



PAFURI traverse

5-Day/4-Night Wilderness Backpack Trail



**RETURN
AFRICA**

WELCOME to the experience of a lifetime.

The Pafuri Traverse is a journey through one of Africa's most remarkable wilderness areas, a landscape shaped by the Luvuvhu and Limpopo rivers, ancient fever trees, elephants, and the open skies of the far north. Walking here is both a privilege and a challenge, and being well prepared will make your trail more comfortable and enjoyable.

Over the five days (four nights) of trail we cover between 10 and 15 km per day, with a total distance of around 55 km. The pace and exact route vary depending on the fitness and objectives of the group. When conditions and the situation allow, we sometimes push a little further to reach special places or make the most of the day.

This list will help you pack practically and travel lightly. Conditions range from warm Lowveld days to cool winter nights. Your fully loaded pack should ideally not exceed 12–15 kilograms, including water.



ARRIVAL & departure

All participants meet at Pafuri Camp by RETURN Africa, in the Makuleke Contractual Park, in northern Kruger National Park. Access is via Pafuri Gate.

Please plan to arrive at 11:00 AM on the first day of your trail. Once the group has gathered and completed introductions, we will set out together for the first walk and establish our opening camp.

Vehicles can be parked safely at the camp for the duration of the trail, under RETURN Africa's care. The trail concludes back at Pafuri Camp by around 10:00 AM on the fifth day.

If you are travelling from further afield, consider arriving the day before and overnighting at Pafuri Camp or another Pafuri Collection property.

GETTING to Pafuri

Pafuri Camp by RETURN Africa is situated in Makuleke Contract Park, which is at the northernmost extent of Kruger National Park.

GPS Co-ordinates: 22°25'15.81" S / 31° 13'45.81" E

Self Drive

- 640km / 7h00 hours from Johannesburg to Pafuri Camp by RETURN Africa. Follow N1 North to Louis Trichardt (Makhado) ±430km from Johannesburg.
- Continue on the N1 for ±60km (over Soutpansberg mountains and through Verwoerd tunnels).
- 500m after the Baobab toll plaza, turn right onto the R525 towards Tshipise.
- Follow the R525 for ± 135km until you reach the Pafuri Gate entrance to the Kruger National Park.
- After paying the Kruger National Park entrance fees continue for 22km inside the park.
- Look out for a left turn onto a gravel road signposted to Pafuri Camp by RETURN Africa.
- The left turn is 150m before the road crosses the Luvuvhu River Bridge. (Turn back if you find yourself crossing a river!).

Flights

- RETURN Africa offers flights from Hoedspruit Eastgate Airport and Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (KMIA).
- Enquire about rates with our reservations team.

Road Transfers

- Transfers can be arranged with our reservations team.



WHAT to pack?

Backpack and Carrying System

- 60–70 litre backpack with comfortable hip and chest straps
- Waterproof pack cover

Clothing

- Two lightweight, quick-dry shirts
- One long-sleeved shirt for sun and bush protection
- Two pairs of quick-dry shorts
- One pair of lightweight long trousers for evenings or cooler days
- Two to three pairs of underwear (these can be washed and dried overnight)
- Two pairs of hiking socks plus one spare pair
- Wide-brimmed hat or cap
- Lightweight rain jacket
- Puffer jacket for cool winter evenings
- Lightweight sleeping clothes
- All clothing should be neutral in colour. Avoid white and bright colours to help you blend in with the environment.

Footwear

- Worn-in hiking boots or trail shoes
- Shoe gaiters to keep sand and grass out
- Lightweight camp shoes such as sandals or slaps

Personal and Hygiene

- Toothbrush and small toothpaste
- Biodegradable soap
- Small towel or microfibre cloth
- Sunscreen
- Toilet paper
- Small trowel (a group spade is available, but a personal one can be useful)
- Personal medications and blister care kit

WHAT TO PACK *continued*

Sleeping and Shelter

- Lightweight tent
- Couples often share a tent
- Sleeping mat, foam or inflatable (note: inflatable mats are vulnerable to puncture)
- Sleeping bag suited to the season:
 - Comfort rating around 0 °C for winter months (June–August)
 - Comfort rating around 5–10 °C for shoulder months (April and September)
- Small pillow or use a stuff-sack with clothing
- Headlamp with spare batteries

Cooking and Food

- Lightweight stove and fuel if self-catering
- Mug, bowl or plate, and spoon or spork
- Lighter or matches
- Personal snacks and drinks
- Small hip flask is permitted, but no excessive alcohol consumption is allowed
- Coffee sachets, tea and powdered drink mix

Plan for four breakfasts, lunches and dinners, plus snacks for each day on trail.

Catering suggestions include:

- **Breakfasts:** oats with dried fruit and nuts, granola with powdered milk, or instant porridge sachets.
- **Lunches:** wraps, biltong, tuna, peanut butter or cheese with crackers.
- **Dinners:** lightweight dehydrated meals, couscous with chorizo or tuna, instant noodles with soup mix, or mash with smoked chicken or dried wors.
- Some fresh items such as cucumber and carrots keep well for several days and add freshness to meals.

Water and Hydration

- Three to four litres total water carrying capacity in bottles or bladder (depending on personal consumption)
- Water treatment using chlorine drops only, for top-ups while walking

Optional Items

- Small knife or multi-tool
- Personal first-aid kit
- Sunglasses
- Camera or binoculars
- Notebook and pen
- Small repair kit with tape, cord, needle and thread

Packing Principles

- Aim for simplicity and minimalism, every item should have a clear purpose.
- Pack heavier items close to your back and lighter ones towards the top.
- Check that your pack fits comfortably and evenly before arrival.

FITNESS & preparation

You will enjoy your trail far more if you arrive prepared. Before your trip, practise walking with your backpack loaded to a similar weight (around 12–15 kg). This helps you adjust straps, identify pressure points and build the fitness needed for long days on foot.



WE CAN'T WAIT *to share this wild corner of Africa with you.*

The Pafuri Traverse is more than a hike, it's a complete immersion into the rhythm of the bush: walking with elephants, sleeping under stars, and rediscovering a simpler pace of life. Each day brings new terrain, new sounds, and new stories to tell.

We look forward to welcoming you on trail and sharing the experience of The Pafuri Traverse.



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