

GROOTBOS

Private Nature Reserve

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Activity Planner 2024



Grootbos Nature Reserve offers a wide variety of activities for guests to enjoy during their stay. Our specialist guides lead a number of activities in and around the reserve. The following document gives you detailed information of each activity offered at Grootbos.



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1. Botanical 4x4 Tour

We're known for our unique botanical safaris on board an open-top Land Rover, where you'll learn from our hugely knowledgeable guides about the incredible birds, plants and animals in this floral kingdom. Be still, absorb the world around you and delight afresh in its wonder.

Keep still, listen intently and you'll be amazed at the things you learn on a botanical safari. With the richest temperate flora in the world and six completely new species never discovered by science before, your time at Grootbos will mean that you'll never look at plants and flowers in quite the same way again.

The 800 recorded plant species in our 2500 hectares of pristine wilderness will bring the fascinating story of fynbos and forest to life as you touch, smell and see the natural miracles that surround you. Learn how a sunbird's beak fits perfectly into a flower, why the honey our bees produce is completely unique and how important ravaging fires are for bringing forth new life.

Time:	09h30
Duration:	2 hours
Fitness Level:	easy
Age restriction:	None, also suitable for children.
Recommendation:	Wear sunscreen and hat.
Notes:	Not suitable for pregnant women.
Cost:	Included in your accommodation rate.



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2. Horse Riding on the Reserve or on the Beach

Get into better rhythm with nature as you traverse this landscape in a very natural way. With our own stables on the reserve, you can see Grootbos as either a beginner or expert rider, as you trot slowly through the fynbos or ride on the beach.

There's something special about seeing a place on horseback. Take a slow trot as you appreciate the views or ride down the sweeping sand dunes, the fresh air filling your lungs and exhilaration pumping through your veins.

Horse riding at Grootbos is suitable for anyone, whether you're a complete novice or a more experienced rider. Go for a relaxed ride through the fynbos or ride one of our special horses that are specifically trained for the beach. Our 18 horses in the stable on our reserve are well exercised and expertly trained, while all of our guides have years of experience in dealing with these noble animals.

Horse Riding on the Reserve:

Time: 09h00, 11h00 and 14h30
Duration: 1 hour
Fitness Level: moderate
Age restriction: from 12 years
Weight restriction: max. 90 kg
Cost: Included in your accommodation rate.

Beach Horse Riding:

Time: On request
Duration: 3 hours
Fitness Level: moderate
Age restriction: from 12 years
Weight restriction: max. 90 kg
Cost: R 2000.00 per person

Notes: Hard hats will be provided. You will need to sign an indemnity form before riding. Parents must sign this form for children under the age of 18. Children under the age of 12 are only allowed on guided pony rides. Not suitable for pregnant women.
Please note that you need to have riding experience in order to take part in beach horse rides. This activity is not suitable for beginners.



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3. Walks & Hikes

Walks or hikes in and around Grootbos are one of the best ways to truly immerse yourself in the Cape Floral Kingdom, as you breathe the fresh air and drink in the crystal clear views. Take a guided walk or head out yourself as you gaze at bursts of fynbos colour.

Enjoy an entrancing stroll through our Milkwood forest or a more revitalising hike up our fynbos-clad mountains, as you begin to understand what makes Grootbos quite so special. From a sunbird sipping from a flower to an ocean vista that leaves you breathless, surprises await you around every corner.

Trails are all well marked and you can choose between self-guided walks or guided walks, to learn more about these fascinating and secretive eco-systems. Gaze into the petals of a King Protea, breathe in the blackcurrant scent of buchu or simply listen to the exquisite silence that surrounds you.

Time:	On request
Duration:	1 hour
Fitness Level:	easy – fairly strenuous
Age restriction:	None, also suitable for children.
Recommendation:	Wear sunscreen and hat. Long pants and close-fitting shoes.
Notes:	Bottled water will be provided. There is also self-guided options available – please ask your guide for the applicable maps.
Cost:	Included in your accommodation rate.



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4. Bird Watching

The rich chorus of birdsong that surrounds you at Grootbos tells you immediately that bird watching here will be extraordinary. Glimpse rare sightings on special guided walks or simply spot the beauty and colour as you walk around the lodge.

With 118 different bird species, Grootbos is uniquely positioned to offer both avid birders and curious novices a rich and varied birding experience. Glimpse the vivid orange of a Sunbird's breast, see a Cape Sugarbird sipping on nectar or spot a rare Black Harrier.

Cool Afromontane forests, the rocky coastline and serene estuaries provide a magnificent backdrop to our birding outings. Our experienced guides will share fascinating facts while helping you spot rare and endemic birds feeding and breeding in these different ecosystems.

Time:	On request
Duration:	1-2 hours
Fitness Level:	easy
Age restriction:	None
Recommendation:	Wear sunscreen and hat. Long pants and close-fitting shoes.
Notes:	Bottled water will be provided.
Cost:	Included in your accommodation rate.



