

SOUTH AFRICA SCUBA DIVING & SAFARI ADVENTURE!

Enjoy our exclusive shark scuba diving and Big 5 Safari extravaganza!

3-night / 5 dives on Aliwal Shoal, 3-night / 4 dives on Protea Banks, and the 3-night Hluhluwe / iMfolozi Safari Adventure!

Suggested itinerary:

Day 01.

Full year 2019:

Arrive King Shaka International Airport – Durban (DUR), own arrangements. (Arrival at King Shaka International Airport – Durban, to be advised.) On arrival you will meet your driver / guide for the 85 kms / 1-hour road transfer to Agulhas House in Umkomaas. Rest of the day free. Overnight at Agulhas House in Umkomaas in a twin/double, en suite, air-conditioned, room on a fully inclusive basis. Continental breakfast, hot "brunch" and dinner.

www.agulhashouse.com

Included:

"Meet & Greet" at King Shaka International Airport (flight details to be advised); Road transfer from King Shaka International Airport – Durban (DUR) to Agulhas House in Umkomaas; "Brunch" (if arrival at Agulhas House is in time for "Brunch"); dinner; accommodation at Agulhas House, in an en suite, air-conditioned, double/twin bedded room on a fully inclusive basis. (Continental breakfast, hot "brunch" after the dives, and a hot dinner.)

Excluded:

Breakfast; additional touring & entry fees; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

Please note: Agulhas House is not licenced to sell liquor. Please advise us in advance, of the your first night's liquor requirements, if any, and we will arrange for Agulhas House to purchase it for you on your behalf, for your own account.

Day's 02 & 03.

Full year 2019:

After an early wake-up call, at about 05h00, you will have a light continental breakfast. Agulhas House staff will load your already assembled dive gear onto the dive boat, which is still in its parking bay behind the lodge. At about 06h40, we assemble at the lodge for the first dive briefing before being transferred in a 4x4, from the lodge, for the 15 minute road transfer to the launch site, which is situated at the Umkomaas River mouth lagoon. Once at the launch site we will have a second short dive briefing, instructions on boat safety, and be handed the lifejackets before we launch the "Duck" (Zodiac/ RIB) for your two scheduled dives on Aliwal Shoal, the first being a baited shark dive followed by the 2nd dive, a reef / wreck dive, weather permitting.

All diving in South Africa is best done early in the morning, at dawn, as this is when there is no wind, no swell, no currents, and definitely the best time to dive. As the morning wears on, the winds tend to pick up causing a chop on the water, large swells, which result in unpleasant diving conditions.

The reefs of Aliwal Shoal are fossilised sandstone, almost 80 000 years ago. 80 000 years ago the area around the shoal consisted of sand dunes, and as a result of heavy rains, the sand and shale dissolved forming a compound of calcium carbonate, which today forms the main body of the shoal. 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.

Aliwal is about 2½ km's long with a width averaging 150 meters. Depths vary from 6 to 27 meters (19 to 88 ft.) and the shoal offers a tapestry of diversity. The Cathedral area of the reef is one of the more

spectacular dives. Its inhabitants include the Ragged Tooth Shark (in season – June to October), Loggerhead Turtle, and Ribbon Tailed Rays.

In addition to the reef itself, there are also two good wrecks on which to dive. The *Produce*, an 18 000 ton Norwegian tanker that hit the Shoal and sank in 1974 and the second could be on the *Nebo*, which struck the shoal in May 1884 and sunk 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.

The modus operandi for a “baited” shark dive on Aliwal is as follows:-

After the launch through the Umkomaas River Mouth, and negotiating the breakers, which has often been likened to “white water rafting in a wet suit,” we head off for the dive site. Once we arrive at the dive site, we start chumming to attract the sharks, and put out a buoy with the bait, which is contained in a stainless steel “box” with holes in it so that the “smell” and oil from the mashed sardines in the “box” permeate into the water. When the first sharks appear, the DM assesses the situation, and if he is of the opinion that the sharks are going to stay around awhile and that they are not aggressive, the divers may enter the water. Either you can view the action from the “safety” of the boat, or for non-certified divers, on snorkel. Certified divers drop down to about 10-meters and follow the action from below. This is a “drift dive” as the boat, chum, and bait is drifting with the wind and surface current, as are the divers at 10-meters. Should the sharks disappear, the snorkelers and divers climb back onto the boat and we move to another location and start the process all over again.

