



TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

**SOUTH AFRICA WILD COAST
CYCLE
SOUTH AFRICA**

Fri 18 Oct - Sat 26 Oct 2019





In aid of The Openwork Foundation

18 Oct - 26 Oct 2019



9 DAYS | SOUTH AFRICA | CHALLENGING

The Wild Coast stretches from East London in the south to the border of Kwazulu-Natal in the north. The Pondoland coastline is the home of the Xhosa people. You'll cycle past estuaries, pristine beaches, natural heritage sites, craggy cliffs, waterfalls, shipwrecks and rolling hills, providing spectacular scenery and a breath of fresh air for all challengers.

- Cycle up to 260km over 5 days along the stunning Pondoland Coastline
- A true mountain bike challenge with a mixture beach rides, grasslands traverses and river crossings
- Experience the warm and friendly hospitality of the local Xhosa people
- Cycle past famous Grosvenor shipwreck, numerous waterfalls and pristine beaches in this untouched natural region
- Visit a vulture colony and cycle past large herds of Eland, Zebra, Wildebeest and baboons

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 Fri 18 Oct

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Depart London for South Africa

Your challenge departure date has finally arrived. Meet your challenge leader and new team mates at the airport and fly to Durban.

DAY 2 Sat 19 Oct

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Arrive in Durban

On arrival in Durban you will be met by your support team and transferred to a nearby hotel. Take this opportunity to freshen up and relax after your international flight. This afternoon, you'll load up the bikes and travel the short distance to Holla Trails on the North Coast. Our specialist bike mechanics are available to assist with any bike assembly, fitting or equipment checks you require. For those interested, we will hold a short mountain bike skills session, before heading out on a gentle ride to test the equipment and make sure everything is set for the week to come. Your day ends with a relaxed dinner and a short briefing, to ensure you are fully prepared for the challenge ahead. (D)

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 3 Sun 20 Oct

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Wild Coast Sun to Mtentu Lodge – 25km Beach Ride, or 40Km inland traverse

After a hearty breakfast, you will head down to the coastal town of Port Edward, the gateway to the Wild Coast, and start of the Pondoland cycle. If the low tide is timed perfectly, your challenge route today will take you along an 18km beach ride to Sikombe Point. From there, a short inland section through the rural Pondo villages will bring you to Mtentu Lodge. The actual riding time is around 3 hours, but it will take approximately 4 hours to get to camp due to the irresistible urge to stop and visit the incredible waterfalls encountered en-route, plus a few river crossings. You will arrive at camp to a warm welcome and a hot shower, followed by lunch. The rest of the afternoon will be leisure time. If we miss low tide, then you will follow a slightly longer, but equally impressive inland route to get the Lodge. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Lodge

DAY 4 Mon 21 Oct

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Mkambati Nature Reserve – approx. 25km

Today you will start with a short ride up to a local community homestead to enjoy a truly authentic cultural experience before heading into Mkambati Nature Reserve. This is an incredible day on a bike, you will see large herds of Eland, Zebra, Wildebeest and baboons. Lunch will be at the base of the amazing Horseshoe Falls, before heading back to the lodge. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Lodge

DAY 5 Tue 22 Oct

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Mtentu to Mbotyi – approx. 60km

Today's ride is across a fantastic stretch with the perfect mix of grasslands, undulating hills and pristine beaches. For the energetic there is an opportunity to cycle to Waterfall bluff and the spectacular Mlambomkulu Falls before heading back inland to finish at your lodge. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Lodge

DAY 6 *Wed 23 Oct*

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Mbotyi to Mtentu – approx. 65km

Today's cycle takes you inland through the heart of the Pondo community. Starting with a steep climb out of Mbotyi up to the Magwa Tea Plantations, the route then takes you to the vulture colony and Super Bowl before dropping back down into Mkambati Nature Reserve and on to Mtentu. The day finishes back at Mtentu Lodge. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Lodge

DAY 7 *Thu 24 Oct*

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Mtentu to Wild Coast Sun - approx. 45km scenic route, or 25km beach ride

After a good breakfast, you will make your way back to the Wild Coast Sun. You will follow a different route back, which includes a stop at the amazing Nymeni falls, from where you will enjoy lunch before the final push to the end. If we missed the low tide on the way in, or your legs are a little weary, there is an option to take the shorter beach route out today. After a truly memorable trip, you will travel back to the hotel for a final farewell dinner celebration. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 8 *Fri 25 Oct*

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Transfer to airport and fly home

You will have free time this morning to relax, before you transfer to the airport for your flight back to the UK. (B)

DAY 9 *Sat 26 Oct*

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Arrive back in London

You will arrive back in London, say farewell to your new friends and head home with memories to last a lifetime.

