

Kwa Zulu Natal



Further Links

- Hiking and dramatic scenery of the Drakensburg.
- St Lucia Wetlands
- Safaris in private reserves and national parks
- Some of the biggest elephants in Africa at Tembe
- Beautiful beaches and good diving
- Turtle breeding beaches
- Zulu culture
- Battlefields and history tours

Situation

Eastern South Africa on the Indian Ocean.

Activities

Beaches, water sports, hiking, game viewing, culture.

Kwa Zulu Natal province contains a variety of landscapes and attractions as diverse as the Drakensburg Mountains and the St Lucia Wetlands and is probably best known for its Zulu culture and fantastic Indian Ocean beaches. There is a long coast of sub-tropical surf beaches, remote lowveld savanna, mountains and the historic battlefields of the Anglo-Boer and Anglo-Zulu wars. The Natal Parks Board has many excellent parks with a huge range of wildlife, both self drive and guided.

Durban is the main city of the province and is a major port and a hub for holiday makers, particularly local South Africans. It has all year warm weather due to the warm Agulhas current in the Indian Ocean. Natal Bay, around which Durban is built was a stopping point for sailors as far back as 1685, though it's also thought that Vasco da Gama stopped here in 1497. The Voortrekkers founded Pietermaritzburg, 80 km north of Durban in the 1800s and Boers claimed control. Today Durban is a rapidly growing city with a high level of tourism.

'**The Elephant Coast**' is roughly from Richards Bay up as far as Kosi Bay, close to the Mozambique border and is a narrow strip of land about 250km long and 70km wide in northern KwaZulu Natal. Parts of it are known as **Maputaland** and Zululand, and the World Heritage Site of Greater St Lucia Wetland Park is also in this region. It is home to an incredible 21 different eco-systems, including evergreen forests, palm

savannahs, swamp forests, coastal lagoon, flood plains, rivers and sand dunes. Due to this, the area has a huge variety of flora, with over 2000 plant species, and a profusion of wildlife. It is also an exceptional birding region.

The beaches here are long and mainly sandy backed by coastal forest. The clear blue waters rarely drop below 20c due to the Indian Ocean warm currents and are home to one of the richest eco-systems underwater in the world, over 1250 fish species, sharks, rays, 95 coral species and a variety of plants live here. It is also one of the world's few remaining breeding grounds for rare leatherback and loggerhead turtles, who nest from the end of October to January, hatching around January - February.

There are some really good **game reserves and parks** in Kwa Zulu Natal, some home to the big 5. Parks include Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Game Reserve, Itala Game Reserve, Ndumo Game Reserve, Phinda Private Game Reserve, Tembe Elephant Park and Thanda Private Game Reserve.

