



THONGA TRAILS

TRAILS

Discover the unique coastline of Maputaland



WHY THONGA TRAILS?



Thonga Trails, situated in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park in South Africa, offers an exquisite blend of adventure and natural beauty. This pristine coastal forest area is perfect for nature enthusiasts, providing well-marked hiking trails through lush forests, grasslands, and pristine beaches. Visitors can explore diverse wildlife, including antelope, monkeys, and a rich variety of bird species. The trail also offers a cultural immersion, allowing visitors to engage with the local Thonga people and learn about their traditions and way of life. Activities include hiking, guided nature walks, swimming, snorkelling, and kayaking in the estuaries. Eco-friendly accommodations ensure a comfortable stay while maintaining a minimal ecological footprint.

Thonga Trails is committed to conservation, being part of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is an ideal destination for those seeking an unforgettable wilderness adventure and a deeper connection with nature.



TRAIL ITINERARY

DAY 1
SODWANA BAY
TO KOSI LAKE
3KM

DAY 2
KOSI LAKES AND
NKOVOKENI
15 KM

DAY 3
BHANGA NEK TO
BLACK ROCK
19 KM

DAY 4
BLACK ROCK TO
SODWANA BAY
9 KM

DAY 5
SODWANA BAY





DAY 1 – SODWANA BAY TO KOSI LAKE

Join us at Sodwana Bay around lunchtime, where you can safely park your car on private property. From there, we'll transfer you 100 km up the R22, near the Mozambican border, where the trail begins.

Your first afternoon brings you to our new hidden forest gem, offering spacious tented accommodation for two in a large clearing overlooking Lake Kuhlange, the largest of the Kosi Lakes. This beautiful, rustic camp is perfect for exploring the Kosi forest and lakes, and for unwinding in nature.

In the evening, enjoy a short guided bird walk through the Kosi forest to the Raffia palms, followed by a three-course meal. Then, head to the beach for an evening turtle walk to spot nesting Loggerhead and Leatherback turtles.

DAY 2 – KOSI LAKES & NKOVOKENI

Start the day with a light breakfast before embarking on a trail along the edge of the 3rd lake through the indigenous forest. Look out for wildlife such as Banded Mongoose, Samango Monkeys, and Red Duiker. The trail meanders 5 km north along the lake, then ascends Nkovokeni dune for stunning views over the Kosi lake system.

Descend to explore fish traps and mangroves, and observe hippos and flamingos. Enjoy lunch under the Mdoni trees before meeting the boat at either the 1st or 2nd lake. Explore the lake system, swim, or snorkel in the mangroves, then return south through picturesque channels. At camp, enjoy a two-course meal and relax by the campfire.



DAY 3 - BHANGA NEK - BLACK ROCK



We start early to beat the heat of turtle season, exploring a pristine and untouched coastline. We pass through bays sculpted by NE winds, including Rabbit Rock, Castle Rock, and Dog Point, reaching Black Rock 15 km down the beach. Enjoy a delicious informal lunch and spend the afternoon swimming, snorkelling, or hiking to the Black Rock viewpoint to spot Humpback Whales, Green and Hawksbill turtles, and Bottlenose dolphins. Look out for Palm Nut vultures and the rare Bouton's Snake-eyed Skink, endemic to Black Rock.

After a day at the beach, we head inland to Hlabasimhlope Monument and Heritage site. Enjoy twin-shared rooms, open-air showers, a cash bar, and a dinner of wood-fired pizzas and shisa-nyama before a good night's rest.

DAY 4 - BLACK ROCK - SODWANA BAY

We start early with a light breakfast and begin our walk at Lala Nek, moving through the coastal forest at Lala Nek (Island Rock). Following a 6 km coastal track, we encounter endemic birds, Vervet Monkeys, and Red Duiker.

At Island Rock, enjoy gourmet sandwiches and a last swim in the ocean before heading to Lake Sibaya, South Africa's largest freshwater lake, for unforgettable sundowners.

We then return to Sodwana Bay to an exclusive private lodge for a final dinner with elegant surprises, freshly prepared, and accompanied by wine and champagne.



DAY 5 - SODWANA BAY

No trip to Thongaland is complete without the ultimate sea safari. Sodwana Bay boasts 30% more fish biodiversity than the entire Caribbean Sea. The deep offshore canyons are home to the Coelacanth and support the world's southernmost coral reefs.

After a light breakfast, we depart by boat from Sodwana Bay, launching through the surf to explore the coast. From the sea, you'll enjoy a unique perspective of the coastline you've been exploring, with excellent water visibility.

Expect to see Bottlenose dolphins year-round, Humpback Whales during their migrations, Whale Sharks, and gestating Ragged-tooth sharks in summer. Snorkel at 9 Mile Reef to see Hawksbill turtles, Potato Bass, Moorish Idols, and Giant Trevally among the 1300 fish species here.

