



CHEETAH PLAINS
PRIVATE GAME RESERVE SABI SAND

Cheetah Plains is the First Carbon-Negative Safari Lodge in Sabi Sand Nature Reserve
Awarded Africa's Leading Green Hotel by World Travel Awards in 2023



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Sabi Sand, South Africa (February 15, 2024): [Cheetah Plains](#), the ultimate safari experience in South Africa is pleased to announce the first carbon-negative safari lodge in the Sabi Sand Nature Reserve (SSNR). Recently awarded [Africa's Leading Green Hotel](#) by World Travel Awards in 2023, Cheetah Plains envelops and embraces sustainability on every level from its unique and award-winning architecture to its all-electric fleet of solar-powered 4x4 vehicles for a 100% off-grid game-drive experience. Pioneering the silent safari and driving a singular approach to renewable energy in hospitality in the wild, Cheetah Plains is committed to delivering an exceptional eco-luxury safari experience of the highest standards, preserving the environment, and leaving a positive, enduring impact. The sustainability initiatives that drive this approach include nature and wildlife conservation, energy efficiency, water stewardship, waste reduction, empowerment, education, and purchasing practices.

"This accolade speaks to the fact that Cheetah Plains operates on a negative emissions basis and shows that sustainable luxury can be achieved through responsible tourism and initiative. We are very proud and humbled by this award and will continue to strive towards leading the way in this field of sustainability," shares NJ van der Merwe, General Manager of Cheetah Plains.

The lodge's focus is on efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while offsetting above and beyond its emission output to exceed carbon neutrality. Credited for its carbon-negative results is the lodge's onsite production of alternative clean energy sources via solar power and best practices in sustainable operations and social impact. Breaking away from the safari industry's reliance on diesel and electric power to operate, the Cheetah Plains 'off the grid' experience harnesses the power of solar to provide an efficient renewable energy source made possible by developing a solar plant that includes the installation of 1,205

solar PV panels on the rooftops, as well as three Dual-axis PV solar trackers which follow the sun for the optimal input. The total solar installation generates an average of 550MWh per annum which is an offset of approximately ZAR 1 million (\$62,500 USD) of electricity from Eskom per annum or 530 Tonnes of CO2 emissions per annum. Introducing solar and electric vehicles reduces greenhouse gas emissions against a baseline scenario. Zero-emission game viewing drives the sustainable safari experience at Cheetah Plains. The twice-daily game drives that traverse over 20,200+ acres are taken in innovative Toyota Land Cruiser Electric Safari Vehicles powered by Tesla batteries that are recharged through solar energy.

“South Africa continues to face an ever-present energy crisis and we are focused on creating our own solutions. We’ve partnered with some of the world’s pre-eminent minds in the renewable energy field to provide clean energy solutions that drive both our hospitality and safari experiences here at Cheetah Plains,” shares Japie van Niekerk, owner of Cheetah Plains.

In an effort to conserve water and reduce plastic use, Cheetah Plains offers guests the option of refilled and sealed glass bottles of water in its villas through its trusted hydration solution partner [Topia](#). The lodge uses filtrated natural borehole water, which goes through a reverse osmosis system that purifies the water with a tested pH level of 9.5. Biodegradable packaging and paper are used throughout to replace plastic use. The lodge’s purchasing practice strives to make intentional decisions supporting a sustainable and local value chain. Examples of this are amenity brand Africology that holds the same standard of practice and is known for its locally sourced and fully biodegradable natural products. Cheetah Plains is also part of a community waste reduction management initiative, where its waste is divided and collected bi-weekly by local community operatives that make a living in reusing, recycling, and up-cycling materials.

Beyond renewable energy, Cheetah Plains equally focuses on responsible tourism efforts that leave a lasting impact locally. With 83 staff members, 53% being women, the lodge makes conscious efforts to hire locally, with 82% of employees living just outside the SSNR gate and surrounding areas and up to the White River and Hoedspruit areas. Committed to community upliftment through empowerment, education, and creating local employment, Cheetah Plains constructed the Lezagwa Utah Community Crèche in 2019. This facility supports the employment of teachers and assistants that care for over 60 children between 6 months and 5 years old and is the main center for local early childhood development.

“For a business of its size, Cheetah Plains has an impressively low Carbon Footprint, 210 tonnes of CO2e (even without offsets),” says Duncan Pritchard of [ETC-Africa](#), an accredited Carbon Footprint analyst registered with the South Africa Carbon Protocol who partnered with the lodge.

In Africa specifically, long-haul travel can have positive benefits as most of it is for wildlife and nature tourism. Africa's 8,400 protected areas generate \$48 billion in tourist spending that aids governments to protect nature and wildlife habitats, while also funding the management of private game reserves such as the Sabi Sand, diversifying and strengthening rural economies, and contributing to food security and poverty alleviation. Investing money through tourism in developing areas is a responsible act and if several thousand private game lodges and wildlife areas frequented by tourists no longer have a reason for existence, the loss would be devastating for biodiversity and climate change. By staying at lodges like

Cheetah Plains travelers can actually offset their travel and give back to communities that need support. A night at Cheetah Plains “costs” -1092Co2 in emissions. As an example, an Economy Class flight between New York City and Johannesburg (NYC to JNB) produces 1.7tCo2 in emissions but is offset by a 3-night stay at Cheetah Plains. Meanwhile, that same flight in Business Class produces 5tCo2 in emissions but is offset by a 5-night stay at Cheetah Plains.

Rates at Cheetah Plains begin at \$2,200 per person per day, all-inclusive based on six adults with a minimum 3-night stay, and \$1,550 per additional guest or \$770 per child 12 years of age and under. For reservations visit www.cheetahplains.com or contact reservations@cheetahplains.com or +27 79 694 8430.

About Cheetah Plains:

Opened in 2018, Cheetah Plains is home to the exclusive-use luxury villa and sustainable safari experience nestled in South Africa’s most celebrated wildlife area, the Sabi Sand Nature Reserve. The eco-luxe experience includes three private villas with four guest bush suites that accommodate up to eight guests each with its own formal lounge, living and dining areas, expansive swimming pool, and outdoor deck that operates off-grid. Each villa comes with a complete hospitality team consisting of an accomplished host, butler, culinary team, and spa therapist, as well as an expert field guide and tracker dedicated to you for the duration of your stay. Families and children of all ages are welcome to experience their own personalized safari, guided bush walks, wellness offerings, fitness gym, and tailored activities for kids. Cheetah Plains sets the standard in South Africa for zero-emission game viewing utilizing its fleet of solar-charged Land Cruiser Electric Safari vehicles. A luxury sustainable safari that is beyond expectations.

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