



Hotel report



Katie Gatens
The *Atlas* digital editor goes wild via Johannesburg

THE STATS

Limpopo Province,
South Africa
+27 1 1837 6776
makweti.com
Rooms: 5
Pool: 1



✈️
Etihad offers one daily direct flight from Abu Dhabi to Johannesburg. etihad.com

Makweti Safari Lodge

Welgevonden Game Reserve, South Africa

Background

The passion project of South African couple Dawn and Alan Kisner, Makweti is a boutique safari stay on the 40,000-hectare Welgevonden Game Reserve.

Location

Even though it's a three-hour drive from Joburg, it's much closer than Kruger National Park with a fraction of the tourists – so you get the Big Five all to yourself (and, really, you do). On arrival, a jeep takes you to the entrance where a warm, only-in-Africa embrace awaits.

Clientele

Baboons, mainly, and the odd elephant (animals roam freely around the site). Otherwise, Makweti's two-person lodges are primed for couples and families with older kids.

Staying in

Dine with fellow guests on a communal table above the treetops sharing stories of the day's safari. On the menu: impala steaks and crunchy cauliflower salad worthy of a five-star kitchen in a capital city: pretty good for a wooden hut in the wilderness.

Design notes

Well-spaced-out thatched lodges are cosy with chunky walnut furniture and decorated with objects from all over the continent – colourful Kenyan beaded headdresses adorn the walls and mirrors are made from wood from old miners' beds. Each room has a roll-top bath, indoor and outdoor rain shower (some with private plunge pools – a popular hang-out for the local baboons). Even so, it's comfy and price-justifyingly luxe; absolutely no survival skills needed here.

The USP

Daily sunrise and sunset safaris (both four hours long) are included and are brilliant – which makes Makweti a seriously good-value proposition when compared to South Africa's many four-figure alternatives. There are no more than six people to a jeep – and, with only five rooms, the lodge has a genuinely home-y feel and never feels over-occupied. I had the pool and the viewing deck to myself most evenings – just me and a dazzle of zebras; yes, really.