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5. Living the Future Tour

Take a tour with heart as you discover how the entire Grootbos experience has been designed around benefitting the community and environment around you. Learn and connect as you witness how our various projects are changing lives and conserving this protected wilderness.

What is progressive tourism? It's a term we coined to explain a new way of living that is at the heart of the entire Grootbos experience. It's about every action we take benefitting someone else or having a positive impact on the environment.

From the freshly grown tomatoes you eat at lunch, to the recycled candles in your room, to the earrings you buy at the gift shop – we're constantly seeking out new ways to create sustainable livelihoods for the people who call this unique area home.

Time:	11h30
Duration:	1– 1.5 hours
Fitness Level:	easy
Age restriction:	None, also suitable for children.
Cost:	Included in your accommodation rate.



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6. Coastal Safari

With some of the most pristine beaches in the world, we can offer you everything from solitary walks along the water's edge, historical cave tours led by our guides, sun tanning with whales in front of you, or snacking on a picnic as the sun goes down.

Pick up a shell while on a guided beach tour. Have the waves to yourself as you take a dip at the water's edge. Or simply lie back and soak up the sun. A visit to our beaches offers you relaxation, inspiration or solitude, depending on how you choose to spend your time. Based off our reserve and just a short drive away, the beaches nearby are unpopulated and unspoilt. Our guides know all the best spots and will transport you there and back, and we can also provide you with a delicious picnic to enjoy outdoors.

Our guided cave tour along the dramatic limestone cliffs of De Kelders will introduce you to a Stone Age World, when Khoi bushman called these caves home. See how they lived as you visit Klipgat Cave, a World Heritage Site, and snap some breathtakingly beautiful photographs. This is one of only three places in South Africa where such ancient remains have been found. Learn more about it through engaging commentary from our guides, and get transported back into a forgotten world.

Time:	15h00
Duration:	1-2 hours
Fitness Level:	moderate
Age restriction:	None, also suitable for children.
Recommendation:	Wear sunscreen and hat. Bring your swimming costume.
Notes:	Towels and bottled water will be provided.
Cost:	Included in your accommodation rate.



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7. Shark Cage Diving

This thrilling encounter with one of nature's most fearsome predators will stay with you for years to come. Venture into our underwater world with a tour company who prides itself on conducting responsible experiences – protecting both these creatures and the environment.

Gansbaai in the Western Cape of South Africa offers the best shark cage diving in the world: attracting these awesome predators as they hunt for birds, penguins and seals. Look these hunters right in the eye and feel your adrenalin surge as you make memories you'll keep for a lifetime.

No diving experience is needed and you'll never be more than a metre below the surface, completely protected in a metal cage. We work in partnership with Marine Dynamics, conducting the tour on our luxury boat along with the help of a dedicated marine biologist. You can also view the sharks from an elevated viewing deck instead of a cage.

Time:	Changes daily
Duration:	3-4 hours
Fitness Level:	moderate
Age restriction:	None, also suitable for children.
Recommendation:	Dress warmly and wear comfortable shoes. Please take seasickness medication well in advance if you are prone to motion sickness. It is recommended to wear sunscreen, a hat and have your swimming costume on before the trip goes out. Please also bring a warm top with you.
Notes:	Pre-booking is essential. Should the boat trip leave early in the morning and you are unable to have breakfast in the Lodge, breakfast will be provided at the Great White House. Please note that the boat trip is weather dependant. A marine biologist is on board to provide an exciting and educational experience. Sightings are all year round, although like any wildlife experience sightings are affected by various conditions. Children under 12 are allowed to go on the boat, but not in the cage.
Cost:	R 3150.00 per adult / R 1830.00 per child under 12 / R 100.00 per child under 5



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8. Fat Biking

This is the ultimate ride from Grootbos Nature Reserve down the mountain to the top of the Sand Dunes. The trail to the dunes is special, running on a narrow sandy horse trail through the Fynbos.

When reaching the dunes we will make our way up and across to reach a fantastic downhill section where we will pick up speed before reaching the top of our first vertical dune face. After a briefing on how to ride down the dune we down the face but for those just wanting an easy ride you can go around the side where it is an easy slope. The dune face may feel impossible and dangerous to do but the ride is in fact very controlled and the sand will slow the bike down.

What your mind tells you is impossible will in fact be very enjoyable and easy. I will be at the bottom of the dunes videoing your challenges so remember to smile. I will also teach you how to do slalom like a skier on a snow ski slope. This is excellent fun on a bike and not too difficult to achieve. After the dunes we will pick up a 4x4 trail down to the beach. From there we will head back up to the car park but for those who are already tired I can bring the 4x4 down to the rocks so you do not have to ride up.

