

FACT SHEET

BLACK LEOPARD
MOUNTAIN LODGE



AFRICAN RETREATS

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BLACK LEOPARD MOUNTAIN LODGE



INTRODUCTION

Nestled in Thabo Tholo's mountainous, wild landscape lies Black Leopard Mountain Lodge. This unique, authentic and eco-friendly camp is set in a riverine valley looking down onto a trickling stream with the sheer cliff face of the Lutla Mountain towering above it.

Depending on your desired safari experience, this wilderness retreat has multiple accommodation options to choose from. Whether it's the luxury canvas tents at Black Leopard Mountain Lodge, exclusive use of the 4-bedroom safari-style house Black Eagle View or Buffalo Thorn camp (an authentic bush camp located in the heart of this reserve), each has something unique to offer.

Explore the undulating diverse landscape of this 6,000 hectare reserve by safari vehicle, on foot or even by mountain bike, in search of the many different bird and animal species to be found throughout this reserve. Some of South Africa's most iconic species can be found on the reserve, from the elusive leopard to the vibrant and rare Narina Trogon.

Ancient archaeological sites are also found scattered throughout this landscape. Rock engravings and old Voortrekker settlements mean this land has many stories to tell.

AT A GLANCE | FACILITIES

- Located in the remote wilderness that is the Thabo Tholo Reserve, with over 6,000 hectares to explore by 4x4, on foot or by mountain bike.
- 3 different accommodation types to choose from.
- **Black Leopard Mountain Lodge** has 6 safari-style luxury tents (including 2 family units) built on raised platforms.
- All rooms enjoy either a trickling stream below or a dramatic mountain view above.
- Each room has a secluded outdoor shower &

Victorian Ball & Claw bath.

- Cosy indoor fire place in the bar area with spectacular mountain views.
- Breath-taking views of the Lutla mountains which forms part of the Steenkamp Mountain range.
- Plunge pool overlooked by the mountain range above
- Catered / Self-Catered options available for Black Leopard Mountain Lodge.
If self-catering our trained chefs will prepare, cook and serve your meals.
- Two activities per day with our knowledgeable guides, are included in the FB rate (Bush Walk & Safari Drive)
- **Black Eagle View** – An exclusive 4-bedroom canvas house with dramatic mountain views, raised central fire pit and self-catering kitchen. Perfect for a family getaway in nature, where dogs are also welcome.
- **Buffalo Thorn Camp** – An eco-friendly, authentic bush camp located in the heart of the wild. 6 dome tents built on raised platforms, communal fire pit and kitchen and a large lounge tent.
- The reserve is a 3 hour drive from OR Tambo Airport and close to many Lowveld attractions such as the Panorama Route, Greater Kruger, Zip-Lining, River-Rafting, Waterfall Tour, Clemengold farms / packhouse and Hazyview.

ACTIVITIES

- **Morning Walk** - Our morning activity is a 2-hour guided bush walk in the Thaba Tholo Wilderness Reserve. Walking as opposed to driving allows you to enjoy the smaller details hidden in nature such as identifying fresh tracks, spotting the birds in the branches and learning about the trees and the different sounds that we find here. There are also many archaeological sites scattered throughout this reserve from rock engravings to ancient ruins. The land here is full of historic tales and treasures.

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- **Game Drive** – In the afternoon we set out in the open safari vehicle for our second activity of the day. A game drive allows you to get up close to some of the larger animal species we find on this 6,000-hectare reserve which include: leopard, buffalo, zebra, giraffe, sable, waterbuck, blue wildebeest, eland and kudu. There are also many incredible viewpoints on the reserve which make the perfect place to stop for a safari sundowner. A chance to watch the sun set below the mountain range, converse about the wildlife sightings of the day and share a drink with your fellow travellers.
- **Self-Guided Hiking Trail** – There are two walking trails that guests are welcome to hike and explore. Both routes start and end at the lodge. The Green Route takes around 2 hours and is 5.6km and the Orange Route takes 3 hours and is 6.8km. We will provide you with a handheld radio to let the guides know what route you will be hiking.
- **Self-Drive 4x4 Trail** – Another way to explore this beautiful landscape is from the comfort of your own vehicle, we allow guests with 4x4 low range vehicles to head out on their own safari drives. We provide you with a map of the route as well as a handheld radio. There is of course the option to take one of our knowledgeable guides with you, or if you don't have a suitable vehicle our guides will take you on our game viewer through the trail.
- **Mountain Biking** – This mountainous and rocky landscape of the Thaba Tholo Reserve is perfect for the adrenaline-seeking mountain biker. Guests are more than welcome to bring their own bikes as there are many off-road tracks to conquer and discover here.
- **Full Day Panorama Tour** – One of the most scenic drives in South Africa. Book this activity and explore the wonders of this dramatic landscape, stopping off

at the many viewpoints along the picturesque journey. Visit the famous 3 Rondavels, Bourke's Luck Potholes, Pilgrims Rest and Gods Window followed by lunch at Harrie's Pancakes in Graskop. Return to the lodge via Sabie and the scenic Long Tom Pass.

