

**This is the itinerary for our tour of South Africa**



## **Cycling & Hiking Adventures**

**Cycling tour in Eastern South Africa and  
Kingdom of**

**Swaziland / Eswatini 13 days**

**04.09. – 16.09.2020**

**Group Size 8 – 15 participants**

*This popular bike tour will introduce one to the highlights, landscapes and cultures of eastern South Africa and the Kingdom of Eswatini. The cycling excursions, which include several ascents, average between 18km and 56km per day. While walking or hiking, the tour guide will introduce you to the regional variety of flora and fauna as well as the different cultures. The cycle route will lead one along the Panorama Route to the Blyde River Canyon, you will undertake safaris in the Kruger National Park and be able to observe diverse species of animals. Experience the Swathi culture firsthand before travelling to the Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve, where the largest rhino population in the world is to be found. Visit the renowned St. Lucia Greater Wetlands, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and go on a boat ride. Cycle and walk in the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Mountains. Cycle through the beautiful Valley of a*

***Thousand Hills, the country of the Zulu people, and experience their warm hospitality.***

***Itinerary km = kilometre, hg = height gain in meters***

**Day 1 04.09.2020 Depart from Johannesburg via Dullstroom to Graskop**

Upon your morning arrival at the Oliver Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, you will be met by your tour guide and transferred to Dullstroom, a town known for its trout breeding, lying at the start of the Drakensberg Mountains. Continue over the Long Tom Pass in the eastern Drakensberg Mountains via Sabie to Graskop, where one will stay for 2 consecutive nights at the charming **Graskop Hotel 3\***.

**Day 2 05.09.2020 Bike Tour from Pilgrim's Rest via Bourke's Luck Potholes to the Blyde River Canyon**

Visit the historical African gold mining town of Pilgrim's Rest, cycling onwards to Bourke's Luck Potholes, an imposing system of potholes, through which the Blyde River makes its way to the Blyde River Canyon. Thereafter, continue cycling along the Panorama Route to the Three Rondavels viewpoint which affords one the most spectacular views of the Blyde River Canyon. Return transfer by bus to the hotel. (57km, hg 510m, tar/gravel road) (B)

**Day 3 06.09.2020 Bike Tour from God's Window via the Lisbon to Graskop**

Cycling in a loop along the Drakensberg escarpment, one will visit The Pinnacle and God's Window. The former is an imposing rock column and the latter a viewpoint with a marvelous view over the Lowveld (hg 914m) below. A short ride takes us to the Lisbon Waterfalls, followed by a longer descent into the Lowveld en route to lunch in Graskop. Transfer in the African Bikers bus to the world-famous Kruger National Park, where one may see lion, elephant, zebra, hippo, rhino, giraffe

buffalo, antelope, wild dogs as well as a colourful array of birds and diverse types of vegetation. The accommodation for 2 nights will be in **Pretoriuskop Rest Camp 2\*** in the south of the park. (40km, hg 570m, tar/forest road) (B)

#### **Day 4 07.09.2020 Safari Trip in the Kruger National Park**

Wildlife is generally very active in the cool morning temperatures. Join a guided walk with a ranger (optional, to be booked well in advance, only 8 places available). After breakfast, drive along the periphery of riparian forests and granite mountains to another camp in the park. In the afternoon, undertake another game drive in an open top game viewing vehicle. (B)

#### **Day 5 08.09.2020 Bike Tour in Swaziland/Eswatini: Jeppe's Reef – Piggs Peak Hotel**

Undertake a morning safari prior to departure from the Kruger National Park to the Kingdom of Eswatini, home to the Swathi people. Start cycling from the border post of Jeppe's Reef on a quite gravel road past many homesteads of the Swathi people to the beautifully situated **Piggs Peak Hotel 3\***. The area with the Phophonyane waterfall is now part of a new UNESCO World Heritage Site. The exposed rock strata are 3.55 billion years of age making it one of the oldest rocks on earth and is easily accessible. (27km, hg 650m, gravel) (B)

#### **Day 6 09.09.2020 Bike Tour: Piggs Peak – Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary**

A short transfer takes you just outside Piggs Peak. On a hilly gravel road ride to Nsanwini, a site where ancient rock paintings of the Khoi San are to be seen. As lower we cycle as more the vegetation changes to a thorny bush savannah. After lunch we transfer to the interesting Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary. (48km, hg 610m, tar/gravel) (B) The accommodation for next 2 nights will be in **Mantenga Lodge 2-3\***.

