

Pondoland Hiking



Venture where only a fortunate few have passed. The northern Pondoland section of the Wild Coast, stretching from Mtamvuna River in the north (Port Edward) to the mighty Umzimvubu in the south (Port St John's), is undoubtedly the least accessible, dramatically rugged and breathtakingly pristine section of the Wild Coast.

You will pass through traditional Xhosa villages, rolling green hills, rocky headlands and sandy bays. See amazing waterfalls, freestanding rock stacks and pristine estuaries on your journey. The skeletal remains of numerous shipwrecks along the shore bear testimony to this high-energy coastline, whilst schools of dolphin and whales are a familiar sight. Active Escapes offers 3 and 5 day catered and self-catered hikes along this section of Wild Coastline.



Pondo Explorer Trails

Leave the crowds behind and get yourself onto Pondoland's best kept secret – the **Pondo Explore Trail**. Overnight in East African style tented camps in unsurpassed locations. Each tented camp sleeps up to 24 persons in 12 twin bedded units, each with their own en-suite bathroom and hot water shower. There is a central dining & kitchen boma which is fully equipped for self-catering so you need *only* worry about your food on the self-catered trail. Porters can easily be arranged if you don't feel like the schlep of carrying a heavy backpack. The 3rd night of both the catered & self-catered trail is spent at Mbotyi River Lodge where dinner & breakfast is provided – a welcome bit of pampering along the trail.

Active Escapes offers a standard a 3 & 5 day Self-catered & Slackpacking hikes, both starting from Msikaba and either finishing at Mbotyi (3 nights / 2 full hiking days) or back at Port St John's (5 Hiking Day / 5 Night trail). Both the catered & self-catered hikes are preferably offered *outside* of school holidays (most especially April & December holidays).

Pondo Explorer - Hike Itinerary

Day 1: Drive to Port St John's (5 Night Trail) or Mbotyi River Lodge (3 Night Trail).

Leave vehicles in secure parking and get transfer through to Msikaba Camp (3hr transfer from PSJ, 1.5hr from Mbotyi).

Recommended Afternoon Activity: Take the canoes up the Msikaba Estuary (reportedly the deepest estuary in South Africa) for sundowners, excellent swimming beach, or cross the estuary into Mkambati Nature Reserve where the superbowl walk will afford a bird's eye view onto an impressive colony of Cape Griffon Vultures.

Overnight: **Msikaba Tented Camp**

Day 2: Hike from Msikaba – Lumphuthana. 16km.

Trail Highlights: the vestiges of treasure quests at Grosvenor, Goss's Point & the stunning Mkwini estuary, the BBC China Wreck and the fantastic spray display at Lumphuthana

Overnight: **Lumphuthana Tented Camp**

Day 3: Hike Lumphuthana – Mbotyi. 18.5 km.

Trail Highlights: Top Hat, Waterfall Bluff (an 80m high waterfall which plunges directly into the ocean), Cathedral Rock, Mfihlelo Waterfall, freshwater swimming pools on the Mlambomkulu river, the Views from the top of Drew's Camp looking down towards Mbotyi where you will enjoy the comfort of Mbotyi River Lodge.

Overnight: **Mbotyi River Lodge** (Dinner & Breakfast included)

END OF 3 NIGHT TRAIL

Day 4: Hike Mbotyi – Manteku. 10km (terrain is more undulating south of Mbotyi – shorter distances)

Trail Highlights: Friendly rural villages, sweeping vistas from the hilltops, Manteku mangrove estuary with prolific birdlife, canoeing up Manteku Estuary.

Overnight: **Manteku Camp**

Day 5: Hike Manteku – Ntafufu. 10 km.

Trail Highlight: Black Sands, beach before Ntafufu, Ntafufu River Crossing

Overnight: **Ntafufu Camp**

Day 6: Hike Ntafufu – PSJ. 13 km. (4.5 – 5hr hike).

Trail Highlights: Dome Bluff, golden miles of beach through to Poenskop.

ETA: Groups arrive from midday to early afternoon. If you not in a rush, why not let us book you a final night in Port St John’s (lots of options to chose from). If you wish to depart this day, please make sure you leave Ntafufu early enough & book your overnight stop enroute.

END OF 5 NIGHT TRAIL



View from Drew’s Camp – looking south to Mbotyi (Day 2 of the Pondo-Explore Trail)

Pondo-Explorer 5 Night: Msikaba – Port St John's (Self-catered trail)

2 Persons - R 3630/ pp

3 -6 Persons - R 3430 / pp

7 -12 Persons - R 3230 / pp

Children 12 years or under - **On Request**

Price Includes:

- Transfer from Port St John's to Msikaba trail head (approx 3hr transfer)
- 5 Nights Accommodation: 4 Nights in Semi-luxury Tented Camps (each twin bedded tent has en-suite toilet & hot water shower) & 1 Night (DBB) at Mbotyi River Lodge
- Inclusive Meals: Dinner & Breakfast at Mbotyi River Lodge
- Full catering facilities available at the tented camps – gas plates, cookware & cutlery
- Reserve Permits & Trail Fees
- Emergency Support Service
- Canoes – available at R50/double canoe/per day – Msikaba & Manteku Camps

NB: This is the basic trail, so you will need to supply your *own* sleeping bag for the tented camps. Bedding will be supplied at Mbotyi River Lodge.

