

MAKUTSI



SAFARI SPRINGS

During the Autumn months of April & May the temperature starts to cool down in the mornings & during the nights, however the daytime stays nice and warm.

The colours of the bush are also starting to change to a soft brown & grey.

With our ample supply of mineral water being put into the gardens, Makutsi Camp is still very lush & green, which means the animals have been venturing closer into camp. We have recently enjoyed sighting of the *Lions, Impala, Waterbuck, Leopard, Giraffe, Kudu, Nyala, Cheetah, Elephants, Warthog* and even regular sightings of a *Civet* from the River Lapa.

May 2012

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New Impala and cattle

In the last few months we have been busy adding to our Impala numbers and also increased the size of our separate cattle herd.

The 42 Impala came from up north, close to the Botswana border. The auction, the transport as well as their release went without a hitch - a very successful operation. They have settled down nicely around our big Lettow Dam, where we see them already mingling with the other Impala every day.

For many reasons it is important to introduce new stock to existing herds. It is always good to make sure you get some new blood into the mix to make sure the genes of your Impala are as strong as possible.

We also added another 40 young cattle to our herd of Brahman, which brings the total to 250! Now we are sure to have enough healthy & organic beef for the restaurant, and even more hungry cattle to keep on maintaining our "organic" fire breaks.

Quiet time in June

Each year in June we close the lodge for 3 weeks. During this time most of our staff enjoy a well deserved holiday, and it also gives us time to do some maintenance & improvements without disturbing any clients. The reservation office will still be open though for any emails or phone calls!





Kruger National Park

Makutsi is located just over one hour from either the Phalaborwa or Orpen gates. For all day trips from Makutsi we take a picnic style breakfast & lunch can be purchased in the Kruger.

The main difference between Makutsi & the Kruger National Park is that we are a Private Game Reserve whereas the Kruger is a South African National Park. Because Kruger is also much bigger in size than Makutsi, you have the chance of seeing larger herds of animals.

The Kruger National Park was established in 1898 to protect the wildlife of the South African lowveld. The park covers over 2 million hectares of land (20 000 square kilometres) that stretches for 352 kilometres from north to south along the Mozambique border and between 60 to 90km in width.

Kruger is home to an impressive number of species: 336 trees, 49 fish, 34 amphibians, 114 reptiles, 507 birds and 147 mammals.



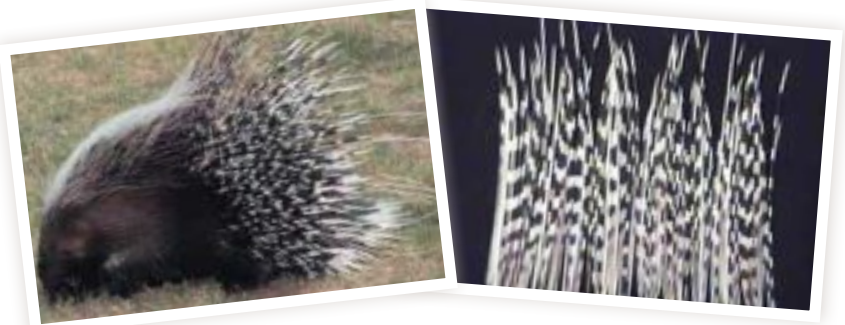
Wildlife in camp

Because there is no fence around Makutsi Camp, it allows for wildlife to move freely throughout the camp. At night time when our guests are being driven home they often encounter some of our nocturnal animal such as Cape Porcupine, Bush Babies, Civet, Genet, Leopard and even the Hippo! Here is some interesting information on two of our favorite camp animals.

Cape Porcupine

Their black & white quills can reach up to 30cm in length. Some say that they "shoot" their quills when under threat, but this is a myth. In fact they raise their quills & back into their offender.

They are also very fussy eaters, testing different food items before selecting the item they eat, often damaging more than they eat. This makes them so destructive when they get into our veggie garden! The porcupine also has an extremely tough digestive system, which makes them one of the only animals that can process poisonous materials like the bark of the tamboti tree.



