the maloti drakensberg
experience
The person who practices ecotourism has the opportunity of immersing him or herself in nature in a way that most people cannot enjoy in their routine, urban existences. This person will eventually acquire a consciousness and knowledge of the natural environment, together with its cultural aspects, that will convert him or her into somebody keenly involved in conservation issues...

HÉCTOR CEBALLOS-LASCURÁIN
INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ECOTOURISM EXPERT
The whole region is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +2).

**Travel tips for the Maloti Drakensberg region**

**Moshoeshoe's Day** (Lesotho)  11 Mar
**Human Rights Day** (SA)  21 Mar
**Easter Monday**  Variable
**Ascension Day** (Lesotho)  Variable
**Africa/Hero's Day** (Lesotho)  25 May
**Freedom Day** (SA)  27 Apr
**Worker's Day**  1 May
**National Women's Day** (SA)  9 Aug
**Heritage Day** (SA)  24 Sep
**Independence Day** (Lesotho)  4 Oct
**Christmas Day**  25 Dec
**Boxing/Family Day** (Lesotho/SA)  26 Dec

**Currency**
The Rand (R) is divided into 100 cents. Most traveller's cheques are accepted at banks and at some shops and hotels. Major credit cards are accepted in most towns.

**Interchangeably in Lesotho. Note that Maloti are not accepted in South Africa in place of rand.**

**Road travel**
South African roads are mostly tarred, and generally in good condition. Rural roads may require caution.

**Petrol and diesel**
Petrol and diesel are available in most South African towns.

**Driving licences**
International driving permits are recognized in South Africa. Driving licences from most countries are also valid for up to twelve months. They should be printed in English, or accompanied by a certified translation.

**Car hire**
To hire a car, travellers must have held a valid driving licence for five years. Most airports offer car hire facilities. National contact numbers for some of the main car hire companies are:
- Avis: +27 (0)861 016 622
- Hertz: +27 (0)861 600 136
- Imperial Car Rental: +27 (0)861 131 000
- Europcar: +27 (0)860 011 344

**Visa requirements**
All foreign visitors are required to carry a passport, and travel documents. Driving licences issued in most countries are also valid, up to a period of 6 months. They should be printed in English, or accompanied by a certified translation.

**Medical facilities**
Medical facilities are good in urban areas, but more limited elsewhere. Many doctors and hospitals require immediate cash payment. Comprehensive health insurance is recommended. A leaflet on health precautions is available from the South African High Commission.

**Climate**
Climate: Moshoeshoe (altitude 1,000m) has a mediterranean climate with mild, damp winters and hot, wet summers. In high-lying areas temperatures fluctuate enormously, even in summer. Snow has been recorded in summer. Jumping Bureau (altitude 2,500m) is snowy. Summer (December to February) can get very hot. Summer and spring are characterized by frequent thunder storms.

**Interchangeable in South Africa in place of rand.**

**Telephones**
All towns have modern telephone services. National and international calls can be made at a telephone card office. All foreign currency exchange can be conducted in Maseru. Banks and some hotels accept major credit cards. Satellite connections are also available to some countries. Local public telephone services are offered by both government and private operators.

**Postal services**
Post offices are open Mon to Fri 08h00–16h30, Sat 08h00–11h30. Some close for lunch from 13:00–14:00. Numerous courier services are also available.

**International air travel**
The national airline is South African Airways (SAA) (website: www.flysaa.com). Many other airlines operate in South Africa and offer frequent flights from all over the world. Flights fly directly to Moshoeshoe I International Airport in Lesotho, or to Durban, Bloemfontein or East London, among others. Flights are also available to Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town. Flights to South Africa take approximately 2 hours to fly to Johannesburg, 1 hour to Cape Town, and 45 minutes to Port Elizabeth.

**Tourism**
Tourism is an important industry in South Africa. Many millions of tourists visit the country each year. There are three main regions: Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Western Cape. The Eastern Cape is a major tourist destination, with its beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and its rich cultural heritage. The Northern Cape is a more remote area, with its vast deserts and its rich history. The Western Cape is a major tourist destination, with its beautiful beaches and its rich cultural heritage.

