

SARDINE RUN INFO

The Sardine run is an ocean related experience. Bearing in mind that the ocean realm is susceptible to weather conditions on a day to day basis and that we are dealing with nature, for those wishing to scuba dive or snorkel with the action, we highly recommend a 6 night package stay

This allows for bad weather scenarios and variable degrees of marine activity.

MINIMUM DIVE QUALIFICATIONS

Recreational scuba divers are to have a **recommended** minimum certification level of advanced diver and be able to sustain the level of fitness required on the sardine run. An Open Water diver qualification linked to **sufficient** experience in the ocean realm will be accepted upon discussion with us. It must be understood that the sardine run is a high risk and fast action event, resulting in this trip being rated as “strenuous” and it is often done in limited visibility diving. It is aimed at the adventure seeker.

Sharks are often encountered under water and intense and fast moving action is the order of the day when sardines meet their predators.

A TYPICAL DAY ON THE SARDINE RUN

Daily outings last for approximately 6 – 8 hours depending on sea conditions and the amount of activity about. With the action being fast and furious in conjunction with variable sea conditions, long boat rides and the whole day out at sea , outings can prove strenuous, therefore it is recommended that clients be relatively fit.

Departure time is usually between 07h30 and 08h00 and return time is action dependant. **We are usually the last boats in each day, giving our GUESTS a full day out at sea, capitalizing on whatever Nature has to offer.**

Each morning, the boat will head out from the Umzimvubu River, Port St John’s, and after typical and highly exciting African surf launch, crew will start looking for all types of action, from whales, dolphins and ocean bird action to the little silver

sardine type action. Sardine activity is usually sighted from large flocks of cape gannet sightings or by the more trusted large pods of common dolphin activity. Our communication network with others is vast and we are also in communication with Natal Sharks Board members that conduct regular aerial flights. Our knowledge of “hiding” places also comes into play here and all avenues are explored to find action for you.

Once the sardines are located, our experienced crew will determine whether the bait ball is fast moving, necessitating snorkel viewing, or more static, whereby we can go straight onto scuba equipment for those wishing to use scuba gear. First hand action will be experienced by snorkellers, divers and boat based passengers, which ensures an exciting day out for everyone where no one is left out of all the excitement that nature brings with her.

ABOUT THE BOATS

We use 7.2m & 8m Feral RIB's powered by 2 x 85hp Yamaha outboards.

Each vessel is licensed to carry 12 passengers including skipper and guide; however, for the sardine run only, we **limit our carrying capacity to a maximum of 8 people** to maximize space and comfort.

Our boats are certified by SAMSA and carry all required safety equipment including oxygen, trauma kits and communication devices.

ABOUT THE CREW

Highly experienced sardine run skippers and dive guides are on board all of our vessels to ensure your safety and make your trip as informative as possible whilst on the sardine run.

WHAT TO BRING ON THE BOAT EACH DAY

- ☞☞ Sun protection i.e. hat, sunglasses & sun block
- ☞☞ Waterproof jacket
- ☞☞ Waterproof bag for anything you wish to bring onto the boat (space is limited so please choose something relatively small. If you are in a group, sharing a larger bag would be advisable)
- ☞☞ Camera, video equipment, binoculars (in a waterproof bag)

Important to note:

Due to our typical African surf launch & beaching of boat techniques, along with the possibility of uncomfortable and choppy sea conditions at times, we do not advise that those with limited mobility or frailty take part in boat activities of this nature.

The sardine run is safe to enjoy, as a passenger, by most, however there is certain effort required by everyone on board.

As a snorkeller or diver, the action can be incredibly fast paced and at times, chaotic as predator chases prey, meaning that a certain level of fitness is required to thoroughly enjoy each and every encounter and in water activity must be undertaken by those reasonably comfortable in the water.

WEATHER AND SEA CONDITIONS

The best weather and sea conditions on the Wild coast happen to be during the winter periods. A little rain and overcast conditions can be expected on some days, though normally good weather prevails.

Sea conditions can range from glassy smooth to white capped seas...exciting and sometimes strenuous.

Our team ensures your **safety first** at all times and all decisions are based on this.

AIR temperature ranges between 14 – 25 °C (58 – 76 °F) and it is often colder at night.

WATER temperature ranges between 15 – 22°C (59 – 71 °F)

VISIBILITY ranges between 2 – 30m and as a safety precaution, in water activities are only conducted with conditions offering us visibility of 5m plus.

Notes for scuba divers

Divers will be asked to produce their certification cards as well as logbooks on arrival at Port St Johns and prior to any ocean activities taking place.

CHECK OUT DIVES will be done on the first day and prior to any sightings taking place. This is for your own safety and comfort, to enable you to tweak equipment, familiarize yourself with local conditions ahead of all the action, and where there is little or no time to tweak gear.

Divers are encouraged to bring their own Wetsuit, mask and snorkel, fins, BCD and regulators, however we do have a range of equipment for rental for a full day equipment rental. **Equipment rental MUST BE pre-booked.**

Cylinders + weight belts to be supplied on arrival. We make use of 10 & 12ltr steel cylinders. *We have an easy conversion from DIN to A-clamp with our cylinders.*

Our rental gear consists of:-

Fins – Mares Avante Tre - **closed heel fins**, maximum fin size is 11-12 (46-47) and the smallest being 3½ - 4½ (36-37)

Masks – black silicone

Wetsuits – our wetsuits are 5mm thickness full suits with a rear zip

BCD & Regulator – Aqualung Wave / Calypso DIN

With water temperatures ranging between 14 – 22 degrees C, wetsuit thickness of 5 – 7 mm with hood, booties and gloves are recommended for this time of year.

Trip staff will be on hand to carry equipment, fill cylinders etc.

It is advisable to bring your own SMB (surface marker buoy) to keep inside your BCD pocket, if you are bringing your own equipment.

Rinsing facilities will be available on site.

GENERAL INFORMATION

AIRPORT TRANSFERS FOR INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Please bear in mind that all international flights arrive and depart through three airports in South Africa viz - *Cape Town* International airport, King Shaka international in *Durban* and O R Tambo International airport in *Johannesburg*. From there a domestic flight to Durban, Umtata or East London is required

Charter flights can be arranged directly to the small Port St Johns air strip if you would prefer to fly rather than be driven or self drive.

For ease of planning, **King Shaka international airport in Durban** (K.S.I.A.) is approximately 6 hours drive from Port St John's.

Umtata airport, as a domestic connection via SA Air link (**UTT code**) is approximately a 1 hour drive from Port St John's and is highly recommended due to the proximity and short travel time to Port St John's. There is one flight in and one flight out per day and the air craft is a smaller one. Flights are operated by S.A.Airlink.

East London airport, as a domestic connection, is approximately 4 hours drive to Port St John's.

Margate airport now offers a small domestic airline "CEMAIR". Margate is approximately 4 hours drive to Port St John's. Rental car facilities are available from this small airport.

INSURANCE

Travel & Diver insurance is highly recommended for all guests and should be organized in their country of origin.

BOOKING INFORMATION

A booking is not confirmed or accepted unless a 30% non refundable deposit has been paid. Please note that accommodation in the area is limited and as the sardine run is peak season for the area, early booking confirmation will confirm your space. Full payment must be received 6 weeks prior to arrival.

Please let us know which dates you would like to join us for the sardine run so THAT we may ensure availability.