Discovering Our Planet Together



Secluded South Africa

Escape the Crowds! Explore Private Reserves on an Exclusive Safari for Just Six Guests

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Trip Details:

Days
10 Days / Jun–Oct

Price
From $19795 (+Air)

Secluded South Africa

Escape the Crowds! Explore Private Reserves on an Exclusive Safari for Just Six Guests

To many, South Africa's wealth is synonymous with its diamonds and gold. But we think its greatest riches lie in another of its natural treasures: its wildlife. Sabi Sand, Marataba, Madikwe and other vast bushveld reserves protect an astounding diversity of big game. From massive-tusked African elephants to sleek leopards, from squat rhinos to regal lions and Cape buffalo, the Big Five are all here to provide one of Africa's greatest safari experiences—and with our focus on secluded private reserves in the Greater Kruger region and remote realms beyond, the only crowds you'll encounter are crowds of animals. At every turn, our Expedition Leader reveals the intricate wonders of the bush ecosystem, sharing interpretive insights and conservation success stories. When your safari is over, one thing is certain: you'll go home far richer than when you arrived.

Trip Highlights

Smallest Groups, Closest Encounters

With just six travelers, get close to the Big Five on a diverse sampler of South Africa's top private wildlife enclaves, including legendary MalaMala

Uncrowded Private Reserves

Guided by top safari Expedition Leaders, explore a diverse range of habitats in Sabi Sand, Marataba and Madikwe, where animals abound and visitors are few

Remote Luxury Camps & Lodges

Surrounded by solitude in wild nature, stay in intimate and distinctive accommodations where sustainability and conservation are integral values

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Secluded South Africa Itinerary

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Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Johannesburg
Days 2–3	Madikwe Private Reserve
Days 4–6	Marataba Private Reserve
Days 7–9	Sabi Sand / MalaMala Private Reserve
Day 10	MalaMala / Johannesburg



Day 1

Johannesburg

Gather in Johannesburg before your South Africa safari

- Settle into a boutique hotel in the city
- Join your Expedition Leader for a welcome dinner and preview of the safari ahead

Our South Africa tour begins on arrival in Johannesburg. At our welcome dinner this evening, our Expedition Leader shares a preview of the many wildlife adventures that lie ahead on this exclusive safari itinerary.

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Days 2–3

Madikwe Private Reserve

Search for the Big Five across vast Madikwe Private Reserve

- Look for lions, leopards, elephants, rhinos, buffalo and elusive African wild dogs
- Explore grasslands, forests and rocky hills on wildlife drives with bush picnics
- Watch elephants and other wildlife wander past the lodge deck

Transfer this morning to the Johannesburg airport for our flight to Madikwe Safari Lodge on the private Madikwe Reserve, tucked against South Africa's border with Botswana. Surrounded by grassland, forest and rocky hills, the lodge sits within a transitional zone where the lowveld of Kruger Park and the semi-arid Kalahari thornveld meet. At 185,000 acres, Madikwe is South Africa's fifth largest private reserve. Supporting a broad range of wildlife, it is home to the Big Five as well as white rhino, cheetah, unique antelope species and the elusive African wild dog. Madikwe has the second largest elephant population in South Africa, and leopard sightings are typically a highlight, too. We explore Madikwe's unspoiled wilderness on exciting wildlife drives, enjoying bush picnics along the way.

After each exhilarating day, return to the comforts of our luxurious lodge, offering warm hospitality in a wild setting. Refresh in your private plunge pool, gather on the main deck to watch wildlife that often ambles by, and enjoy fine dinners by the open fire in the boma. As the cloak of night descends, a spray of stars adds nature's glitter to the sky.

Days 4–6

Marataba Private Reserve

Track black and white rhinos beneath the Waterberg cliffs

- Search for rhinos with expert guides across plains, mountains and valleys
- Cruise the Matlabas River past elephants and abundant waterbirds
- Stay in a luxury tented suite overlooking the Waterberg escarpment

A three-hour drive takes us to Marataba Private Reserve. Lying within Marakele National Park, this 57,000-acre mosaic of plains, mountains and valleys is home to predators, primates, antelope, small carnivores and more than 400 bird species. Marataba is a less-discovered treasure, and while it doesn't have the name cachet of Kruger or Sabi Sand, it delivers one of the most scenic and impressive safari experiences in South Africa. Black and white rhinos are a special focus, and we seek them out our Expedition Leader and local guides adept at tracking them. Lion, leopard, elephant and buffalo round out the Big Five, with other abundant species on display, too, including greater kudu, eland, impala, giraffe, zebra, waterbuck, wildebeest, spotted hyena, bat-eared fox, jackal, chacma baboon and vervet monkey. Avian highlights include yellow-billed hornbill, African Scops owl, fiery-necked night jar and lilac-breasted roller. After dusk, we can search for nocturnal species, too. The camp's boat is also available for water safaris on the Matlabas River, where elephants snorkel and waterbirds abound.