**KwaZulu-Natal**
KwaZulu-Natal is a province in South Africa. It is known for its beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and its rich cultural heritage. The province is home to many major tourist destinations, including Durban, and the Durban Beaches.

**Limpopo**
Limpopo is a province in South Africa. It is known for its beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and its rich cultural heritage. The province is home to many major tourist destinations, including Kruger National Park.

**North West**
North West is a province in South Africa. It is known for its beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and its rich cultural heritage. The province is home to many major tourist destinations, including the Vgie Nature Reserve.

**Western Cape**
Western Cape is a province in South Africa. It is known for its beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and its rich cultural heritage. The province is home to many major tourist destinations, including the Cape Town Metropolitan Area.

**Visa requirements**
All foreign visitors are required to carry a passport, and travel documents. Driving licences issued in most countries are also valid, up to a period of 6 months. They should be printed in English, or accompanied by a certified translation.

**Road travel**
South African roads are mostly tarred, and generally in good condition. The provincial and national roads are well maintained.

**Currency**
The Rand (R) is divided into 100 cents. Most traveller’s cheques are accepted at banks and at some shops and hotels. Major credit cards are accepted in most towns.

**Visa requirements**
All foreign visitors are required to carry a passport, and travel documents. Driving licences issued in most countries are also valid, up to a period of 6 months. They should be printed in English, or accompanied by a certified translation.

**Medical facilities**
Medical facilities are good in urban areas, but more limited elsewhere. Many doctors and hospitals require immediate cash payment. Comprehensive health insurance is recommended. A leaflet on health precautions is available from the South African High Commission.

**Climate**
Climate: Moshoeshoe (altitude 1,000m) has a mediterranean climate with mild, damp winters and hot, wet summers. In high-lying areas temperatures fluctuate enormously, even in summer. Snow has been recorded in summer. Jumping Bureau (altitude 2,500m) is snowy. Summer (December to February) can get very hot. Summer and spring are characterized by frequent thunder storms.

**Interchangeable in South Africa in place of rand.**

**Telephones**
All towns have modern telephone services. National and international calls can be made at a telephone card office. All foreign currency exchange can be conducted in Maseru. Banks and some hotels accept major credit cards. Satellite connections are also available to some countries. Local public telephone services are offered by both government and private operators.

**Postal services**
Post offices are open Mon to Fri 08h00–16h30, Sat 08h00–11h30. Some close for lunch from 13:00–14:00. Numerous courier services are also available.

**International air travel**
The national airline is South African Airways (SAA) (website: www.flysaa.com). Many other airlines operate in South Africa and offer frequent flights from all over the world. Flights fly directly to Moshoeshoe I International Airport in Lesotho, or to Durban, Bloemfontein or East London, among others. Flights are also available to Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town. Flights to South Africa take approximately 2 hours to fly to Johannesburg, 1 hour to Cape Town, and 45 minutes to Port Elizabeth.

**Tourism**
Tourism is an important industry in South Africa. Many millions of tourists visit the country each year. There are three main regions: Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Western Cape. The Eastern Cape is a major tourist destination, with its beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and its rich cultural heritage. The Northern Cape is a more remote area, with its vast deserts and its rich history. The Western Cape is a major tourist destination, with its beautiful beaches and its rich cultural heritage.

**KwaZulu-Natal**
KwaZulu-Natal is a province in South Africa. It is known for its beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and its rich cultural heritage. The province is home to many major tourist destinations, including Durban, and the Durban Beaches.

**Limpopo**
Limpopo is a province in South Africa. It is known for its beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and its rich cultural heritage. The province is home to many major tourist destinations, including Kruger National Park.

**North West**
North West is a province in South Africa. It is known for its beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and its rich cultural heritage. The province is home to many major tourist destinations, including the Vgie Nature Reserve.