Extra Days & Services:

On this trail, a guide and porters can be arranged.

Guide Fee: R180/day (paid directly – cost shared amongst group)

Porter Fee: R100/day (paid directly). Each porter can carry a maximum of 15kg, so one porter *can* be shared between 2 persons if you carry some of your own gear.

Optional Extra Days: Availability permitting, an extra day/night can be spent at *any* of the self-catered tented camps for an additional **R360/per person**.



An optional night at Grosvenor Inn: If you would like to break the first hike day into 2 shorter days (6km from Msikaba to Grosvenor; and 10km from Grosvenor to Lumphuthana) and spend a night at Grosvenor Inn (a full board lodge where dinner, breakfast & lunch will be provided) – you can do this for an extra **R900/pp/sharing**. Please note there is NO self-catered option when staying at Grosvenor Inn

Trail Logistics

On this trail you will self-drive (or public transport can be arranged) through to Port St John's where you will leave your vehicle and then a private transfer will be provided through to Msikaba (start of the trail). You will overnight at Msikaba camp on your arrival day and start hiking the next day.

It is 5 days of hiking from Msikaba back to Port St John's, so you need to budget 6-7 days of leave (5 Days hiking + arrival/transfer day & depending on where you are coming from – we advise spending an extra night in PSJ at the end, to drive home the next day).

Pondo-Explorer 3 Night: Msikaba – Mbotyi

(Self-catered trail)

2 Persons - R 2830 / pp

3 -6 Persons - R 2630 / pp

7 -12 Persons - R 2430 / pp

Children 12 years or under - *On Request*

Price Includes:

- Transfer from Mbotyi to Msikaba trail head (approx 1.5-2hr transfer)
- 3 Nights Accommodation: 2 Nights in Semi-luxury Tented Camps (each twin bedded tent has ensuite toilet & hot water shower) & 1 Night (DBB) at Mbotyi River Lodge
- Inclusive Meals: Dinner & Breakfast at Mbotyi River Lodge
- Full catering facilities available at the tented camps – gas plates, cookware & cutlery
- Reserve Permits & Trail Fees
- Emergency Support Service
- Canoes – available at R50/double canoe/per day - at Msikaba Camp

NB: This is the basic trail, so you will need to supply your *own* sleeping bag for the tented camps. Bedding will be supplied at Mbotyi River Lodge.

Extra Days & Services:

On this trail, a guide and porters can be arranged.

Guide Fee: R180/day (paid directly – cost shared amongst group)

Porter Fee: R100/day (paid directly). Each porter can carry a maximum of 15kg, so one porter *can* be shared between 2 persons if you carry some of your own gear.

Optional Extra Days: Availability permitting, an extra day/night can be spent at *any* of the self-catered tented camps for an additional **R360/per person**.

An optional night at Grosvenor Inn: If you would like to break the first hike day into 2 shorter days (6km from Msikaba to Grosvenor; and 10km from Grosvenor to Lumphuthana) and spend a night at Grosvenor Inn (a full board lodge where dinner, breakfast & lunch will be provided) – you can do this for an extra **R 900 pp/sharing**. Please note there is NO self-catered option when staying at Grosvenor Inn

Trail Logistics

On this trail you will need to self-drive through to Mbotyi River Lodge, where you will leave your vehicle. We will arrange a private transfer through to Msikaba (start of the trail). You will overnight at Msikaba camp on your arrival day and start hiking the next day. It is 2 full days of hiking from Msikaba back to Port St John's, so you need to budget 4 days of leave (2 full days hiking + arrival/transfer day & departure day).



Fully Supported & Catered Pondo Trails

Fancy doing the Pondo-Explore trail, but don't feel like catering for yourself? We can offer a fully catered, fully supported option on the 3 and 5 day trails.

You will overnight at the same tented camps, but bedding will be supplied. Your main kit bags will be transferred around from camp to camp, so you need only hike with a light daypack. Dinner, Breakfast and a packed lunch for each trail day will be provided by the tented camps, and DBB at Mbotyi River Lodge.