Civet

Wow... have we been lucky in the last 4 weeks! On average twice a week we have had sightings of a civet walking past the River Lapa deck. Some of our guests were even fortunate enough to see a Leopard & a Civet eyeing each other across the road on the way to dinner!

One distinctive feature is the black and white markings on their fur along with the black band around their eyes, which make them look like a Raccoon.

One would think that they are a part of the feline family, yet they come from the same family as the Mongoose.

The Civet has anal glands which produces fatty yellow secretion of these glands and has a distinctive musky odor used for territorial marking. This substance is known as civetone and is used as a perfume fixative.



Traditional BUSH MEDICINE

Medicinal plants are an important part of daily lives for many South Africans and forms a big part of their cultural heritage. Traditional healers are known as "Sangoma" - a herbalist. There are an estimated 200 000 indigenous traditional healers in South Africa. In South Africa close to 3000 plant species can be used by healers for medicinal purposes in, of which about 350 species are used and traded commonly. Below are just a few examples of how certain ailments can be cured, along with some tribal superstitions....



Marula tree - High in vitamin C

The fruit from the Marula tree is often used for jams, jellies, beer & even the Amarula liqueur. It is much richer in vitamin C than your average orange. The kernel of the marula is also known to be very high in protein. There is a male & female tree and the people from "Venda" believe that the bark infusions can be used to determine the gender of an unborn child. If a woman wants a son, the male tree is used, and for a daughter, the female tree. If the child of the opposite gender is born, the child is said to be very special as it was able to defy the spirits.

Knob Thorn tree - Pain relief

Local healers will grind the knobs from this tree to form a powder which can be used as a pain killer or anesthetic. Can be used to cure toothaches & eye infections. Many tribes believe that by applying the powder, young women will develop bigger breasts.

Leadwood Tree - Toothpaste

When burnt, the ash is high in lime and acts as an abrasive which can be used as a toothpaste.

The Wimba people from Namibia believe that this tree represents their ancestors, as the leadwood tree lives for so long. Some leadwoods are believed to be over 1000 years old. For this reason the Wimba people never cut down leadwood trees.

Tamboti Tree - Toothache

The milkysap of the tamboti tree can be used to quartersize an exposed tooth nerve. The sap is highly toxic, eating one leaf results in a runny tummy for several days and when cooked over the fire (le: if eaten) can result in death.



Aloe Ferox - Wounds & Burns

This bitter aloe is famous for its medicinal qualities. The gel like flesh from the inside of the leaves is reported to have wound healing properties. The whole leaf can be used to cure arthritis, constipation and the leaf gel can be used for skin irritations, insect bites, rashes, sunburn and cuts. It's no wonder they have been harvesting this aloe for decades.



Wild Basil - Deodorant

The wander herb! Commonly used as a deodorant, but also to alleviate sore feet by putting the leaves in your shoes during long walks. Dried leaves rubbed on the head can repel lice. If the smoke of the leaves is inhaled this can cure chest pain & bleeding noses.



Mother in Laws Tongue - String & Water

The "Mother in Laws Tongue" has fibrous leaves. The fibres can be separated and used to make very strong & flexible string. Water can be extracted from the roots and even the leaves in a survival situation.



Why not stay longer than one week?

One of our most frequent comments from guests is: "We didn't know we could stay longer. We would have booked extra nights if we would have known that it's possible".

Our classic package lasts for one week, however we also offer packages that can last up to 5 weeks. There is a package out there for everyone. You don't always have to book a longer package, you can simply **add on extra nights** depending on how long you want to stay. This way you can spread your excursions out, with more free time to rest by the pool, read a book on your terrace or sit by the Hippo Hide (a water-hole outside of camp with a viewing deck).

For those guests that like to keep busy every minute of the day, there are plenty of excursions you can request.

Cheetah Research
Simba Safari
Blyde River Boat cruise

Hatari Safari
Hot Air Balloon
Star gazing

Moholoholo Rehabilition centre
2 night Walking Safari sleep-out
Lekgalamatse mountain walk

So what are you waiting for: the longer you stay, the more time we have to spoil you :)

The Makutsi Team

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