





## INTRODUCTION

Cradled on the banks of the great Olifants River, beneath towering fig and natal mahogany trees lies Ezulwini River Lodge. Ezulwini, meaning 'place of paradise', remains true to its name in the secretive construction of River Lodge, which is a bird-lovers utopia, and a wildlife wonderland for all of the Balule beasts.

The great leafy branches of the riverine forest drape over the viewing deck providing shade and quiet for lazy afternoons at River Lodge. The outdoor lounge, swimming pool and inviting bar area are equipped for comfort, while nighttime lanterns turn the place into bush dining bliss.

Big tusker elephants of the Kruger Park come to feed on the trees in the riverbed, while resident lions can be heard calling into the night. Ensuite bedroom rondavels are topped with thatch and joined via wooden and concrete pathways, keeping to the authentic feel of the lodge.

## AT A GLANCE

- Comfortable to luxury safari lodge located in the private Balule Game Reserve, Greater Kruger.
- Accommodating only 16 people at most, River Lodge is small and keeps the experience intimate.
- River Lodge is simply appealing with its convivial 'relaxation area' under the trees and overlooking the riverbed.
- 5 Superior Suites that are spacious and have luxurious ensuite bathrooms.
- 4 Luxury Chalets with ensuite bathrooms, cupboard space, air-conditioning and overhead fans.
- Early morning coffee and rusks served before game drive, hot brunch served outdoors after

game drive, lunch at 2pm and high tea served before afternoon drive, while dinner is a feast served by lantern-light.

- Private traverse of the Balule Reserve, off-roading, and stopping for morning coffee and afternoon sundowners.
- Lazy afternoons can be spent on the deck overlooking the riverbed or birdwatching from the many relaxation locations around the lodge.
- Elephants and other animals come right up to the lodge and sometimes drink from suites' plunge pools due to the unobtrusive fencing, adding to the wild experience.
- Swimming pool located on the deck in the main area looking onto the riverine forest and riverbed.

## FACILITIES

- Main lodge with shaded bar, outdoor lounge, indoor dining area
- Swimming pool and deck leading onto lounge and bar area
- Wooden walkway leading to a viewing deck overlooking the riverbed and Olifants River
- **5 Superior Suites** with private plunge pools and open-air showers
- **4 Luxury Chalets** with ensuite bathrooms
- Wooden and concrete walkways leading from rooms to main lodge
- Deck set up with dining tables and lanterns at night for dining under the stars
- Extra towels and blankets in all rooms
- Evening turn-down service
- Main lodge swimming pool
- Viewing deck located overlooking the riverbed and the Olifants River
- There is **free WiFi** at both Billy's and River Lodge. The signal strength is good at the entertainment



areas, and for sending emails but very slow for downloading large files which we do not recommend.

### ACTIVITIES

Safari activities at Ezulwini River Lodge revolve around morning and evening game drives in the private traverse of the Balule Nature Reserve, Greater Kruger, but there are many ways to keep busy during a stay at the lodge.

- Morning and afternoon game drives in 4x4 safari vehicles led by guide and tracker. Morning game drives begin at 06h00 and afternoon game drives depart from the lodge at 16h00.
- Photographic opportunities both on drive and from the various viewpoints around the lodge.
- Bird watching from the lodge and while on game drive.
- Sundowners in the bush enjoyed during afternoon game drive as the sun is setting.
- Traditional South African cooking and dining by lantern-light under the stars.

### TYPICAL DAY AT EZULWINI RIVER LODGE

A typical morning at River Lodge begins with a wake up call for early morning game drive, and ends with a warm and welcoming soiree in the outdoor bar area. Below is summary of how a typical day is structured at the lodge.

