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Garonga Safari Camp is situated in Limpopo Province within the Greater Makalali Game Reserve. It is one hour west of the Phalaborwa Gate to the Kruger Park. The size of the Reserve is at present 11,113 ha but will be extended to 22,000 ha in the near future, as one of the neighbouring farm owners has decided to include his property in the conservancy.

Garonga opened on 01st June 1997 and offers an in-depth experience for wildlife lovers seeking more than the classic "Big Five" encounter. The ethos of Garonga is holistic, offering an unhurried and relaxing experience in a totally natural environment. This is reflected in the camp's architecture and design that highlight the textures and colours of the earth. The main living area is totally open plan and has a "Moorish" North African feel.

Accommodation:

There are six main rooms and one suite accommodating a maximum of 14 people. Each 55sq m room has a natural canvas tented roof with walled structures around it. It has its own viewing deck with hammock, its own indoor and outdoor shower, and is fully en-suite.

The Hambleton Suite has its own salt water swimming pool, outdoor sala and indoor lounge, mini-bar, air conditioning, and fireplace. The bathroom has a hand-beaten copper bath, toilet, indoor and outdoor shower. The design of the suite has a distinctive Indonesian accent with influences of the Africa of old.

Facilities:

The main lounge is open plan with a huge fireplace for those cold winter nights. Many meals are taken here. The main bar is run on a "serve yourself basis". There is also a salt-water swimming pool with a waterfall that drops down into the riverbed below.

There is a wine cellar consisting solely of good quality South African wines which guests can browse through should they wish to choose something different from the house wine. It is stored at cool room temperature.

The thatched sala is used for aromatherapy, reflexology, or reiki. Guests may book during their stay. Each session lasts for 45 minutes and is charged as an extra.

The camp has its own "Bush Bath", a ball and claw bath, set out under the stars. This requires booking in order to prepare it for use. It is best to take it as the sun is setting as it is beautifully lit with candles and lamps, but it can also be taken during the day.

About 20 minutes north of the camp is a "Sleep-out Deck". It is built on a platform around a large tree, and has stunning views over the bush. It also directly overlooks a waterhole. This is the way to experience the true African bush. Guests are dropped off with a picnic hamper and drinks at sunset. After their meal they retire to comfortable beds under a mosquito net and can watch the constellations and then fall asleep with the night sounds all around them. A ranger picks them up in the morning and returns them to main camp.

Other facilities include pastels and drawing easels, a small library and house games and cards for guests' use. These are situated in the main lounge.

The camp has its own curio shop consisting of African artefacts, clothing, jewellery, films etc.

Garonga has its own airstrip 5 minutes from the main camp. We also have our own transfer vehicle to drop off and collect guests.

Activities:

Game drives and walks are done in the morning and afternoon with experienced and armed rangers. Guests can choose whether to go out or not, and at what time. There is absolutely no pressure to participate in everything. Sleeping in or spending time on a hammock, relaxing totally, is encouraged. Or perhaps sip a sundowner on the lounge deck and appreciate the quiet of the bush.

Alternatively, traverse through some of the Reserve down to the river for a riverine trip. The concept of "re-earthing" has been pioneered at Garonga where guests are encouraged to walk and get much closer to nature. Sometimes shoes are removed to feel the sand whilst walking through a sandy riverbed, or time is taken to sit apart, perhaps on a rock, enjoying the solitude. At night stargazing is also offered.

The primary aim is to experience the bush and nature first, which increases an appreciation of the animals, both large and small.

For Guests staying over a long period there are activities to enjoy outside the Reserve. There is horse riding, trips to the Blyde River Canyon, "God's Window", and other interesting places.

Game:

Lion, Rhino, Elephant, Cheetah, Leopard, Hyena, Hippo, Crocodile, and good General Game. The game drives and walks are handled in a very sensitive way, and every effort is made to make them a thoroughly enjoyable experience

Meal Venues:

These are varied. There is a balance of privacy and eating together at the camp. Breakfast and lunch are normally done served at separate tables. At dinner, the Lounge area lends itself to private dinners on one night and maybe a communal meal the next. Meals are taken also in the Boma, out in the bush (breakfast or dinner), on the picnic deck (two people only, for lunches), and sometimes a lunch barbeque is prepared round the swimming pool. Variation and privacy are the key factors.

Rates:

There is no single supplement. House beers, wines, spirits, soft drinks, game drive drinks, and laundry are all included in the rate. It excludes therapies, certain imported drinks, curios, transfers and levies.

Summary:

Relaxation, flexibility, privacy, and a "home from home" ambience are the essential values of Garonga. The service is professional, unobtrusive, and friendly where guests are welcomed as friends rather than as clients. The minimum stay for a fulfilling Garonga experience is 3 nights.