Time:	on request
Duration:	2 hours
Fitness Level:	fairly strenuous
Age restriction:	from 8 years
Recommendation:	Wear sunscreen and closed fitting shoes.
Notes:	Bottled water will be provided.
Cost:	R 1200.00 per adult / R950.00 per child, ages 8 – 11



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9. Marine Big 5 Boat Trip

When you book a trip with us, the evening before your tour we will confirm the time of your tour. Trip times vary with weather and tide conditions. Once you have arrived at The Great White House, you will receive a brief introductory talk about the route, safety, and what to look out for. Passengers are fitted with comfortable life-jackets and waterproof jackets. Safety is of the outmost importance.

Trip lengths are between 2 and 2.5 hours, depending on sightings and weather conditions. All cruises depart from Kleinbaai harbour near Gansbaai. Found only in Gansbaai, Dyer Island is located 8 km from shore and is an access controlled Important Bird Area (IBA) for the conservation of its many resident bird species, including African penguins.

Adjacent to Dyer Island is Geyser Rock, home to a 60,000 strong Cape fur seal colony. These seals are present all year round. We will take you into the channel of water between Dyer Island and Geyser Rock known as the world famous 'Shark Alley'. We will then take you to the whale hot-spots in the bay. With over a decade of experience, not only do we know where to expect the best whale viewings, but the whales have also learned where to expect us! We boast South Africa's largest boat-based whale identity catalog and we see re-sightings of the same individual whales year after year.

In the summer months after the Southern right whales depart, Dyer Island Cruises runs 1.5 to 2 hour trips to Dyer Island and Geyser Rock. These trips take in the sights described above at Geyser Rock, Dyer Island, and the White Shark Cage Diving boats. In addition, during this time of year we also spot Bryde's whales and dolphins. The dolphins we most commonly see are Bottlenose and Humpback. This is also the beginning of the 'sardine run' and our best seabird encounters happen during this time of year.

Time:	Changes daily
Duration:	2 to 2.5 hours
Fitness Level:	easy
Age restriction:	None, also suitable for children.
Recommendation:	Dress warmly, comfortable shoes and sunscreen. Please take seasickness medication well in advance if you are prone to motion sickness.
Notes:	Pre-booking is essential. Please note that the boat trip is weather dependant. Water and windproof jackets as well as life-jackets will be provided. Whale Season is from June – mid December.
Cost:	R 2050.00 per adult / R 1510.00 per child under 12 / R 100.00 per child under 5



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10. Lady Stanford River Cruise

Hop aboard the Lady Stanford river boat for a iconic and tranquil river cruise that winds its way gently along the picturesque Klein River, toward the Hermanus lagoon. Spend time on the open upper and lower decks of this modern eco-friendly river boat with its quiet, four-stroke boat engines, as you watch a kaleidoscope of natural colour go by.

No expense has been spared when it comes to comfort and luxury on board this vessel that most definitely stands out from the rest. A qualified skipper and experienced interactive guide, who intimately knows the river and all it has to offer, will ensure this journey is a memorable one. The Klein River features more than a hundred bird species which include majestic fish eagles, a flamboyance of pink flamingos and the ever spectacular, blue crane. Keep an eye out for otters, bontebok and horses grazing on the fertile river banks, as you make your way toward the lagoon. Lady Stanford runs daily trips for individual passengers as well as being available exclusively for private functions. The boat can comfortably accommodate 26 passengers.

Time:	Changes daily
Duration:	2 to 2.5 hours
Fitness Level:	easy
Age restriction:	None, also suitable for children.
Recommendation:	Dress warmly, comfortable shoes and sunscreen.
Notes:	Pre-booking is essential.
Cost:	R 650.00 per person



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11. Spa Treatments

For those who just want to relax we offer an array of spa treatments. It is time to tip-toe into a slower world where the mind can drift away on the vapors of luxurious scents, such as sandalwood, arnica and buchu, while the body melts under the soothing touch of our fully qualified beauty therapist. Pampering takes place in the comfort of your own suite.

For the tired body, a therapeutic full body massage is a definite must, leaving you in a state of absolute calmness. For the weary feet, reflexology, including a footbath, will most certainly do the trick. Manicures, pedicures, facials and a host of other treatments are available on request in our Bloom Beauty Salon.

After a day of activities, enjoy treatments in our luxurious treatment rooms, the privacy of your own suite, or even in the forest with the trees and birds as company. We have two fully-equipped Bloom beauty centres: one of which is situated conveniently close to Garden Lodge.

The other is set deep in the Milkwood Forest, a short walk from Forest Lodge where you'll be surrounded by the sound of trees moving in the wind and may even spot a shy bushbuck coming to visit.

Time:	on request
Duration:	on request
Fitness Level:	easy
Age restriction:	None.
Recommendation:	N/A.
Notes:	Pre-booking is essential.
Cost:	Please see price list in your Information folder in your suite.