After your “baited” shark dive, which is almost always scheduled for the 1st dive of the day, you will spend the surface interval time on the dive boat, out at sea, SIT is not much, as your average dive depth on a “baited” shark dive is only to 10-meters, max. After the surface interval time you will commence with your single tank reef / wreck dive on Aliwal Shoal. Water and light refreshments are provided on board the dive boat in between dives.

After both dives have been completed, you will return to Agulhas House between 11h00 & 12h00 for a shower and “brunch.” Whilst you are enjoying “brunch” Agulhas House staff will look after your dive gear for you, rinsing it in fresh water after each days diving, and washing it at the end of your stay at Agulhas House. Your wetsuit, booties etc will be left out to dry and will be ready for you in the gear room very morning. The rest of the afternoon is free. In addition to “free” transfers to Croc World, “free” transfers the nearby town of Scottburgh, “free” transfers to the landing strip for micro-light flips, “free” transfers the beach or a beach walk, “free” transfers to the Kassie Cultural Tour and “free” transfers to the East Coast Brewery Tour, the other places of interest in the area are the nearby Tala Game Reserve, a Durban City Tour, a visit to uShaka Aquarium in Durban, a visit to the Natal Sharks Board, also in Durban and an Oribi George tour. The costs of these tours as well as the costs and entry fees for the micro-light flight, the Kassie Cultural Tour and the brewery tour have not been included in the cost of this itinerary, and would be for your own account. Overnight at Agulhas House in an air-conditioned, en suite, double / twin bedded room, on a dinner, continental breakfast, and hot “brunch” basis.

Included:

Light continental breakfast; road transfer to the launch site; 1 x “baited” shark dive; 1 x guided Aliwal reef / wreck dives; hire of full equipment or just the hire on tanks, weights and air, depending on the equipment option you chose; Nitrox airfills, if Nitrox certified; services of a qualified dive master to lead all dives; MPA dive permit; hot “brunch”/lunch; complementary return road transfers to Croc World, Scottburgh, the micro-light landing strip, the beach, for an afternoon walk, the Kassie Cultural Tour, and the East Coast Brewery Tour; dinner; accommodation in on air-conditioned, en suite, double / twin room at Agulhas House.

Excluded:

Additional dives; equipment hire other than the hire of tanks, weights and air-fills, depending on the equipment option you chose; entry fees to Croc World, Micro-light flight fee; Kassie Cultural tour fee; Brewery tour entry and beer tasting fees; additional tours, touring & entry fees; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

Day 04.

Full year 2019:

Unfortunately only time for a guided reef / wreck dive on Aliwal Shoal this morning, weather permitting. After the dive has been completed, you will return to Agulhas House for a shower, brunch, and check-out, before Agulhas House transfers you to Shelly Beach, and St Michaels Sands Hotel (St Mike's,) for your 4-scheduled dives on Protea Banks. This is about an 85 kilometres / 1-hour road transfer. En route to St Mike's you will stop by Aqua Planet's Dive Centre, in Shelly Beach. At the dive center you will meet with Aqua Planet's dive crew, unpack your dive gear to let it dry, and select your rental dive gear in preparation for the following days scheduled dives on Protea. We suggest that you do this immediately upon your arrival in Shelly Beach, before going onto St Mike's. This is firstly to dry out your dive gear, and select your dive gear. Secondly, the following morning's Protea pre-dive activities are usually hectic and rushed. After you've met the crew, and selected all your gear and weight requirements, you will continue the short 10-minute transfer to St Mike's. Overnight at the St Mike's in a sea-facing, air-conditioned, en suite, double / twin / single room, on a bed, and breakfast basis.

www.stmichaelssands.co.za

Included:

Light continental breakfast; road transfer to the launch site; a guided reef / wreck dive on Aliwal; Full equipment hire or the hire on tanks, weights and air, depending on the equipment rental option you chose; Nitrox airfills, if Nitrox certified; services of a qualified dive master to lead all dives; MPA dive permit; return road transfer to Agulhas House; hot "brunch"/lunch; road transfer from Agulhas House to St Mike's in Shelly beach via the dive shop; accommodation at St Mike's in a double / twin / single sea-facing, an air-conditioned, en suite room on a bed and breakfast basis.