#### **Day 7 10.09.2020 Bike Tour from Bhunya to Mlilwane**

After breakfast, brief transfer to the uSutu Forest. On the quiet country roads, cycle past many kraals before reaching the famous Swathi candles workshop where candles are made accompanied by local music. Continue riding to the Mlilwane Animal Protection Park, while observing zebra, blesbok, impala, ostrich, and, at a dam, hippo en route. The return trip to our accommodation takes us past the Royal Palace. In the afternoon, do game watching on foot or by bicycle – it is completely safe, there are neither buffalo, elephant nor other predators in the reserve. (67km, hg 400m, tar/gravel road) (B)

### **Day 8 11.09.2020 Safari in the Hluhluwe - Imfolozi Game Reserve**

En route into the idyllic Zulu country in South Africa, one will pass villages and fields of sugarcane. The Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Game Reserve is known worldwide for its white and black rhino species protection program. Undertake a wildlife safari in the African Bikers vehicle. In addition to the BIG 5 – lion, elephant, rhino, leopard and buffalo, the beautiful lowland nyala antelope is also found here. Overnight accommodation for the next 2 consecutive nights will be at the **Umlilo Lodge 4\*** in St. Lucia, a small town situated in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. (B)

### **Day 9 12.09.2020 St. Lucia – Boat Ride and Day of Rest**

In the morning, enjoy a boat trip on the St. Lucia Lagoon (optional), where, in addition to crocodiles and hippo, one can see the African fish eagle, the goliath heron, and many other bird species. The rest of the day is at leisure. Swim in the warm Indian Ocean, take a walk in the rainforest, or visit and explore a small township by bicycle in the company of an enthusiastic local guide. (20km, hg 50m, tar/gravel) (B)

### **Day 10 13.09.2020 Bike Tour in the Valley of a Thousand Hills**

Continue travelling into rural Zululand. Commence cycling from the Wartburg, one of the old German settlements, and cycle past numerous Zulu kraals through the Valley of a Thousand Hills. Thereafter, brief transfer to the comfortable **Lexden Guest House 3\*** in Pietermaritzburg , for the overnight stay. (37km, hg 200m, tar) (B)

### **Day 11 14.09.2020 Bike tour Bergville to the Amphitheatre**

A 1.5-hour transfer takes you to Bergville. The bike tour lead initially through green farmland and then past numerous Zulu kraals. The Ukhahlambra Drakensberg Mountains (3000m altitude), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, its many peaks lying above 3000m altitude, are covered in snow from April to October. Overnight accommodation for 2 consecutive nights will be at the **Tower of Pizza or Hlalanathi Drakensberg Resort 3\***. (50km, hg 500m, tar) (B)

## **Day 12 15.09.2020 Hiking Tour in the Royal Natal National Park**

Drive along the edge of the Tugela River and enter the Royal Natal National Park. On a slightly undulating path, hike into the Tugela Gorge, where the Tugela Waterfall (1300m), cascades from the Amphitheatre. On a 6-hour hike, enjoy viewing the beauty of the tree ferns, proteaceae and orchids. Transfer back to the lodge. (B)

## **Day 13 16.09.2020 Drive back to Johannesburg – Visit the Apartheid Museum and Transfer to the O R Tambo International Airport**

After breakfast we transfer back to Johannesburg. A visit to the Apartheid Museum gives one insight into South Africa's turbulent past. A transfer to Oliver Tambo International Airport will be the end of this remarkable and multifaceted journey. (B)

### **Charges for tour**

**USD 2,495.00 per person sharing**

**USD 300.00 Single Room Surcharge**

**USD 270.00 MTB Hardtail Hire**

**USD 320.00 E-Bike Hire**

### **Included:**

- Qualified English-speaking tour guide on bicycle
- Accommodation in double/twin rooms with shower/toilet (2-4\*) as stated in this itinerary
- Meals: 12 x breakfast
- Permanent back-up vehicle with bike trailer transport
- All entrance fees as stated in this itinerary
- All transfers & travel in air-conditioned minibuses

- **Excluded:**

- Tips for guides, porters and waiters
- Meals not mentioned in this itinerary
- Beverages and mineral water on non-cycling days
- Personal expenses e.g. laundry at accommodation facilities, telephone and internet services etc.

- **Hints:**

A moderate to medium level of fitness is required for the climbs on this route. It will be possible to cycle longer distances, because of the accessibility of the accompanying vehicle. During the mentioned dates of travel, the climate in the Kruger National Park and in Eswatini can reach up to 25°C to 30°C. In the summer months, it can also be turbulent and rainy.