



KRUGER & MPUMALANGA EXTENSIVE TOUR

This 6-day tour is designed to provide an extensive overview of the birds, mammals and general nature occurring in Eastern South Africa with emphasis on the Kruger National Park and adjacent Afro-montane Forests and grasslands. Several different habitats will be encountered ranging from Montane Grassland, Afro-montane Forest, Grass savannah, Riverine forest, as well as several tree and bush savannah areas occurring on the predominant basalt and granite soils.

DAY 1

On arrival at OR Tambo International Airport, transfer by shuttle bus to the Peermont Metcourt Hotel in the Emperor's Palace Complex. Remainder of day at leisure to explore the complex or relax by the pool. Your guide will meet you in the late afternoon for a pre-tour briefing. Dinner at one of the complex's many restaurants (own account)

DAY 2

After an early breakfast, depart at 07h30 and travel via Witbank Nature Reserve, Belfast, Dullstroom and Lydenburg to Hazyview arriving at Gecko Lodge at around 18h00. The day consists of traveling through the high lying grassland areas (1500m to 1750m) with occasional short stops to view the mammals and birds which occur in the area, time will be spent in the Montane grassland (above 2000m) in search of several birds endemic to this area. Meet for dinner and complete check lists.

DAY 3

An early wake up and depart at 05h30 for a full day open vehicle safari in the Kruger National Park. The day will be spent traversing various habitats with sightings of several mammal species and a multitude of birds, trees etc. The lodge will supply breakfast packs and we'll stop at a Restcamp or picnic site at around 08h30. Lunch for own account. Continue the search for birds and wildlife until around 16h00 when we leave the Park and return to Gecko Lodge. Meet for dinner and complete check lists.

DAY 4

Another early departure, although not quite as early as yesterday, for a full day Escarpment Tour including Mount Sheba, Pilgrim's Rest and the Blyde River Canyon. The day will be spent in the Montane areas situated to the West of the Kruger Park traversing various habitats with possible sightings of several mammal species and a multitude of birds, trees etc. The lodge will supply breakfast packs. Lunch at Harrie's Pancakes in Graskop. Return at sundown followed by dinner and possible nocturnal birding tour. Complete check lists.

DAY 5

An early wake up and depart at 05h30 for a full day open vehicle safari in the Kruger National Park. The lodge will supply breakfast packs and we'll stop at a Restcamp or picnic site at around 08h30. Lunch for your own account. Continue the search for birds and wildlife until around 16h00 when we leave the Park and return to Gecko Lodge. Meet for dinner and complete check lists followed by possible nocturnal birding tour.

DAY 6

Early morning birding walk at Gecko Lodge before breakfast at 08h00. Check out and depart for either Casa do Sol or Sabi River Sun for final birding and completion of check lists. Both lodges could produce possible species so far not encountered. Depart on the shuttle to Johannesburg at 12h30 arriving at around 18h00. Overnight at the Peermont Metcourt Hotel.

SPECIALS

Mammals:

The Kruger Park is famed for the "Big 5" (Lion, Leopard, African Elephant, Rhinoceros, and Cape Buffalo) during the few days allowed one will be likely to view several of these species. Apart from viewing these "flagship species" other mammals such as Giraffe, Burchell's Zebra, Hippopotamus and several antelope species are likely to be seen.

Birds:

This tour gives the birding enthusiast a chance of viewing many of the possible 58 endemics, near endemics and breeding endemics which can be encountered in the area such as Knysna Turaco, Jackal Buzzard, Southern Bald Ibis, Cape Vulture, Ant-eating Chat, Pied Starling and Gurney's Sugarbird to name a few. Raptors are in abundance in the Kruger Park (particularly in summer). Sightings of African Hawk Eagle, Martial Eagle, Tawny Eagle, African Fish Eagle and Bateleur are fairly regular. Several of the 5 vulture species which occur in the area may be encountered as well as the possibility of viewing other vulnerable species, with a bit of luck we may even be able to see one of the three highly endangered or vulnerable crane species that do occur in the area.