

THORMAHLEN & COCHRAN SAFARIS GUIDED TOURS



Mpumalanga

ACTIVITIES AND PLACES TO VISIT:

- Kruger National Park – visit by car. Option to take a guided morning walk and night drive to see the big five activity at night
- Loskop Nature Reserve – hiking or driving – photographic safari & bird watching.
- Golf Courses (Skukuza, famous Leopard's Creek)
- Fly-Fishing
- Elephant-back safaris, Helicopter rides & Microlight safaris
- Hazyview: Hot air ballooning Kloofing, abseiling, bunjee jumping, white water rafting, ballooning and quad biking
- Horse trails and Game Trails
- Tsinini Silk Farm: It was one of the first companies to develop and market Wild African Silk products in South Africa.
- **Scenic tours:**
 - Blyde River Canyon
 - Potholes or Bourke's Luck
 - Three Rondavels - well known gigantic peaks made from quartzite and shale
 - God's Window – a viewpoint a viewpoint at an altitude of 1,829m/6,000ft extending northward over the Blyde River Canyon
 - Town of Graskop: Silk Factory & Harry's Pancakes
 - Pelgrim's Rest – old mining town of 1800's
 - Various waterfalls (Mac Mac, Berlin, Lone Creek, Lisbon etc)
 - Long Tom Pass: The Long Tom Pass was named after the cannon, which the Boers used to try and dislodge the British from Lydenburg in the battle between the Boers and the British in the Anglo-Boer War (1899 -1902) in the Lydenburg area.
 - Sudwala Caves (famous stalagmite and stalactite cave rock formations, oldest known to mankind, 300 million years ago)
 - Curios and wooden carvings
 - Cheetah Breeding Centre
 - Moholoholo Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre
 - Matsamo Cultural Village – dancing with Swazi tribe
 - Day visit to Swaziland
 - Picnic in Botanical Gardens in Nelspruit. Only a small part of the Botanic Garden is laid out as a garden. The rest of the area is home to 500 species of plants native to this area, with wonderful paths leading through it.
 - Spa – for facials, body massage and beautiful nature reserve scenes
 - Fly fishing
 - Tailored motorbike tours

Detailed description of some destinations listed:

LOSKOP NATURE RESERVE:



The well-known Loskop Dam Nature Reserve can be found deep in the Cultural Heartland of South Africa's Mpumalanga. The Loskop Dam is a 27km long dam which makes it the largest dam in the Southern Hemisphere. The dam measures over 2 350 hectares and is situated within the Loskop Dam Nature Reserve which itself comprises of 23 000 hectares of picturesque bush veld. The Loskop Dam reserve covers 230km², of which 23km² comprises of water.

The Loskop Dam Nature Reserve is a luscious paradise and home to an abundance of vibrant birdlife and exciting wildlife. In fact, there are over 70 species of mammals on the reserve. It is part of Thormahlen & Cochran's hunting area. The fascinating wildlife such as hippo, warthog, giraffe, plenty of plains game and other wildlife abound in this spectacular reserve. Apart from hunting activities, game can be viewed by boat and the area offers water sports and hiking trails to explore all the wonders of this tranquil and picturesque area. It is also a popular fishing area and the most desirable species found in this dam are carp, blue and red breasted bream, yellow fish, sharp tooth catfish, eels, mudfish and many more. Clients can also explore the Loskop dam on horseback.

KRUGER NATIONAL PARK





The Kruger National Park in South Africa is an enormous nature reserve (2 000 000 hectares) stretching 350 kilometers (217.4 miles) along the Mozambican border and being 60 kilometers (37.2 miles) wide on average.

Staying in Kruger National Park or one of the surrounding private game reserves is ideal during a visit to South Africa. The safari and game lodges range from artistically elegant to super luxurious with en-suite bathroom facilities. The expert game rangers whisk you off on game drives and walking safaris, tracking the wildlife in their natural habitat.

Kruger National Park is one of the premier game-watching destinations in the world for a South Africa safari. Approximately 145 mammal species occur in the park as well as the Big Five, such as Elephant, Buffalo, Leopard, Lion, black and white Rhino, Hippopotamus, Crocodile, Sable, Giraffe, Zebra, Bushbuck, Kudu, Warthog and many Antelope species. Other carnivores include Cheetah, Wild Dogs and spotted Hyena.

