



## 2012 Our Choices : THE "GEMS" OF KWAZULU/NATAL

For those divers who are not mad about cold water diving or cage diving with the Great White's this dive safari is just for you!

It takes place on the KwaZulu/Natal south and north coast which enjoy a sub-tropical climate, similar to that of Miami. It includes diving Aliwal Shoal, which, if you are not into sharks, could include wreck and reef diving on the Shoal itself. Then a few days break from diving, which will appeal to that non-diving partner, whilst you look for the "Big 5" (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino & buffalo) in the Hluhluwe Game Reserve before continuing on to Sodwana Bay, South Africa's premier dive destination. Sodwana offers world class tropical coral reef diving, as good as anywhere else in the world. After having dived Sodwana's reefs you will appreciate why Paul Spohr of the Scuba Centres of Michigan had this to say about diving Sodwana.

The reef system in Sodwana Bay is the healthiest and most diverse system I have seen in my 23 years of doing tours. I have dove all over the world and our facility books 10-30 trips a year and I have never been so impressed by any reef system.

Experience KwaZulu/Natal with us!

### Day 01.

#### 2011:

On arrival at King Shaka International Airport, Durban, own arrangements, you will be met by a representative of Dive the Big 5 for the 45 minute road transfer to the small seaside village of Umkomaas. Rest of the day free. Overnight at Sea Scapes on a bed and breakfast basis. [www.africanwatersports.co.za](http://www.africanwatersports.co.za)

#### Included:

Road transfer from King Shaka International Airport, Durban, to Sea Scapes; accommodation.

#### Excluded:

International / Domestic airfare; arrival taxes; lunch; dinner; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

### Days 02 and 03.

#### 2011:

Four dives on Aliwal Shoal (two per day), weather permitting. After a light breakfast consisting of fruit, yogurt, cereal, muffins etc you will be transferred to the Umkomaas Lagoon for the pre-dive briefing and the launch. The launch is through the river mouth, through the pounding surf to the reef. This is an adrenalin rush in itself and can be likened to "white water rafting in a wet-suit!".

Aliwal Shoal offers some of the best diving on the South African coast line. The first dive on Aliwal could be on the wreck of the Produce, an 18 000 ton Norwegian tanker that hit the Shoal in 1974 and the second could be on the NEBO, which struck the shoal in May 1884 and sank almost immediately with its cargo of railway material. Both wrecks lie at approximately 30 meters and are fairly intact which makes for great wreck diving. If that is not enough, there are the sandstone reefs on which to dive. These reefs are covered with both soft and hard corals and have an abundance of fish life that is normally associated with coral reef diving.

All diving in South Africa is best done early in the mornings, at dawn, before the winds cause the sea to develop a rough "chop", which makes for unpleasant and dangerous diving conditions. In between the first and second dive you will return to Sea Scapes for SIT and a hot breakfast. After breakfast you will return to the lagoon and launch for the second dive on Aliwal. Quite often, due to sea and weather conditions the skipper may elect to do a 2 tank dive. This is when you don't return to shore for your surface interval time, but you stay at sea and do the second dive when your computer shows that it is safe to do so. This prevents a very bumpy ride back, and out again for the second dive. After returning to Sea Scapes after your second dive you will have the rest of the day free. Overnight at Sea Scapes on a bed and breakfast basis.

Included:

Continental breakfast; return transfers to the Lagoon; two dives on Aliwal Shoal; services of a local dive master; weight/cylinder/air fill hire; hot "brunch"; accommodation.

Excluded:

Hire of diving equipment other than tanks, weights and air; additional dives; lunch; dinner; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

#### **Days 04 and 05.**

**2011:**

After the light continental breakfast, you will transfer to the lagoon for the day's dive briefing before spending between 3/5 hours at sea "free" diving (with scuba but no cage) with the Tiger Sharks of Africa, weather permitting. This is shark diving at its ultimate best. After the dive you will have the rest of the afternoon free. Should you not have any desire not to dive with the Tiger Sharks you can substitute the Tiger dive for a wreck or reef dive on Aliwal. Overnight at SeaScapes on a bed only basis.

Included:

Continental breakfast; Tiger or wreck and reef dives on Aliwal Shoal; services of a local dive master; weight / cylinder / air fill hire; hot "brunch"; accommodation.

