



BIG SKIES UBUNYE





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At a glance

COUNTRY:	South Africa
REGION:	Northern KwaZulu-Natal
OPERATIONAL:	All year round
TYPE OF CAMP:	Canvas rooms with glass doors.
NO. OF ROOMS:	4 x twin or double bedded canvas rooms. En suite bathroom
WATER:	Bottled drinking water provided
MAX. GUESTS:	18
PLUGS:	220V plug points



Purpose

At Big Skies, we value a holistic model of tourism, a model that emphasises community, environmental conservation and an outstanding guest experience. The most important members of our community are the people who work in and live near our camps. They are the original custodians of the land and the people who know it best. By partnering with local communities, we have been able to benefit from their profound knowledge of the area and offer incredible experiences to our guests. The warm hospitality that you'll experience in our camps has been extended to us from the earliest days of Big Skies and gives us the privilege of feeling that we also belong here.

Overview

Ubunye is situated on KwaZulu-Natal's north-eastern seaboard, a diverse region of forested dunes, wetlands, sandy beaches, woodlands and warm seas. It lies just outside of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, one of South Africa's UNESCO world heritage sites which spans a range of ecological zones. Situated offshore is the sanctuary of the Maputaland Marine Reserve with prolific marine life, spectacular coral landscape, dolphins and whales. The camp is located 4km from the beach with breathtaking views overlooking the coastal forest and ocean. Enjoy the 8 en suite rooms (including 1 family room with two bedrooms and a shared bathroom), as well as the bar, kitchen, lounge, pool deck and boma. At Ubunye you can set your own schedule, guided only by the tides and your own wishes. This is your time, and however you choose to spend it is just fine by us.



<https://bigskies.travel/>

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Access

Approximate driving times to/from our secure Manguzi parking lot (no stops or other variables like weather, traffic, etc. taken into consideration):

- Durban Airport +/- 5 hours
- Richards Bay +/- 3 – 3.5 hours
- O.R. Tambo International Airport +/- 9 -10.0 hours

4x4 vehicles are required to access the camp and to transfer between the camp and the beach. For those who don't have 4x4 vehicles, we offer transfers (at an additional cost) from our secure parking in Manguzi to the camp.

Climate

The Maputaland region has a tropical to subtropical climate. All year round air and sea temperatures are relatively stable. Temperatures range from 16 to 25° C in the winter season (between May and August) and in the summer months from 23 to 33° C (between September and April). Rain falls in the summer months with afternoon showers and storms passing into blue skies.

Activities

The beauty of Maputaland is that you can do as much or as little as you wish. Relax on the beach, stroll through the trees in search of brilliant butterflies and birds, or head to Lake Sibaya, the largest freshwater lake in southern Africa. Depending on the season, you can watch prehistoric loggerhead and leatherback turtles dig their nests in the sand, and humpback whales migrate along the coast. For a fully immersive experience, take the plunge and enjoy some of the world's best snorkelling with our experienced and knowledgeable guides. The flourishing reefs are home to amazingly diverse marine life, including mention octopus, eels and nudibranchs. Back on dry land, spend time with our neighbours at the KwaMpukane community centre and learn more about the culture of the people and the stories and traditions that pass magic on to the next generation. Whatever you choose to do, you can be sure of a fulfilling and enriching time.





