



TRIP ITINERARY

ON SHORE/ OFF SHORE: A SOUTH AFRICAN EXPEDITION

*Cape Town/ Gansbaai/ Cape Town/ Sodwana Bay/ Pongola/ Aliwal Shoal/ Durban
8th to 21st August (12 days in-country)*

This is so much more than just a dive holiday; this is an African expedition. South Africa is a country of breathtaking diversity of landscape, culture and wildlife. Count down the days to an unforgettable experience.

The Trip

Day 1

08/08/11

Today you are flying to Africa. Just say it to yourself: it sounds good. Enjoy(?) the mid-air cuisine, hope for a good film (with headphones that work) and anticipate the two weeks that lie ahead.

AIRFARE

Day 2

09/08/11

Arrive in Cape Town; a city often described as a little bit of the Mediterranean in Africa. This is a relaxed city with so much on offer. Whether shopping, restaurants, bars, helicopter trips or historical visits are your thing, Cape Town has something for everyone, all set against a landscape of outstanding natural beauty. There is no better introduction to the city than to see it from the top of Table Mountain, so this is what you will do. You will stay at the Protea Banks Waterfront Hotel, right in the heart of the vibrant city.

WATERFRONT HOTEL – B&B

Day 3

10/08/11

Your first full day in South Africa and already you are in the water. Dive 1 is a trip out to one of the seal colonies found on the coast along from the city. These marine gymnasts are curious creatures, always willing to engage. The length of the dive will depend on how confident they become; we like to return to the boat with most of our fins left intact. In the afternoon, leaving the city, you take the beautiful drive east along the coast, through hill sides covered by vineyards to the small fishing village of Gansbaai. Here you will stay at Aire del Mar, enjoying the local hospitality and wondering just how you will respond tomorrow when a great white shark comes to greet you.....personally. Great white sharks like seals too.

AIRE DEL MARE – B&B - DIVE 1

Day 4

11/08/11

Waking early, you will have breakfast (not too much, it may be choppy!) and then receive a briefing from the resident marine biologist on the ecology and behaviour of the white shark. Then it is a short walk to the harbour and your boat. All kit is provided, so you will be warm and safe, all you have to do is enjoy the experience. Dive 2 is just you, a cage and some very large sharks. When back on shore, you will return to Cape Town, on the way visiting the charismatic penguins of Boulders Beach before progressing on to Cape Point: the place where two oceans meet, a whole continent is at your back and the wind is no friend to elaborate hair styles. The evening is yours to spend as you wish. Enjoy!

WATERFRONT HOTEL – B&B - DIVE 2

Day 5

12/08/11

Today you fly northeast from Cape Town to Durban, the vibrant heart of KwaZuluNatal. There we will transfer into vehicles and drive north, out of the city, through the green fields of sugar cane and into the bushveld of Zululand. Africa just got a little wilder. The journey will last for approximately three hours, but, with breaks and a good road, it will fly by. Your destination is Sodwana Bay and the lodge of the same name, a place where forests meet sandy beach and your access to the most southerly tropical reefs in Africa. Hello warm water diving!

SODWANA BAY LODGE – BREAKFAST & DINNER

Day 6

13/08/11

Sodwana Bay is a place of great marine diversity with over 20 beautiful dive sites and a host of large pelagic visitors. Look out for the whale sharks. Join the turtles floating over the reef. Get close up for a bit of macro action. You will spend the next three days here, so enjoy and make the most of it. (Dives 3&4)

SODWANA BAY LODGE – BREAKFAST & DINNER

Day 7

14/08/11

Back in the boats and confidently enjoying the surf launch, you will spend the day diving whichever of the reefs our local guides are confident will give you the best diving experience. Off the water, it is also possible to arrange other excursions, not included in your package, such as quad biking, horse riding and even a flight over the bay in a micro-light (weather permitting). Just ask your guide for more details. (Dives 5&6)

SODWANA BAY LODGE – BREAKFAST & DINNER

Day 8

15/08/11

After an early breakfast and a final dive you will leave Sodwana and drive through Mkuze Game Reserve to Pongola Game Reserve and the White Elephant Bush Camp, a little-known haven on the shores of Lake Jozini. This is a place to relax, enjoy the wildlife, or just absorb the peace of the place – while eating like a king. Arriving in time for the afternoon game drive, you will be taken out into the reserve, hopefully to find the famous 'red elephants'. (Dive 7)

WHITE ELEPHANT – BREAKFAST & DINNER

Day 9

16/08/11

Waking early, while it is still cool, you will be taken out onto Lake Jozini, to view the reserve from the water and try to spot as many of the over 300 bird species resident in the area. Then it is back to the camp for a lazy breakfast, before retreating from the heat of the day. As the sun drops, you have the opportunity to go out on an evening game drive and watch as the creatures of the reserve prepare for the night. Or perhaps you would prefer to take a walk with a ranger and learn more about the little things of equal importance to life in the bush.

WHITE ELEPHANT – FULL BOARD (2 activities)

Day 10

17/08/11

After a final early morning game drive, you are heading south to the coast again. Destination: Ellingham Resorts, Rocky Bay near to the village of Umkomaas, entry to Aliwal Shoal, the home of the tiger sharks. It is time to dive again. Sharks and a surf entry are the order of play again, but this time it's for the tigers. Staying at a local guest house, you will be well fed, watered (!) and as comfortable as you will have grown to expect.

ELLINGHAM RESORTS – B&B (1 activity)

Day 11

18/08/11

Tigers. You are diving with the experts, who, it is suspected, prefer tiger to human company, they spend so much time with them. You will be fully briefed on the ecology and behaviour of these beautiful creatures. The dive briefing will be comprehensive and don't worry: there is no such thing as a stupid question. Launching from the river, you will break the surf line and head out to the waters of the shoal. Then it is up to Mother Nature. In the afternoon, you will dive cathedral on Aliwal Shoal, a dive known for its raggies. (2 dives)

ELLINGHAM RESORTS – B&B (Dives 8 & 9)

Day 12

19/08/11

Today you will dive again on Aliwal Shoal with the option of repeating the tiger dive; you are confident now and fully enjoying a diving experience that may never be bettered. Pike in the local quarry will never intimidate you again. This evening will be your last night in South Africa, so test the local hospitality (it won't be found wanting), eat the sea food like it's going out of fashion and enjoy a night to remember as befits a trip you won't forget.

ELLINGHAM RESORTS – B&B (Dives 10 & 11)

Day 13

20/08/11

The airport calls and so does an Indian summer in the UK. Honest. This has been a trip packed with memories, but please hurry back; there is so much more to experience.

Day 14

21/08/11

Land in the UK



The Details

£2,450 per person (standard diver, two people sharing), **£2,650 per person** (diver, single supplement) or **£1,900** (non-diver).

Including: accommodation and food as specified; 11 dives; 4 activities in Pongola Game reserve; internal flights, transport as specified.

Not including: international flights, non-specified activities, transport to and from non specified activities, drinks and gratuities

Signed (lead passenger).....

Name (printed).....

Date.....