NB

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, wildlife movements, the strength of

the group, and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary; however, we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say



HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.
The costs below are per person.

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £495.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £4895.00 for your charity.

FLEXI

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Registration fee of £495.00 when you book
Then £575.00 towards challenge costs
(8 weeks before your challenge)
Raise a minimum of £3450.00 for your charity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Members only benefits and discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor, Runners Needs, Snow + Rock, Water to Go, The Altitude Centre, Sporttape and Nomad & MASTA.
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules

On your challenge

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- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes, and fuel surcharges, at the time of costing)
- All internal transfers
- Bike
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- Activity equipment such as bikes, tents and rafts as per the challenge activity
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- All ground staff including English speaking guide, drivers, cooks, and porters
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Visa
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Travel Insurance (you can buy at time of booking or in your Account Area, or provide your own policy details)

On your challenge

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- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines

You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 10 weeks before departure (by 09/08/2019), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 23/11/2019). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.

Prices include all known air taxes

We include ALL known air taxes (including fuel) at the time of costing. Many companies do not include air taxes at all, and clients are therefore hit with a surcharge of three or four hundreds of pounds just before departure. Our aim is to provide you with transparent pricing and clear instructions as to what is included in our prices and if applicable what isn't.

Typical group size

The typical group size is 24 - 28 participants

Small group supplement

The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 24 participants. We can run this trip with 20-23 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £95. This is payable by your charity if you book under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi options, and by yourself if you choose the Self Funder option. We will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary.

Optional extras

Business class upgrades*
Single room supplements*
(*subject to availability)

Travel insurance

Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenge is our main concern, which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy, which covers you for the adventurous nature of your challenge, the activities you are undertaking, and the altitudes. We have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found at <https://www.campbellirvine.com/charitychallenge>.

Level of Difficulty

Challenging: A “challenging” trip will test someone who is relatively fit and has a spirit of adventure. You may have had some previous experience, but this is not necessary as long as the correct training is undertaken. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, but perhaps haven't taken on a strenuous challenge event before and are hoping to push themselves out of their comfort zone. You can tell your supporters that on your challenge, you will be:

- Mountain Biking over 250kms through the rugged and remote wild coast.
- Tackling tricky terrain, river crossings, dirt roads, steep climbs and the heat
- Meeting the locals, swimming in rock pools or freshening up under a waterfall
- Staying in pristine eco-friendly camps, limited mobile phone connection and no wifi.

Typical Day

During the cycling days, you will cycle for 4-8 hours. Depending on the weather and the day, rest stops will be set up every 10-20kms where you can regroup and refuel to keep you going and to take in the magnificent scenery. You will stop for a packed lunch at a scenic location en-route. At the end of the day you will have time to have a rest in your tent/room, have a swim in the lagoon or ocean before being briefed on the next day's cycle and having dinner with the rest of the group.

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up Challenge Safe one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. Challenge Safe formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount.

In terms of your bike challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- The trails that you are on have limited accessibility by vehicle, however emergency evacuation to a hospital is possible but may take upwards of a few hours, depending on the location
- Riding in the African heat is a major challenge in itself so make sure you are well hydrated throughout and are able to carry sufficient water.
- The route includes a few river / lagoon crossings. These are all conducted at low tide which allows you to wade through the river and not have to leave your feet. You will also be accompanied by highly trained guides at all times.
- This trip involves cycling on dirt roads, and tracks with lots of loose stones and rocks so concentration while riding through these areas is essential. Basic mountain biking skills are required. Once again our skilled guides will be there to instruct and assist where needed.
- Sections of the ride may require you to get off your bikes and push or carry them over a short section that may be too difficult to ride.

Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism, and work closely with bodies such as the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local

environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly, and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, so as to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the UK challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information, please visit our [Responsible Tourism](#) pages, where you will be able to view a list of the projects that we currently support.

Flights

You will be flying overnight in both directions from London to Durban, via Johannesburg airport. Your flight information can also be found in your Account Area under 'Flights'. Your tickets will be emailed to you before your departure.

If you choose to book your own flights please confirm with the Charity Challenge office prior to booking any flights, otherwise you may be liable for your included group flight cost. Contact flights@charitychallenge.com for any further info or intent of booking your own flights. For any general flights questions, please refer to our main [FAQs page](#).

Visa

If your expedition ventures to a country which requires a visa, this info will be uploaded to your Account Area 3 months prior to departure. The visa info is per the FCO website where a link will be provided together with a link to the visa office for that country.

Insurance

It is a condition of travelling with Charity Challenge that you have a suitable travel insurance policy which covers you for your entire challenge. We have a special policy which covers among other things, medical (emergency, evacuation and repatriation) arrangements, cancellation and curtailment of the challenge, and more specifically for the adventurous activities undertaken on this challenge.