Excluded:

Hire of diving equipment other than tanks, weights and air; additional dives; lunch; dinner; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

#### **Day 06.**

**2011:**

At a time to be advised you will be collected from Sea Scapes by a representative of Dive The Big 5 for the 4 hour road transfer to Hluhluwe Game Reserve and Hilltop Camp. You will arrive at Hilltop Camp in time for the evening safari which departs camp at 17h00. The game drive last for about 3 hours, depending on animal activity and is conducted under the expert guidance of a KwaZulu/Natal Park Ranger in "open" safari vehicles. Overnight at Hilltop Camp on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis. [www.kznwildlife.com](http://www.kznwildlife.com)

Included:

Breakfast; road transfer from Sea Scapes to Hilltop Camp, Hluhluwe; KwaZulu/Natal Parks Conservation Levy; evening game drive; dinner; accommodation.

Excluded:

Lunch; additional wildlife activities; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

#### **Days 07 and 08.**

**2011:**

Full day on safari in Hluhluwe. This will include a 3 hour safari in the morning and a 3 hour safari in the afternoon / evening. Both safaris are in "open" safari vehicles under the guidance of a KwaZulu Natal Parks Game Ranger. We suggest that you double check with reception the departure times for the morning and evening game drives, as these could change depending on the weather and time of year. Overnight at Hilltop Camp on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis.

Included:

Early morning game drive; breakfast; evening game drive; KwaZulu/Natal Conservation Levy; dinner; accommodation.

Excluded:

Lunch, additional wildlife activities; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

#### **Day 09.**

**2011:**

After the early morning game drive and breakfast, you will be collected by a representative of Dive The Big 5 and transferred by road to Sodwana Bay. Rest of the afternoon free. Overnight at Sodwana Bay Lodge on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis. [www.sodwanadivelodge.co.za](http://www.sodwanadivelodge.co.za)

Included:

Early morning game drive; breakfast; road transfer from Hilltop Camp to Sodwana Bay Lodge; lunch; dinner; accommodation.

Excluded:

Lunch; additional touring; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

#### **Days 10, 11, 12 and 13.**

**2011:**

The next four days will be spent diving the magnificent coral reefs of Sodwana Bay, weather permitting. These reefs are even further south than Australia's Great Barrier Reef which has 1 800 species of fish. In comparison, Sodwana Bay – 1/10 the size of the Great Barrier Reef – has 960 species of fish, 6 of which are endemic to the Sodwana area. Your chances of seeing more species of fish are therefore greater at Sodwana Bay than the Great Barrier Reef!

You could dive on either the Two, Five or Seven Mile Reefs or the seldom dived Nine Mile Reef. The reefs are all named

after the distance from the launch site, which is Jesser Point. For a deep dive, Sponges are a must and best dived on Nitrox which is available at Sodwana.

The first dive at Sodwana is always scheduled for one of the "far" reefs such as Five, Seven and Nine Mile as the sea is usually calm in the early morning, making for an easy boat ride out to the dive site. The second dive of the day is scheduled for Two Mile Reef which is closer to 'home' but is no less spectacular. This is due to the high winds that rise as the day progresses and cause unpleasant diving conditions in the afternoons.

Your afternoons are free to explore your new surrounds. This could include going on a guided walk on the Mgobozeleni Trail – a walk of about 5 km's (3 miles) – through coastal forest and grasslands while Hippos and crocodiles look on. Or you could take a 4 x 4 ride to Lake Sybia, the largest in-land freshwater lake in South Africa. Or you may prefer to ride the miles and miles of deserted beach on horse back. These activities have not been included in the cost of this itinerary and would be for your own account. Overnight at Sodwana Bay Lodge on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis.

Included:

Breakfast, 1 x Nine Mile and 1 x Two Mile Reef dives daily; the services of a local dive master; the hire of tanks / weights and air fills; dinner; accommodation.

Excluded:

Equipment hire other than tanks / weights and air fill; a one-off ZAR 45 Government dive tax which must be paid in cash to the dive shop; ZAR 20 KwaZulu/Natal Parks daily beach permit; Nitrox; additional dives and night dives; lunch; extra activities; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

#### **Day 14.**

##### **2011:**

After breakfast, you will be collected by a representative of Dive The Big 5 for the 3 hour road transfer to King Shaka International Airport, Durban to arrive there in time to connect with your onward flight, own arrangements. End Of Services.

Included:

Breakfast; road transfer from Sodwana Bay Lodge to King Shaka International Airport, Durban.

Excluded:

International / domestic air; lunch; dinner; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

##### **Cost based on two divers travelling:**

ZAR 26 625 per diver sharing.

##### **Cost based on single diver travelling:**

ZAR 35 170 per single diver.

##### **Non-diver cost based on a non-diver sharing with a diver.**

ZAR 19 585 per non-diver sharing with a diver.

Itinerary and costs subject to change.

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