



Guided MTB trails last two and a half hours.



THE HLANE SUN-UP CYCLE

Pedal at the Crack of Dawn

“From the rest camp, we kept our eyes peeled along the initial pedal in the rhino and elephant section.”

What a way to wake up! The Hlane Sun-up Cycle is a guided activity, with as much focus on the environment and wildlife as on the actual riding. **By Jacques Marais**

TRIP PLANNER

GETTING THERE
The beauty of Swaziland is that you don't need a visa, only a passport, which makes for an easy weekend drive from KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. Hlane Royal National Park is situated near Simunye, about an hour from Manzini along the M3.

ACCOMMODATION
The campsite at Hlane's Ndlovu Camp offers true tranquility, with large trees to relax under, though no electricity. From R105 a person a night. Stay in cosy thatched rondavels from R415 a person a night and eat at the open-air restaurant, or opt for self-catering cottages from R445 a night.

BOOKINGS
Big Game Parks Central Reservations +268-2528-3943 reservations@biggameparks.org www.biggameparks.org

“What about the rhinos, lions and elephants?” is generally the first question the mountain-bike guides at Hlane Royal National Park, in the Kingdom of Swaziland, are asked. Never fear, you ride through the big game section for only about a kilometre before you enter another section of the park. Although you may still bump into the occasional dangerous creature – we saw crocodile drag marks! – your guides are there to keep you safe.

and elephant section. Once we made it through the first gate, it was an easy gravel cruise of around four kilometres to Mahlindza Dam. Coffee or tea and muffins can be arranged for you to enjoy when you reach the bird hide, with a passing parade of animals and birds to watch while you relax.

Thus fortified, we continued onto the Ngoti Road to navigate a track meandering through the typically dense thornveld vegetation. The riding is non-technical, except for the occasional patch of sand. Chances are good you'll bump into plains game while swooping amidst the stands of tamboti and knob-thorn.

Depending on the fitness levels and speed of your group, you can decide on the best route to follow back to Ndlovu Camp. And when you feel the glow of the African sunrise, all will be well with the world. 🐾

We enjoyed a dawn caffeine fix while the guides briefed us on riding in the bush, then got ready to saddle up. At Hlane, you can either bring your own bike or make use of one supplied by Big Game Parks at no extra charge.

From the rest camp, we kept our eyes peeled along the initial pedal in the rhino



Guides point out interesting tracks on the ride.

ABOUT THE RIDE

<p>GRADING Easy to intermediate</p>	<p>DURATION 2 to 3 hours</p>	<p>CONFIGURATION 18km</p>	<p>START POINT Ndlovu Camp</p>	<p>TERRAIN Track and dirt road</p>
<p>ACCESS Entry fee of R40 a day (free with a Wild Card) plus R230 a person for the guided ride</p>		<p>BIKE HIRE Standard bikes with perma-tube inners must be used for the guided ride. You can bring your own bike to explore selected day trails in the area with a guide.</p>		

Hlane Royal National Park lies in Swaziland, about five hours' drive from Gauteng.

