

LOWVELD TRAILS CO.

APPRENTICE TRAILS GUIDE COURSE

On the Lowveld Trails Co. Apprentice Trails Guide Course, candidates will receive personalised attention from their course facilitators and as much first-hand experience as possible.

Although the primary objective is to be signed-off to enter the Apprentice Trails Guide Program at the end of the 28 days, we place strong emphasis on the ethos surrounding Trails Guiding, the necessary bush skills required for multi-day Trails and holistic environmental interpretation.

Passion. Experience. Quality.

Scheduled Courses

01 - 28 March 2026

01 - 28 July 2026

01 - 28 November 2026

The 28-day FGASA-accredited course is limited to 8 candidates, and run by the most experienced Trails Guide Course facilitator team in the industry.

About the Course

The course is divided into three phases:

1 Advanced Rifle Handling (ARH) & Trails Guide Theory

We spend the first eleven days at our rustic Tented Camp in the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve. Here we commence with the Advanced Rifle Handling (ARH) theory, training and assessment components. We also start with introductory walks during which candidates may begin logging walking hours and dangerous game encounters towards Apprentice Trails Guide. The majority of the Trails Guide theory will be covered during this phase of the course.

2 The 3-night 'Primitive Trail'

The next four days of the course will be spent out on a 'Primitive Trail', without support from a camp or vehicle. Nights are spent sleeping in the open under the stars (no tents), with each participant taking turns at "watch duty", ensuring the groups safety. All food and equipment are carried in backpacks, and we obtain our water by digging in the riverbeds (seasonal rainfall dependant).

3 Walking Hours, Encounters, Trails Guide Theory & Exam

From day 16 we are based back at our Tented Camp in the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve. The focus here is to log well beyond the minimum requirement of 50 walking hours and 10 potentially dangerous game encounters. Between walks we concentrate on the remaining Trails Guide theory modules. Once all the lectures have been completed, there will be a brief study period before the FGASA Trails Guide Theory exam takes place.



The course is intense, yet practical, with an average of seven hours spent walking most days.

Our Tented Camp, set under giant Jackalberry trees along a dry riverbed, is basic, but comfortable, providing an authentic and interactive experience. You will log priceless walking hours and dangerous game encounters under experienced mentors who will guide you through the process of approaching and retreating from dangerous game on foot.

A typical day starts with a wake-up call prior to sunrise. As the birds announce the approaching day, we enjoy coffee, rusks and a light breakfast before heading out on a four to five hour walk, as soon as sufficient daylight allows.

We return to camp before midday for a well-earned brunch, before the daily debrief, a short lecture, or a few hours free to shower, read or study. At around 3pm we head out again for a two to three hour walk, with the intention of gaining more valuable hours and encounters.

Dinner and a crackling campfire await us back at camp, usually followed by an open air shower and an early night after the exertions of the day.

At times we will be walking for long periods in rugged conditions, so candidates should be prepared to get hot and dirty, all part of being a Trails Guide operating in Africa's wild spaces.

This is an unmatched opportunity for aspiring Trails Guides to be intensively trained and mentored by experienced and active FGASA Trails Guides and Mentors.

To view a comprehensive description of each Mentor's qualifications and experience, please visit the 'Our Team' page at www.lowveldtrails.co.za.

About the Campus

Bateleur Property, Timbavati PNR

Our authentic Tented Camp is unfenced and erected under magnificent Jackalberry Trees prior to each course. The entire camp is removed upon group departure, ensuring minimal environmental impact according to our 'no-trace' ethic. There is no electricity, Wi-Fi or mobile phone signal, allowing us the opportunity to tune into the rhythm of the bush without any distractions.



Canvas dome tents house 2 candidates each. A mattress and pillow is provided, but bring along your sleeping bag and whatever other bedding you may require.

Ablutions are simple, yet unmatched. Comfortable seats crouch over pit-fall toilets and canvas bush showers stand under a canopy of trees, open to views of the surrounding bush.

The communal area is around the campfire or at the kitchen area where our cook whips up wholesome meals on a gas cooker and an open fire.



What to Pack

Trail Equipment

- Backpack (for the Primitive Trail)
- Daypack (for water, snacks, etc.)
- Sleeping bag/Blanket & sheet
- Water bottles (min. capacity of 2.5l)
- Head torch (spare batteries)
- Binoculars
- FGASA Logbook (if you have one)
- Notebook/Passport
- ID book/Passport
- Compass (not compulsory)

Trail Kit

- Walking Shoes (already worn in)
- Ankle Gaiters
- Belt
- Neutral Coloured Clothing
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Flip-flops
- Sarong - can be used as blanket, sun protection & towel.
- Rain Jacket for Oct to Apr (just in case!)

Personal Essentials

- Sunscreen
- Mosquito Repellent (Mar & Nov)
- Toothbrush, toothpaste and additional toiletries
- Towel, face cloth & soap
- Additional snacks you may want
- Your own soft drinks / alcoholic beverages

Washing powder will be provided to students during the course.

Book your Spot on the Course

28-Day Apprentice Trails Guide Course

2026 Course Dates:

01 - 28 March

01 - 28 July

01 - 28 November

2026 Course Rate:

RSA Citizen Rate: ZAR 81 400 / candidate

International Rate: ZAR 97 680 / candidate

50% deposit payment secures your spot.

Contact us at reservations@lowveldtrails.co.za to check availability and book your spot.

Why Choose Lowveld Trails Co.?

- An industry specialist. The only FGASA accredited delivery partner that conducts Trails Guide Courses exclusively.
- The most experienced Trails Guide Course facilitator team in the industry.
- Courses take place exclusively in prime big game areas in the open system of the Greater Kruger National Park.
- Fair & competitive Trails Guide Course price.

Included

- ARH training & assessment (two opportunities)
- Trails Guide theory presentations & discussions
- Lowveld Trails Co. Lecture Guide
- Conservation Levies
- CyberTracker Track & Sign Assessment
- FGASA Trails Guide Workbook, Study Guide & Dangerous Game Logbook
- FGASA Trails Guide Theory Exam
- Dangerous Animals of Southern and Eastern Africa (Book by Jeff Williams and Patricia Goodwin).
- Logging walking hours & dangerous game encounters with experienced mentors
- 3-Night Primitive Trail
- Additional Primitive Trail equipment (excluding backpack & sleeping bag)
- Lowveld Trails Co. Cap, Tracker Card & a small notebook
- Visit to the Graeme Naylor Museum, Timbavati Private Nature Reserve
- All meals, juice, tea & coffee for the duration of the course

EXcluded

- Transport to / from Hoedspruit, Limpopo
- FGASA Membership Fees
- PFTC Unit Standards
- Soft Drinks and Alcoholic Beverages

What you need to know:

Meeting & End Point

Timbavati Headquarters

Meeting Time

12h00 midday on Day 1

End Time

By 11h00 on Day 28

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