

# A SOUTH AFRICA SAFARI

by Ted Cookson



View from lodge



Luxurious safari suite



Shop at lodge



Claw-foot bath tub



Lodge dining room

South Africa boasts some of Africa's best-maintained safari parks. World-famous Kruger National Park, the size of Wales, is the country's premier park. But South Africa also offers many other terrific but lesser-known private game reserves such as Phinda Resource Reserve in Kwa-Zulu Natal northeast of Durban and Richards Bay.

Kruger, South Africa's oldest and largest national park, was formed by combining several smaller conservation projects, the oldest of which was established in 1898. Today more wildlife

species are protected at Kruger than at any other African sanctuary. Incredibly, Kruger contains 137 mammal species, 112 reptile species, 49 fish species, 33 amphibian species, 227 butterfly species and 493 species of birds. With an area of 19,485 square kilometers (7,523 square miles), the park plays host to huge populations of Burchell's zebra, impala and many other species. Of course Kruger also contains all of the Big Five game animals – lion, leopard, rhino, buffalo and elephant.

Kruger is wedged into South Africa's northeast corner where it abuts both

Zimbabwe in the north and Mozambique in the east. On the other hand, along Kruger's western border are a number of private game reserves. These properties have placed fencing along their own western boundaries. However, the animals may roam freely between the various private reserves and also back and forth between the reserves and Kruger itself. The private game reserves offer off-road game viewing as well as night game drives, neither of which is allowed in the park.

The best time to visit Kruger is during the Southern Hemisphere winter months



Phinda vehicle



Guide with prints



Picnic in the bush



**Buffalo horns**



**Male lion**



**Cape buffalo**

of June, July and August. The dry winter weather compels the animals to gather around water holes, so visitors are bound to see more game then. During South Africa's winter season daytime temperatures range up to 30 C. (86 F.) while nighttime lows can dip to as low as 0 C. (32 F.). The park looks its best after South Africa's summer rains. However, animal spotting then is made more difficult by thick foliage and tall grasses. Kruger is always rather crowded during the South Africa school holidays in July and December.

Maputaland in the northeastern portion of South Africa's state of KwaZulu-Natal takes its name from the Maputo River which rises in South Africa and flows into Mozambique. The climate in the north of Maputaland, influenced by the Indian Ocean, is tropical; and consequently Maputaland offers a diverse range of ecosystems which include South Africa's largest freshwater lake, forest, savannah, mangrove swamps and coral reefs. In this unique environment lies 170-square-km (66-square-mile) Phinda Resource Reserve, a three-hour drive from Durban and a six-hour drive -- or a short flight -- from Johannesburg. Phinda, established in 1991, features seven distinct ecosystems, ranging from palm savannah and mountain bush to sand forest and dense thornveld.

The luxury accommodation in Phinda's main lodge and at its rock chalets and bush suites is absolutely top notch. Phinda is not only exclusive but also sophisticated and very luxurious. Each suite at the main lodge comes complete with its own private plunge pool. Another unique feature at Phinda is the Getty House, owned by the Getty Family, which is a sole-use villa geared specifically for rental to wealthy safari takers. Privacy and tranquility are absolutely guaranteed at this villa, which overlooks the rolling green hills of an extinct volcano.

Phinda's guests enjoy superb game

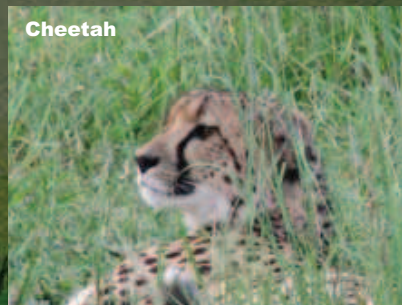
drives ranging through the various habitats in the reserve. Indeed, it is rare at other African game reserves for tourists to have a chance to experience not only the Big Five, over 400 species of birds, and spectacular Indian Ocean sea life all on the same safari!

Visitors to South Africa should expect an unparalleled game-viewing experience whether they elect to visit the world-famous Kruger National Park or one of the country's many up-market private game reserves. If you must travel over the Christmas holidays, plan to book well in advance in order to avoid disappointment. Air bookings may be made approximately eleven months in advance. Non-stop flights from Cairo to Johannesburg are offered by Egypt Air. In addition, frequent one-stop air service

is available on Emirates via Dubai, on Qatar Airways via Doha, and on Kenya Airways via Nairobi. It is also possible to purchase air transportation on South African Airways. However, in this case the flights both from and to Cairo will be operated by Egypt Air while domestic flights within South Africa will be operated by South African Airways.



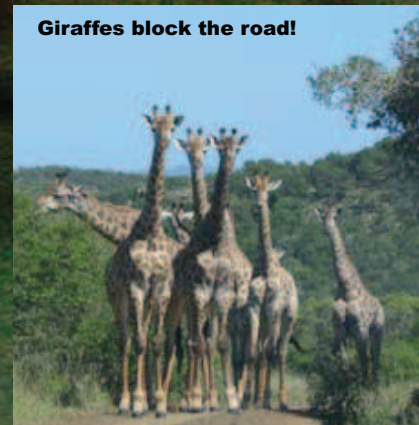
**Butterfly**



**Cheetah**



**White rhino**



**Giraffes block the road!**

**ABOUT TED COOKSON:**

Egypt's most widely-traveled travel agent, Ted has been to every country in the world! He has also visited 307 of the 317 destinations on the list of the Travelers' Century Club (visit [www.eptours.com](http://www.eptours.com) and refer to World Travel Club). A travel agent in Cairo since 1986, Ted manages EGYPT PANORAMA TOURS, a full-service travel agency, at 4 Road 79 (between Roads 9 and 10, near the "El Maadi" metro station) in Maadi. Contact Egypt Panorama Tours (open 7 days a week 9 AM-5 PM) at: Tels. 2359-0200, 2358-5880, 2359-1301. Fax 2359-1199. E-mail: [ept@link.net](mailto:ept@link.net). Web site: [www.eptours.com](http://www.eptours.com). The password for residents is eptcool. Both text and PDF versions of all of Ted's travel articles published since 2002 are archived online at [www.eptours.com](http://www.eptours.com) under "Ted's International Travel Articles." Some of the archived articles also contain video clips!