

## MERIDIAN DIVE ADVENTURES



### TYPICAL SARDINE RUN ITINERARY

The example package details are below. Guests are welcome to add on an extra nights and diving days, or just do a few days of diving. We are flexible, and different prices are available on request. The diving hours per day will be a minimum of 5 hours out to sea. If you are staying in other accommodation, meet at the river lodge in the mornings, and for the evening briefings. Dates are subject to availability.

#### DAY 1

##### Location: Mbotyi

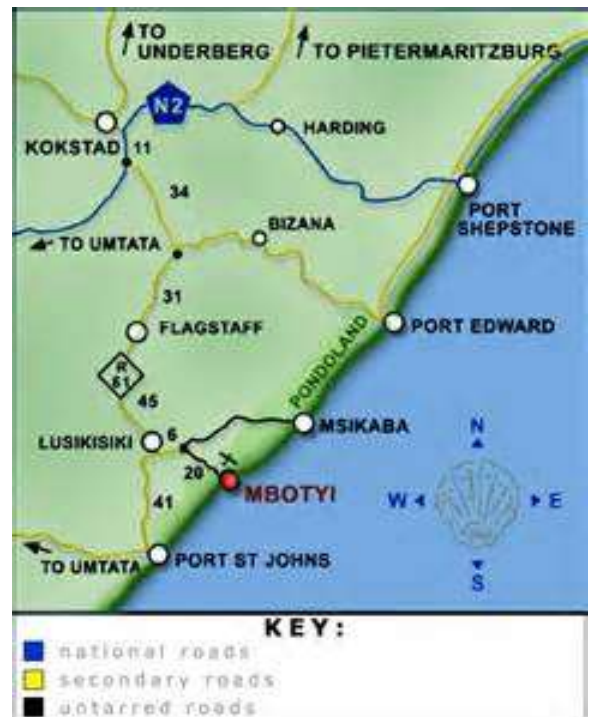
Guests arrive in their own time at the lodge accommodation. The drive from the Durban central is about 5.5 hours. From Umkomaas it is 5 hours. Meet for evening cocktails, dive briefing and boat orientation. Dinner from 18h30.

##### Location: Port St Johns

As above – about an hour's drive longer.

##### Location: Mpame, Eastern Cape

As above – about 8 hours from Umkomaas



#### DAY 2 – DAY 6

After an early breakfast, the RIB/zodiac dive boat will be ready with your cylinders, weight belts and weights. Full boat briefings are provided by our very experienced skippers who will also assess the safety of each launch.

The launch is from the river, which is in front of your accommodation, and out to sea. When the action has been found, it's all go! You are already in your wetsuits, so most of the day you will be in and out of the boat many times, either with scuba or on snorkel. It depends on how fast the predators and prey are moving. The scuba gear will be kept assembled and at hand on the boat so we can drop you into the action as soon as possible. After an action filled day at sea, return to the river lodge to either relax or for the more adventurous, enjoy some of the activities offered. We all meet for dinner and the plans for the next day are made.



## DAY 7

Depart after breakfast – or travel on to Aliwal Shoal for baited shark diving and reef diving (see Add On details in other attachment).

## ACCOMMODATION

### 1) Mbotyi, Wild Coast (6 nights / 5 days at sea)

3 star rated family hotel and holiday resort. Pondoland's best kept secret is situated at the mouth of the tidal Mbotyi River nestled between the rolling hills, lush tropical forest. The grounds of the hotel are spacious with manicured lawns, indigenous gardens, crystal clear swimming pool and sunny wooden decks. Approaching Mbotyi, you will drive through a section of the magnificent Magwa Tea Plantation. This is known to be one of the world largest tea plantations.

### Other Attractions In The Area Include:

#### Mbotyi

#### Micro light Flips – for this Mbotyi package ONLY

Take a short ride in the Micro light and see the action and the coastline from a different perspective the first 10 min is free, if you would like a longer flight you can negotiate it with the micro light pilot.



#### Walks

The walks are all graded from professional hiking to the casual and there are experienced guides who will show you the way safely. Here are some of the walks:

**Indigenous Forest** – Walk through the biggest coastal Indigenous forest in South Africa. The forest forms the transition between the Kwa-Zulu Natal sub tropical climate and the Eastern Capes more yellowwood trees with some unique vegetation only found in this particular area.

**Waterfall Bluff** – for the serious hiker a 4 – 5 hour walk to the top of Waterfall Bluff one of only 3 places in the world where you have a fresh waterfall falling into the sea. So for those no launch days this is a must.

**Shark Point** – A short walk along the coastline to a majestic point of rocks called Shark Point and watch the fishermen battle with large sharks or bring in a huge salmon or kingfish.

**Drives:** - in the area there are 3 of the most amazing waterfalls and gorges to be found anywhere some have been caused by erosion other by seismic events.

**Magwa Falls** – This is a seismic split in the earth that goes straight down for approx. 100m Spectacular, approx. 10 minute drive.

