

## **Choccachinos in the bush**

NP Squires

An altitude of 650m above sea level is quite high when thinking of the Kruger National Park, an area that most people call the Lowveld. This is in the South Western corner of the park, where Bushman wilderness trail is situated. The lowest part of the park is the Satara area, 250m. This landscape is flat, dotted with thorn trees and game, and is in keeping with a common perception of African game reserves.

A trip to the mountains of Bushman can change a lot of peoples' perspectives for the better. Surprisingly these highpoints are easily accessed due to the high density of big game in the area. These animals have created a network of game trails or paths, which follow the contours of the land. The net result is knowledge of these highways can make hikes to mountainous plateaus and rocky outcrops comfortable and realistic. More importantly the terrain is utilised for the maximum benefit while walking, i.e. game viewing and safety.

These highpoints are visited early in the morning, from where a thorough search of the surroundings can take place, resulting in a lot of animals seen. Some animals such as Rhino and Elephant can be approached on foot, with the added bonus of the rocky boulders placing you out of the animals reach, thus ensuring total safety.

A trip to this area is also incomplete with out a spectacular sun setting behind these mountains.

On a previous trail a group of friends and family were hiking in the mountains and were positioned above a small family of elephants. The weather was very poor, with howling winds and low temperatures. These weather fronts only enhance the dramatic landscape and make hiking safer and less of a physical demand. Out came fleece jackets and thermos flasks filled with a coffee hot chocolate mix. The atmosphere was very special, a moment to savour indeed.

This is the magic of wilderness areas. This activity provides an exclusive opportunity for friends and loved ones to share in the wonder of nature and to be together, far from normal everyday life.

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