason — a full day trip in the world-famous Kruger National Park.

This 360km by 68km game reserve is one of the best places to see South African wildlife. Whilst the reserve you will be staying on is a part of the Kruger Greater Transfrontier Park, and the animals can come and go between, it still deserves a visit both for its wildlife and stunning natural landscapes. You'll learn along the way about all the different animals you encounter, and you'll have some great chances for photos as well.

Lunch is included and we'll stop off at one of Kruger's many restaurant areas around 1pm, resting from the midday sun before we continue, aiming to finally leave just as the park is closing at 6pm.

Tip: Bring layers on game drives, as mornings can be cold (falling below 10 degrees on occasion) but by midday it is often above 30!

Day 6: Town Trip

Saturday is the day to stock up and resupply for the week. We'll take a trip to the nearest town of Hoedspruit where you'll be able to go to a local supermarket and other shops.

You'll stop off at a local restaurant of your choosing and have a bite to eat. After that, you have the chance to pick up anything you can't do without, whether it be junk food, snacks or anything else you've been craving.

Additionally, on Saturday evening you'll usually have a BBQ or Braai (as its locally known) and a chance to reflect on the week and enjoy the weekend.

Please note, weekend meals and anything purchased from shops are not included in your package and must be paid for by the traveller.

Tip: You'll be able to find most items found at any supermarket the world over, either international brands you know or local brands of similar quality. On average, you'll find things in South Africa comparatively cheaper than the UK and the rest of Europe.

For any concern about a certain item you just can't do without, either bring enough to last you or send us a message and we'll check it out for you!



Day 7: Wifi Day and Leisure Time

On Sunday you'll have a chance to contact and talk to friends and family and make them green with envy. You'll be taken to the main lodge on the reserve, giving you the chance to connect to the internet and Skype / WhatsApp / Facebook / email whoever you choose for a good catch up!

Sundays are also when the guides tend to look over and analyse any data collected during the week – as always, anyone who wants to learn and help is more than welcome to join.

Day 8: Invasive Species management, Camera Traps and Night Drive

Enjoy a morning bush walk focused on the reserve's varied plant life and help remove any invasive species. Invasive species are often able to out-compete indigenous species, as they have fewer animals that actively feed on them. Removing these species helps keep the ecosystem healthy.

We'll also retrieve the camera traps, downloading the findings and getting them prepped, recharged and ready for later recording.

Then as dark descends, a night drive and the chance to look at some nocturnal species as well as practice a bit of astronomy.

Tip: In addition to the spotlights, the vehicles come equipped with bright torches which are a great addition to night drives. They help lift the veil of darkness and allow you to spot what you might otherwise miss.

Day 9: Tracking, Camera Trap Surveying and Insect Surveying

By now we hope you will be familiar with the environment, and have a good idea of the various animals here. With that knowledge you'll spend the morning helping the reserve track and monitor some of its rarer animals such as the rhino or aardvark, and attempt to locate and record their behaviour.

While you're out tracking you'll also be able to replace the camera traps at chosen sites or note other findings of interest.

In the evening we'll conduct an insect survey, identifying species and recording data to help give an indication of their health. During this insect survey, we'll only ask those of you comfortable with them to get close or help handle. Although we hope you're somewhat comfortable with bugs — as you will inevitably encounter them in the bush



— we don't want to leave you terrorised!

Day 10: Optional Day

The first of two optional days.

As a group you'll be able to decide whatever you want to do. If you want to explore the miles of caves in the Sudwana cave system that can be arranged, or perhaps some mountain hiking, or go on the a rope swing over a gorge or a boat safari. These days are to provide you with the flexibility to do what you want.

Day 11: Bird Ringing and Tree Surveying

Morning bird ringing and surveying means another early start, getting up before dawn you'll help set up mist nets. These humane catch and release nets will allow you to help ornithologists catch, tag, record and realise various bird species helping monitor migratory movements, populations and species health.

After lunch and a possibly needed siesta, you'll go for a gentle drive around the reserve looking for notable trees, where you'll map their location and record data.

Tip: During most surveying with our projects, Hamba Africa's guides and ecologists will record any data, findings or observations, however we encourage you to bring your own pen and pad to learn yourself and make your own notes.

Day 12: Local Vet Work and Target Shooting

Help out with local vets getting a behind-the-scenes glimpse at how they operate. Although this work is possibly the most unpredictable (as it depends on the animals' activities) it is often the most exciting. Usually it takes the form of routine check-ups and substitute feeding of wild animals, but sometimes it could mean emergency response to injured animals and helping out in any way!

After that we'll do something a bit different — target shooting at a neighbouring reserve using an assortment of bolt action rifles that guides often are equipped with as they conduct their bush walks.

Day 13: Town Trip

Another day to resupply and stock up for the week ahead.

Day 14: Wifi Day and Leisure Time



Once again you'll be able to contact and talk to anyone back home as well as help analyse some of the data gathered throughout the week.

Anyone staying with us for 2 weeks will also be transferred back to Hoedspruit airport.

Adventure week

Begin your week of adventure and action, during which you'll be traveling and staying at various backpackers and lodges throughout the area. The region you'll be staying in, known as the Drakensberg, is home to stunning mountain ranges, breath-taking views, fantastic hikes as well as adventure centres, different habitats, points of interest to explore and various animal sanctuaries and much more.

Here you'll have a little break from your various conservation tasks and get a chance to focus on pure pleasure and excitement.

During your time here you'll also be able to take to the skies on your microlight adventure. These propeller driven gliders provide a fantastic new way to see the African bush as you soar overhead.

