Port St Johns is an idyllic little town in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province, set amongst subtropical jungle and 350 metre-high cliffs at the mouth of the Mzimvubu ("Home of the Hippo"), South Africa’s fourth-largest river.

It is the only town on the Wild Coast, which stretches 270km between the Kei (to the south) and Mtamvuma Rivers. The area’s inaccessibly rugged landscape, and its political isolation during the Apartheid era, have given it a distinctive ambience, with a sense of having been less affected by outside influences.

"PSJ" as it is affectionately known, was established as a supply port in the 1840’s, when ships sailed up the coast to Durban and beyond. It operated as such into the 1940’s when siltation made it unviable. These days, it is a supply centre for the surrounding rural areas.

It consists of two villages, which are 5km apart.

First Beach is the bustling shopping centre, with supermarkets and wholesalers, a street market and taxi rank. There are also several restaurants and a coffee shop, as well as a museum and art gallery. Second Beach is smaller and slower-paced. There are one or two restaurants and a few buildings clustered around a beautiful, palm-fringed lagoon.

This is Pondoland, home to the Pondo People, one of the groups which make up the Xhosa. The land is administered by tribal authorities, with kings, chiefs and headmen upholding traditional values and law, and many age-old practices still prevail against the modern way.

Port St Johns is surrounded by a particularly rare type of jungle known as Pondoland Scarp Forest. It’s a botanist’s dream, and contains species such as White Stinkwood, Forest Bushwillow and Umzimbeet (Mthimbiti), as well as critically-endangered fauna such as the Samango Monkey and Cape Parrot. Other bird species abound, with the Trumpeter Hornbill being a raucously-noticeable member of the community, while the call of the African Fish Eagle is often heard.

The spectacular Sardine Run occurs between June and August each year, when huge shoals of fish swim north and attract hordes of predators. PSJ is also famous for its angling, with favourite spots such as Poenskop and the Mzimvubu Estuary within easy reach.

In short, Port St Johns offers a tremendously beautiful, extremely rare and practically undiscovered experience - a true taste of Africa. In fact, the scenery, culture, flora and fauna are so quintessentially African that the area has appeared in many well-known movies, depicting scenes from all over the continent.