

AMAVA RIVER LODGE, BALULE GAME RESERVE GREATER KRUGER – FACT SHEET

LOCATION:

Amava River Lodge is situated within the Balule Nature Reserve, part of the Greater Kruger National Park in South Africa, on a 5,000-hectare concession. This exclusive lodge offers guests an intimate safari experience along 8 kilometers of the Olifants River. Balule is a private reserve with no fences separating it from Kruger, allowing wildlife to roam freely. The area is known for its prolific wildlife, including lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo. Amava offers the rare chance to experience Big Five game viewing in a pristine, uncrowded setting.

GPS CO-ORDINATES:

Amava River Lodge, Balule Game Reserve Greater Kruger - S 24° 04' 48.7" E 31° 04' 36.6"

DIRECTIONS:

From OR Tambo International Airport

To reach Amava River Lodge from OR Tambo International Airport, exit the airport onto the R21 North towards Pretoria and merge onto the N1 North towards Polokwane for approximately 300 km. Take the R71 exit towards Tzaneen and follow it for about 100 km. Turn right onto the R40 and continue for approximately 50 km, turn left onto the R531 and drive for 30 km. Turn right onto the local road leading to Amava River Lodge.

Amava River Lodge is approximately a 6-hour drive from Johannesburg via Polokwane and Tzaneen. Secure parking is available at the Grietjie Gate (Balule Nature Reserve), where guests are met by our guide and transferred to the lodge in an open safari vehicle.

To ensure a seamless journey, please avoid using GPS navigation. Instead, follow the detailed directions provided.

WHEN TO TRAVEL:

Amava River Lodge is a year-round destination, but the best wildlife viewing is typically during the dry winter months from May to September, when animals congregate around the river and waterholes. Daytime temperatures are mild, averaging around 24–26°C, with cooler nights—so a jacket is recommended.

From October to March, summer brings lush landscapes and excellent birding opportunities, along with higher temperatures (often 30–38°C) and the chance of afternoon thunderstorms, which add drama and atmosphere to the African bush.

ACCOMMODATION:

Amava River Lodge features five en-suite riverfront tented suites, each accommodating up to two guests. Each suite is furnished with either a queen-size or 2 x ¾ beds, high-quality linens, and a spacious en-suite bathroom with a shower, flushing toilet, and hot and cold running water. The tents are constructed with wood and canvas, offering ample space and natural light. Each suite includes a private deck overlooking the Olifants River,

enclosed with insect-proof mesh, providing a serene and intimate setting for guests to relax and enjoy the stunning surroundings. Standing fans are provided for ventilation, ensuring comfort throughout your stay.

THE MAIN AREA:

Our facility features a range of amenities for your convenience, including a dining area with a viewing deck overlooking the Olifants River, two lounges with river views for relaxation and socialising, and a traditional boma with a firepit for evening gatherings under the stars.

SOLAR POWER AND USE OF ENERGY:

The entire camp is off the National grid and is powered by a sustainable solar energy system that supplies 220V mains electricity. Charging stations for electronic devices are available in the main lounge area as well as in the tents.

FOOD:

We try as far as possible to support the local market and farms to get fresh produce to the camp. This will facilitate empowering the local farmers in a continuous and sustainable way.

GUEST AMENITIES:

All guest amenities including shampoo, conditioner, hand and body lotion, liquid gel and soaps are sourced from eco-friendly suppliers, who are endorsed by Beauty without Cruelty, and where possible, use organic ingredients which are biodegradable.

WATER SUPPLY:

Water at our camp is sourced from an underground borehole, which is safe for activities like showering. We test our water regularly and is used for cooking to meet safety and quality standards. The water is safe for consumption, but for drinking we provide bottled water sourced from Manzi Water to ensure the highest quality for our guests.

All greywater and effluent from the camp are treated using an advanced Aerated Treatment Plant. This system incorporates aeration and UV lights in the final tank, effectively treating the water before it is safely returned to the environment, reflecting our commitment to sustainable and eco-friendly practices.

