

The Mabitsi Trail – 10 Day Journey

“When elephants rub themselves against a trunk of a baobab they must surely feel a sense of companionship with the tree – like mine your skin is wrinkled by the sun.”
(H. Blight)

**Come on an African journey in which Elephants,
Baobabs and the Bushman will relate stories of plains teeming with wildlife;
Ancestral tales of myths and legend and civilizations lost and now revisited.
We will guide you to great landscapes, extraordinary wilderness sanctuaries
and African mythology, tracking the narrative and following the words of
An Elephant Bloodline.**

Day 1: Our Journey Begins

You will arrive at Oliver Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg and catch a connecting flight to Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport in Nelspruit with your guide.

You will then be road transferred to your accommodation, Hippo Hollow Country Estate, in Hazyview in Mpumalanga, situated on the Sabie River and famous for its hippo sightings.

Here you can relax and then be introduced to the EFAF (Elephants For Africa Forever) elephants that are cull survivors and the characters of the book An Elephant Bloodline.

Tembo, Mabitsi and 3 other elephants will take you on a wonderful sundown ride through the forest, where you will enjoy picnic sundowners while the elephants browse, leaving you with a sense of remarkable tranquillity.

Day 2: Sunrise Elephant Walk, Waterfalls & Scenic Splendour

In the early morning, you will join the elephants again and take a gentle walk with them through the forest and down to the river for a champagne breakfast.

We will then depart on our journey traversing the beautiful and scenic Panorama Route visiting many of our beautiful waterfalls, curio shopping in the quaint town of Graskop and viewing the majestic Gods Window, Bourke’s Luck Potholes, The Three Rondavels and Blyde River Canyon.

Our day will end at Tshukudu Game Lodge near Hoedspruit, just outside the Kruger National Park, where we will spend two glorious evenings. This game reserve breeds lions and rescue other orphaned wildlife until they are ready to be released into the wild again.

This was also the home of Tembo, the elephant, who managed to escape when his family was being culled. He found himself on the Sussen Game Farm and they looked after him for many years. Tembo escaped from the farm because he was being dominated by wild bull elephants. He was saved and adopted by the EFAF organisation...we will hear his brave story of survival.

Day 3: Getting To One with Nature while at Tshukudu

In the early morning, we will have the unique experience of walking with all the magnificent wildlife on the Sussen game farm, from small creatures to lions and rhino.

The rest of the day can be spent at leisure and then we will enjoy an afternoon game experience.

Day 4: Game viewing in the Kruger National Park

After a leisurely breakfast we will depart for the Kruger National Park entering at Phalaborwa gate. The town of Phalaborwa has the largest opencast copper mine in the world.

Once through the gate, we will spot wildlife along the way to Olifants Camp, situated on a prominent 100 metre ridge overlooking the Olifants River. This spectacular river has its mouth at the Xai Xai in Mozambique and flows into the mighty Limpopo.

Here we can relax and later enjoy sundowners while watching the wildlife come to the water for their afternoon drink under the watchful eye of the African Nile Crocodiles.

We can then enjoy dinner in the restaurant and get a good nights sleep for an early start.

Day 5: A Day of Exploration and Wildlife Adventure

Watch the earth greet the sun with our day's adventure at 05h00. We will make the most of the cool morning with a 3hr wildlife tracking walk through the park with a trained guide.

After a leisurely breakfast, we will then depart for our short journey to Letaba Camp to visit the Elephant Museum, which displays The Magnificent Seven Tuskers who used to roam the park.

One of the most famous being Mafunyane, Tembo & Mabitsi's Grandfather (as described in An Elephant Bloodline).

There are many emerging big tuskers in the Park at the moment and it is fun to try and spot them and compare their size and tusks with these great specimens. To qualify as a big tusker each tusk must weigh more than 100lbs or 45kg.

We will then travel north through the park, exploring and spotting wildlife, birds and trees, have a picnic on the way and arrive at Mopani Bush Lodge which is situated on the Pioneer Dam, great for wildlife spotting while enjoying sundowners.

