

THE ZULU KINGDOM UPDATE



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Events 'not to be missed' in 2009 in KwaZulu-Natal... July to December 2009

July

Forget Ascot – it is time to head for Greyville Race Course for the **Vodacom Durban July!** Held on the first Saturday of July (4th) this is South Africa's premier horse racing event where the rich and famous go to be seen and where the fashions are as outrageous as decency permits! www.vodacomdurbanjuly.co.za

If sun, sea and surf are more your 'thang', then be sure not to miss the **Mr Price Pro and RCI night surfing contests** which will run from 29th June until 5th July! Watch the world's best surfers in action, cheer on the teams in the beach soccer and volley ball events and gaze in awe at the country's most beautiful women in Miss Southern Comfort – all part of the mix that make up KwaZulu-Natal's Annual **Beach Africa Festival**. With all this plus fashion shows, live radio broadcasts, live bands and Deejays's is it any wonder that this is the world's greatest beach festival? Entrance is free. This event is usually held in Durban but may move for 2009 to either the North or South Coast.



Further down the coast, the Mallards & Mercury **Ski-Boat Festival 2009** is scheduled for 2nd – 5th July 2009 (TBC) near Shelly Beach on the South/ Hibiscus Coast. The competition has proved to be so successful that it is now one of the biggest ski-boat competitions in the country and by far the biggest angling event on the Hibiscus Coast, attracting not only +/- 400 anglers and their families from all over the country but hundreds of tourists who are attracted to the "festival" in and around a huge marquee at St. Michaels beach where the weigh-in and all the action takes place. Loads of fun activities and entertainment for the family - <http://skiboaffestival.co.za/>

The **Hluhluwe Rhino Classic** is the third race of the Zululand Big 5 Mountain Bike Series and starts at the Hluhluwe Hotel at 09H00 on Sunday 20th July 2008 (TBC) with options of 50km, 25km or a 10km fun ride, which is ideal for children. The route will pass through game reserves, farms and, bushy singletrack ravines and super enjoyable technical and singletrack sections.



Christmas in July? Absurd? Maybe - but loads of fun! [Nottingham Road](#) in the Midlands will switch on its Christmas lights and run Christmas specials. Enjoy Christmas lunch or dinner at your favourite Midlands restaurant. Bring warm clothes ... it may even snow. Turkeys – run!!!

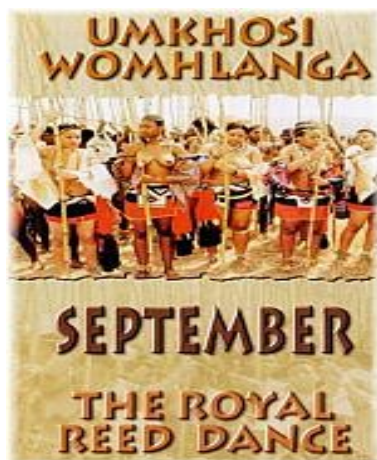
August

The 1st August will see a 5km **Ghandi Walk** taking place, that begins and ends in the grounds of the Talana Museum commemorates the involvement of Mahatma Gandhi in the Dundee/Battlefield area and in South Africa. www.talana.co.za

August is a great time for **game viewing** in the Zulu Kingdom as the bush is not as dense and the game levitates towards the waterholes after the dry winter. Fantastic reserves for game viewing include [Hluhluwe-Imfolozi](#), [Mkhuze](#), [Ithala](#), [Phongola](#), [Ndumo](#), [Tembe Elephant Park](#), [Thanda](#), [Amakhosi](#) and [Phinda](#) – to name but a few!!

The **BMW International Polo Series**, against a touring international team, is played in July / August each year. The first Test (always on a Sunday) is played at Shongweni, near Durban and the second Test, played a week later, is held at the Inanda Club in Sandton.

July to November is the best time to head for the St Lucia area for a spot of **Whale Watching**. Boat-based viewing is best, with [Advantage Charters](#) being the only one license holder in KwaZulu-Natal at present. Guests see mainly Humpbacked Whales, and occasionally Southern Right Whales. From July to September the whales are moving north on their way to their breeding grounds off the Mozambique coast, and from September to November they return, heading for the nutrient-rich waters of Antarctica.