Pondo-Hopper - 5 Nights: Msikaba – PSJ

(Catered & Supported Slackpacking Trail) * Only offered outside of school holidays, unless you a large group on special request – availability permitting

2 Persons - R 6530/ pp

3 -6 Persons - R 6030 / pp

7 -12 Persons - R 5530 / pp

Price Includes:

- Transfer from Port St John's to Msikaba trail head (approx 3hr transfer)
- 5 Nights Accommodation: 4 Nights in Tented Camps (each twin bedded tent has ensuite toilet & hot water shower) & 1 Night (DBB) at Mbotyi River Lodge
- Bedding provided at Mbotyi & all the tented camps
- Full Catering: DBB + Packed Lunch from all the tented camps & Mbotyi
- Daily luggage transfers from camp to camp/lodge
- Reserve Permits & Trail Fees
- Emergency Support Service
- Canoes – available at Msikaba & Manteku Camps

DETAILS: This is a fully supported & catered trail. Daily luggage transfers are provided from camp to camp so you need only hike with a light daypack. All bedding is supplied. A hiking guide can be pre-booked for all or just *some* of the hike days. Guides need to be paid directly: R180/guide/per day.

Optional Extra Days: We regret, due to expensive & complicated transfer & catering logistics – no extra days can be spent any of the (normally self-catered) tented camps (Msikaba, Lumphuthana, Manteku or Ntafufu). The *only* extra day possible, is if groups would like to break up their first hike day by spending a night at **Grosvenor Inn** enroute (6km from Msikaba to Grosvenor; and 10km from Grosvenor to Lumphuthana). This can be done for an extra **R 900pp/sharing**.

Trail Logistics

On this trail you will self-drive (or public transport can be arranged) through to Port St John's where you will leave your vehicle and then a private transfer will be provided through to Msikaba (start of the trail). You will overnight at Msikaba camp on your arrival day and start hiking the next day.

It is 5 days of hiking from Msikaba back to Port St John's, so you need to budget 6-7 days of leave (5 Days hiking + arrival/transfer day & depending on where you are coming from – we advise spending an extra night in PSJ at the end, to drive home the next day)

Pondo-Hopper - 3 Night: Msikaba – Mbotyi

(Catered & Supported Slackpacking Trail)

2 Persons - R 4430 / pp

3 -6 Persons - R 4130 / pp

7 -12 Persons - R 3830 / pp

Price Includes:

- Transfer from Mbotyi to Msikaba trail head (approx 1.5hr transfer)
- 3 Nights Accommodation: 2 Nights in Tented Camps (each twin bedded tent has ensuite toilet & hot water shower) & 1 Night (DBB) at Mbotyi River Lodge
- Bedding provided at Mbotyi & all the tented camps
- Full Catering: DBB + Packed Lunch from all the tented camps & DBB at Mbotyi
- Daily luggage transfers from camp to camp/lodge
- Reserve Permits & Trail Fees
- Emergency Support Service
- Canoes – available at Msikaba Camp

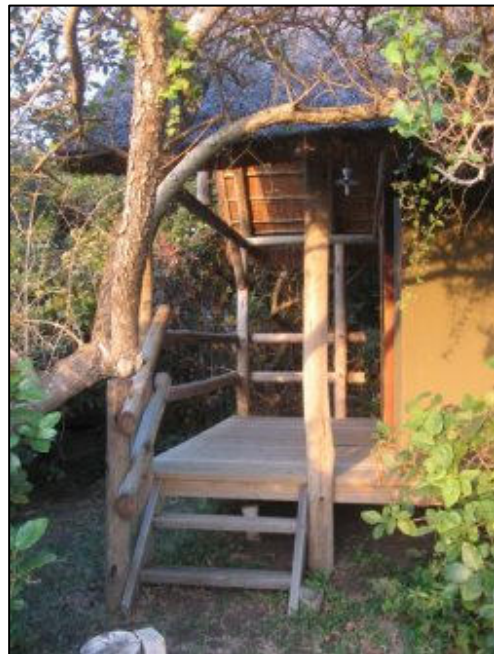
DETAILS: This is a fully supported & catered trail. Daily luggage transfers are provided from camp to camp so you need only hike with a light daypack. All bedding is supplied. A hiking guide can be pre-booked for all or just *some* of the hike days. Guides need to be paid directly: R180/guide/per day.

Trail Logistics

On this trail you will need to self-drive through to Mbotyi River Lodge, where you will leave your vehicle. We will arrange a private transfer through to Msikaba (start of the trail). You will overnight at Msikaba camp on your arrival day and start hiking the next day. It is 2 full days of hiking from Msikaba back to Port St John's, so you need to budget 4 days of leave (2 full days hiking + arrival/transfer day & departure day). The *only* extra day possible, is if groups would like to break up their first hike day by spending a night at **Grosvenor Inn** enroute (6km from Msikaba to Grosvenor; and 10km from Grosvenor to Lumphuthana). This can be done for an extra **R 900/pp/sharing**.



Above: Mbotyi River lodge. Above Right: BBC China Wreck



Top Left: Msikaba Camp
Top Right: Lumphuthana Spray Display
Centre Left: Mkambati Nature Reserve
Centre Right: Lumphuthana Tented Camp
Left: Waterfall Bluff