Day 15: Baobab Tree Visit, Waterfall and Forest Hike

Get your bags packed as you hit the open road! First stop is the locally famous Baobab Café and Restaurant, where we'll get a bite to eat and you'll have the chance to get up close with these iconic African trees. Afterwards we'll head over to the local backpackers, where you'll be staying for the next couple of days, to check in and drop off your belongings.

Then we'll go for a gentle hike by Swadini Dam, exploring a dense forest microclimate nestled against the cliffs of the Drakensburg mountains. This area is home to South Africa's rarest monkey, the Samango monkey, as well as countless other animals, magnificent waterfalls and stunning views.

Day 16: Local Animal Centre Visits

Heading to Mohoholoho Rehabilitation Centre, you'll be able to see and understand the various rehabilitation and orphanage programs they are involved with. You'll have the chance to get up close and personal with some of the animals there, such as hyena, wild dogs, honey badgers, birds of prey and of course the various babies!



Next we'll go to the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre to see the wonderful work they are conducting there and why it's so important.

Afterwards we'll pop into a local reptile park to have a look at the various species of lizards, snakes and other animals you might not have seen or noticed during your stay.

Day 17: Panorama Route Explore and White Tube Rafting

Keep the camera ready as we'll be traveling to the next backpackers along a stunning panorama route full of excellent photo opportunities.

You'll be checking into your next backpackers then head to an outdoor adventure centre where you'll be geckoing (or tubing) in the white water rapids. There are also several exciting cliff jumps into the water and you'll get to paddle down the stunning Crocodile River — but don't worry, there are no crocs where we'll be!

Afterwards replenish your spent appetite at a local restaurant.

Tip: During this adventure week, you might find you have less time to charge cameras, phones and other electronics as well as have access to your laptops. As such we recommend bringing a spare battery pack or two, especially for your cameras to ensure that you're able to capture as much as possible.

Day 18: Optional Activity, Horseback Safari and Elephant Interaction

In the morning we'll head back to Induna Adventures, and you'll be able to take part in an activity of your choosing, may it be quad biking, mountain biking, archery or paint balling – whichever seems most fun for you!

Please note that optional activities are not included as part of your package.

Then a horse back safari — a different and unique way to see and explore the bush. Not only can you cover more ground and gain a beneficial height advantage to peer above the scrub, but animals will often see you as a part of the horse. This should allow you to get a little bit closer than if you were just on foot.

You'll go in groups of similar riding experience, from novices to more accomplished riders.

You'll also be able to take part in a ride with some local tame elephants, getting a fantastic perspective on their true size.



Please note: Hamba Africa does not support any organisation that displays substandard animal welfare. The tame elephants that you will be interacting with are predominantly brought to the sanctuary as rescued elephants, and trained via positively rewarding their actions. They are never coerced or forced into doing anything they don't want to do.

Day: 19 Jane Goodall Chimp Sanctuary and Cave Exploration

In the morning we'll be heading to the local town of Nelspruit, for a visit to the famous Jane Goodall Chimp Eden. This sanctuary, headed and run by the world famous primatologist Jane Goodall, rescues and studies chimps and will give you a chance to understand a bit about their work as well as seeing these magnificent animals up close.

Afterwards we'll grab a bite to eat at a local shop and head over to a cave system to have an explore in this incredible geological formation. Afterwards, it's back to the backpackers for our final night away from the reserve.

Day: 20 Return to Hoedspruit and Town Trip

This is a perfect time to buy any souvenirs for friends and family as we'll be stopping at a few African markets on route.

Heading back home, we'll pass by a number of supermarkets and towns so you can stock up again for your final week ahead.

Day 21: Wifi Day and Leisure Time

Day 22: Camera Trap, Small Mammal Trap and Insect Survey

First we'll go out and retrieve the camera traps we placed over a week ago, downloading the data and getting them ready for action again. Whilst setting these up, you'll also help set up our small mammal traps. These humane traps allow rodents and other small mammals to enter, attracted by bait. We then record valuable data about the species that can help us gain an indication of the species population.

In the evening we'll conduct another insect survey.

Day 23: Small Mammal Trap Collection, Bird Survey and Night Drive

Before the day gets too hot we'll retrieve the rodent traps placed previously, recording all information regarding the species, location and health of the animal.



Next up is some bird surveying! In the company of your guides, you will spend the morning out spotting some of the 350 species of birds present. You'll record various data including age, sex, behaviour and number.

In the evening we'll go for a night drive, for a chance to glimpse some of the more secretive species of wildlife.

Day 24: Reserve Maintenance and Community Visit

Spend the morning helping the reserve with various maintenance and routine work. This could be an assortment of things, including the removal of alien invasive plants or encroaching species, digging drainage ditches, repairing fences, clearing fire breaks, etc.

Then we'll take a trip to help the local community with various projects that include sustainable agriculture and building development.

Day 25: Optional Day

The last of two optional days, where you have the chance to travel to any location in the surrounding area to get on board with any activity of your choosing.

Day 27: Town Trip and Optional Camera Trap Collection

Another town trip to stock up on anything you might need, and a chance to make any last minute travel arrangements and let people know that you're coming home.

For anyone who doesn't want to spend the day relaxing, you'll also be able to join the guides as they collect the camera traps once again.

That evening we'll have a final braai and a goodbye party to conclude your time with us!

Day 28: Day of your Departure

The day of your departure. Hold back the tears and gather your possessions — you'll be taken back to Hoedspruit airport for your flight home. Until we meet again!!!

Please Note: This is an example itinerary and the exact order of the package may vary.

