



## Tour 2 - Gentle Giants & Ocean Nomads

### A Wildlife Odyssey

Duration	8 days
Total direct distance	1056 nm
Approx. flying hours	16 hrs (incl. scenic flights)
Difficulty level;	Relatively technical Mountain and valley flying with bush strips
Experience required	Minimal with safety pilot Very confident if self-guided
Best time of year	Possible year round Best April - October (dry season) although during the wet season it is mainly isolated thunderstorms to contend with. Best for turtle breeding between November & February
Level of accommodation	Comfortable guest houses and lodges: 3 to 4 star
Suitability for partners	Very scenic and lots of ground activities, great for flying or non-flying partners
Price	On request

Embark on a picturesque journey exploring the hidden treasures of South Africa, away from the usual tourist paths. Ideal for a pilot and their flying companion with limited time but a desire to encounter breathtaking aviation and witness the country's exceptional wildlife, both on land and at sea. It is advisable to have a safety pilot accompany you, not only for cost-effectiveness but also due to the need for technical flying expertise. The safety pilot is well-versed in discovering scenic detours and uncovering intriguing landing strips along the route.



### Day 1 & 2 Hoedspruit /Kruger

The journey commences from Wonderboom Airport in Pretoria, guiding you to various airstrips and dirt tracks for touch-and-go exercises. Descending to the Lowveld, you navigate through the Blyde River Canyon, the third-largest canyon globally, following the Grand and Fish Fish River Canyons. Engaging in canyon and mountain flying, you conclude the day with an overnight stay at a game lodge adjacent to Kruger Park, offering optional afternoon and/or morning game drives.

### Day 3 & 4 Kosi Bay

Here the priority is filing a flight plan, essential for this leg as you will be traversing Swaziland. Crossing over the Swai Mountains at Piggs Peak, you will witness the rural yet stunning countryside below. The terrain levels out before you approach the Mebombo Mountain Range, marking your re-entry into South Africa. Descending for a landing at Kosi Bay, you will spend two nights in a beach camp.

This coastal area is a haven for snorkelling, scuba diving and simply unwinding on its secluded beaches. However, its true distinction lies in being a breeding ground for Loggerhead and Leatherback turtles. Between November and February, there's a noteworthy chance of witnessing the mother turtles laying eggs or observing the new hatchling scurrying down the beach to reach the safety of the ocean. Either experience is remarkably special and unforgettable.



### Day 5 & 6 Port St. Johns



Following take-off, your course leads southwest, skimming the shoreline at an altitude of approximately 500 feet. From this aerial perspective, expect to spot numerous dolphins and if fortunate, even whales and sharks below. The first pitstop is at Durban Virginia's airstrip, strategically positioned next to and parallel to the beach, offering a refuelling opportunity and a quick bite.

Continuing south, a striking transformation unfolds from a developed coastline to a rugged, untamed rural haven. Witness waterfalls cascading directly into the sea, formidable waves crashing against rocky shores and the casual presence of cows and goats lounging on the beaches. This area, known as the Wild Coast, never fails to leave a person breathless upon arrival

The Port St. Johns airfield, originally a military strip designed for aircraft like DC3s, sits atop Mount Theziger. The final approach to runway 27 is particularly noteworthy, featuring a sheer cliff face drop-off of over 1000 feet. The threshold of runway 27 is positioned on the edge of this cliff face, resulting in an intriguing and mostly high, final approach.

The surrounding area offers an array of outdoor activities such as hiking, canoeing and exploring waterfalls or beaches. Utilising a 4x4, you'll venture into lesser-known areas, immersing yourselves in the Pondo vibe during your two-night stay. Culinary delights await, making meals in this region a memorable experience.



### Day 7 Drakensberg

Soaring over the untamed countryside terrain, the ground gradually ascends to the pinnacle of the Drakensberg Mountains, marking the border with Lesotho. Reaching an elevation of 11,420 feet, a substantial gain in altitude is necessary if you aim to navigate along the crest of the ridge. This spectacle is particularly breathtaking when the mountains are adorned with a winter blanket of snow. The landing at Dragon Peaks demands technical finesse once again – it's a one-way in, one-way out strip with minimal margin for error. Fortunately, the challenges faced in the preceding days should have sufficiently prepared you for this one. Enjoy an overnight stay in a cosy log cabin.

### Day 8 Wonderboom

Your route takes you to the nearby El Mirador landing strip, where you'll indulge in a satisfying breakfast before commencing your return journey northward. Approaching Jo'burg Special Rules, the contrast becomes apparent as the skies, previously serene for the past few days, suddenly teem with position reports from other aircraft in the vicinity. Navigating around the Johannesburg Control Zone, you'll conclude the adventure with a landing back at Wonderboom Airport.

