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SARDINE RUN 2018

Sardine Run along the unspoilt Wild Coast

African Dive Adventures and Indigo Safaris are offering Sardine Run Packages along the Wild Coast. We set up our base at Coffee Bay where we accommodate our divers in the lovely Ocean View Hotel. We offer standard packages of 5 nights and 4 activity days at sea. For groups we can offer tailor-made, longer packages or combinations of Sardine Run and Protea Banks and/or wildlife safaris.

The Ocean View Hotel

Our guests are accommodated in the lovely Ocean View Hotel. We believe that after a hard day's work our guests need to come home to the best place in town. Not only does the staff at the Ocean View make us feel at home, but also the food is delicious. The bar and deck are the perfect places to talk about the day's events. Pool for those who can't get enough, and the scenic beach is right behind the wooden fence, barely 50m from reception. The rooms are comfortable and cosy. But the best on the whole trip is the heated equipment room.



Typical Bar snacks consist of Crayfish, Oysters, Mussels ...

In the old days it was said that as soon as the aloes bloom on the South Coast, the Sardines will start running. Nobody gave the Sardine Run much notice then because it was thought to be too dangerous. The ocean is buzzing with life, yet only the locals used to get drawn into this unbelievable spectacle of Mother Nature. There are hundreds, sometimes thousands of Common Dolphins along the coast hunting the sardines and there are whales everywhere. Cape Gannets cruise in flocks of several hundreds above the sardines and dive from 20m into the water to catch as many of the silver fish as they can. At the end of a good day, the Gannets are so full that they just sit on the water unable to take off.



Daily Activity

After Breakfast at 7am we get transferred by Landrover and Landcruiser 4 x 4 to Mapusi, the most spectacular, idyllic river mouth from where the boat is launched. This drive alone is worth a few photo stops. The cliffs are high and drop off almost vertical into the deep blue ocean. On the banks of this river divers get ready for the launch. The 4 x 4 drives the boat down into the river. Divers and the crew have to push the boat further until there is enough water under the keel and all rocks are cleared. Once it is safe, the skipper gets on the boat and starts the motors. When he has enough water under the keel, he calls all guests on. With speed the boat drives over the sandbank and into the waiting basin. Once all waves have passed, the skipper chooses the safest moment to launch out to sea. Mapusi offers one of the very few safe launches along the Wild Coast. And the adventure begins....



In the meantime the aircraft has taken off and done a good fly over the ocean in search of animal activity. The skipper and the pilot are in constant radio contact whereby the boat gets directed to the best action on hand. Sardine Run action consists not only of silver fish but whales, dolphins, sharks and gannets. Wherever there is something happening the boat will go.

The highly experienced and skillful crew will approach anything interesting with great care and only when it is safe will the divers be allowed to enter the water. More often than not this will be done on mask and snorkel. There is a constant off-the-boat and on-the-boat which requires stamina and a certain fitness. Obviously it is always the client's choice if he wants to remain on the boat or jump into the water. To make a long day out at sea as pleasant as possible we offer sandwiches, fresh fruit, chocolates, cookies, fruit juice and water on the boat. The excitement often makes us forget about food....

The Ultimate Experience is the Bait Ball



The sharks and dolphins round up a large number of sardines and form what is known as a bait ball. Once the bait ball is formed, the sharks and dolphins swim through and through and through that ball until not one sardine is left. They are often joined by gannets that dive from a dizzy height and use their wings to actually swim further down in pursuit of a sardine. Unbelievable! Then comes a Bryde's Whale from the depth and like a Front End Loader scoops thousands of sardines into its gullet.

As divers, you first approach the situation carefully and watch from the boat what is going on.

Then you slide into the water and watch the incredible scene from a depth of approximately 5-7m. Such a bait ball can last from a few minutes to half an hour or even longer. When it is over it's back on the boat and off to the next group of sardines. This can go on for hours or even the whole day with a short lunch break in between.

You return to base no later than 15h00. Driving back into this idyllic river mouth just rounds off a great day's adventure. The guests are picked up by the 4x4s and taken straight home to a hot shower. The staff prepares the boat and

equipment for the next day, washing off all diving equipment and hanging the wet suits into the heated equipment room at the Ocean View Hotel.

YOu meet for a drink in the bar where the incredible management often serves crayfish and oysters for bar snacks. A scrumptious buffet awaits us from 18h00 at leisure



The Financial Risk

When the Sardine Run starts, it starts just north of Port Elizabeth and moves up the coast pretty quickly. Many operators book up all accommodation along the Wild Coast and sell packages to experience the Sardine Run. As nobody can foresee the exact time of the run, the risk has to be with the diving public. They have to book their package with the understanding that there cannot be a refund in case the sardines should not show up. Same if the weather should turn nasty and preventing boats from launching.

However, there is always activity on the ocean. On a quiet day you see, follow and swim with whales and dolphins. This is why we there is an aircraft. Our pilot WILL find us something exciting. And if push comes to shove, there is always the bait bucket for a baited shark dive.

In case the wind should ever prevent from launching you can go on a 4x4 outing, hike the picturesque coastline or have a picnic in paradise. Photo enthusiasts will never run out of motives.

In three years not a single day has been ost to bad weather here.

The Safety Risk

Launching along the Wild Coast can at times be dangerous. Especially when the wind has blown all day the sea will get whipped up. As everybody is under a certain pressure to deliver client's expectations, one sometimes launches a boat when one should rather have cancelled the day's activities.

Furthermore, if divers come across a bait ball and get too close, they could get in the way of hyped-up sharks. Due to the remoteness of the Wild Coast, medical facilities are rather limited.

For all possibilities African Dive Adventures is especially well equipped with medical supplies as well as communication devices. Besides, ADA has commissioned a microlight plane to spot activity and also call for help in an emergency.

PRICE

5 nights at the Ocean View Hotel on a half board basis, 4 days on our boat with sandwiches, fruit, cookies, chocolate, fruit juice and water, air support by microlight several times a day.

32000 ZAR

Extra day: 5500 ZAR

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

Transfers not included. Return transfers from Umthatha airport 800 ZAR