- **Sudwala Cave Excursion** – Spend the day exploring these ancient dolomite caves. Formed over 240 million years ago and thought to be one of the oldest caves in the world. Join the hour tour where you journey 600 meters in, and over 150 meters underground where you'll find staggering stalactites and stalagmites and even pre Cambrian fossils! There is also a crystal tour for the more adventurous cave explorer!
- **Blyde Boat / Moholoholo Rehabilitation Centre / Reptile Park** – These activities can be combined as a full day trip or individual excursions. Explore the third largest canyon in the world by boat. This 'green canyon' is not only home to a vast array of wildlife but also boasts views of the famous Kadishi Tufa waterfall and the Three Rondavels. Moholoholo is a fun family tour where you can learn about South Africa's wildlife, allowing you to get up close to many bird and animal species. There is more to South Africa's wildlife than the Big Five and a visit to the Reptile Park shows how many unique species of snakes, lizards, frogs, tortoises and iguanas are found here. Get up close and personal with some weird and wonderful creatures.

Note: All tours to be booked prior to arrival.

TYPICAL DAY AT BLACK LEOPARD MOUNTAIN LODGE

Daily schedules change according to what guests have planned or pre-booked for the duration of their stay. A typical day at Black Leopard Mountain Lodge will include a 2-hour morning walk, cold breakfast followed by a mid-morning brunch. Tea at 2pm served at the lodge with

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both savoury and sweet dishes before a 3-hour afternoon game drive in the reserve. Head back to camp for a candlelit dinner or bring your own food and have our chef cook it for you at your leisure and end the day sat around the roaring fire under the stars.

- **05h30** Wake up Call / Morning Coffee & Rusks
- **06h00** Depart for Morning Bush Walk
- **08h00** Head back to camp for a cold breakfast with fresh fruit, cereals & yoghurt
- **10h00** Brunch served in the lodge dining area
- **14h00** Afternoon Tea (light savoury and sweet snacks)
- **16h00** Afternoon Game Drive Departs – Scenic Sunset Drinks
- **19h00** Arrive back at camp where you will be served a delicious dinner in our dining area which overlooks the bush and the dramatic Steenkamp Mountain range above.

Please note: Game drive times alter slightly, depending on a full board/self-catering option and seasonal basis.

LOCATION & DIRECTIONS

Black Leopard Mountain Lodge is easily accessible for self-driving guests.

There is shaded parking on the reserve where you can leave your car and be collected in our open safari vehicle and driven to the lodge.

GPS COORDINATES | The Reserve Gate: **S 24°57'21.5"**
E 30°19'37.3"

- There is shaded parking to leave your car on the reserve
- Only 4x4 vehicles are able to self-drive to the lodge
- Transfers are done in our open safari vehicle with trailer and the trip to the lodge takes approximately 20 minutes
- Please call Simon, Anton or Julius when entering the

bottom gate in citrus valley.

There is one daily pick up time from the parking area on the reserve which is 14:30

Simon (Management) 084 447 4666
Julius (Management) 082 223 8615
Anton (Head Guide) 071 854 8014

The reserve entrance is situated just off the R37 Burgersfort & Polokwane road, outside Lydenburg/ Mashishing, Mpumulanga.