Each evening, tuck into the comforts of Marataba Safari Lodge. Beautifully appointed stone and canvas tented suites raised on stilts survey the vast expanse of bushveld beyond. Views over the plains are spectacular, with wide-angle vistas of the Waterberg escarpment merging into acacia savanna. Each luxury tent has a private shaded viewing deck, lending a sense of being one with the wild environment beyond.

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Days 7–9

Sabi Sand / MalaMala Private Reserve

Search for leopards and the Big Five along the Sand River

- Fly by private charter to historic MalaMala Game Reserve
- Look for leopards, lions, elephants, rhinos and buffalo across the private reserve
- Set out on evening wildlife drives in search of predators and other nocturnal species

Depart this morning on a private chartered flight directly to MalaMala Game Reserve, one of the oldest, largest and most highly regarded private wildlife sanctuaries in South Africa. Covering 33,000 acres and sharing a 12-mile unfenced border with world-renowned Kruger National Park, MalaMala lies in the heart of the legendary Sabi Sand region, the country's premier safari destination. Historic MalaMala was one of the first reserves to transition from hunting to wildlife-viewing safaris. Today it is renowned for some of the best Big Five viewing in Africa. These famous five—lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant and Cape buffalo—were once favorite hunting targets, and while many were hunted nearly to extinction, reserves like this one have made inspiring strides in bringing them back. Enjoy the exclusivity of MalaMala Main Camp, situated along the Sand River where wildlife regularly wanders in to drink. MalaMala is famous for its leopard viewing, and evening drives are a highlight here, with an array of nocturnal species on view, including predators on the hunt. As the largest private game reserve in South Africa, safari tourism from MalaMala directly supports many individuals in neighboring communities.

Day 10

MalaMala / Johannesburg

Depart South Africa after a final morning at MalaMala

- Enjoy breakfast overlooking the reserve
- Fly from Skukuza to Johannesburg for onward flights or extensions

After breakfast, our safari concludes with a transfer to nearby Skukuza Airport where we board our flight back to Johannesburg for onward travels.

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Secluded South Africa Accommodations

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Fairlawns Boutique Hotel

This tranquil sanctuary in the Johannesburg suburb of Sandton is near the international airport, yet a world apart, with luxury suites set among lush gardens that evoke traditional European ambience.



Madikwe Safari Lodge

The lodge offers an elegant yet relaxed base from which to explore the 185,000-acre Madikwe Game Reserve, one of the largest and most exclusive private wildlife sanctuaries in South Africa.



Marataba Safari Lodge

This luxury eco-retreat enjoys an exceptionally secluded location on the Marataba Private Reserve, a hidden gem where the mountainous scenery rivals the incredible wildlife viewing.



MalaMala Main Camp

With deep roots in an earlier safari era, this venerable camp has taken the essence of its history and translated it into one of the finest experiences of bush luxury in the private Sabi Sand reserve.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/africa/secluded-south-africa/accommodations.

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Outstanding Wildlife Viewing Away from the Crowds

Secluded South Africa

South Africa has long been among the continent's most popular safari destinations, and for good reason: its scenic grandeur and prolific wildlife (including the famous Big Five) have few parallels. But popular can mean crowded and standardized, especially in South Africa, and that's not the kind of safari-of-a-lifetime experience we provide. Take a look at these crucial features that set our South Africa safari apart:

1 **Maximum Group Size Just *Six* Travelers!**

An authentic encounter with nature is tough to achieve in a big group. While South Africa's tarmac road system and established network of lodges encourages a more bus-based safari approach, often with 15-20 guests aboard, we limit our groups to six, lessening our impact and granting us access to smaller camps and remote spots larger groups can't get to. We promise the most personalized safari experience available!

2 **Private Reserves Offer Seclusion & Superior Wildlife Viewing**

Private reserves are essential to the best African safari, especially in South Africa. In the exclusive wilderness areas of Sabi Sand, Marataba and Madikwe, we explore exceptionally varied habitats in solitude, viewing abundant wildlife away from crowds of other visitors (who are mostly traveling on paved roads inside the public parks).

3 **An Unusually Diverse Itinerary**

Most South Africa safaris concentrate on Kruger National Park, and rightfully so, as its wildlife is legendary. Naturally, our itinerary includes the Greater Kruger ecosystem, but from a private reserve, where visitor numbers are strictly limited. MalaMala has an unfenced border with the park, so wildlife can wander back and forth freely. Our itinerary also includes the less-visited Marataba and Madikwe reserves, adding yet more elements of diversity with completely different ecosystems and landscapes.