Kruger has a list of almost 500 bird species, some of which are not to be found elsewhere on a South Africa safari. Hornbills, Starlings, Vultures, Rollers, Bee-eaters and Shrikes typify the ubiquitous avi-fauna and birders can look forward to pursuing the Big Six (Saddle-billed Stork, Kori Bustard, Martial Eagle, Lappet-faced Vulture, Pel's Fishing Owl and Ground Hornbill).

Raptor viewing can also be very rewarding on a South Africa safari in Kruger Park with Bateleur, Martial, Black-breasted Snake, Brown Snake, African Hawk, African Fish and Tawny are all regularly seen, and in summer: Wahlberg's, Steppe, Lesser Spotted.

THE PANORAMA ROUTE

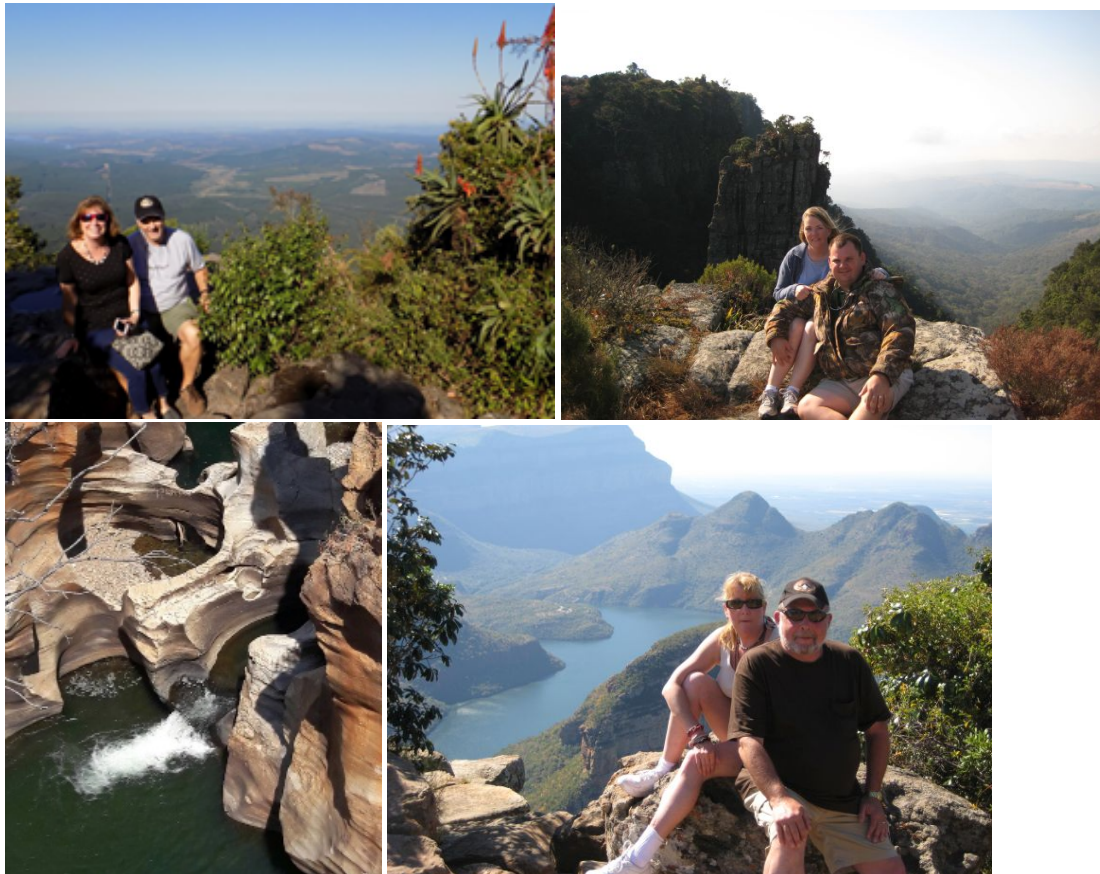


The magnificent Panorama Route is best known for its cultural heritage and its dramatic landscapes.

One of the major highlights in the Panorama Route is **The Blyde River Canyon Nature Sanctuary**, home to spectacular wildlife, birdlife and plant-life and some of the best views in the country. The Blyde River Canyon is the third largest canyon of its kind in the world. The scenery of the 25 000 ha reserve is truly unsurpassed by any other. Its vegetation is both varied and lush and the rich selection of birdlife includes a breeding colony of the rare bald ibis. The fresh mountain scenery and panoramic views over the Klein Drakensberg escarpment are quite spectacular and give the area its name of 'Panorama Route'.