Excluded:

Equipment hire, depending on the option you chose; additional tours, touring & entry fees; dinner; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

Days 05 & 06.

Full year 2019:

At a time as advised the previous day, when you stopped by Aqua Planets dive center, you will be transferred from St Mike's to Aqua Planets dive centre where, over a cup of coffee, you will meet the team, fellow "dive buddies," and to kit-up. After kitting up you then transfer the 15 minutes or so to the "base" which is the Sonny Evans Small Craft Harbour in Shelly Beach, called the "base" because it is also the actual base for the local NSRI (National Sea Rescue Institute). Here you will have the full pre-dive briefing for your two scheduled dives for the day on the reefs of Protea Banks.

Your first dive of the day on Protea Banks is **scheduled** as a "baited" shark dive, followed by a deep, Protea reef dive, as the second dive, weather permitting. We say "**scheduled**" because weather conditions may force the skipper and DM to change the order in which we do baited shark dives and the deep reef dives on Protea.

Please note that all Protea Reef dives are deep dives, in excess of 30-meters, and are restricted to advanced divers only.

The modus operandi on Protea Banks for a "Baited Shark Dive" is:-

After meeting the Aqua Planet dive crew, at a time confirmed the previous day, in the parking lot in the Sony Evans small craft harbour, which is also the base for the local NSRI (National Sea Rescue Institute), you will kit-up and have the pre-dive briefing. Your dive gear will be stowed on-board by Aqua Planets crew, and the 4x4 pick-up (bakkie) will reverse the dive-boat as close to the water as possible. Everyone then assist the Aqua Planet crew launch the dive boats, which are either a 7.5 meter "duck," or a 8 meter "duck or RIB, or semi-inflatable, nose first, into the surf. On the skipper's instruction, the ladies board first, after which the men clamber into the "Duck", placing themselves opposite their gear, which was been stowed down the centre of the "Duck." You then quickly put on your lifejackets, place your feet in the foot-straps, and off you go..... The launch itself is an exciting experience, and is likened to "white water rafting in a wetsuit". After punching your way through the pounding surf, on reaching the calmer waters,

the skipper pauses to see that all is ok, before you continue on to the dive site. On arrival at the dive site, we start chumming to attract the sharks, and put out a buoy with the bait, which is contained in a “shark friendly” round “camo” drum with holes in it, so that the “smell” and oil from the sardines in the “drum” permeates into the water. When the first sharks appear, the DM assesses the situation, and if he is of the opinion that the sharks are going to stay around awhile, and that they are not aggressive, the divers may enter the water. You either view the action from the “safety” of the boat, or, for non-certified divers, on snorkel; you float on the surface of the ocean and watch the action as it unfolds, 5 meters below you. Surface viewers and non-certified divers pay the same price for going out on the dive boat as divers pay. The certified divers, already kitted up, descend to about 10 meters, to the depth of the camo drum, and follow the action from there. This is a drift dive, as the boat, chum, and bait, is drifting with the wind and surface current, as are the divers at 10 meters below.

After the baited dive, we return to the Sonny Evans Small craft Harbour, swap tanks, and immediately re-launch the boat for the second scheduled dive of the day, a deep Protea Reef dive. There is no SIT required between the first baited shark dive and the second deep Protea reef dive, as a “baited shark dive” is not a deep dive, more like a 10-meter “bounce” dive at most!