**Western Cape**
Western Cape is a province in South Africa. It is known for its beautiful beaches, beautiful mountains and its rich cultural heritage. The province is home to many major tourist destinations, including the Cape Town Metropolitan Area.
EXPLORING THE MALOTI DRakensberg ROUTE

the maloti drakensberg experience
exploring the maloti drakensberg route

THE MALOTI AND DRAKENSBERG MOUNTAINS in Lesotho and South Africa contain irreplaceable resources: unique but fragile ecosystems that host a high concentration of endemic plant species, places of cultural significance, and important wetland systems that are a vital source of freshwater. These features, together with the extremely appealing scenery, give these mountains the potential to become an internationally preferred nature- and culture-based tourism destination.

It was against this backdrop that South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho launched the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Project (MDTP) in 2003, fulfilling the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two countries in 2001. The project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the World Bank, has the conservation of the globally significant biodiversity and cultural heritage of this region as its main objective. Linked to the conservation effort is promoting the sustainable utilization of the many economic opportunities – especially tourism – arising from the wealth of natural and cultural resources of the region.

Since the preparatory phase of the MDTP in 1999 there has been a strong focus on the need to support the marketing of tourism products, offered both by existing operators and by new ventures, especially in Lesotho. To this end, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed in Durban in May 2006 by a number of key tourism players in the region:

- Eastern Cape Tourism Board
- Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife
- Free State Tourism Authority
- Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation
- South African National Parks
- Tourism KwaZulu-Natal

The purpose of this MOA is to establish a framework of co-operation and collaboration based on a shared vision: to develop and position the area as a prime tourist destination. The Maloti Drakensberg Experience aims to showcase the tourism products of the area, with its breathtaking scenic beauty, in support of the conservation and development goals of the MDTP. It also carries a clear conservation message which we hope will encourage visitors to behave responsibly and to protect the globally significant resources of the Maloti and Drakensberg Mountains.

We trust that you will enjoy your stay in the area and that your experiences will inspire you to return to these mountains for years to come.
table of contents

8 introduction and maps
22 people of the mountains
36 hiking and walking
46 pony trekking
56 fly-fishing
66 rock art

78 floral splendour
88 birding
98 stories in stone
108 engineering exploits
118 adventure tourism
129 directory
The Maloti Drakensberg Mountains are an exquisite and mysterious living landscape. The formidable cliffs, rocky gorges, rugged mountainsides and wilderness areas contain an abundance of life and a colourful kaleidoscope of cultures.

This book aims to unlock the treasures of the Malotl Drakensberg and promote the development of sustainable community tourism. This is one way of contributing to the livelihoods of the people who are ultimately the custodians of these precious treasures.
the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park – a world heritage site

This park incorporates 200 km of the Drakensberg Mountains, ranging in altitude from 1 600 metres to higher than 3 000 metres above sea level. It was declared a world heritage site due to its globally significant biodiversity, rich cultural and historical significance, and exceptional natural beauty.

An extensive network of trails allows the visitor access to a vast wilderness area that is carefully managed to ensure protection of its natural and unspoilt state. It is envisaged that the neighbouring Sehlabathebe National Park in Lesotho and the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park in South Africa will be combined into a transfrontier park.

Below Game Pass Shelter, uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park. Photo: Boyd Esott
Previous The Drakensberg at sunset from Vergelegen, uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park. Photo: Fe

culture and history
The captivating human history of these mountains dates back many thousands of years to the Stone Age. Much of the San rock art is still intact. Wars and migrations have led to the area being occupied by many different people over the centuries, reflected in the fascinating and diverse cultures of the people who live in the region today. The region is home to 26 different ethnic groups – many of whom still live a traditional way of life.

The mountains themselves have a pre-history of geological events – spanning more than 300 million years – which formed the southern Africa we know today. Embedded in the sediments of the geological history is a rich fossil record, including dinosaur footprints estimated to be more than 200 million years old. The oldest known dinosaur eggs with embryos still intact were discovered in the Golden Gate Highlands National Park.