4 **Remote & Intimate Luxury Accommodations**

Most visitors to South Africa are relegated to larger, impersonal safari lodges that dominate in the national parks. Since our focus is private reserves, our guests enjoy exclusive boutique lodgings. Our isolated luxury camps and lodges are highlights in their own right. Each blends seamlessly with the natural environment, and tents and chalets have private verandas to maximize personal wildlife viewing opportunities.

5 **Flights Maximize Your Time on Safari**

While we enjoy watching the countryside unfold on the drive between Madikwe and Marataba, we put a big focus on flights, arranging air transfers where possible to maximize your time with wildlife, rather than spending too much of it negotiating rough roads on long drives. And from the air, you'll gain a whole different perspective on South Africa's dramatic landscapes and roaming wildlife.

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6 **The Very Best Vehicles—with a Window Seat for All**

Standard safaris often utilize cramped mini buses. In contrast, we charter top-quality custom safari vehicles that optimize comfort. Our 4x4 Land Rovers and Land Cruisers have a suspension system designed for rugged terrain, and an open-top, open-sided, tiered seating arrangement maximizes game-viewing opportunities. Each vehicle has 10 cushioned passenger seats, but since we don't fill them to capacity, everyone has an unimpeded side view. Each row is raised slightly higher than the one in front of it, allowing for unobstructed views of scenery and wildlife.

7 **Exclusive Opportunities to Explore via Bush Walks and Night Drives**

Guided bush walks and night drives are available on the private reserves we visit, though not in national parks, where most safaris go. You'll appreciate the rare opportunity to stretch your legs while on safari as we get close-up views of interesting smaller species, which most safari-goers confined to vehicles miss. And drives after dark reveal fascinating nocturnal wildlife that's rarely seen by the typical traveler.

8 **South Africa's Most Outstanding Safari Guides**

We are proud to provide the personalized service of some of South Africa's premier naturalist guides. We employ only the most highly trained and experienced Safari Expedition Leaders. Rather than relying on less-qualified local camp guides at each stop, our Expedition Leaders accompany our guests from start to finish. Our guides average 15 years' experience each, with additional resources provided by WWF's leading scientists. **See Expedition Leader bios** and traveler comments regarding the quality of our leaders.

9 **Our Quality-Value Guarantee Ensures Your Superior South Africa Safari**

With Natural Habitat Adventures, you receive our exclusive guarantee, which clearly states that we will meet the lofty expectations we set in our promotional materials. To our knowledge, this is the most ambitious guarantee made by any adventure travel company. **Read our important promise for yourself!**

10 **Feel Good About Your Carbon-Neutral Journey**

We care deeply about our planet, as we know you do. When you travel with us, the carbon emissions from your trip are 100% offset—including your round-trip flights from home. Natural Habitat Adventures has been the world's first carbon-neutral travel company since 2007.

11 **Natural Habitat Adventures is WWF's Travel Partner**

Because of our commitment to environmentally friendly travel, as well as the exceptional quality of our adventures, World Wildlife Fund—the world's leading environmental conservation organization—has named Natural Habitat Adventures as its worldwide travel partner, a designation that makes us exceedingly proud!

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Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $19795 (+Air)

Group Size
Limited to 6 Travelers

Secluded South Africa Dates, Pricing & Info

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2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Jun 1 - Jun 11, 2027	**$23995** +internal air	Photo Expedition
Jun 14 - Jun 23, 2027	**$20295** +internal air	Women's Journey
Jun 17 - Jun 26, 2027	**$20295** +internal air	Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
Jun 22 - Jul 1, 2027	**$20295** +internal air	
Jul 2 - Jul 11, 2027	**$20295** +internal air	
Jul 7 - Jul 16, 2027	**$20295** +internal air	
Jul 15 - Jul 24, 2027	**$19795** +internal air	
Jul 24 - Aug 2, 2027	**$20295** +internal air	
Jul 27 - Aug 5, 2027	**$20295** +internal air	

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Aug 4 - Aug 13, 2027	**$19795** +internal air	
Aug 7 - Aug 17, 2027	**$24495** +internal air	Photo Expedition
Aug 12 - Aug 21, 2027	**$20295** +internal air	
Sep 11 - Sep 20, 2027	**$20295** +internal air	Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
Sep 20 - Sep 30, 2027	**$24495** +internal air	Photo Expedition
Sep 24 - Oct 3, 2027	**$19795** +internal air	
Oct 5 - Oct 15, 2027	**$23995** +internal air	Photo Expedition
Oct 15 - Oct 24, 2027	**$19795** +internal air	Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available
Oct 18 - Oct 27, 2027	**$19795** +internal air	
Oct 24 - Nov 2, 2027	**$19795** +internal air	

