
Tourism KwaZulu-Natal



Zulu Kingdom. Exceptional

Media Release

XX November 2023

For immediate release

To: All media

Attention: News Editors and Journalists

TKZN'S SUMMER HOLIDAY SAFETY GUIDE

Fun in the sun is a must this festive season – but remember that nothing can spoil your holiday as quickly as an unexpected accident or injury. So, whilst our safety personnel are doing their utmost to protect you whilst you are on vacation, we also need you to be a partner for your own safety. Most of all, despite fun and games, make sure that you always use good judgement and look out for loved ones, especially children.

Here are a few tips:

1. **LOOK OUT FOR LIFEGUARDS:** Many of KZN's beaches are protected by lifeguards, especially those flying Blue Flags. These should be your first – and only – choice if you plan to catch a few waves. Swimming on protected beaches and making sure that you only enter the water between designated red and yellow flags is a non-negotiable, especially when you are swimming with children.

Before you so much as put a toe in the water, make sure that you know exactly where the lifeguard tower is so that, should you find yourself in trouble, you know where to call for help. Raise your arms and wave whilst calling for help should you find yourself in distress – and train your little ones to do the same.

2. **BE WATER WISE:** Remember that swimming in the sea is very different from swimming in a pool. If you are concerned about the quality of the water at any particular beach, save the website of the nearest local authority on your phone, so you can visit it regularly to check whether a beach is open.

Don't swim in bad weather when winds are strong, waves are high and the water is murky. Authorities usually close beaches at this time to protect bathers against debris such as logs and other large items that may be washed down rivers and out to sea.

Always chat to locals to know where the danger zones are and where you are most likely to encounter Rip tides. These ultra strong currents can quickly scoop you up and drag you out to sea. If you do find yourself caught up in a Rip tide, don't panic and try to swim against it as you will exhaust yourself and risk drowning. Instead, signal for help and then go with the flow, treading water until someone comes to the rescue or you can make your way back to shore when you are out of the tide.

3. **BE FAMILY FRIENDLY:** The rule should be to never let children out of your sight when you are on the beach or next to a swimming pool. Youngsters should always be supervised by an adult who knows how to swim and can pull them from the water to safety if needs be. Groups of adults should also avoid being distracted by socialising as, often, losing sight of a tiny tot for a split second can spell disaster.

Whether you are going to the beach with family or with friends, always make sure that you know the swimming abilities of all. Remember, that South Africa's sad legacy means many adults were not allowed to go to beaches and didn't learn to swim. Adults who have never learned to swim are as vulnerable as children. Most importantly, never swim when under the influence of alcohol.

4. **BEWARE OF BEACH CRAFT:** Inflatable toys and lilos are potentially dangerous toys in the sea. When winds are high and waves are big, they can be quickly swept out. There is always the danger of beach toys such as body boards hurting fellow bathers. So, if you have to include these, make sure this is done under supervision and in the shallows.

Most KZN beaches have designated areas for swimmers and those enjoying water sports such as surfing, kayaking or paddle boarding. It is always good to stick to swimming areas to avoid being hit by a wayward board or watercraft.

5. **SUN SAFETY:** Sun burn and heat stroke are ever present dangers in KZN's warm and sunny climate. Although the danger times when the sun is at its hottest are between 9am and 2pm, the rule should be to apply a high factor sunscreen at all times. This is particularly important for small children with sensitive skins who should also wear either a T-shirt or UV protective suit.

Sunscreens should be waterproof and reapplied every time you take a dip. Sun hats and sunglasses are also essential both on the beach and inland. To prevent heat stroke, make sure that you do not spend too long a time in the sun and always rehydrate with cold drinks or cool water.

6. **CUTS AND SCRAPES:** Although beach goers are encouraged to clean up behind themselves and place rubbish in bins, there are always those who don't follow the rules. Alternatively, there's also the risk of glass being washed up on to the beach from the sea. Other dangers are discarded fishhooks and gut. The same applies when hiking in the mountains or countryside. The first rule is to be careful where you walk and, if an accident does happen, to immediately clean and stop any bleeding. Keep a

basic first aid kit in your beach bag and go for help to a lifeguard or a nearby pharmacy if the cut is deep.

7. **ON ROCKY GROUND:** While it is fun for beach goers to explore rocky areas and tidal pools, remember there are plenty of potential hazards. The most obvious one is getting cut on sharp edges or shells or even fishing gear left behind. Try not to venture to the edges of rocky outcrops where you risk getting washed off and into deep water – and never turn your back to the open ocean as a surprise wave can send you sprawling.

If you are holidaying in the mountains, do not go too close to unprotected edges or rocky outcrops. Always check whether a hike or rock climb matches your abilities and make sure that you have the necessary safety gear as well as protective footwear.

8. **BEWARE OF BUGS:** KZN, with its hot weather is as popular with tourists as it is with bugs. On the beach, beware of stinging insects, especially those who are attracted by sugary snacks like ice-creams and lollies. It is always good to keep an antihistamine cream in your beach bag or first aid kit. In the evenings, there's always the chance of a visit from mosquitos, so make sure you have a repellent at hand. Use citronella candles to keep bugs at bay at braais or other outdoor activities. Always check if you are staying in a malaria area so that you can take the necessary precautions.

Jelly fish and blue bottle stings can be extremely painful, so avoid swimming if there are any in the water. These creatures are also just as dangerous when washed up on the beach. You can treat minor stings with a saltwater rinse or a hot shower, but it is always best to get medical advice.

9. **GUARD YOUR CARDS:** Summer is prime hunting season for fraudsters who know people are spending savings and bonuses on vacation. So, be ultra careful when asked to provide personal information and keep an eye on banking cards at all times. Tap rather than insert cards when paying. Use other high-tech ways of paying – E wallets, banking apps and trusted virtual payment mechanisms – as these often offer an extra layer of protection.

The South African Banking Risk Information Centre (SABRIC) advises travellers to avoid carrying unnecessary personal information in wallets or purses, to store personal and financial documentation safely (preferably in hotel safes) and to always assume that any Wi-Fi network at any resort or public area could be compromised. Never use internet cafes or unsecure terminals at hotels or resorts to do your banking. If you suspect any form of fraud, contact your bank immediately to minimise damage.

10. **STAY AWAY FROM SCAMS:** When making a holiday booking, remember that if a special offer seems to be too good to be true, it probably is! Scammers create fake listings or misrepresent existing ones. Unless you are using someone you know and trust, avoid using unknown agents or intermediaries. Start with good research – use reliable search engines and cross reference properties with other websites, especially official websites like www.tourismgrading.co.za or www.kznedtea.gov.za or the TKZN Travel Guide. Always read reviews. Better still, find a telephone number and call the resort directly. Ask if a special offer is genuine or bogus and add a host of additional questions. If you don't get accurate or acceptable answers, stay away.

Also be vigilant when it comes to phone fraud. Never give out your CVV number to a caller and don't provide an OTP number to a caller warning about possible fraud on your cell phone account. If you have the slightest doubt, end the call and redial your service provider's help line to make sure that you are dealing with a bona fide problem.

ENDS.

Website: <https://www.zulu.org.za>

Facebook: Tourism KwaZulu-Natal

Instagram: Tourismkzn official

Twitter: @TourismKZN

Pinterest: KZN Tourism

Hashtags: #KZNHasItAll #Believelt

For media queries:

Nhlanhla Ngwenya: Tourism KwaZulu-Natal

031 366 7551 / 063 698 7455

nhlanhla@zulu.org.za