We return to Sodwana beach around 11 AM. After a quick shower and farewells, we'll embark on our respective journeys home.

At Thonga Trails, we offer an unforgettable experience—spotting dolphins or whales in the morning, hippos in the afternoon, and laying turtles in the evening.





INFO



ACCOMMODATION
 ALL ACCOMMODATION IS TWIN SHARING WITH SHARED BATHROOMS AND PROVIDED TOWELS, THOUGH WE RECOMMEND BRINGING A LIGHT TOWEL OR SARONG FOR THE DAY'S WALK; NOTE THAT THERE IS NO ELECTRICITY IN THE ROOMS FOR THE FIRST 3 NIGHTS AND CELL PHONE SIGNAL IS INTERMITTENT.

BEVERAGES
 ALL DRINKS AT THE CAMPS, INCLUDING A SELECTION OF SOFT DRINKS, GNDS, BEERS, CIDERS, AND WINE, WILL BE PROVIDED; HOWEVER, GUESTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FILLING THEIR WATER BOTTLES EACH MORNING, WITH A SODASTREAM MACHINE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST, SO BRING A MINIMUM 1-LITRE WATER BOTTLE.

MEALS
 ALL MEALS INCLUDED ARE FRESHLY PREPARED BY DAMIEN AND JERRY WITH NO BIDVEST FOODS, EMPHASIZING HOMEGROWN AND LOCALLY MADE DISHES. PLEASE LET US KNOW ABOUT ANY SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS.

PARKFEES
 ALL PARK FEES ARE INCLUDED IN THE PRICE.

DATES
 WE'RE FLEXIBLE AND CAN DISCUSS GUIDE AVAILABILITY AND GROUP SIZE; WHILE MOST TRAILS ARE BOOKED AS GROUPS, WE OFFER OPEN TRAILS DURING WHALE AND TURTLE SEASONS FOR SMALLER GROUPS, COUPLES, AND SINGLES TO JOIN TOGETHER.

THE TRAIL
 THE TRAIL IS NOT OVERLY CHALLENGING FOR EXPERIENCED HIKERS BUT DOES REQUIRE SOME FITNESS; THE FITTER YOU ARE, THE MORE ENJOYABLE IT WILL BE, AS EVIDENCED BY GRANDPARENTS OVER 80 WALKING WITH 9-YEAR-OLD GRANDCHILDREN, WITH REGULAR BAIL-OUT POINTS AVAILABLE. REGARDING FOOTWEAR, PERSONAL PREFERENCE IS KEY AS THERE'S NO SINGLE IDEAL SHOE FOR THE TRAIL, THOUGH LIGHT SHOES THAT DRY QUICKLY ALONG WITH A PAIR OF SLOPS ARE OPTIMAL IN OUR OPINION, HAVING WALKED THE TRAIL BAREFOOT OR WITH SLOPS, WITH ONLY OCCASIONAL ACACIA THORNS POSING MINOR ISSUES.

WHAT TO BRING AND TIPS FOR YOUR TRAIL ADVENTURE
 FOR YOUR TRAIL ADVENTURE, BRING A LIGHT DAY PACK WITH ESSENTIALS LIKE A FEW CHANGES OF CLOTHES, TOWELS, A HAT, BUFF, LONG SLEEVE SHIRT (FOR SUMMER IN THONGALAND), AND A LIGHT WINDBREAKER, WHILE SHARING SUNSCREEN AND INSECT REPELLENT WITH FELLOW HIKERS AND AVOIDING BRINGING VALUABLES TO ENSURE A COMFORTABLE AND WORRY-FREE EXPERIENCE FOR ALL.



HOW TO BOOK



We strive to offer great value without breaking the budget. We are happy to customise your trail with a variety of options to choose from. The best way to start is to drop us a line, discuss your ultimate adventure, and let us handle the rest.

Packages start from R15 700 (incl. VAT) per person sharing until October 2026, and R17 500 (incl. VAT) per person sharing until October 2027. Our packages accommodate groups of 14 to 16 people and include the following:

- Guides and Entry Fees: Enhance your trail experience with knowledgeable guides.
- Meals and Drinks: Enjoy freshly prepared meals, soft drinks, water, ciders, G&Ts, beers, and wine.
- Turtle Walks: Participate in two seasonal turtle walks, with an optional second walk.
- Kosi Boat Trip: Explore the scenic waterways.
- Ocean Safari: Experience an exciting ocean safari.
- Snorkeling Gear: Masks and snorkels for underwater adventures.

Almost everything is included, except for gratuities. Bring some cash for spending money or to support local crafters.



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