September

Not to be missed, usually in the second week of September each year, is the annual **Royal Reed Dance**, [UMKHOSI WOMHLANGA](#). Traditionally, it is symbolic of purity, fertility and the union of mutual respect between the royal bloodline and the people of KwaZulu-Natal. Thousands of maidens make the trip from so far away as Swaziland to the KwaNyokeni Palace at Nongoma in Zululand to perform the traditional dance of maidens for His Majesty King Zwelithini Goodwill kaBhekuzulu. The highlight is the presentation of the reeds by maidens to the King, that symbolizes the contribution made by maidens in building the Zulu nation. It is a cultural rite of passage for young girls as they approach womanhood and a time of gracious celebration, but the king now also uses the opportunity to educate the Zulu nation on things like preventing the spread of AIDS. Some nearby properties take guests to this authentic cultural ceremony.

October



Battlefield fanatics won't want to miss the **Annual History in Action Festival**, featuring a weekend of "Ghost Tours", Battlefield, cultural and game tours, battle re-enactments, displays, craft markets and entertainment. This festival is planned to co-incide with the date of the Battle of Talana, the 20th October. www.tourdundee.co.za

Observed for the whole month of October each year, **The Annual Shembe Religious Festival** sees over 20 000 Shembe followers gathering near Eshowe for a month of prayer and celebrations. Their spiritual leader is in attendance. Tourists can visit the Saturday prayer and Sunday traditional ceremonial dance as well as enjoy a trip into the village to meet the people is an enriching experience which is highly recommended.

November

The Ithala Challenge canoe race takes place every year in November between the Bivane Dam and Ntshondwe Main Camp in Louwsberg. The Bivane River in northern KwaZulu-Natal, not far from Ithala Game Reserve, cuts through a deep winding valley (500m plus) with vertical cliffs forming the riverbanks along much of the route (43km). There are approximately 60 rapids along the length of the river and not many straight sections. This is the dramatic setting for one of the biggest annual events in South Africa - one that has been rated "The best one day race in the country" three times in a row. It is organised by the Impala Irrigation Board, KZN Wildlife the Umfolozi Canoe Club and attracts more than 400 people. Visit their website for details on the 2009 challenge – dates still to be advised. <http://www.ithalachallenge.co.za>.



Another challenge for the ultra energetic is the annual **Sani Stagger** which is happening on 28th November 2009 - 'The Ultimate Endurance Race' either 21 or 42 km up the famous Sani Pass in the Southern Drakensberg. <http://www.sanistagger.com/>

You may start to catch some of the **turtles laying their eggs** on the beaches of Maputaland if you are lucky this month.

December

16 December – Battlefield fans shouldn't miss the annual **Commemoration Of Blood River** at the Blood River Museum. www.tourdundee.co.za

For a bit of Christmas Spirit why not enjoy South Africa's version of panto? Durban's popular supper theatre, The Boho, in Windermere Road, usually hosts the latest side-splitting "adults only" offering from Anthony Stonier. <http://www.playhousecompany.com/>

Very little can touch the heart more than the show put on at Ushaka Marine World in Durban. Their annual **Dolphins by Starlight** Christmas Carols evening combines traditional carols with spectacular performances by the residents of ORI/Sea World. <http://www.ushakamarineworld.co.za>



Or, to really see in the New Year on a high, find yourself a spot on the beach, watching fireworks reflected in the ocean – whilst eating barbecued prawns and fresh seafood straight off the 'braai'.

What will you do this year in the amazing Zulu Kingdom?

Sincere thanks to www.sa-venues.com for some of these event updates.

For more information, please visit www.zulu.org.za or contact Ethos Marketing, the UK office for Tourism KwaZulu-Natal on 01403 243 619 or info@ethosmarketing.co.uk.

Many thanks to Roger de la Harpe and any other photographers, for the use of their images.

Hundreds of high res images of KwaZulu-Natal can be downloaded from <http://gallery.ethosmarketing.co.uk/photo/tkzn>

Whilst every care has been taken, we apologize if any incorrect information has been taken from outdated websites.

If any KZN suppliers have news snippets that they would like to see included in this newsletter please email 300 words plus your website address and contact details to Claire@ethosmarketing.co.uk