- 05h00 Wake up call
- 05h30 Rusks, tea and coffee at the lodge
- 06h00 Depart for game drive
- 08h30-09h00 Return to the lodge after game drive and take some time to freshen up before breakfast
- 09h30-10h30 Breakfast is served on the deck

in the sunshine, or on the shaded veranda overlooking the surrounding bush

- 10h30-14h00 Leisure time during which guests may relax in their rooms, at the lodge, at the pool, or on the lookout deck
- 14h00-15h00 Lunch is served on the deck in the sunshine
- 15h30 Afternoon tea served just before departing for game drive
- 16h00 Depart the lodge for afternoon game drive, during which time guests stop for sundowners and enjoy a short night drive upon return to camp
- 19h30-20h00 Return to the lodge after game drive and spend a few minutes refreshing or having a drink at the bar before dinner is served.
- 20h30 Gather in the boma and take your seats in the dining area while dinner is served

### LOCATION

Ezulwini River Lodge is located in the Balule Nature Reserve, which makes up part of the Greater Kruger Park. Sharing unfenced borders with the Klaserie Private Nature Reserve and the Kruger National Park, Balule enjoys the free-flow of wildlife throughout its traverse, putting Ezulwini River Lodge in the heart of it all. The reserve is about a 45 minute drive from Hoedspruit – the safari capital of Limpopo.

### HOW TO GET THERE

Guests at River Lodge can access the lodge via self-drive or road transfer after flying to Eastgate airport in Hoedspruit.

The drive from Eastgate airport to River Lodge is about 1 hour in duration along the well-travelled



R40. Guests will enter the Balule Reserve through the Olifants West gate and drive a short distance through the reserve to the lodge.

Guests flying to Johannesburg OR Tambo airport can take a shuttle or self-drive option to cover the 6 hour car journey to the Balule Reserve.

### GENERAL TRAVEL INFO:

#### **Weather**

The average mean rainfall for the year is 350mm, with most rainfall occurring during mid-summer (November - February). The rainfall generally occurs in the form of thunderstorms where a downpour is experienced, very seldom lasting longer than a few hours. The mean average maximum temperatures range from 24.5°C in July to 31.5°C in January with the mean monthly minimum occurring in July at a temperature of 8.5°C.

#### **Wildlife**

During the dry season the vegetation is sparse and wildlife congregates around watering holes. During the wet season the vegetation is dense and wildlife is more dispersed. Expect to see the Big Five over the course of a 2-3-night stay.

In addition to the Big Five species that are regularly sighted and enjoyed at close range, animals frequently seen in the Balule Reserve include giraffe, zebra, warthog, spotted hyena, baboon, hippo, impala, kudu, vervet monkey, waterbuck, wildebeest, bush baby, mongoose, duiker and steenbok. A specialty at River Lodge is the Sharpe's grysbok, which enjoys the habitat.

Some other very special members of the wild you

might also see include the wild dog, cheetah, honey badger, porcupine, aardvark, civet, caracal and serval. Birds can be spotted from all over the lodge, but some of the top species are vultures, owls, bee-eaters, rollers, eagles, bustards, hornbills, starlings and shrikes.

#### **Malaria**

Before travelling, guests are encouraged to consult their local doctors on anti-malarial medication and preparation, however a repellent stick or spray is effective and should be utilised. All rooms have canopy mosquito nets adding an extra precaution.

### WHAT TO PACK

The climate in the Kruger lowveld brings hot summer months between October and April when the rainfall is high, and so is the temperature, reaching over 40 degrees Celsius. The dry winter months begin in May and carry on until October/November, during which time the weather is mild during the day with temperatures averaging mid-high 20s, while very cold in the evenings and early mornings.

- Throughout the year, we recommend packing lightweight, neutral-coloured clothing with short sleeves
- Bring sun protection in the form of sunblock, sun hats, and glasses.
- Scarfs, jackets and gloves are needed for early mornings on game drive, especially in winter.
- Comfortable walking shoes as well as open sandals for when the weather is hot.
- Bring along cameras, binoculars and recording gadgets to keep a record of the many wildlife sightings.