Other highlights include the exquisite waterfalls in Graskop and Sabie, the Echo Caves that speak of Africa's powerful tribes in regions such as Lydenberg and Orighstad, Ancient artistic footprints left by indigenous peoples of Africa and the Gold Rush territory, Pilgrim's Rest - home to the early gold prospectors.

Viewpoints on this route, are named for the spectacle they offer:



God's Window boasts truly dramatic views to the South and East from various placed viewpoints, overlooking the almost sheer 300m drop into indigenous forest clad ravine. Being 250m higher than the pinnacle viewpoint, the total drop to the lands below is approximately 750m.

The '**Pinnacle**' is a single quartzite column rising out of the deep wooded canyon and the '**Three Rondavels**' (also called 'Three Sisters') are three huge spirals of dolomite rock rising

out of the far wall of the canyon. Their domed heads are iced in green and their sides are stained with fiery orange lichen. From the 'Three Rondavels' you can see the extensive Swadini Dam in the far distance, which marks the end of the reserve. The geology and climate of this high rainfall plateau results in **masses of waterfalls**, beautiful to look at and many of which you can visit. Various animals and birds, including all three species of South African Loerie bird can be found in the Reserve.

Bourke's Luck Potholes

This natural water feature marks the beginning of the Blyde River Canyon. Through countless eons the swirling whirlpools which occur as the Treur River plunges into the Blyde River, caused waterborne sand and rock to grind huge, cylindrical potholes into the bedrock of the river. The Potholes were named after a gold digger, Tom Bourke, who staked a claim nearby. Although his claim did not produce a single ounce of gold, he correctly predicted that large gold deposits would be found in the area. Just above the confluence of the Blyde and Treur Rivers is a curious formation of rounded holes in the rock caused by the perpetual swirling waters of the Treur River. The trekkers named the Blyde (meaning joy) and the Treur (meaning sorrow) following an incident when their sorrow turned to joy.

GRASKOP



Graskop is a small town found on the edge of the Drakensberg escarpment. The natural wonders of the area and town are probably the most photographed and painted scenes in the world. Graskop was so named because of the vast tracts of grassveld and absence of trees in the area. It is the gateway to the Panorama Route. Enjoy the famous Harry's Pancakes and explore several curio shops, silk factory and many interesting shops in town. Graskop also boasts a vast array of exciting activities including fantastic golf courses, hiking trails, 4x4 trails, horse riding, quad bikes, and motorbike tours.

ECHO CAVES



Situated just outside Ohrigstad are the spectacular Echo Caves. These mysterious caves were discovered in the 1920's by the owner of the farm. After his cattle mysteriously disappeared on the farm he started looking for answers. That is when he discovered the Echo Caves. After exploring the cave, the discoverer realized that this is a gift from nature laid among the gentle undulating hills of the Mpumalanga escarpment. The Echo Caves are some of the oldest caves in the world and were declared a Historical Monument. The caves are so called because the local people used one of the stalactites as a drum to warn of any approaching Swazi. As these caves extend for some 40 km, the sound travelled for surprisingly long distances and the people could take refuge in the caves. The Echo Caves are the least well known of the limestone caves. One of the rooms of the cave has a height of 60m! There are guided tours through 2km of tunnels viewing impressive stalagmites and stalactites. New discoveries include the Madonna and the Crystal Palace. For the more adventurous, a special tour can be organized to go deeper into the cave. The end of the cave has not yet been found and it is said that the end of the Echo Caves is somewhere close to the Strijdom tunnel.

SABIE



Sabie is a tranquil and attractive malaria-free town, named after the Sabie River, which is well known for its fearful crocodiles as well as harsh currents. Sabie originated as another gold rush town, all due to an accidental discovery during a picnic in 1895: a bottle shooting practice revealed gold specks in the rock where the bullets had glanced off.

Patches of indigenous forest survive in some of the valleys, and the banks of streams are covered with beautiful wild flowers and ferns. The Bridal Veil Falls, the Lone Creek Waterfall and the Horseshoe Falls can all be reached from the scenic forest track along the south bank of the Sabie River. Sabie boasts an abundance of exciting activities including 4x4 Trips, swimming, fishing, abseiling, archery, ballooning over the shimmering valleys, bird watching, boating and sailing, Helicopter Flips, white-water rafting, rock climbing, hiking and so much more!