If you have your own travel insurance policy, you must ensure that it provides at least the same level of cover as our recommended policy, including protecting the charity in the event of your cancellation 56 days or less prior to departure. If you choose not to purchase our recommended policy when you book we will send you a disclaimer which you must complete and return to Charity Challenge prior to travel.

For more travel insurance questions, please refer to our main [FAQs page](#) or for any specific queries, please contact us at bookings@charitychallenge.com.

Vaccinations & Medicines

For up to date vaccination information please check the Travel pro health page:

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-abroad>

Charity Challenge team are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements. Your GP may ask questions about the specific locations that you are visiting, and as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

Medication

- Carry medicines (including those bought over the counter) in their correctly labelled original packaging, as issued by the pharmacist. These should be carried in your hand luggage.
- Consider packing a spare supply of medication in the hold luggage in case of loss of hand luggage
- A letter from the prescriber detailing the medicines with the generic names for the medications can be helpful for border control checks, and in case medicines have to be replaced or medical help is required
- Carry a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery for controlled substances and injection medications
- Take out an appropriate level of travel health insurance including repatriation and specific cover for any pre-existing illnesses

N.B. Some medications are banned abroad so please check. You can find further information at

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-abroad>

Climate & Terrain

Climate

Overall the Wild Coast enjoys sub-tropical temperatures along most of the coast in summer. However it can become hot and humid in the summer months, so hydration and sun protection is key. The average maximum temperature ranges from 25c to 30c, with evenings cooling a little to between 17c and 24c. At this time of the year there is the possibility of rain so please come prepared. We will always take the weather into account and plan accordingly each day.

Terrain

You will be cycling on a mixture of dirt roads, dirt tracks and the beach. The 'off-road' sections are not technical, but we would certainly recommend doing some training on tracks just to get accustomed to what this feels like. Some areas of the cycle will be very exposed and with heat and humidity which will be a challenge in itself. Please ensure you drink plenty of fluids and protect yourself from the sun. On the days we cycle on the beach, we will take the tides into account to ensure we cycle on hard compacted sand.

Training

Training is definitely required. It is important that you work specifically on your stamina, leg and joint strength, and balance in order to get as much out of the challenge as possible. Don't forget that the temperature and climate and topography is different to the UK and that you will be exercising constantly for a number of days.

Challenge Training

If you would like to get a feel for our challenges ahead of your departure, why not consider booking on a 1 or 2 day UK Challenge?

We have a variety of challenges, covering all levels of difficulty, taking place in stunning National Parks across the UK that are led by highly qualified and experienced expedition and mountain leaders. These challenges will give you the perfect opportunity to monitor fitness levels, test out your kit, meet people in the great outdoors, share fundraising stories and gain valuable advice and support for the challenge ahead. We encourage participants to make use of our highly knowledgeable leaders and ask them any questions you may have about clothing and equipment, expedition health and wellbeing, trekking skills, walking techniques and teamwork!

We are offering all participants **50% off** the registration fee when you book on one of the UK challenges listed via the link below. Just use the code **TRAINING** when booking. T&C's – you must have an active booking on a challenge to avail of this offer. Discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Find out more [here](#)

Luggage Allowance & Valuables

The luggage allowance will depend on the airline we are using for your challenge, but in general it will be one piece of checked baggage at approximately 20kg.

As no formal clothes are needed, luggage should be kept to the absolute minimum – details of what to pack are provided in your kit list. Whenever we move accommodation venue, your personal kit will be transported to the next camp. For convenience we recommend you pack an overnight bag for the day we cycle to Mbotyi, as we will return to the original camp following day. It will be significantly easier than packing up your entire bag for just one night. We will provide all bike spares, but you will be required to carry a lightweight pack with your water, snacks, medication and lunch for the day. You will not have access to your luggage until reaching camp.

Leadership

We employ a number of first aid trained challenge leaders, all of whom speak English. They will ultimately be responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. You will also have a great support team of drivers, mechanics, guides and assistant guides who will be there to keep you going throughout the long days of cycling.

Group Size

This group is intended to be a minimum of 24 people in order to run and a maximum of approximately 28 people due to the wilderness environment in which the challenge takes place and accommodation availability. We will be able to run this challenge for 20 to 23 people by charging a small group supplement of £95 which will be added to your final balance invoice (self funders) or charged to your charity (minimum sponsorship or flexi).

Accommodation will be in multiple occupancy (up to 4 people, including a bunk bed) chalets or 2 person fully equipped tents.

Clothing & Equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For your cycle challenge, padded cycling shorts and comfortable footwear are essential, and helmets are compulsory throughout. Training with your cycling shorts is definitely advised! You can bring equipment like clip-in pedals or a gel seat, if desired, in order to adapt your bike in country and we would also recommend technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. A full kit list for this challenge can be found [here](#) and once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor and Cycle Surgery.

