

Find peace in the exclusive Makweti Safari Lodge

25 Jan 2021 | Travel

The intimate Makweti Safari Lodge offers a restorative experience that will transport you away from current woes.



At first I'm not sure what sound has woken me up. Something outside my chalet window only two metres from my head. I listen again noting the gentle morning light through the drawn curtains signalling sunrise. The noise again – like the low growl of a giant's stomach and then.... silence. It's my second night at Makweti Safari Lodge – an exclusive game lodge in Limpopo province, three hour's drive from Johannesburg. I climb out of bed and tiptoe towards the curtains. On our previous evening's game drive we'd witnessed a spectacular sighting of a lion and lioness protecting their recent eland kill. The male lion, his giant paw possessively placed over his kill had flung his head back and roared into the darkening sky, setting off his lioness mate who joined the bone-chilling sound leaving no doubt as to who the kings of the jungle truly are. I wonder now if the growl that's woken me belongs to that same predator. I hold my breath and slowly draw back the curtains.

The bull elephant is only five metres away, his trunk submerged in our private plunge pool where just yesterday afternoon we were enjoying cocktails in the cooling waters. Behind him a herd of elephant awaits its turn to drink – mothers and babies picking leaves off branches. I take a few steps back towards the bed to watch, and they grow stock still like a sculpture garden, only their ears moving. After a moment they continue as they were. Makweti is one of the few unfenced camps in South Africa allowing encounters like these, with animals freely wandering literally right up to your doorstep. As I lie watching, I marvel at how quiet elephant are, one of their many survival instincts.



The Big Five roaming through camp is one of the unique aspects of this luxury lodge. But there are many others. Makweti is a small camp – it accommodates only 10 guests in five luxury chalets in the Welgevonden private game reserve. While not hugely well-known to South Africans, Welgevonden is home to 22 private lodges only three hour's drive from Johannesburg. Traditionally marketed to international tourists, current times have demanded these lodges become more accessible to locals. Makweti's main lapa, restaurant and bar are small and intimate giving the establishment a homely feel where you can put your feet up with only the vervet monkeys and a handful of staff that quickly start feeling like family. Attention to detail extends to their excellent collection of wines and cuisine which has earned Makweti membership of the "by-invitation-only" Chaîne des Rôtisseurs – the global hallmark of excellence in cuisine and culinary service.



After the elephant have wandered off leaving an empty pool we phone reception to check that it is safe to come down for our game drive. At night you're accompanied to your chalet by a guide but in the day, unless instructed to stay inside, you can move freely as long as you stick to the paths. There are two game drives a day and it's that afternoon, as we stop for sundowners sipping on Graham Beck MCC across from a herd of grazing rhino that our guide Neil Davison tells us these rhino have been sent here from bigger reserves for safety because it is easier in a private reserve like this, where you can only get around on guided Landrovers, to protect against poachers. We stare out at the growing cumulus clouds filling the vast sky with the dark green bush humming with insect life. It is a marvel to see so many rhino, their horns intact, seemingly unaware of any danger. Neil has a wealth of knowledge about the animals, the birdlife, the vegetation as well as the mating habits of dung beetles and bullfrogs. It is easy to forget the outside world here, to feel small in comparison, to feel firmly placed in perspective to a life that goes on seemingly unaffected by a global pandemic. It goes on despite us. It's what Neil admits keeps him and his wife here.

Before we leave Makweti we witness a female cheetah chasing an Impala while her two cubs, ears peeking from the bushveld, watch learning. We've stared back at a young jackal peering inquisitively out from his den while his mother has wandered off to find food. We've sat breathless, metres away from elephant, buffalo and lion and learnt the difference between cheetah and lion tracks and spoor. We've sat and enjoyed a candlelit world-class meal under the night sky. But mostly for a short while we've found a true sanctuary from the uncertain and distressing times we're living through. And that's the beauty of the bushveld.

Private Edition readers can enjoy these reduced rates:

- R 4 000 per person per night sharing
- Inclusive accommodation, all meals, all safaris and VAT
- Excludes beverages, items of a personal nature and reserve fees of R165 per person per night.
- Valid until end July 2021
- Please quote: Private Edition when making a booking.

For more information visit [Makweti Safari Lodge](#)

Images supplied by Makweti Safari Lodge.

RELATED ARTICLES



STYLE

Skincare tips for travellers



TRAVEL

The perfect staycation location



TRAVEL

Your own private oasis in the Serengeti



TRAVEL

Why Tintswalo Atlantic is a secluded paradise born from the ashes