FROM GAUTENG

- Take the N12 to Witbank/eMalahleni, or from Pretoria take the N4 to Witbank/eMalahleni
- Pass Witbank/eMalahleni and keep on the N4 highway, past Middleburg
- Take the Belfast/Dullstroom off ramp and travel through Belfast and turn right at the Total fuel station in Belfast to get on the road to Dullstroom (DO NOT follow the GPS instructions to carry on the N4 via Machadadorp, as this is a much longer route and the road from the N4 to Lydenburg is very rough and filled with massive potholes and in some areas no tar)
- Proceed through to Dullstroom and then on to Lydenburg. Please watch out for bad potholes between Dullstroom and Lydenburg
- Once you arrive in the town of Mashishing / Lydenburg, you come into town on the main road Viljoen street. Keep on this road to the Caltex and Spar 4 way stop street.
- Pass straight through this stop street. Follow sign boards to Ohrigstad and Burgersfort
- At the Medical Centre 4-way stop street, turn left into Kerk Street
- Follow the signs again to Ohrigstad and Burgersfort
- Follow this street until you come to the Engen garage /Kia Motors 4 way stop street
- Turn right into De Clerq street. This street takes you out of town
- Once out of town take the first road left (R37) to

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Polokwane/Burgersfort

- Travel on the R37 for about 30km down the Waterfallsriver pass
- Once at the bottom of the pass on the straight stretch turn left at the very first road on your left (Beetgekraal Road). **Please note that this is a gravel road**
- Continue on the Beetgekraal road for 3km (Citrus trees on your left)
- Turn left at the silver gate marked LB6 (there is a Gyrocopter on the gate post) and look out for the BLC/BTC sign
- Enter the gate, passing staff accommodation and travel straight for about 200m until you get to another large silver gate (opposite the silver shed)
- Enter this gate (please CLOSE this gate again) and travel on this twisty turning track until you get to the Thaba Tholo Reserve gate
- Enter the code provided upon booking ensuring that you CLOSE this gate correctly (remembering to tumble the coded lock again)
- Once through the gate carry on until you get the second road on the right with a sign showing Black Leopard Mountain Lodge
- Carry on up to the covered parking area by the offloading ramp, where you will be met by your guide/driver

CHILD POLICY

Children of all ages are welcome here at Black Leopard Mountain lodge.

GENERAL TRAVEL INFO:

Weather

The climate in South Africa's Lydenberg area brings the hot summer months between October and April. During this time rainfall is high, and so is the temperature, with 17 Degrees Celsius at the lowest and 35 Degrees at it's

peak. The dry winter months are May to September, during which time the weather is mild during the day with temperatures averaging mid- high 20's, while very cold in the evenings and early mornings which can be as cold as 2 Degrees Celsius.

Wildlife

The Thabo Tholo Reserve is home to a vast array of species of all shapes and sizes. Various species of plains game roam this undulating landscape such as Buffalo herds, towering Giraffes and many unique species of antelope. There are also numerous small predators that can be found on the reserve from Caracals to Genets, as well as Africa's most elusive big cat, the Leopard.

For the last 10 years we have been gathering data on leopards in this region working in conjunction with the Ingwe Foundation to hopefully ensure a better future in conservation outside formally protected areas for these cats. Over the years we have had sightings of leopards with unique colour morphs both golden and black variations. The Thabo Tholo Reserve is one of the few places in the world where these unique variations have been documented and caught on camera traps. Many of our guests get involved with identifying individuals and placement of the cameras. With so many set throughout the reserve we can gain an insight into the unseen lives not just of these leopards but of many creatures that call this place home.

According to 'Birdlife South Africa' there is estimated to be over 840 species of birds found throughout the country, many of which can be found in this reserve. Raptor species can be seen catching the thermals above, scouring the landscape below. Many species can be seen from the comfort of your balcony, from Half-Collared Kingfishers, Golden-Tailed Woodpeckers to Martial Eagles and African Wood Owls, so grab a pair of binoculars and one of our bird books and keep your eyes peeled for any movement above and below the skyline.



Malaria

The Thaba Tholo Reserve is in a malaria free area however, before travelling, guests are encouraged to consult their local doctors on anti-malarial medication in preparation for their visit to South Africa. Insect repellent should also be utilised.

WHAT TO PACK

For any overseas adventure it's good to be prepared for all weather changes and wildlife sightings. We've put together a rough guide of what we recommend to pack for your African Adventure:

- Throughout the year, we recommend packing lightweight, neutral-coloured clothing with short sleeves

- We always recommend to bring warm clothes and layers for when the sun goes down and for those cool evening temperatures at camp.
- Scarfs, jackets and gloves are needed for early mornings on game drive, especially in winter.
- Bring sun protection in the form of sunblock, sun hats, and glasses.
- Insect Repellent
- Comfortable walking shoes for our morning bush walks, as well as open sandals for when the weather is hot.
- Cameras & Binoculars for the many wildlife sightings / bird-watching at camp
- Adaptor plug