**Fraser Falls** – These have been caused by the traditional erosion method. Although not as spectacular as Magwa Fall the Gorge that follows is truly awesome plunging some 100m into some of the most unspoilt indigenous forest left on this coastline.





## 2) Mpame, Eastern Cape (6 nights / 5 days at sea)

Accommodation is from a small fishing lodge in the Eastern Cape at Mpame. This hidden gem in the heart of the Eastern Cape is about 10km south of the nearest town (Hole in The Wall) providing us unrivalled access to the local marine action, a short stroll from the lodge to the sea shore means easy access to the boat to start your day's adventure. As we are based away from the main hubs for the Sardine Run (Port St John's) we have a significantly increased chance of being the only boat in the area following the Sardines.

Bulls Inn has a bar area with a large fire where you can unwind after your day at sea, with its deck looking straight down the bay to the ocean. All rooms are en-suite with family room options available. Newly renovated en-suite double / twin and triple rooms are available. This lodge is rural and therefore cell phone signal is intermittent. However, the rustic nature of the lodge and its location add to the feeling of connection to nature and the sea, making it an ideal place to experience the Sardine run





## 2) Port St Johns, Wild Coast (7 nights / 6 days at sea)

**The 4 Star River Lodge** is a comfortable and attractive establishment with a relaxing and laid-back atmosphere. You will stay in spacious thatched single or two bedroom family bungalows, each with its own en-suite bathroom. Rooms are private and comfortably furnished to create a warm and inviting ambience. Nestled between towering cliffs and set in tropical gardens on the banks of the Umzimvubu River, The River Lodge is a small family lodge offering a perfect mixture of Wild Coast hospitality and homely comfort. Inspired by African, ethnic design, this intimate lodge offers a mixture of contemporary finishes in a rustic setting. Holidaymakers seeking a destination to really connect with nature can find it all here!



## **Other Attractions In The Area Include:**

### **Port St Johns**

Gap and the Blowhole - a rock at Second Beach where you cross to the other side with a ladder. The blowhole pushes waves onto this crossing at high tide.

Mt. Thesiger (The Airstrip) - visit the airstrip and army base for small planes and catch beautiful, aerial views of the big Umzimvubu River and the town.

Lighthouse (First Beach) - a walk to the lighthouse is a multimedia adventure and a very simple way to experience a wide spectrum of life in Port St Johns.

The National Museum (overlooking the Golf Course) - meet the Pondo people and experience their culture.

Silaka Nature Reserve (Third Beach) - this is a small coastal reserve which lies in a forested valley south of Port St Johns. Walking trails are offered through the evergreen forests which provides the opportunity for bird watching.

## **EQUIPMENT**

The sea is about 18°C – 20°C/68°F. Cooler the better for the Run. Please bring your own 5mm wetsuit, fins, mask, booties, rash vest, dive gloves, BC, regulator – your usual scuba equipment. Remember everything plain black, no bright colours or silver/white/yellow fins.

Cylinders (either din or A-clamp fittings), weights and weight belts are provided. Please do not bring shiny fins! As it can be quite cool on the boat, please bring a splash or windproof jacket and a beanie. If you need to hire equipment please book this in advance so it can be brought down from Umkomaas for you. For safety - please bring your SMB/Rescue Sausage +-1.5m ht, and cylume/glow stick (24hr one or 2 x 12hr ones).

As the vast majority of your in water activity can be conducted with ease on snorkel this makes the Sardine Run an accessible and exciting marine expedition for non-divers and divers alike. As long as you are comfortable snorkeling you will not miss out on the action. From our experience we would recommend that the majority of your time in the water be spent on snorkel as this will give you the speed and flexibility to enter and exit the water easily and therefore not miss out on the fast moving action. If we do encounter activity that is of sufficient size you will have the opportunity to enter the water on scuba.

We use 8m RIBs that are nimble but robust enough to tackle the typical surf launches we have as a consequence of the structure of our coastlines

## **DIVE CERTIFICATIONS**

Scuba divers require a minimum of open water certification. The dive depth is from the surface to +- 20m. Snorkelers and day boat viewers are welcome.



**ACTIVITY LIKELY TO BE SEEN**

**Sharks:**

Copper sharks  
Spotted ragged tooth shark  
Black tip sharks  
Dusky sharks  
Oceanic black tip  
Bronze Whaler shark

**Cetaceans:**

Common Dolphin  
Indian Ocean Bottlenose dolphin  
Killer whale  
Bryde's whale

**Pinnipeds:**

Cape fur seal

**Birds:**

Cape Gannet  
Petrels and Shearwaters  
Black browed Albatross  
African penguin

Activity seen on past runs, although rare:

Bull/Zambezi shark  
Sail fish and Sun fish

***THE SARDINE RUN SHOULD BE THE 8<sup>TH</sup> WONDER OF THE WORLD, BOOK IT & DIVE IT!***



We look forward to hearing from you with all the questions you may have.

**Best Regards**

**Celia Coleman**

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