The modus operandi for a deep Protea Reef Dive is:-

Once over the dive site, the skipper cuts the motors and the divers, as well as the DM, kit up, on the boat. This is a fully guided reef dive with the DM leading the dive. Once every diver has kitted up the Skipper repositions the boat over the reef, and on the DM’s signal, all the divers do a backward roll, simultaneously, into the water. All Aqua Planet’s Dive Masters, who have dived Protea for years, have mastered the art of safe diving on Protea. The DM first descends to 5 meters and waits at 5 meters until all the divers on the boat get down to him/her. Once all the divers are at 5 meters, the group descends together, to the bottom, which is at about 30 meters. Those divers that are heavy breathers are buddie paired off, so that when they get low on air, they surface together as a pair. After the Protea Reef dive, you will return to the Sonny Evans Small-craft Harbour where the boat is winched out of the water. All your dive gear will be taken back to Aqua Planet’s dive shop to be washed down, rinsed, and dried for the following days diving. After the dive, Aqua Planet will transfer you back to their dive center where you will pick-up your rental and drive the short distance back to St Mike’s. The rest of the afternoon / evening is free. On a combination “baited” shark dive / Protea reef dive, breakfast can be enjoyed before you leave St Mike’s for your first dive, or St Mike’s will give you a packed breakfast to take with you, to be enjoyed on the boat whilst at sea, in between the 1st and 2nd dives, or you can elect to have breakfast on your return back at St Mike’s after both dives have been completed. Up to you. The afternoon is free to explore the Hibiscus Coast in your rental car. The local places of interest in and close to Shelly Beach include, Pure Venom Reptile Park, Crags View Wild Care Centre, the Margate Art Museum, Uvongo River Nature Reserve, Oribi Gorge, which is a 20 km drive from Shelly Beach, The Wild Coast Casino, which is nearby, a coffee farm in the neighboring town of Ramsgate. If you are a golfer..... lots of top-class golf courses in the vicinity, surfing, fishing etc. etc. The folk at Aqua Planet and at St Mike’s will be happy to point you in the right direction. Any additional dives and local touring would be for your own account. Overnight at St Mike’s in a sea-facing, air-conditioned, en suite, double / twin room, on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis.

Included:

Breakfast, or a packed breakfast, your choice; return transfers from St Mike’s to the launch area; combination “baited” shark dive followed by a Protea 1-tank, deep reef dive; full equipment hire or the hire of tanks, weights and air only, depending on which equipment hire option you chose; services of a qualified dive master to lead all dives; accommodation at St Mike’s, in an air-conditioned, en suite, double / twin sea-facing room on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis.

Excluded:

Additional dives; full equipment hire depending on which gear rental option you chose; additional tours and touring; lunch; dinner; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

Day 07.

Full year 2019:

After an early breakfast, you will be picked up from St Mike's in Shelly Beach @ 08h00 by our representative for the road transfer through the heart of "The Kingdom of the Zulu" to Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge in the Hluhluwe / iMfolozi Game Reserve via St Lucia. This is a 370 km or 4-hour road transfer from St Mike's to Advantage Cruises jetty at St Lucia, scheduled to arrive at the jetty at about 11h30, in time to join the 12h00 cruise up the St Lucia Estuary. At 12h00 you will board the *Advantage Cruiser* for a 2-hour boat cruise up the St Lucia River Estuary for close up sightings of hippo, crocodile, mangrove swamps, birds, and many, many more that inhabit the Isimangaliso Wetland Park which was declared a world heritage site in 1999, and is one of 552 world heritage sites worldwide. The main objective of the detour is that after the cruise, you leave the Isimangaliso Wetland Park with an appreciation of the fragile eco system, and why it was declared a Wetland Park, and go back home with photographs and memories of the animals that inhabit the Estuary that will last a lifetime. The *Advantage Cruiser* is equipped with a fully licensed bar; tuck shop, toilets, PA system, and the popular sundeck, for better animal viewing. The *Advantage Cruiser* was built specifically to venture into shallow waters, for those up close photos of hippo and crocodile. After the boat cruise, which lasts approximately 2-hours, you will continue on to the Hluhluwe / iMfolozi Game Reserve and Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge. The plan is to get you to Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge to check in, explore your new surroundings, enjoy high tea, and to join the afternoon / evening safari / game drive, which departs Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge at 16h30.

Hluhluwe is one of the oldest and largest game parks in South Africa; the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park is renowned for its wide variety of bird and animal life. Besides 'The Big Five' (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo), the elusive cheetah, wild dogs and many other well - known Bushveld species inhabit the park, offering the visitors a rich game viewing experience. The park covers 96 000 hectares, and comprises three reserves: Hluhluwe and Umfolozi – two of Africa's oldest game reserves, both founded in 1895 – and the linking Corridor Reserve, proclaimed in 1989. Hluhluwe has the distinction of being the oldest "formally" protected area in Africa! In 1895, with about only 20 southern white rhino's surviving on earth, and these in Imfolozi, the threat to the species survival was dire, and the proclamation of the Hluhluwe / Imfolozi Game Reserves ensured their survival. Hluhluwe / Imfolozi Game Reserves now "export" white Rhino's to reserves all over Africa where they were originally found. A truly wonderful success story!