Day 6: Elephant Country

We will rise early with a traditional 'rusk/biscuit and coffee' before setting off on the next stretch of our journey north. This is elephant country and we have a leisurely day ahead, looking for elephants, finding dams rich with bird life and spotting other animals.

We will have brunch on the way to our next camp Shingwedzi.

Here we will relax and then later in the day enjoy a mystical night drive, along the way, breaking for a barbeque/braai in the bush, letting the whoop of the Hyena and the diesel-engine-like call of the Mozambique nightjar enchant you.

We will visit the Kanniedood Dam, a perfect place to be on the lookout for Crocodile, Hippopotamus, Elephant, Bushbuck and even Leopard and return to the camp for a well deserved good nights sleep!

Day 7: Baobab Stories & Crooks Corner – “The Haven of Scoundrels”

There will be an early morning start again with a ‘rusk/biscuit and coffee’ before taking off on our journey to the furthest northern part of the Kruger Park. The terrain in the far north is quite different and therefore we will see a change in the wildlife and birds. On the way we will also view many of the magnificent baobab trees, icons of the bushveld with many stories to tell.

This is the area that set the scene for the famous book *The Ivory Trail* by T.V. Bulpin.

We will arrive at our accommodation, Wilderness Safaris, Pafuri Camp, which is a luxurious 4-Star, tented camp overlooking the Levuvhu River. Here we can relax, have lunch and enjoy a cooling swim.

In the later afternoon we will go on a game drive along the Levuvhu River and visit Crooks Corner, “The Haven of Scoundrels”. In the early 1900’s, ivory smugglers, poachers, bandits and hunters used to hop over the border depending on which police were looking for them. As you stand at the point, you are on the borders of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa; it is rich with colourful history.

Day 8: Baobab Trees and Myths & Legends

After a leisurely breakfast, we will leave the Kruger Park at Pafuri Gate and visit the biggest and oldest Baobab Tree. It is estimated to be more than 3000 years old with a base of 43 meters.

We will experience the rich Venda culture and visit the Venda town of Thohoyandou meaning Head of the Elephant, the mystical Lake Fundudzi, rich with Venda myth and legend as well as the Dzata Ruins, which hosts the spirit of the drum and is linked to other ancient civilisations such as Thulamela and Mapungubwe.

We will end our day at Shiluvu Lakeside Lodge nestled amongst fig trees on the Albasini Dam.

Day 9: The Elephant Whisperer

In the morning we will tour the area of Louis Trichardt/Makhado and then head for an area called Mooketsi, the home of the EFAF Elephant Training Facility.

Here you will meet the elephant whisperer Rory Hensman and interact with the elephants that are in training at present and experience how incredibly intelligent they are. Open discussions can be held with Rory, he is one of a kind found anywhere in the world!

We will then travel to Tzaneen and stay the night at the charming and elegant 5 Star Coach House Country Hotel, with its rich history and magnificent views. The hotel has a fully functional health spa where you can enjoy some pampering if you so wish.

Any nougat lovers can visit the macadamia nut nougat factory close by!

Day 10: The Valley of the Olifants & Homeward Bound

After breakfast we will leave for our journey home which will take us up the beautiful Valley of the Olifants with sweeping exotic forests of yellowwood trees and down the mountain passes of Magoebaskloof, also known as the Land of Silver Mist. This is where the Pedi Chief Makgoba bravely resisted taxation by the Transvaal government and fled into the forest. He was eventually caught and beheaded. A bronze cast head was put here to commemorate the battle. We will tea to honour him at the Magoebaskloof Hotel.

We will then drive past Zion City and through other rich historic areas of the Limpopo Province on our way to Johannesburg...or onto Capetown.

This tour is conducted for a minimum of 6 people and accommodation can be changed according to your needs.

Depending on the availability of accommodation at the time of booking, some of the lodges mentioned may have to be changed, however, the same standard will always be selected and similar activities will be offered.

Please email for a quote.