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Experience	Overview	Time	Cost
Snorkelling	<p>Just a 15-minute beach 4x4 transfer from camp (included in offering) along the dunes and through the national park is Lala Nek beach, which has family friendly snorkelling in beautiful, pristine rock pools where a variety of tropical fish and ocean life can be viewed.</p> <p>Snorkelling is determined by the tides and is run on a schedule which is communicated with guests in camp the night before. Masks, fins and snorkels are provided and guests can choose to have this activity as guided or unguided. National Park entry fees and permits are included in the offering.</p>	2-3 hrs	Included
Turtle Nesting/ Hatching	<p>Loggerhead and the endangered Leather Back Turtles nest along the coastline and can be found nesting between mid-November and mid-March each year.</p> <p>Guided turtle tours (walks or drives) are on offer at an additional charge. These tours take place at night and determined by low tide. Guests can walk or be driven along the beach to locate and observe nesting or hatching turtles. Turtle sightings are not guaranteed, however, due to research and conservation efforts we are located in one of the most highly populated turtle nesting grounds along the coastline.</p>	2-3 hrs	R650 - R995
Beach day	<p>Ubunye is located in an area that boasts some of the most pristine and isolated beaches in Southern Africa, beach days include packed lunches, soft drinks, shade shelters and staff to assist with the setup and packing up of all the beach equipment.</p> <p>Beach days are offered at Lala Nek which is the closest beach to camp, a 15-minute 4x4 drive along the dunes and through the national park.</p> <p>A full day excursion is also on offer to Black Rock beach, further north of camp, approximately 1-hour drive. This is a stunning beach and this activity is highly recommended for guests who are booked for long stays.</p>	Varied	Included



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Experience	Overview	Time	Cost
Boat cruise	<p>Experience the ancient fish traps and natural beauty of the Kosi bay Lake systems. Included in the rate is a transfer to and from camp to Kosi Bay (1.5 hours one way) and a boat tour which includes snorkeling in the lake and a picnic lunch.</p> <p>The transfer is lengthy, however the experience and beauty is worth it as the lake system and communities surround it is unique.</p>	5-6 hrs	Included
Walks	<p>Various walks and routes are available for guided walks. The camp will tailor a route based on the guests desires and can include community, grassland, forest and beach walks of various distances.</p> <p>Short, unguided walks are also available to guests. The team in camp is more than happy to collect guests from the beach should they wish not to walk back to camp.</p>	Varied	Included
Wellness treatments	<p>Massages are available at an additional charge. A small spa, with a stunning view, is located on the property offering a selection of relaxing treatments.</p>	1 hr	R800 - R1200
Catch-and-release fishing	<p>Maputaland is well-regarded for its' fishing. Please contact us for details on where to fish and direction on how to apply for the permit.</p>	Varied	Included
Bird watching	<p>The area boasts various bird species and a number of "lifers" such as the Palm nut vulture, long claws and more. Guests can enjoy the scenery and birds around camp or for the more enthusiastic birders, guided bird tours can be arranged with the camp guides. Guests will depart with a guide to various locations in search of birds.</p>	Varied	Included

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Charismatic species

MAMMALS: hippos at Lake Sibaya, common reedbuck, red duiker, herds of Nguni cattle

INSECTS: Gold Banded Forester, Blue Swallow Tail, African Monarch and Natal Tree Nymph butterflies

MARINE LIFE: Abundant sea life including sea stars, nudibranchs, half beak, angelfish, clownfish, paper fish, potato bass, rays and turtles.

BIRDLIFE: Palm-nut vulture, rosy throated, Cape and yellow throated longclaws; narina trogon, southern banded, black breasted, martial and crown eagles; gorgeous bush shrike, Livingstone and purple crested turaco, common whimbrel

IN SEASON: Humpback whales (June to October), Leatherback & Loggerhead turtles (mid-November to mid-March).

Community focus

KwaMpukane, KwaMqobela and KwaZibi are all home to communities of Tsonga people, the original custodians of the land upon which Gugulesizwe stands. At Big Skies, we value above all the generosity and resilience of these communities and centre community relations and ownership in our business model.



Currency

The currency in South Africa is the South African Rand, denoted by the symbol R. We recommend guests travel with sufficient currency (credit card facilities available) to cover any extras at the camp – such as selected drinks, wellness treatments, gratuities and any turtle experiences.

Gratuities

These are at guests' discretion. We recommend from

- ZAR 100 to ZAR 300 per day for general staff
- ZAR 120 per guest per day for guides

Conservation focus

We're conscious that our impact must always be a positive one. That's why we focus on vegetarian cuisine, renewable energy, and a level of comfort that's entirely in keeping with our setting. Although we ask for very little from our environment, we're given an abundance – and that's something we want to share with you.

