

Exploring the Outdoors and Wildlife of Southern Africa



Have you ever dreamed of exploring the wilds of Africa? We hope you enjoy this exciting guest post from Dave of [Dave's Travel Corner](#) about his experiences at a wildlife park in South Africa and the beautiful photographs of the animals that he saw while he was there.

A recent trip to Africa brought me to the sub Saharan region with the focus being on the outdoors and its diversity of wildlife. Where better to start than in Kruger National Park in South Africa. The park is huge – physically larger than a number of countries. The southern part of the park which features

more wildlife compared to the northern part is only about 4 hours from Johannesburg.



We entered the park and immediately thought of a friend a number of years ago who hid under clothes in the back seat to escape the park's admission fee. When a ranger asked his brother who was driving for a ride to one of the camps – it quickly became an awkward situation with his brother telling the ranger “no” – he can't give her a ride because “he doesn't like people”. Fortunately we weren't on that type of extreme budget on this trip and gladly paid the admission fee anticipating seeing the wildlife that internationally this park is known for.

We didn't have long to wait – large groups of elephants immediately made their presence known by crossing in front of us as soon as we passed through the entrance. The beauty of Kruger is its vastness and there are many dirt tracks available for self drive safaris. You will see wildlife here; Cape Buffalo (one of Africa's most dangerous and unpredictable animals) tend to hang out near water pools or rivers, a number of lions live in the park, and you can easily see giraffe, and large herds of impala. Be sure to check the “spotting boards” at many of the camps which list that day's animal sightings and last known locations.



Eastern Swaziland is ideal for viewing wildlife – and doesn't have the crowds that sometimes Kruger receives. During a visit to Hlane Royal National Park we drove for four hours and never saw another vehicle.

Botswana is so full of wildlife; the government has set aside nearly 40% of its entire land to National Parks and nature preserves. Chobe National Park is ideal for wildlife viewing – the animal and bird life is prolific regardless of the time of year. I've been on several safaris in Africa but this was the closest I've ever been to a pride of lions. Our guide wasn't fazed at all when they all stood up as we approached. He said it is common for lions to stand up and jump onto the top or hood of a vehicle. Now that is an adrenaline rush I'm not sure we needed in our open topped vehicle!



Sometimes the smallest wildlife can be the most intriguing. While in Chobe we witnessed a chameleon changing color and also a unique “show” which prominently featured animal dung. A male beetle rolled a ball of dung much larger than its own body size (containing an egg) across the dusty ground while the female hung on to the side without moving the entire time...an enviable role. Or take the “weavers”, small birds appropriately named that weave hanging nests out of grass. The male makes the nests – and the female decides if she wants to move in or not – if not, the male starts building a new nest. Again a brilliant role for the female!

Warthogs are interesting animals; nature wasn't sure how to develop their physique – they can appear both cute and ugly simultaneously. In an urban setting they are natural lawn mowers – oh and they even kneel while grazing!



Southern Africa gets under your skin in a good way. It is a region that is waiting to be explored and boasts a diversity and uniqueness of wildlife found nowhere else in the world.



For more travel articles and insights visit Dave's website, Dave's Travel Corner (founded 1996) – www.davestravelcorner.com and his often updated blog, Above the Clouds – www.davestravelcorner.com/above-the-clouds



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A Canadian freelance writer with a love of art, culture, literature and adventure, Kelly loves exploring foreign lands and expressing her experiences through the power of the written word.

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1. **Breakfree** says:

July 8, 2012 at 9:26 pm

Wow Southern Africa has such a rich wildlife. It would be so great to witness it firsthand. Also the way you describe it makes this article more pleasing and interesting to read.



2. **Amani** says:

March 15, 2014 at 4:18 am

Haha, I like your description of warthogs: they can appear both cute and ugly simultaneously. I love warthogs, especially when they are running with their tails up in the air like antennas.