ACTIVITIES OFFERED:**Game Drive:**

Morning and afternoon game drives are offered daily, with a coffee stop included on morning drives and a sundowner stop on afternoon drives. Drives are conducted in open safari vehicles by experienced guides and provide excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing within the Balule Nature Reserve, part of the Greater Kruger. This is Big 5 territory, and sightings of lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo, and rhino are possible.

Kingly Conservation Experience:

Guests have the option to take part in conservation activities at the nearby Kingly Conservation Camp, with the project being endorsed by Balule Nature Reserve. Tasks may include fence patrols, snare removal, alien plant

eradication, clearing bush debris, or collecting and reporting data on tree impacts, depending on the current needs of the reserve. The project is endorsed by Balule Nature Reserve.

ACTIVITIES OFFERED AT AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE:

Olifants River Boat Cruise:

The Kambaku Boat Cruise offers a unique Big Five water safari experience on Kruger's Olifants River. This three-hour journey provides opportunities to see hippos, crocodiles, elephants, buffalo, and various antelope species along the riverbanks. Birders will enjoy sightings of African fish eagles and kingfishers. The cruise begins with a game drive to the boat station and includes views of Kruger's landscapes from the boat's open deck. Ideal for wildlife viewing, photography, or a peaceful break from game drives.

Bush Walk:

Guided bush walks are available on request and are led by qualified walking guides. These walks allow guests to explore the reserve on foot, learning about tracks, plants, birdlife, and smaller wildlife. As Balule is a Big 5 area, walks are conducted with strict safety protocols and provide a chance to encounter large game from a safe distance while gaining a deeper understanding of the natural environment.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Tent Facilities:	
1. How many tents are there?	5 Tented Suites.
2. What view do the tents have?	All tents have a river view.
3. How many people can occupy 1 tent?	Twin/Double (2 Guests - Adult and/or Child).
4. Is there a family tent for children?	No. Parents will need to share with the child.
5. Do tents have electricity?	Yes.
6. Is there internet in the tents?	No.
7. What are the tents facilities?	Twin/Queen beds, en-suite bathroom with shower and bath, fan, tea & coffee facilities, safe.
8. Is there a fridge in the tent?	No.
9. Are there laundry services available?	No.
10. What time does room service clean?	When guests are on game drives.

Main Area:	
1. Is the dining area outside or inside?	Outside and inside, Boma dinner.
2. Does the camp have a pool?	Yes.
3. Is there a bar?	Yes.

Activities:	
4. What activities are available?	Game drive (Morning and afternoon game drive). Kingly Conservation Experience. Guided Bush Walk (<i>on request</i>). Boat Cruise on the Olifants River (<i>on request</i>).

5. How long are is the half day game drives?	Half day game drive: +- 3 hours.
6. Are drinks and snacks provided on game drives?	Drinks and snacks are provided on game drives.
7. Are children allowed on game activities and what is the age limit?	Yes, allowed on exclusive use. From +12 years for game drives and +16 years for game walks.
8. What kind of animals can I expect to see?	Elephants, Leopard, Lion, Warthog, variety of birds, Buffalo, Rhino, Painted Dog, Jackal, Giraffe, Hares, Hyena, Mongoose, Civet, Genets, Honey Badger, Monkey, Bat-eared fox, Zebra, Pangolin, a variety of antelope.

Other Info:	
9. Can I Self-Drive to the lodge?	Self drive to Grietjie Gate. The lodge will meet you at the gate and transfer you to the lodge.
10. When is the best time to visit?	From May to September.
11. What type of clothing do you recommend I pack?	Neutral coloured clothing, warm jacket in winter.
12. Can we charge phones?	Yes, charging station in main area and tented suites.
13. Check-in & Check-out Times	Check in: From 2pm / Check out: By 10am Earlier check in or late check out must be prearranged.
14. Mobility/Accessibility: Are we geared for Disabilities (Wheelchairs etc.)	No.
15. Can guest walk to their tents alone?	Guests are escorted to their rooms at night, by a guide/camp staff.
16. Is there a fence around the camp?	We have an Elephant fence in place, specifically designed to deter large game animals from accessing the premises.
17. Is there a spa?	No.