



LAP UP THE LOCAL HERITAGE IN THE NORTH WEST - A LIFE ENRICHING JOURNEY

BY CLAIRE ALLISON

Travelling in South Africa is always a treat for the senses. Every province has its own look and feel, language and unique experience that leaves you feeling rejuvenated and inspired by this beautiful land. The North West province is no different.

Travelling from Johannesburg, one gets the feeling that they are entering 'the real Africa' as the landscape changes dramatically from the Hartbeespoort Dam and lush greenbelts to mine shafts, dry hills and barren horizons that hide some of South Africa's best-kept secrets.

The Segarona Heritage Experience is one such secret. Launched in 2012 by local NGO, Open Africa and SAB Foundation, this self-drive travel route takes visitors around the northern half of the province through the area's natural rural beauty, into local villages (watch out for cattle crossing the street!) and past two renowned game reserves. One of the most notable attractions along the route is the national heritage site of Kaditshwene, the Lost City of the Bahurutse, which was inhabited by about 20,000 people in the



deep with water so pure it is bottled at the source and sold commercially. Anyone keen on a spot of diving can explore the underwater tunnels where water flows out at a staggering rate of 300 000 litres per hour.

Groot Marico has a range of accommodation types to suit any budget and guests can enjoy local hospitality at its best. The pub at the entrance to the town rustles up some fantastic steaks and burgers and the friendly staff create a warm,

welcoming atmosphere. Close by, the Marico Bushveld Dam, also known as Riekertsdam, is used extensively for water sports like fishing, skiing and sailing and the well-equipped caravan and camping site makes a relaxing venue from which to watch the setting sun and rest weary bodies in preparation for another day on the road.

What would a trip to the North West be without a bit of game spotting? Travellers have a choice of two fantastic game parks, namely the Pilanesberg National Park and the Madikwe Game Reserve. Big 5 spotting in these reserves is world class and both are considered excellent safari destinations.

A key attraction near Groot Marico is 'The Eye' (Die Oog), the source of the Great Marico River, which runs into the Limpopo River. This pristine spring is an oasis in the middle of the Highveld, approximately 17m



Madikwe is situated along the Botswana border, 90km north of Zeerust and covers an area of approximately 75,000 hectares. It was established in 1991 with the purpose of not only protecting the natural wildlife, but also with the aim of helping local communities to benefit from conservation and responsible tourism projects. Stop off at a local roadside eatery for some shisa nyama and a beer with

the locals before heading into the untamed luxury of the reserve and its lavish bush setting - you won't be disappointed! Madikwe, meaning 'Africa in its majesty', is also one of the largest game reserves in South Africa and guests have a choice of staying at one of 13 lodges on the perimeter of the reserve. Unfortunately the reserve doesn't allow entry to day visitors who aren't pre-booked into

one of these lodges so if you're only planning to spend a day game viewing, you're better off visiting the Pilanesberg Game Reserve.

Pilanesberg's long extinct volcano crater sets the scene for some fascinating landscapes. Formed by volcanic eruptions around 1300-million years ago, the Pilanesberg is one of the largest volcanic complexes of its kind in the world and spotting game such as lion, wildebeest, leopard, buffalo and elephant here is an experience to not to be missed.

The Segarona Heritage Experience guarantees travellers an authentic African bush experience in this lesser known province of South Africa, so if you're looking to mix a rustic holiday of exploration with a touch of luxury, then you need to explore this route!

ABOUT OPEN AFRICA

Open Africa is a non-profit organisation that helps create and sustain jobs in rural Africa using tourism as an economic platform. Open Africa has 63 self-drive travel routes in 6 countries across Southern Africa.

For more information about the Segarona Heritage Experience and other routes, visit www.openafrica.org and support responsible tourism.



WEEKEND SAFARI GETAWAY From R1750

per person per day

Rate includes:
Dinner, Bed and Breakfast,
2 professionally guided
game drives daily

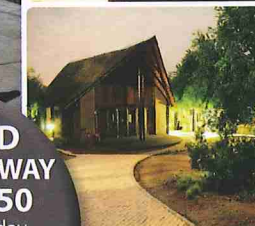
MOROKOLO GAME LODGE is situated on the northern slopes of the Pilanesberg mountains in the Black Rhino Game Reserve, recently incorporated into the Pilanesberg National Park and boasts one of the richest varieties of African wildlife, predators, fauna & flora in Africa.

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With eight luxury double suites plus a private bar and entertainment area, Morokolo Game Lodge is the ideal wildlife safari getaway

destination for couples, families and small corporate or tourist groups.

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