After high-tea you will assemble in the reception area where you will be introduced to your Ranger and Tracker and depart the lodge at 16h30 for your afternoon / evening game drive (safari). This safari is conducted in "open" Land Cruisers with professional guides. After the 3-hour safari, at about 19h00, depending on animal activity, you will return to Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge for dinner. Dinner will be either in the restaurant or on the deck, under the African stars. Overnight at Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge, in an air-conditioned, en suite, double / twin / single "Safari Room" (subject to availability) on a fully inclusive basis.

www.isibindiafrica.co.za and click on Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge.

Included:

Breakfast at St Mike's; road transfer from St Mike's in Shelly Beach to Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge in the Hluhluwe / iMfolozi Game Reserve, via the 2-hour boat cruise up the St Lucia Estuary; KwaZulu/Natal daily Conservation Levy at Hluhluwe / iMfolozi Game Reserve; high tea at Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge; evening safari; dinner; double / twin / single accommodation in an air-conditioned, en suite, "Safari Room" at Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge.

Excluded:

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

Day's 08 & 09.

Full year 2019:

Two full days spent on safari with Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge in Hluhluwe / iMfolozi Game Reserve. You will be woken up at 06h00 by an early morning wake up telephone call for early morning tea / coffee and "rusks" which are served in the lodge's public area, after which you will depart on your early morning safari at about 07h00. Please check departure times with reception the night before, as this changes from month to month, depending on sunrise. All animal viewing is best done in the early morning and late afternoon when it's cool. This is when the animals are more active and easier to spot. From about 10h00

till 15h00, when the day is at its hottest, the animals tend to lie in the shade, not moving, which makes for difficult game viewing. While on safari, you will stop somewhere in the bush for tea / coffee and snacks, after which, you will continue with the safari. Depending on animal activity, you will return to the lodge at about 09h30 / 10h00 for “brunch”. The rest of the morning / afternoon is free to laze by the pool, visit the Spa, spend time bird watching around camp, or join a three hour guided bush walk. Please note that the cost of the guided bush walks is ZAR 580 per person, and is not included in the cost below, and would be for your own account. At about 15h00, you will again assemble for high tea before departing on the evening safari. At sunset you will stop somewhere in the bush for “sundowners” whilst you watch the African set below the horizon. After sunset, you will continue with the safari into the night, looking for the nocturnal animals with the aid of a powerful spot lamp. After the evening safari, depending on animal activity, you will return to Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge for dinner. Overnight at Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge in an air-conditioned, en suite, double / twin / single “Safari” Room on a fully inclusive basis.

In between morning and evening game drives, the following activities are available at Rhino Ridge: A visit Isimangaliso Wetland Park; a visit to the Border Caves; a visit to the Nongomo Market; a cultural tour. The costs of these activities are not included in the cost of this tour and will be on your own account.

Included:

KwaZulu/Natal Parks per person daily Conservation Levy; early morning safari; brunch; high tea; evening safari; dinner; accommodation.

Excluded:

Extra nature activities, other than the morning and evening safari's; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

Day 10.

Full year 2019:

After the early morning safari, followed by a quick, or maybe even a packed, to go “brunch,” you will be collected from Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge by our representative, for the 230 km or 4 hour return road transfer back to King Shaka International Airport – Durban, to connect with your return flight home. (Flight details to be advised.) End of services.

Included:

Morning safari; breakfast; road transfer from Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge in the Hluhluwe / iMfolozi Game Reserve to King Shaka International Airport – Durban.

Excluded:

Lunch; dinner; overnight accommodation; onward air out of King Shaka International Airport – Durban; bar; items of a personal nature; gratuities.

Cost based on 2-divers sharing including full equipment hire:

USD 3090 per diver sharing

Cost based on 2-divers sharing including tanks, weights and air only:

USD 2980 per diver sharing

Cost based on Single traveler including tanks, weights and air only:

USD 4220 per single

The above itinerary and cost are subject to change, based on current rate of exchange at time of booking and is subject to availability at the time of booking. The cost can only be guaranteed once invoiced and paid for in full.

Please note: Hluhluwe / iMfolozi Game Reserve falls within a “low-risk” Malaria area. To be safe, we strongly suggest that you consult your Doctor for advice on taking prophylactics before entering a “low risk” Malaria area.

