



EXPERIENCES – FACT SHEET

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Life-Enriching Experiences

Through our people and this place, we create experiences for guests to enrich their lives – whether they are looking for adventure, family time, romance, relaxation, or the chance to give back...

Game Drives

Game drives, in open safari vehicles, head out each day at sunrise and again in the late afternoon to find the reserve’s many fascinating animals, both diurnal and nocturnal. Keep an eye out for the African wild dog – Madikwe’s signature species. This mammal is one of the continent’s most endangered (largely due to habitat loss), but is flourishing here. With no more than eight guests on a game drive, accompanied by their Madikwe field guide, this is a truly intimate safari experience.

- Duration: ±3 hours
- Includes: a hot beverage or sundowner stop in a scenic spot to purely appreciate being in the bush and in the moment
- Children 6 years and older are welcome on the twice-daily game drives
- The children’s game drive (for young guests 3 to 5 years) goes out daily from 10h00 to 12h00 in summer and from 11h00 to 13h00 in winter; parents are welcome to go along, subject to availability of seats

Bush Walks

These are our after-breakfast walks on the wild side. Guests are immersed in the bush, rather than just observing it. All five senses are engaged, as they feel scrub crunch beneath their feet, touch the velvety acacia seed pod, hear the crack of a branch indicating they are not alone, and spot big game at eye level – exhilarating! Our expert guides will tailor walks to each of our guest’s area/s of interest, focusing on mammals, birds, insects, plants, geology, etc.

- Duration: 1.5 to 2 hours, depending on guests’ fitness levels
- Children under 16 years are not permitted on the bush walks
- Guests should wear: neutral-coloured clothing; comfortable walking shoes; a hat; sunglasses; and sunscreen
- Guests should bring along: a lightweight dry mac jacket; camera/smartphone; and binoculars

Wildlife Lectures

At times when the weather is unsuitable for safari activities, our field guides and trackers present short nature talks. They cover a host of subjects, giving guests more insight into the animals they see on safari (e.g. elephant behaviour) and the natural surrounds (e.g. the ecological impact of commercial lodges on the environment). The talks are informal presentations, largely guided by interactions with guests.

Safari Kids' Programme

Along with the lodges' options and flexibility around accommodations and meals, tailor-made activities give children (5 to 11 years) a little extra freedom to explore and just be kids – and make family travel child's play.

Based at Lelapa Lodge, the Eco House children's entertainment and education centre keeps young guests occupied with the wonders of the natural world, as well as sporting and creative activities, during their stays. Just some of the fun includes: family morning game drives; bug CSI; spoor casting; scavenger hunts; pool games; board games; rock painting; cookie baking in the kitchen; toasting marshmallows in the boma; and stargazing. Parents are welcome to join in, or sneak a few hours for themselves.

Stargazing

During evening game drives or bush dinners (weather permitting), the field guides will share insights into the skies. The clear air and minimal light pollution of this remote African wilderness make it an ideal location for stargazing. Guests will see planets and stars they have never before noticed with the naked eye. The guides will point out the constellations that shift seasonally and those that are unique to the southern hemisphere (circumpolar constellations), taking guests on an astral safari.

Rhino Conservation Experience*

Madikwe Game Reserve is committed to wildlife conservation, including of the critically endangered rhino species. To this end, the reserve has established The Honorary Officers Counter Poaching Unit (HOCPU), headed by Phillip Hattingh. Guests of Madikwe Safari Lodge have the unique opportunity to join Phillip and experience rhino conservation in action.

After an early morning wake-up call, tea/coffee and a light snack, guests will be transferred by open safari vehicle to Madikwe Eastern Airstrip to meet up with Phillip, park representatives, and a veterinary specialist. Following a conservation orientation session and overview of the morning's plan of action, the veterinarian will depart by helicopter to track and sedate an as-yet-unrecorded rhino on the reserve.

Once the location of the rhino is called in, guests will be taken by open safari vehicle to the scene where they can participate in the process of gathering DNA samples from the rhino and 'notching' (attaching an identifying ear tag). The rhino is soon back on its feet (sedated for no longer than 10 to 15 minutes to minimise stress on the animal) and now recorded in the reference book of identifiable individuals within the Madikwe rhino population.

Through this process, field guides are able to identify the rhinos and record their sightings for the purpose of monitoring the health of the population. In addition, the DNA samples are sent to Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute for each animal's unique ID to be added to the national database. Thorough records of rhino DNA are also vital to ensure convictions against poachers.

- Duration: 1 to 2 hours, depending on the time it takes to find an un-notched rhino
- Cost: ZAR46 000
- Includes: refreshments; helicopter use; veterinary specialist services; access to dedicated park officials; and an exclusive encounter with a rhino
- A maximum of 16 guests may participate
- Children under 18 years are not permitted on the Rhino Conservation Experience

Spa* and Wellness

The hours between safaris are an ideal time to spend being pampered. A selection of indulgent therapies is offered by expert therapists in the quiet retreat of guests' own Suites or private decks – a luxury unique to Africa. Guests choose from full-body massages and have facials individually customised for them with Africology skincare products and essential oils – all ethically formulated with the finest natural and organic ingredients.

Yogis will find no better place to stretch out any leftover tension than on their private decks overlooking the serene reserve. Guests need not pack their mats with these available to borrow from Reception.

Shopping*

Safari Lodge Gallery (located at Lelapa Lodge) offers a range of proudly African-produced high-end clothing, accessories, art, and mementos – rare and beautiful items to remind guests of their time in Africa – as well as everyday necessities.

**Subject to an additional cost*

Daily Programme

An idea of what to look forward to...

That being said, guests are not restricted to a schedule and can arrange their stays around exactly what they feel like doing, or take up opportunities that arise in the moment.

Summer (September to April)	Programme	Winter (May to August)
05h00	Wake-up call	06h30
05h30	Tea/coffee; game drive departs	07h00
09h00	Game drive returns; breakfast/brunch is served	09h30
At leisure	Bush walk, or other activities of personal preference	At leisure
13h00	Lunch is served	13h00
16h00	Afternoon tea	15h00
16h30	Game drive departs	15h30
19h30	Game drive returns; dinner is served	18h30