

Wildlife Walks of Eswatini (Swaziland)

Tour Style: Worldwide walking holidays

Destination: Eswatini

Trip code: ESWHW

Trip Walking Grade: 2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Embark on an extraordinary African adventure in the small-but-mighty kingdom of Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland. Enjoy guided nature walks among grazing zebras and exotic birds in the Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary and journey deeper into the wilderness with thrilling game drives. We'll venture to the acclaimed Mkhaya Game Reserve for intimate wildlife encounters with Africa's Big 5 and discover the rich culture of Eswatini through visits to local communities and artisanal workshops. Then, discover Hlane Royal National Park for game viewing and scenic walks. This once-in-a-lifetime trip promises new and meaningful experiences that will leave you with unforgettable memories of Africa's wonders.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Heathrow including baggage and transfers
- Guided walks and sightseeing with local leaders
- 11 nights' accommodation across Eswatini
- 11 breakfasts, 10 lunches & 11 dinners
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- All in-destination transport
- Free upgrade to Premium Economy flights (first eight passengers only)

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk amongst Eswatini's astonishing wildlife in pristine sanctuaries
- Enjoy several thrilling game drives
- Experience Swazi culture with a community visit to meet friendly locals and learn traditions
- Witness the artistry of Emaswati craftsmen and women glassblowing at Ngwenya Glass Factory
- Embark on fascinating safaris to search for elusive black rhinos
- Discover the historic Ngwenya mine, the oldest mine in the world
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 12 people)

ITINERARY

Day 1: Travel To Eswatini

Overnight flight from the UK.

Day 2: Arrival In Eswatini

Distance: 2km

Ascent/descent: flat

Arrive in Eswatini and transfer to your accommodation at Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary. Check into your unique roundhouse accommodation and take some time to relax or explore the surrounding wildlife-filled grounds. In the evening, gather for dinner and enjoy a briefing from your guide about the upcoming adventure.

Day 3: Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary Exploration

Distance: 10km

Ascent/descent: flat

Embark on a nature walk through Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary, surrounded by lush landscapes and abundant wildlife. Listen to the calls of zebras, wildebeests, hippos, and exotic birds as you traverse the scenic trails. We'll enjoy lunch overlooking a small pool where birds flock, before an afternoon guided walking safari to a different part of the reserve.

Day 4: Further Exploration Of Mlilwane

Distance: 8km

Ascent/descent: 50m

Continue your exploration of Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary with a morning walk along the Sondzela Trail and enjoy panoramic views of the park. In the afternoon, choose from a variety of optional activities, such as mountain biking or a guided game drive. End the day with a memorable sundowner game drive.

Day 5: Cultural And Wildlife Experiences

Distance: 3km

Ascent/descent: flat

Visit Gone Rural and Swazi Candles for a cultural experience. You'll learn about local empowerment initiatives and traditional craftsmanship. Then, embark on a wildlife safari in Mkhaya Game Reserve, and enjoy opportunities for close encounters with rhinos and other wildlife species.

Depart for Mkhaya Game Reserve, renowned for its intimate wildlife encounters and conservation efforts. Enjoy a guided safari drive through the reserve, keeping your eyes peeled for black and white rhinos, buffalos, leopards, and other wildlife species. Spend the night at Stone Camp, nestled along the banks of a dry riverbed.

Day 6: Mkhaya Game Reserve

Today we will enjoy an early morning game drive before breakfast. Afterwards, we'll grab a bite to eat before the opportunity to go on walking safari where you can learn how to track wildlife and discover the medical uses of plants. For the remainder of the afternoon, you can choose to sit at nearby Kirky Hide to see what wildlife will appear. Late afternoon we will enjoy another game drive.

Day 7: Explore Hlane Royal National Park

Journey to Hlane Royal National Park, home to diverse wildlife including Africa's Big 5. Visit a local school for orphaned and vulnerable children before arriving at our accommodation near a watering hole frequented by wildlife. Spend the afternoon at leisure before a sunset safari drive to see elephant, rhino and lion.

Day 8: Rhino Encounter And Hiking

Distance: 6km

Ascent/descent: flat

Embark on a thrilling rhino drive in the morning, offering close encounters with these magnificent creatures. Then, depart for Mbuluzi Game Reserve for a day of hiking amidst pristine bushveld landscapes. Enjoy walking trails and the opportunity to observe giraffes in their natural habitat.

Day 9: Cultural Experience In Shewula

Distance: 5km

Ascent/descent: 50m

Experience the rich culture of Eswatini with a visit to Shewula, the first community ecotourism project in the country. Take a guided walk through the community, interact with locals, and enjoy lunch at Shewula Mountain Camp. Learn about traditional Emaswati lifestyles and appreciate the natural beauty of the Lubombo conservancy.

Day 10: Journey To Foresters Arms

Distance: 4km

Ascent/descent: 50m

Travel to Foresters Arms, a comfortable lodge set amidst beautiful gardens. Take a leisurely walk in the surrounding plantations and enjoy the tranquillity of the natural surroundings.

Day 11: Explore Malolotja Nature Reserve

Distance: 7km

Ascent/descent: 250m

Venture to Malolotja Nature Reserve for a guided hike through stunning mountain landscapes (approx 4-5hr walk and 250m climb). Marvel at breathtaking viewpoints and immerse yourself in the peaceful ambiance of the reserve. Enjoy a picnic lunch amidst nature before returning to your accommodation.

