

South African Safarai: see the Big Five, lion, leopard, African buffalo, elephant and rhino

Few places in the world offer the primal allure of Africa and visitors to South Africa's Sanbona Wildlife Reserve experience first hand a place where the ecological clock has been turned back. Lion, leopard, African buffalo, elephant and rhino known as the Big Five all live in the wild here but Sanbona prefers to identify the Big Five as "high-profile" instead. Big Five was a term used by big-game hunters and it was their trophy hunting madness that drove these prized animals to the edge of extinction

All of the Big Five have gradually been re-introduced into the wild at Sanbona as part of the vision of Adrian Gardner who purchased the privately owned reserve in 2001. His dream of restoring the fallow farmland to a wildlife natural habitat for indigenous flora and fauna has gradually become reality. The reserve's White Lion Project is also a huge success story.



Here's what to see and do at Sanbona:

Guided walks: Feel the spiritual essence of the area called the Little Karoo by following in the footsteps of the San people who roamed this semi-arid area for thousands of years. From gentle strolls to challenging trails, guided walks can be the highlight of your personal African adventure. Under the guidance and protection of a highly trained guide, you can observe animals in the wild without invading their sense of territory.

The cheetah mom and her cubs pictured here were seen and photographed while on a guided walk in the Northern Section of the Reserve. All told, the reserve encompasses about 54,000 hectares, an area about the size of the Island of Singapore

Game drives: Discover the diverse landscape of the Little Karoo on early morning and afternoon Land Rover treks where you'll observe the rare White Lions, tawny lions, elephant herds, zebra, and all manner of exotic wildlife such as kudu, springbok, and eland. On your afternoon "sundowner" drive, you'll stop to toast a blazing red/orange South African sunset reflected at water's edge

Bird watching: Listen as an early morning chorus greets the dawn, signaled by the variety of more than 200 species of bird life on the reserve. Raptors and African eagles soar overhead while breeding pairs of majestic Black Eagles can be seen nesting their young. The reserve's guides are eager to share their knowledge of the area's history and geology.

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Flowers and Minerals: From August onwards, a spectacular flowering season begins. Sanbona’s famous quartz patches shimmer; rose quartz, crystalline quartz fragments and fossils can be found in abundance. Pictured is an indigenous succulent called “baby’s bottom.”



Photography: Almost perfect light conditions make the reserve an outstanding photographic opportunity for every skill level.

Rock Art: The name Sanbona honors the San people, hunter/gatherers who lived here more than 3,500 years ago. With a highly evolved spiritual life, tribe members chose animal and human symbols to tell their life stories. Travel through time with a guided walk to some of the striking depictions created by the tribal San peoples.

Dining After a morning game drive, dive into a full hot breakfast in the reserve’s fireplaced dining room. Follow breakfast with a hot stone massage in the full-service holistic spa. An excellent kitchen serves light meals and full-course dinners.

Star gazing: At night, the absence of surrounding light makes star gazing a phenomenal experience with stars from horizon to horizon. Considered among the best places to observe the night sky in all of Southern Africa, the constellation-studded canopy over Sanbona offers an opportunity to sit and reflect at the end of the day.

Sanbona is accessible from Cape Town on excellent scenic roads with a 3.5 hour drive to the entrance gate. The reserve also offers a private landing strip for fly-in guests www.sanbona.com

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