

6 OF THE BEST

3 MADI A THAVHA CRAFT SHOP & GALLERY Brighten up your lounge

At Madi a Thavha Mountain Lodge near Louis Trichardt there's a craft shop on the premises where the colours of the handbags, tablecloths and jewellery will blow your mind.

"Venda is a colourful place," says owner Marcelle Bosch. "We encourage local artists to create quality products and we support them by selling these artworks in our shop."

Next door, at the Dancing Fish Gallery, you can buy clay pots, wooden figurines and baskets decorated with beads.

Why you should go: Madi a Thavha is a wonderful one-stop shop if you don't have time to explore the whole region.

More things to do: Watch artists at work, learn a thing or two about the symbolism of the beadwork, and enjoy a snack and a cup of coffee.

Where to stay: Madi a Thavha has various accommodation options, including self-catering, B&B and full board.

How to get there: Drive west from Louis Trichardt on the R522 for about 9 km and turn right at the Madi a Thavha sign. Drive another 3 km along a dirt road.

Accommodation rates: From R425 per person per night for self-catering accommodation.

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HIGHLY STRUNG. Colourful beads are often used as decoration in Venda culture. The craft shop at Madi a Thavha Mountain Lodge sells decorated handbags, tablecloths and jewellery.



RELAX TO THE MAX. Igababa Cabin on Zvakanaka farm has a splash pool outside and a wooden deck with a view of the mountains.

4 ZVAKANAKA FARM Bathe with the birds

This farm in the eastern part of the Soutpansberg is a good destination for a romantic getaway. There's the private Igababa Cabin for two, a family cottage for four, and two secluded campsites with a communal ablution block.

Even if you prefer to shower, the double bath under a tree at Igababa Cabin is irresistible. It's so big that your bath at home will feel like a basin; two people and a small hippo can soak in comfort. From the bath you have a wonderful view of the mountain.

Why you should go: The bath is next to a bird feeding spot. Scatter some of the supplied seed and you can watch firefinch, yellow-fronted canary and bronze mannikin feed metres away. You might even see an African crowned eagle soaring overhead.

More things to do: There are numerous footpaths on the farm and a hiking trail up the mountain.

Where to stay: At Igababa Cabin, of course! It sleeps two, so it's great for a romantic break. Besides the outdoor bath, there's also a bathroom with a shower, a kitchen, and a lounge/bedroom with double bed and a television. Outside, there's a wooden deck with easy chairs, a splash pool with a view of the mountain and a braai spot – firewood is supplied.

The four-sleeper Madala's Cottage has beautiful views, but it's less private.

Rates: Igababa Cabin R530 per night for two people and Madala's Cottage R500, plus R125 per extra person. Both are self-catering. Camping costs R60 per adult and R30 per child aged 2 to 12.

How to get there: From Louis Trichardt, drive north on the N1 for about 11 km and turn right into the second road to Witvlag. Follow this dirt road for exactly 1 km. The entrance to Igababa Cabin is on the left.

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