PILGRIM'S REST



Pilgrim's Rest is situated on the magnificent Panorama Route. The entire town of Pilgrim's rest has been declared a national monument. Here, visitors can relive the days of the old Transvaal gold rush. The history of this quaint and delightful village dates to 1873 when a miner, Alex Patterson, discovered alluvial gold on the farm named Ponieskrantz. Though the discovery was kept as a secret, once a second prospector named William Trafford also discovered gold close by, the inevitable happened. Soon after, optimistic panners and prospectors from all over the country and the World came to the area. On 22nd September 1873, Pilgrim's Rest was officially proclaimed a gold field and the scatter of tents and elementary shacks soon grew into a flourishing little village complete with sturdy brick houses, shops, churches, canteens, a newspaper and the well-known Royal Hotel. Today, Gold Panning is still supported and practiced by people from all races, genders, and ages. Visit the exciting curio and craft shops, and fascinating historical sites such as old church buildings, shops, various Museums and the Cemetery.

LONG TOM PASS



The Long Tom Pass gets its name from the Long Tom cannons used during the Anglo-Boer war. The original Long Tom Pass was a treacherous one, steep hairpin bends and hair-raising drops. It was originally the route followed by pioneer wagon drivers transporting goods from Mozambique to Lydenburg. The road tumbled over the so called Devil's Knuckles, and many wagons were lost in this area as it was so dangerous.

Today however, as you travel on the new tarred road, you will still see the old road twisting over its dangerous course but the danger is no longer present. The scene is dominated by the peaks of Mount Anderson and Mauchsberg making it quite a beautiful route to drive along. Misty Mountain is a 280 hectare South African Natural Heritage Site situated on the

spectacular Long Tom Pass. Activities like Trout fishing in dams and weirs with equipment available to hire and guided quad biking excursions are popular in the Long Tom Pass area.

WATERFALLS



Berlin Falls

Close to God's Window, north of Graskop, are the mighty Berlin Falls. A special observation platform has been built to view this natural wonder, one of the most spectacular along the Panorama Route. The Watervalspruit plunges down a cliff, 80 meters high into a huge green pool. It is a great picnic sport and pool to swim in.

The Lone Creek Waterfall

The Lone Creek Waterfall is situated about 10 km west of Sabie. Here the Sabie River pours over a 68-m cliff of trees, moss and ferns. The waterfall is spectacular after heavy rainfall when the spray nurtures a rainforest. Lone Creek Waterfall is just one of many waterfalls to be found along the Sabie River; other include the Horseshoe Falls and beautiful Bridal Veil Falls.

The Lisbon Falls

These falls are just three kilometers to the south of the Berlin Falls. The Lisbon River plunges down in a double stream, 90 meters high, over a semicircular rock face. There is a 100-meter footpath leading from the parking area to a vantagepoint, at the base of the falls for a spectacular view. Nearby are some lovely picnic spots.

The Elands River Falls

These falls have been declared a national monument. At this waterfall, the water of the Elands River gushes over a 228-meter cliff in three separate streams, splashing into a clear, deep pool.

The Mac-Mac Falls

The Mac-Mac Falls are one of the most photographed and unusual sites: the Mac-Mac River plummets down 65 meters. It is named after Mac Mac village, the site of the gold rush of 1873. Mac-Mac pools, to the south of the falls, consist of a series of rocky basins filled with water. Swimming is permitted. There is a lovely picnic sight two kilometers beyond the falls, which is also the starting point of the Forest Falls Nature Walk.

The Forest Falls

These falls can only be viewed by going on the four-kilometer Forest Falls Nature Walk. It is a rather pleasant walk through pine plantation and indigenous forest. Because of its location, the falls are not as frequented as the other waterfalls.

The Montrose Falls

At the Montrose Falls, near the Sudwala Caves, the Crocodile River flows over a 12-meter high rock face into a series of pools. There are actually two falls, one above and one below the main cascade.

SUDWALA CAVES



These caves are the oldest known to mankind, formed over 300 million years ago. Prehistoric man discovered these caves and at the beginning of the 19th century they were used as refuges by sections of the Swazi people. In the early years of the 20th century, the In the 500 m length of the caves open to tourists, there are many dominant and powerful drip-stone formations. The ceiling of the caves contains fossilized colonies of blue-green algae known as "stromatolites". Such stromatolites, one of the earliest identifiable forms of life in Southern Africa, flourished about 2 000 million years ago.

