

12 Days

South Africa

Geography, Conservation and SCUBA

An exciting adventure through the stunning South African province of KwaZulu-Natal with an important focus on conservation and protection . Situated on the East Coast of South Africa, this area boasts some of the greatest diversity of wildlife, ecology, geology and scenery in Africa.

Here you will find the UNESCO World heritage site of the epic Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Mountains . We will witness the unbelievable number of species found in both terrestrial and marine ecosystems in the coastal plains of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. Experience a thrilling journey through the game reserves and close-up animal encounters.



Recommended tour itinerary

Day
1-2

Arrive in Durban

Fly from the UK to King Shaka International Airport, Durban, where we are met on arrival by our local STC Expedition Leader. We transfer to our accommodation nearby the airport and freshen up. We then have a welcome briefing and set off for our first traditional meal.

Day
3

Durban Botanical Gardens

This morning we will visit the beautiful Durban Botanical Gardens, renowned as the oldest surviving botanic garden. Established in 1849 it is home to many indigenous and exotic plants that deserve our protection. After fully exploring the gardens, and restoring ourselves with some lunch, we will drive to Albizia Environmental Camp. Albizia Camp is an educational and conservational estate, formed by a collaboration of the local properties agreeing to drop their fences to promote and produce a greater conservation effort. This land is called Ukuwela which means 'to cross over' in Zulu. Ukuwela is a natural jewel; with a flowing river, striking fever tree forests, open grasslands, and mixed woodlands, it is one of the most beautiful and diverse wilderness areas in the region. It can support all shapes and sizes of plant and animal species, including leopards, zebras, wildebeests, hippos, and crocodiles.

Day
4

Environmental Awareness Program, Albizia Camp

Today signals the start of our Environmental Awareness Program which will cover the many facets of conservation and wildlife management of game and game reserves within Africa. Our day begins with a walk in this impressive environment, where we will learn basic bush skills and key species identification. The focus today will be on the rehabilitation of the land as it is transformed from farming to conservation land. Ending the day with some reptiles and creepy crawlies! An interesting and exciting talk covering the various species of scorpions, spiders and snakes found in South Africa.

Day
5

Richards Bay Minerals, Eucalyptus Plantations and Paper mills

Today's activities will focus on human impacts on the current environment. We will visit South Africa's largest mineral sands producing facility where we learn about the consequences of strip mining, but, perhaps more importantly, the rehabilitation process that is being undertaken here to restore the previously-mined coastal sand dunes. Afterwards, we visit one of the paper mills and the massive Eucalyptus plantations that feed these mills. We debate the benefits and risks of commercial plantations over conservation of these aromatic plants.





Day
6

Pineapple farm and Elephant Interaction

We start the day by walking through rural villages, visiting some of the homesteads and local schools to learn about the what everyday life is like here. These villages are in a close proximity to the large game reserves and conservation areas, so it helps us to understand the importance of conservation and how it helps these outlying communities. Next we take a tour of a working pineapple farm to see for ourselves the intensive labour process fruit goes through to get to our tables.

This afternoon we have a fantastic opportunity to see elephants close up and even get a chance to feed them! Rambo and his family will greet us as we enter the Zululand Rhino Reserve and upon meeting the elephants we can marvel at the size and behaviour of these gentle giants. We will also visit Ilala Weavers market where there is the chance to buy souvenirs and gifts to take back home.

Day
7-8

Discover SCUBA, Sodwana Bay

Together we will take the plunge into the underwater world with the Discover Scuba Diving experience and be awed by the hidden ecosystem that lies beneath the ocean waves. The Discover Scuba Diving program is spread over a two day period, giving us time to learn the necessary skills and adapt to our new equipment. The experience will consist of a confined water dive in a pool, a short lecture, and an open water dive in the ocean. The final dive offers you the breath-taking opportunity to dive into the magnificent watery depths, gliding amongst shoals of fish and looking at the world from a new angle.

Day
9

St Lucia

St Lucia is close to the southern-most point of iSimangaliso Wetland Park and contains the highest vegetated dunes in the world, an extensive and diverse wetland system, as well as coastal grasslands. A two hour boat cruise on the Estuary in the afternoon provides us with an opportunity to see hippos, crocodiles, reedbuck and many fascinating grassland, forest and sea birds species. We return to Albizia camp this evening.

Day
10

Game Drive

Our final day of activities is certainly one to be remembered. We will have a full day drive through the Hluhluwe –iMfolozi game reserve, the largest in KwaZulu-Natal. This should give us plenty of time to spot some of the famous "Big Five" (lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant, and buffalo) who stalk the verdant savannah. Situated in the heart of Zululand, it is also the oldest game reserve in Africa and is where Zulu kings, such as Dingiswayo and Shaka, hunted and put in place the first conservation laws. The viewing hides overlook waterholes and will enable us to see animals at an unbelievably close range.

Day
11-12

Depart Durban

After breakfast we complete the last leg of our journey as we head to King Shaka International Airport for our return flight back to the UK.