Day 12: Ngwenya Mine And Glass Factory

Distance: 2km

Ascent/descent: 100m

Visit Ngwenya Mine, the world's oldest mine, and learn about its history and significance. Explore the Ngwenya Glass Factory, where skilled craftsmen create beautiful glass products from recycled materials. Enjoy shopping for souvenirs before returning to your accommodation.

Day 13: Departure Day

Transfer to the airport for your departure flight.

Day 14: Arrive Home

Arrive back in the UK.

ACCOMMODATION

Beehive Huts, Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary

The beehive huts have the feel of traditional Emaswati homesteads with grass domeshaped huts arranged in semi-circles all semienclosed by traditional Emaswati kraal fencing. A beehive is a traditional grass dome construction with a low door and no windows providing for a deep sleep. Huts are tastefully designed with twin beds and en-suite bathroom yet in keeping with the surrounding area, they are surprisingly larger inside than you anticipate! The camp is unfenced, yet relatively safe as only smaller species of wildlife occur in the Sanctuary. It is tranquil and relaxing with a continual stream of animals such as impala, warthog and nyala walking between the facilities and grazing outside your room. One of the attractive features of the camp is the restaurant which overlooks a picturesque bird pool providing wonderful wildlife viewing. You can admire crocodiles and prolific birdlife while enjoying delicious meals. The restaurant consists of a cosy inside area with a fireplace and comfortable couches as well as two outside wooden deck areas, where you can enjoy meals and drinks from the bar.

Stone Camp, Mkhaya Game Reserve

Unique in style and offers visitors the opportunity of really getting back to nature. Each cottage is laid out discretely in the riverine forest overlooking the dry riverbed, linked by pathways which are lit at night by paraffin lanterns. The entire internal structure of these cottages, although veiled for privacy, is open to the external bush, which gives visitors a totally unique and true bush experience. There is no electricity in the camp which adds to the charm and tranquillity of the camp. Magical.

Ndlovu Camp, Hlane Royal National Park

Ndlovu Camp has delightful ensuite twin rondavels near to Ndlovu waterhole. These twin rooms are beautifully designed and set in the bush away from the main part of the camp. There are often impala wandering through the area and each rondavel has its own veranda. At night you go to sleep listening to the rumbling roars of lion. There is no electricity in the camp and paraffin lights are provided giving a wonderful atmosphere to your room.

Foresters Arms

The bedrooms are tastefully decorated, with bathrooms en-suite, telephones and satellite TV. The personal touch of the Foresters Arms spills over into the bedrooms with a homely and welcoming feeling to them. The rooms are spacious and all open up onto the delightful gardens and the outstanding views over the surrounding countryside. The stunning gardens are a favourite haunt of sunbirds, paradise flycatchers and other colourful birds.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Joining Instructions (With Flights)

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from a range of UK airports* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

If you prefer to book the holiday without flights and make your own travel arrangements you will still be able to make use of the return group transfers between the airport and hotel, which are included in the cost of your holiday. You must contact us on [+44 \(0\)20 3974 8865](tel:+44(0)2039748865) or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk at least 8 weeks before your holiday start date to provide your flight details if you wish to join the transfers. If you do not contact us, we will assume you are making independent travel arrangements.

If you are arriving ahead of the group, and are meeting them at the first hotel, please leave a message at the hotel reception for the HF Holidays' leader or local leader, detailing your room number, and a mobile telephone number if possible. The leader will contact you once the group arrives. If you are arriving after the group, a message will be left for you at the hotel reception, welcoming you and giving details of the time and place to meet the group.

Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)

- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device

Safety On Your Holiday

Once you have made your booking, you will receive a pre-holiday questionnaire where we ask for details of next of kin and insurance details. **You must complete and return this to us - we need to have this from you at least 10 weeks before travel.**

Please also inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders must consider both group and individual safety at all times.

Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you:

- Please listen to any safety instructions and other directions from the leader
- Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor
- Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you.

Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any medication including aspirin, paracetamol, antihistamines and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit (see Suggested Kit List).

In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services on 999. Please then call our emergency number (sent in your final dispatch) and let us know there is a problem.

Dietary Requirements

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs.

If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

Useful Information

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is

imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We work with Campbell Irvine to provide you with competitive single and annual multi-trip insurance. Please see our website for more information and details of how to contact them for a quote:

<https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/about-us/booking-information/insurance>.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>.

Local Currency

Local currency is the Swazi lilangeni (SZL), however South Africa Rand notes are also widely accepted. While larger establishments like hotels, restaurants and shops may accept credit cards, smaller businesses may not. Visa and Mastercard are the most widely accepted cards.

Electricity

In Eswatini the standard supply is 230V and typically three round-pin plugs. Please note that any plug adapter should be for South African three pin plugs, which are different to those in Europe.

Tipping

Tips are not included in this holiday. Whilst tipping is not mandatory, this is generally appreciated for local guides and other services. Some lodges will have staff tip boxes for staff to share, or you can tip individual staff for excellent service. In restaurants, tips of 10-15% are customary. Your tour leader will be able to offer advice locally.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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