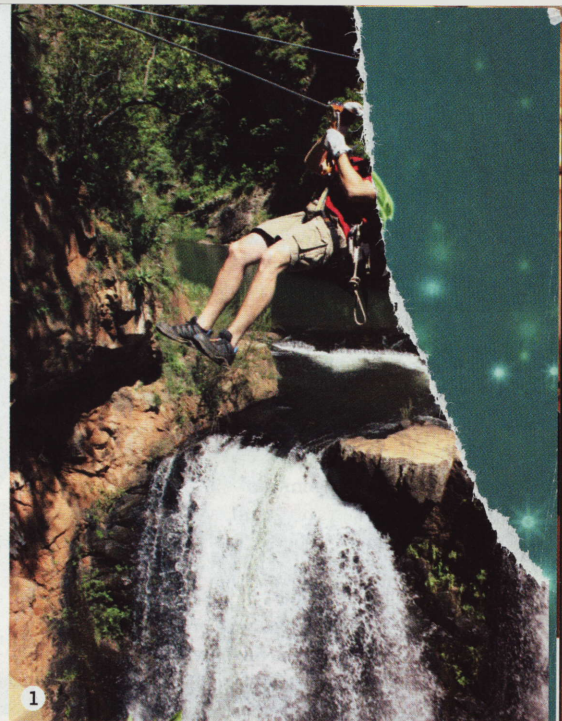


Let's face it – Word Cup fever aside, it's been another tough year, and anyone predicting a speedy recovery in 2011 is bound to be pronounced a die-hard optimist. Long-term survivors are going to be those who've learnt to sit tight, avoid debt and make do with less. So, unless you've racked and banked the air miles, put that long-haul trip on hold – but not your plans to experience life at full throttle.

We've travelled around the country to discover the best value holiday suggestions – with exciting adventures to uplift the soul, comfortable accommodation to kick back in and delicious dining options to tantalise more than just the taste buds, all within a three to four-hour radius of your city. So pack your bags, your favourite girl, a few friends or even the extended family, and rediscover why the best experiences in life don't come with a big price tag.



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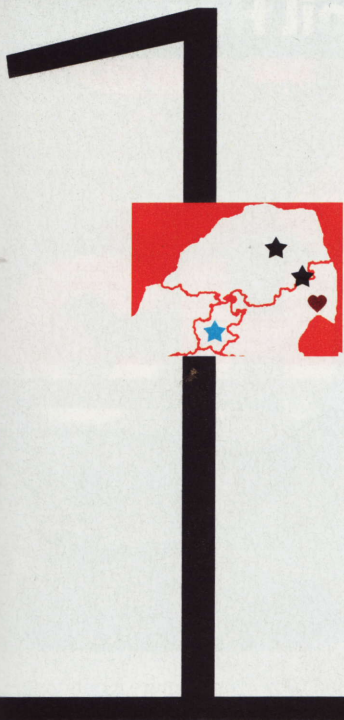
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Joburg

Some like boating on the Vaal, others rambling the Magaliesburg region, but this year our escape routes lead east to the undulating escarpment, and north to the lush Magoebaskloof forests. Here's what to do, and where to stay and dine in each.



including light refreshments, transport, lunch, guides and equipment). We've yet to meet anyone, regardless of age, who hasn't left feeling totally exhilarated. If that just whets the appetite, the same company arranges kloofing, horseriding, paintball, mountain biking – don't miss the tough Debengeni downhill run – and tubing.

☎ 083 866 1546

ACCOMMODATION Deep within the 422 hectare Kurisa Moya Conservancy are two well-hidden, self-contained tree houses, built high in the canopy of the indigenous forest. From your very private deck, three metres up, you're eye-to-eye with Samango monkeys and some 300 bird species that flit through the Kurisa Moya forest. For a larger group, book the original 1937 farmhouse, with five en-suite bedrooms, a large living and dining area with fireplace, well-equipped kitchen and deep verandahs to drink in the views.

Alternatively there's Thora Boloka, 2 a comfortable rustic stone cottage, with incredible views of the Kudu's River Valley. A real respite from the urban jungle, situated in the Houtbosdorp mountains, easy striking distance from Magoebaskloof or Tzaneen, Kurisa Moya is powered by solar, gas and candles. A swim in the farm dam will have you forgetting the city. Around R560 to R800 p/p. ☎ 015 276 1113 www.krm.co.za

DINING It's worth traversing the Magoebaskloof Pass just to dine in the 100-year-old gardens of Kings Walden Garden Manor 3 near Tzaneen. A worthy visit, not only for the breathtaking views and romantic surrounds,

but also for resident chef Stephen Jacobs – a self-proclaimed “food architect” – has been wowing visitors since taking tenure here a few years back. And should you dip too deeply into the wine list, you may choose to overnight here in one of the large, comfortable rooms (B&B R625 p/p). www.kingswalden.co.za

★ **ESCARPMENT, MPUMALANGA:** 3-4 hours from Jozi

ADVENTURE The Crystal Tour 4 is a five-hour excursion under the guidance of

Spoil Her... AND REAP THE REWARDS

Here are some of the most romantic places to show her she's worth a few nights' extravagance. Guaranteed, in these cases, the repayment for blowing the budget will be worth it.

♥ **TIMAMOOON** (near Hazyview) offers you a choice of six very secluded and sexy lodges (B&B and dinner R1 700–R2 500 p/p). You're all alone, aside from the birdsong emanating from the indigenous bush, the distant sound of water and a mesmerising view. Each lodge features an en-suite bedroom (one has two bedrooms) with four-poster, king-sized beds draped in mosquito netting, and private decks with plunge pools that overlook the forested gorge through which the Sabie River cascades. Luxurious bathrooms and outdoor showers enjoy similar views. A real winner. www.timamoonlodge.co.za

★ **MAGOEBAKLOOF, NORTHERN PROVINCE:** 3-4 hours from Jozi

ADVENTURE When last did you whoop like a kid? Experience the pure delight of foefie sliding across rivers and waterfalls, high above the forest floor, with the two-and-a-half hour Magoebaskloof Canopy Tour 1 (R450 p/p