Further information

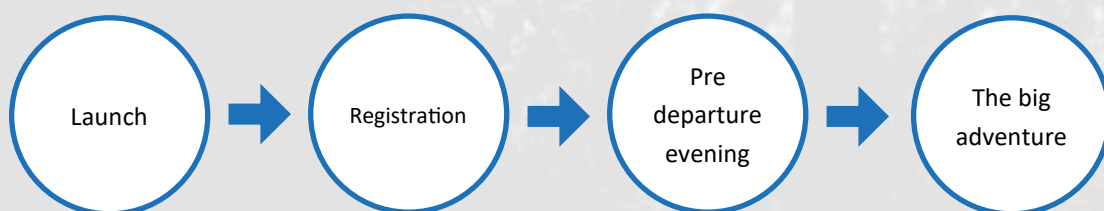
Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local tour leader
- Parent and student trip launch evening
- Pre-departure preparation evening
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

Your educational journey timeline



Physical journey rating:

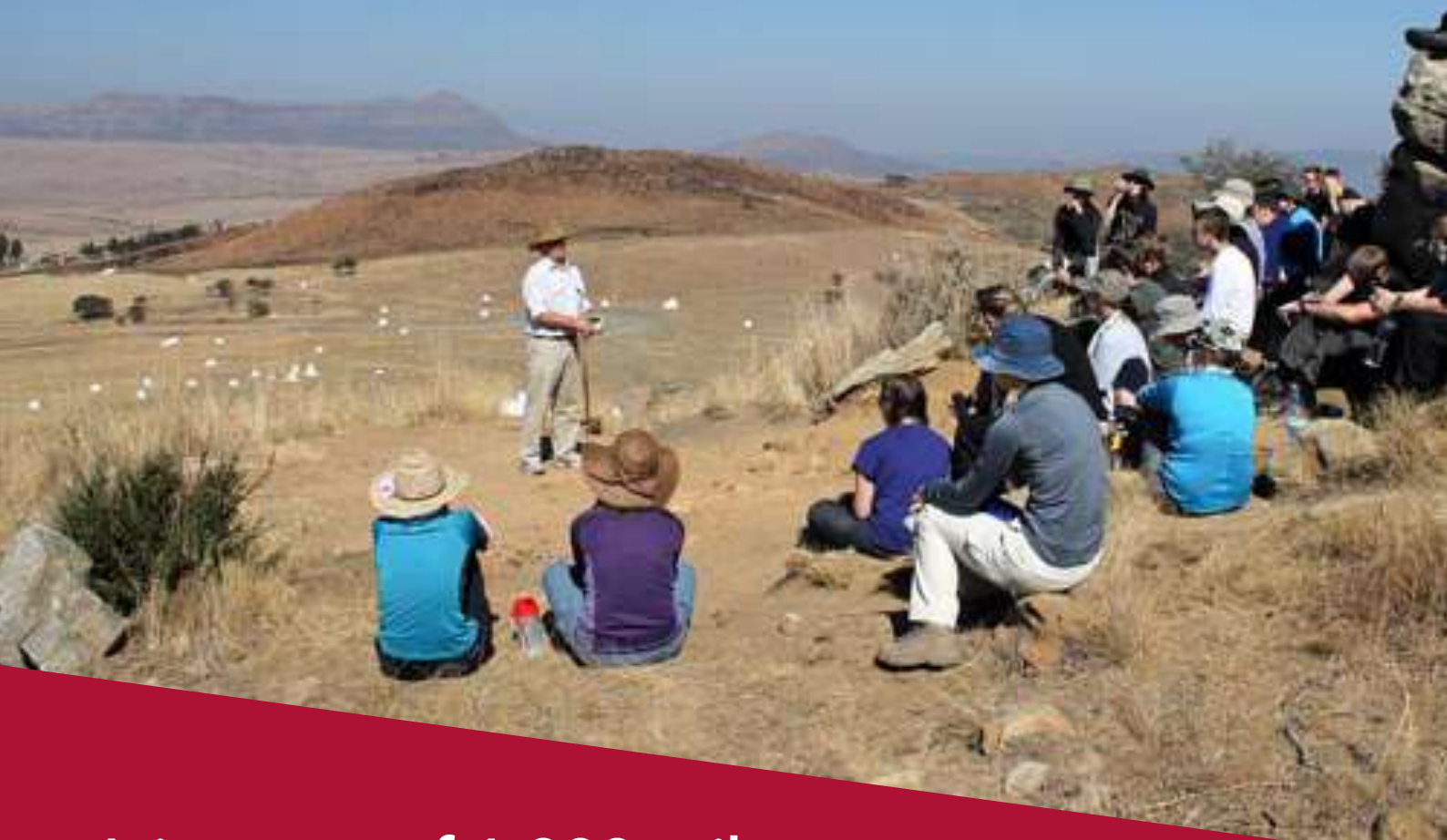


Some low level physical activities included in your trip, including walking on uneven terrain, maybe a morning/afternoon trek of two to four hours. That said, no physical preparation is required to make the most of the tour. High humidity and temperatures can occur at certain times of the year.

Culture shock rating:



Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your educational journey.

1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your educational travel itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

3 Arrange a trip launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the planned adventure with a comprehensive information evening and an opportunity for questions.



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