It is policy that participants must wear a helmet – this is not provided on the challenge, so please do ensure that you take your own. Be aware that cycling can be dangerous and accidents do happen – you must take responsibility for your own safety whilst riding.

Basic, hardtail mountain bikes are provided, however you are welcome to bring your own mountain bike. There will be bike mechanics available on arrival in Durban to help re-assemble your bikes and likewise service and pack up your bikes for the return flights. Please note that you will personally need to make special arrangements to transport bikes on all flights.

Do we need to take our own sleeping bags and mats?

No, these will be provided for you.

What are the bikes like?

The bikes are good quality hardtail mountain bikes and all of them have 18 or 21 speed gears. They are sturdy and weigh approximately 15kgs. All bikes have a water bottle holder, although we recommend you also make use of a substantial hydration pack. If you would like to bring your own gel seats or SPD pedals you can. Please let us know your height at the time of booking so that we can pre-book the appropriate bike for your challenge in advance.

What if I can't keep up?

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's cycling abilities, this is allowed for and as much as possible. No one will be left behind and one of your guides will stay with you to the very end so you can take things at your own pace! Generally we will try to stick together but on the wide expanse sections the group can open out a little more! We will always have a lead guide out front and a sweep guide at the back with a roving guide in amongst the group. But always remember this is a team effort and to copy and popular saying – 'it is about the journey and not the destination'.

If we find somebody is unable to cycle at all, then we can transport them from one location to the next.

Accommodation & Toilets

Accommodation

You will be staying in a mix of lodges, camps and hotels throughout the challenge. All accommodation is on twin or multiple sharing basis.

1. Hotel – 3/4 star (2 nights) – twin sharing
2. Mtentu Lodge – basic sharing accommodation – 3 or 4 per room, communal ablutions, solar power (3 nights)
 - Cabin – 2 Bedrooms (one room has two 3/4 beds, and one room has a large bunk bed)
 - Safari tents – each tents has 2 single beds, bedding, towels and night stand
3. Mbotyi River Lodge – Twin / Double en-suite cabins (1 night)

If you would like to share with someone on the challenge please make a note on your booking, or alternatively send an email to challenges@charitychallenge.com and we will organise this for you.

Toilets

You will have clean toilets and good washing facilities on all campsites, lodges and hotels. In the camp, you will have communal eco / solar showers and ablutions.

Food & Drink

The food will be plentiful and very filling. There will not be the variety that you are used to in the UK, but the food is delicious and just right for a cycling challenge. If you have any dietary requirements please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure and we will do our utmost to accommodate them. If necessary we may ask you to bring some extra snacks as some dietary requirements are not yet widely understood in South Africa!

Money

Currency: The South African Rand can be purchased before leaving the UK.

Exchange: Currency exchange is available at the airports where you can change cash or travellers' cheques at the prevailing free market exchange rate. The best currency is the dollar (US). For up to date currency exchange, go to: <http://www.xe.com>.

Credit cards: Major credit cards are accepted in most areas. However they are not generally accepted in the areas we visit on the Wild Coast. Bring enough money and do not carry all your cash on you. Cash point machines, which allow the use of Visa & MasterCard etc with a PIN, are generally available, apart from some of the very remote areas we visit. Cash point machines are your best option for obtaining cash.

Spending money: You will not need a large amount of money during this trip. Somewhere in the region of £220 should be sufficient to cover presents, tips, drinks, and so on. Keep in mind that other than at the start and end of the challenge, you will be in remote camps away from any foreign exchanges or banks. We recommend that you carry

cash.

Tips: We recommend in the region of \$10US (or equivalent) per day for the team, and this should be given to the challenge leader at the end of the challenge, who will distribute it among the support team. If you do want to give one member of staff an extra tip, please also leave this until the end and allocate over and above the recommended tipping amount. Make sure you have plenty of smaller bills for tipping at lodges and for drinks/meals.

Phone & Wi-fi

There is Wi-Fi at the hotels, but not normally at the campsites. Phone signal is sporadic, but you should be able to get some throughout the whole trip, although it will come in and out of range.

There is no opportunity to recharge any electrical equipment during the cycle at the campsite, but if you want to bring a solar charger these work quite well to charge phones. There are charge points in your rooms at the hotel.

Emergencies

Throughout the challenge, back-up support will be close by. If for any reason any injury should occur, a relief vehicle will be made available. Your leader will be first-aid trained, and in cases of emergency one of the vehicles will evacuate you immediately to the nearest hospital. In severe cases helicopter evacuation may be required – we recommend that this be covered or a cover option in your medical/travel insurance.

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Any more questions?

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