

Rocktail: Where the blue planet comes to life

 By [Brian Berkman](#)

24 Nov 2014

There is something about the quiet of being under the water that soothes my soul - now, at any rate. I remember my first ever snorkelling experience in The Maldives and the panic I felt as I floated over the drop-off with the deep blue for as far as I could see. Once past that initial panic the feeling of insignificance when faced with a sublime void is so addictive that I've tried to get back into the water at any opportunity.



Turtle recall... a magical experience up close (but not too close - you should never intrude) with these gentle creatures is on the cards on one of your dives.

As someone who suffers from claustrophobia, I've kept my water experiences to surface and shallow diving with a snorkel but have longed to experience that strange, space-like movement when one is totally submerged so thought about signing up for a PADI course while at Rocktail Beach Resort.

If you're a first-timer, Rocktail Beach Resort, a Wilderness Safari adventure camp in the Maputuland Marine Reserve, near the KZN border with Mozambique, is the perfect place to learn to dive.

It's one of the world's top 10 dive sites

Rocktail is considered the premier dive site in South Africa, with pristine coral reefs to which only Rocktail guests have access. While shore-based diving is available it is essential for experienced divers to bring dive cards and/or logbooks. They have a "No card - no dive" policy.

Someone from the Dive Centre comes to the dining room just before dinner to discuss the following day's plans as everything is weather and low-tide time dependent.

The instructor sketched a typical dive day:
"After watching an instructional video and safety briefing we take you into a 12 x 6 metre pool with a 1 metre shallow end and 2 metre deep so you can get your sea legs. The next day you go on your first dive and experience firsthand the reasons Rocktail Bay is listed among the top 10 dive sites in the world."

She continued: "We head to our launch site called Island Rock. As we are in a marine reserve, we have special permission to drive along the beach. From November to April we have leatherback and loggerhead turtles laying their eggs on the beach which means we need to drive near the low-tide mark. This is why we are 'tide dependent' and have to arrange our diving times over low tide, to ensure that we only go onto the beach two hours after high tide and get off the beach two hours before high tide. This means that our dive times vary according to the tides and so only have time to do two dives a day."



The life under the waves is second to none.

You'll never be 'one of the crowd'



Off to school.

What makes staying at Rocktail Beach Camp doubly special is that only Wilderness Safaris has the right to dive in this pristine and sensitive marine wilderness. It is entirely possible that your group will be as few as just two of you and never more than 20.

Imagine that human solitude with a species count comparable to the entire Great Barrier Reef. Aside from fish and stunning coral expect to experience dolphins, whale sharks, manta rays, other big rays, turtles, grey reef sharks, white tip sharks, tiger sharks, zebra sharks, nurse sharks as well as ragged tooth sharks. Expecting females arrive between December to April.

It's all about service

What appeals to me about their offering is they are entirely service oriented and all we need do is arrive at the Dive Centre and they do all the work for you including getting you to the beach.

The Dive Centre also offers an ocean safari that is boat-based whale and dolphin viewing.

Sadly, we selected possibly the worst time to visit Rocktail Bay and our hopes of seeing the world famous turtles that lay their eggs on the beach not to mention the myriad fish were dashed because of very severe weather.

We took an excursion to Lake Sibaya, about half an hour away on an open-sided game vehicle but the storm winds were so strong we would have done better enjoying the storm from the comfort of our tent.



And after a hard day's diving, what better than this...

See [Rocktail Beach Resort](#) for more information.

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