Above High-altitude tarn at Sehlabathebe National Park, Lesotho. Photo: AC

why are wetlands important?
There is growing understanding of the significance of wetlands, which support an amazing diversity of life and play a role in flood attenuation and in trapping, cleaning and slowly releasing rainwater. Unfortunately they are under threat since the fertility of the soil makes them attractive for grazing and planting crops. The Ramsar convention recognizes wetlands of international importance.

a vital water source
The Maloti Drakensberg Mountains represent one of the most important water catchment areas in southern Africa. Presently, the industrialized province of Gauteng in South Africa has approximately 50 percent of its water needs met from these mountains. This has been made possible by a transfrontier water transfer scheme – the Lesotho Highlands Water Project – which traps water in huge dams high in the mountains and delivers it to where it is needed via a series of tunnels and canals. It is estimated that by the year 2030, 70 percent of the people of the region will be reliant on water from these mountains.

biodiversity of the region
The Maloti Drakensberg region is renowned for its rich biodiversity. It contains many species of fauna and flora that are found nowhere else in the world.

The lush indigenous forests offer cool respite from a hot day’s hiking. The grasslands contain an amazing array of flowering plants and small animals. The grasses alone display great diversity, being represented by more than 100 species.

Among the larger animals are baboons and antelope such as Eland, Oribi and Rhebuck. If you are lucky you could see Black-backed Jackal, Serval and Caracal. There are at least 24 species of snake. Most are harmless, but you should be alert for the poisonous ones: Rinkhals (South African Spitting Cobra), Puffadder and Berg Adder. The region is also rich in birdlife, with over 350 recorded species. It provides homes for at least 10 internationally threatened bird species and 40 species which are found nowhere else in the world.

The high-altitude rivers and tarns contain the aquatic larvae of insects including midges, mayflies and stoneflies as well as a number of endemic shrimp species. They also hold the highly endangered Maloti Minnow – until recently thought to have been eradicated by the exotic (non-native) trout introduced over a century ago.

The value of these mountains is recognized internationally through the World Heritage status of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park and the Ramsar listing of two wetland areas (namely the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park and the Lets’eng-la-Letsie wetland complex in Lesotho). This is reinforced nationally by the growing number of parks and conservation areas in Lesotho and South Africa. (See pages 14-21.) Parts of this region are also the focus of the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation Area. Funded by the Global Environment Fund, it has established ways in which South Africa and Lesotho can work together for the conservation and sustainable development of the region.
Another exciting feature are the so-called “paleogenic” invertebrates – similar to ancient fossil species – which are generally limited to high mountain zones. They include velvet worms, carnivorous slugs, millipedes and centipedes – each of which has its role to play in sensitive ecosystems.

**caring for the environment**

- Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints.
- Avoid walking off the paths, as this quickly leads to soil erosion and enables alien species to become established.
- Uncontrolled wildfires are dangerous and destructive. Use camping stoves rather than open fires. Make sure matches and cigarette ends are properly extinguished and take them away with you.
- Baboons and other wild animals can become a danger to people if fed. Don’t feed any animals, no matter how cute.
- Although some snakes are dangerous, they are an important part of the ecosystem. If you see a snake, don’t kill it – stand clear or walk round it.
- Flowers are important in the ecosystem. Admire their beauty, but never pick them – they may be rare, endangered or endemic. Picking a flower could contribute to its extinction as the plant will fail to reseed itself.
- When hiking, remember that others will use the same route as you. So when using the toilet, dig a small hole – well off the path and far from streams – and cover it well afterwards. Avoid using sandstone shelters, as these have become badly polluted in this way.
- The rock art is of global importance, irreplaceable and easily damaged. Help to preserve it by not touching, tracing, wetting or interfering with it in any way.

**what does the future hold?**

Unfortunately much of this mountain region is under threat. The threats include loss of land to agriculture and housing estate developments, poor agricultural practices such as overgrazing and uncontrolled burning, alien plant invasion and unwise land use decisions. The result is a steady loss in biodiversity. Some areas have been declared “biodiversity hotspots”; they contain globally threatened species faced with extinction.