NELSPRUIT BOTANICAL GARDENS



The Lowveld National Botanic Garden, with an area of 154 ha, is situated on the northern outskirts of Nelspruit. The Crocodile River flows through the gardens from east to west, forming the impressive Nelspruit Falls. The Crocodile River surges through a narrow, solid rock gorge that has been scoured out and pot-holed over millennia, while the Nels River tumbles down a waterfall from the west, to converge with the Crocodile in a serene pool on a bend in the river. A path runs alongside the river. Only a small part of the Botanic Garden is laid out as a garden. The rest of the area is home to 500 species of plants native to this area, with wonderful paths leading through it.

The Gardens contains a restaurant, shop, and information centre.

MATSAMO CULTURAL VILLAGE



The people residing in the various rural villages around Matsamo is predominantly Swazi in custom, tradition and language with a strong Sotho influence and has a well preserved and rich cultural heritage. They are part of the Shongwe clan, once a strong independent group with its own paramount King who in the time of King Mswati II swore allegiance to the Swazi King and helped defend the territory against intruders from the North. As part of the reward for his allegiance and loyalty, Chief Matsamo remained in control of the region as an important Swazi Royalty and absorbed the Sotho clans who lived in the area into his clan.

Today, the passion with which these rural communities practise their indigenous knowledge is undoubtedly a major contributor to the economic success of the Centre ensuring sustainability through tourism. Clients are guided through the villages, are treated to folk dance and other cultural performing arts and enjoy food and refreshments in the village or

in the restaurants. Approximately one hour must be allowed for a tour and at least one and a half hours when a meal is included.

DAY VISIT TO SWAZILAND

A typical day tour will include:

- Visit a Swazi Cultural Village – tour & performance.
- Ngwenya Glass Factory – handmade glass.
 - Mantenga Craft Market – pots, garments, leather, silver, curios & artwork.
 - Gone Rural – exclusive rural handcraft / weaving.
 - Lunch at a local restaurant.
 - Swazi Candles – watch the creation process and meet the artisans.

FLY FISHING



Fly-fishing is an activity that is as mesmerizing to watch, as it is to partake in. Whilst its predominantly enjoyed by the older generation, fly fishing is fast catching the attention and interests of a whole new generation of enthusiasts. The art of fly fishing was initially developed as an angling method to catch salmon and trout. In modern times however, the method has been adapted to include pike, carp and bass amongst other.

Mpumalanga is privileged to have some spectacular locations where enthusiasts and beginners alike can experience the joys and challenges of fly fishing.

ELEPHANT BACK SAFARIS



Elephants, the largest land animals in the world, inspire a feeling of awe and respect in most people.

Whilst the majority of people will never have the opportunity to come close or even touch these animals, we can offer you a once in a lifetime chance to do an Elephant Back Safari. Imagine yourself, perched 6ft in the air on the back of a 6 ton elephant.

The elephants are prepared with a comfortable saddle and you will be seated behind an experienced elephant handler. Your initial few minutes on the back of this monstrous animal will be endured with more than a little apprehension, but rest assured that as the safari begins and you become accustomed to the rhythmic and calm movements of the elephant, the experience that follows will be incredible. You will also be able to interact with the elephants and experience how clever the giant elephants really are.

MOTORCYCLE TOURS



The Eastern part of SA is known for its spectacular mountains and passes, beautiful scenery, great weather: touring on a motorcycle is the ultimate opportunity for an adventurer. Avid South African Adventure Rider and accredited tour guide can tailor special motorcycle tours throughout South Africa. The tour leader grew up in Swaziland, lived in Mpumalanga and recently relocated to the beautiful Western-Cape and coastal town of Mosselbay. The main focus is on your safety and a back-up vehicle and second tour guide will always follow for any mechanical or emergency assistance! Depending on the choice of the client, the tour normally departs from Johannesburg in the direction of Mpumalanga. Overnights are included in small towns and includes tar and scenic dirt roads, passing through the Border of Swaziland. Various landmarks like the Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary near the Capital of Swaziland, Mbabane and Pigs Peak in Swaziland will be visited. Other visits include Barberton, Graskop, Hazyview, Sabie, Mac Mac Falls, Graskop Gorge Lift, Gods Window and Blyde River Canyon and eventually back to Gauteng. Any route can be adjusted to the clients' specific needs. Also popular is the inclusion of a Soweto township tour, featuring Vilakazi Street: the only street in the world that has produced two Nobel Peace Prize winners, Nelson Mandela & Desmond Tutu.