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Jun 4 - Jun 13, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Jun 7 - Jun 17, 2028	**From $23995** +internal air	Photo Expedition
Jun 11 - Jun 20, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	Women's Journey
Jun 22 - Jul 1, 2028	**From $21775** +internal air	
Jul 2 - Jul 11, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Jul 15 - Jul 24, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Jul 24 - Aug 2, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Jul 31 - Aug 9, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Aug 9 - Aug 19, 2028	**From $23995** +internal air	Photo Expedition
Aug 20 - Aug 29, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Aug 23 - Sep 1, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Aug 27 - Sep 5, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Sep 1 - Sep 10, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Sep 5 - Sep 14, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Sep 30 - Oct 9, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Oct 4 - Oct 14, 2028	**From $23995** +internal air	Photo Expedition
Oct 16 - Oct 25, 2028	**From $19795** +internal air	
Oct 22 - Nov 1, 2028	**From $23995** +internal air	Photo Expedition

See https://www.nathab.com/africa/secluded-south-africa/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Trip price includes: Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s), local guides and camp staff, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Internal air: All aircraft flights within the itinerary (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

Important Information About This Trip

Our Secluded South Africa safari combines three spectacular wildlife camps. The itinerary involves quite a bit of travel—both by safari vehicle and by private aircraft—but in the company of our professional safari Expedition Leader, we've determined that our routing is the best way to explore this remote, diverse and far-reaching region that is replete with wildlife. Changes to the itinerary

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may occur in order to take advantage of conditions unique to the season and/or to accommodate unexpected changes in flight schedules; therefore, itineraries may need to be rerouted or redesigned without notice.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to on this trip are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require medical evacuation insurance for our guests' safety. If you decline the medical evacuation insurance coverage offered by Natural Habitat, we request that you send us documentation of the independent coverage you have selected. We will add the cost of a medical evacuation policy to your tour invoice until you provide our office with proof of coverage including your insurance company's name, contact number and your individual policy number. Thank you for understanding that our policy exists exclusively in the interest of our guests' safety.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in Johannesburg, South Africa. Because this is a long international journey, **we recommend that you arrive at least one night prior to Day 1** to rest from your travels and begin the trip refreshed. For guests who come in early, recommended hotels will be included in your pre-departure materials. You must arrive in Johannesburg by 5 pm on Day 1 in order to attend the 6:30 pm welcome dinner.

You may depart Johannesburg anytime after 6 pm on the final day.

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights' accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.



Secluded South Africa Extensions

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Madagascar Explorer

Look for rare and endemic flora and fauna on a compact itinerary revealing a mix of contrasting ecosystems—primary rainforest, pristine beaches, ancient baobabs and coastal mangroves

$13895 (+air)



Secluded Botswana Safari

Our flagship Botswana safari—for just seven guests! A truly exclusive wilderness immersion in the Okavango Delta's best private wildlife reserves and beyond, plus Victoria Falls.

$19995 (+air)



Namibia Desert Extension

Namibia’s towering sand dunes, arid canyons and desert-adapted wildlife offer a distinct contrast to other southern Africa safari destinations—look for endangered black rhino, desert elephant and more.

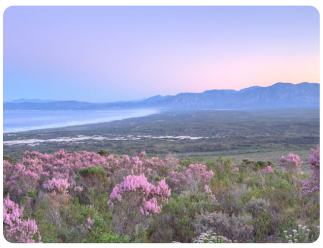
$7395 (+air)



Cape Town Extension

Discover one of the world's most entrancing cities and its natural environs. Survey the view from Table Mountain, explore the Cape Peninsula, visit Cape Point Nature Reserve, see penguins at Boulders Beach, and tour the Winelands.

$2495



Wild Cape Coast Extension

From our luxury ecolodge base on the Grootbos Private Nature Reserve, explore pristine coastal wilderness including the rare Cape Floral plant kingdom and Stony Point penguin colony.

$3595



Extra Day in Johannesburg

Explore South Africa's complex history with a full-day exploration of Johannesburg and Soweto, featuring important sites and stories crucial to the journey from apartheid to democracy

$593



Ultimate Madagascar

Look for lemurs and many more species found only here as we explore the biodiversity treasure trove of the planet's most unique island. Madagascar is an evolutionary time capsule—truly a world apart!

$16795 (+air)

Natural Habitat & WWF: Discovering Our Planet Together

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WWF's membership travel program is operated by Natural Habitat Adventures (Nat Hab). To date, Nat Hab has provided more than $6 million in support of WWF's mission and will continue to give 1% of gross sales plus $175,000 annually through 2028. WWF® and ©1986 Panda Symbol are owned by WWF. All rights reserved.