

## An experience with nature at Kosi Forest Lodge

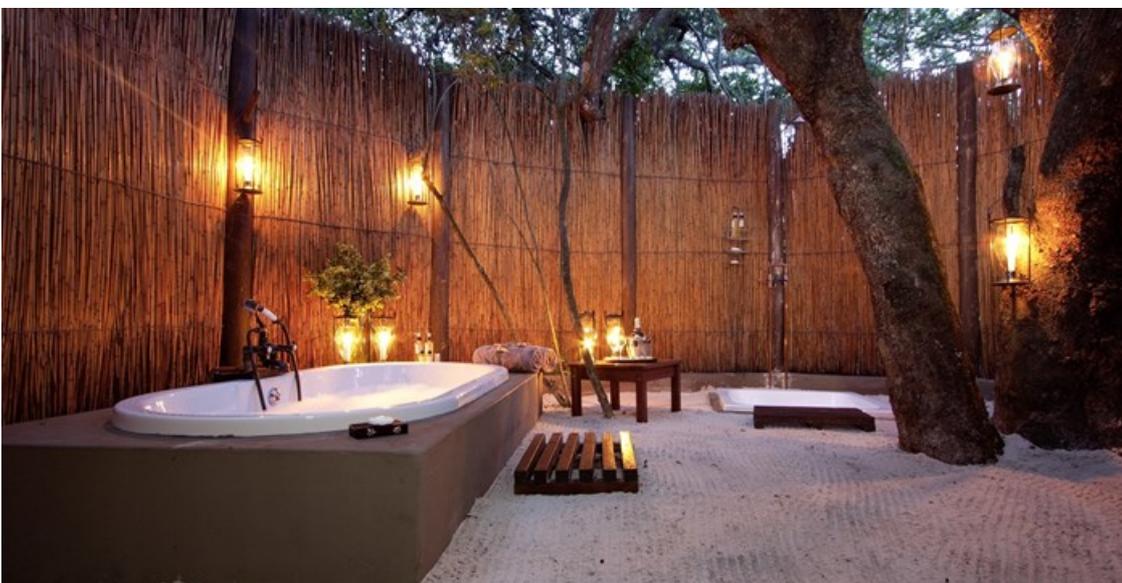
Kosi Forest Lodge, owned by Isibindi Africa, is located in the unspoiled wilderness of KwaZulu-Natal and is the only private lodge in the Kosi Bay Nature Reserve. This eco-tourist haven is situated off the beaten track in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, a proclaimed World Heritage Site that boasts unrivaled biodiversity and exquisite beauty.

The focal point of the entrance to this beautiful sand forest lodge is a massive Zulu Podberry tree. The lounge, dining room and bar all strategically open up onto a large wooden deck surrounding the tree which offers breath-taking views of this ecological sanctuary.



The lodge comprises eight enchanting bush suites, each accessed through a natural corridor of giant Albizia and Podberry trees with white beach sand underfoot. These suites are neatly tucked away in the forest and are built in such a way that they provide guests a private and intimate experience with the peaceful surroundings and the opportunity to enjoy the serenity of the enchanted forest, undisturbed.

The en-suite bathrooms flow outdoors into a reed-enclosed boma, offering an “Out of Africa” indulgence where ancient Milkwood trees replace the ceiling and stepping stones and smooth sand make up the floor.



The lodge offers family accommodation in the form of a suite comprising two separate chalets, each with en-suite shower, basin and toilet. These chalets are linked by a short walkway and also share a common outdoor boma bath and shower.

The lodge aims to create as small a carbon footprint as possible and it runs almost completely electricity-free. Gas appliances are used in the kitchen while a small generator powers energy-frugal LED lights in each of the suites. The evening's light is provided by old-fashioned paraffin lamps and flaming torches bordering the pathways of trees light the way to the dining area. Here, visitors can enjoy a three-course meal, with organic vegetables sourced from the locals, by candlelight in the lodge's boma.



Guests can make use of the crystal clear pool which overlooks Lake Shengeza while enjoying the throngs of birds in the trees overhead and grunting pods of hippo just metres away. This region is a birder's paradise, and with over 420 species recorded in the area, the lodge allows for some exceptional bird watching.

Kosi Bay is a water wonderland of lakes ranging from seawater to fresh water and is the cultural capital of the Tsonga Tembe Kingdom. Guests can experience the beauty of this unique eco-system of intertwined lakes, streams, ancient forests, and grasslands either by canoe, motorised boat or on foot.

## **Adventurous activities**

The lodge offers activities such as guided canoe trips which include a picnic and walk to the Bhanga Nek, a six-kilometre stretch of pristine beach on the Indian Ocean. Adventure enthusiasts can enjoy snorkeling and 4x4 excursions to the Kosi River Mouth – known as “the aquarium” because of the clarity of the water and abundance of fish species.



There is also an opportunity to participate in early morning or late afternoon guided walks through the Raffia Palm Forest – these magnificent trees can tower up to 16 metres in height and their leaves can reach an astounding 25 metres in length. Here, one might catch a glimpse of the rare palm-nut vulture – the only fruit-eating vulture in the world. Guests travelling to the lodge between mid-November to mid-January will be able to witness the moving centuries-old ritual of giant leatherback and loggerhead turtles making their epic journey back to their birthplace to lay their eggs. Between June and September, guests will be able to watch humpback and southern right whales migrate northwards along the coast.

## **The Myayiza Initiative**

Guests at Kosi Forest Lodge will be pleased to know that their stay contributes to making a positive and lasting impact on the local communities through the Myayiza Initiative – a joint venture between the indigenous Myayiza community and Kosi Forest Lodge.

The Myayiza Initiative created temporary jobs during the building of Kosi Forest Lodge and permanent jobs for the on-going operation of the lodge. It also generated opportunities for countless small tourism-focussed businesses and initiated the building of a mobile clinic providing the local community with access to medical assistance. The lodge also supports the community by purchasing a supply of locally-made products for its curio shop.

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