Among the biggest threats to the region are the growing numbers of people who depend on these mountains for their survival. Those charged with conservation are faced with the difficult task of balancing development needs with the sensitivity of this ecologically important region.

Many strategies are being, or could be, applied to try and achieve this balance. Landowners are encouraged to consider future implications of their land-use decisions. Time and money spent now can safeguard land for the future. Examples include the careful use of fire as a management tool, eradicating alien plants and rehabilitating damaged land (including erosion control and revegetation with indigenous species).

Developing sustainable tourism is one of the ways in which the people of the region can derive livelihoods, with limited impact on the environment.

**the maloti route – partnerships across borders**

The Maloti Route is an exciting example of collaboration to grow tourism across an international, and national boundaries. It is an initiative bringing together tourism operators in South Africa and Lesotho to increase benefits to the people of the region. The route was launched by the Ministers of the Environment for the two countries and has grown from strength to strength. The Maloti Route will be extended to become the Maloti Drakensberg Route, which will include Lesotho and its neighbouring South African provinces.
This popular region is easily accessible. It is a great base from which to explore the Maloti Mountains. The region has many craft stores and boasts the highest road pass in southern Africa. There are many sites where dinosaur footprints can be seen.

**getting around the region**

From Harrismith en route to Lesotho, the picturesque R712 takes you past Sterkfontein Dam and the Basotho Cultural Village. The road goes through the scenic QwaQwa and Golden Gate Highlands National Parks to the charming village of Clarens, with its arts and crafts and many places to eat and stay. From here you can follow the R711 to Fairesburg. Enter Lesotho at Caledonspoort gate, and drive on to Botha Bothe.

From Botha Bothe one option is to head east along the A1 towards the New Oxbow Lodge, a popular destination offering skiing when there is snow and fly-fishing in the summer. Move on to Mokhotlong in the Eastern Highlands and then to the beautiful views from the top of Sani Pass, leading into South Africa. This spectacular route is the original “Roof of Africa” rally route, taking you through rugged mountain passes, with much of the trip at very high altitude (above 3,000 m).

Alternatively, head west from Botha Bothe along the A1 through Hlotse (Leribe), Peka, Teya-Teyaneng and on to Maseru. This route is of particular interest to craft-lovers, with the Leribe Craft Centre at Hlotse and many interesting craft shops in Teya-Teyaneng. You can also travel south on the B27 outside Botha Bothe to Ts’ehlananyane National Park, where you can walk, look for birds and enjoy the high-altitude flora.

Katse Dam, offering unforgettable tours of the dam wall, is also accessed from this route. Take the B25 southwards from Hlotse. You will pass Bokong Nature Reserve on the way.
This region abounds with natural and scenic splendour. It is characterized by steep gorges and spectacular waterfalls. It boasts the highest mountains and longest waterfall in southern Africa.

Lesotho eastern highlands and kwazulu-natal

Getting around the region

The key route leading into the southern Drakensberg is the scenic R617 to Underberg, from which you can reach areas like Bushman’s Neck, Garden Castle, Drakensberg Gardens and Cobham. If you have a rough-road vehicle you can also travel from Himeville up the spectacular Sani Pass to the Lesotho Highlands. The route from the top of Sani Pass to Mokhotlong passes Thabana Ntlenyana, the highest peak in southern Africa (3 482 m).

From Underberg you can continue on the R617 through Swartberg to the historic town of Kokstad, then on to Matatiele and into Lesotho at Qacha’s Neck. From there you can reach Sehlabathebe National Park.

To reach Giant’s Castle take the Mooi River turn-off from the N3, go into Mooi River, and follow the Giant’s Castle signs to the reserve. To access the dramatic central and northern Drakensberg you can take the R74 to Winterton. Follow the R600 from there, and look out for the clear signposts to Cathedral Peak, Champagne Castle, Monk’s Cowl and Cathkin.

To reach the northern Drakensberg, continue through Winterton along the R74 to Bergville. Approximately 30 km beyond Bergville you can follow the signs to the unforgettable Royal Natal National Park, with its magnificent rocky gorges, deep rock pools, and exciting hiking trails.

If you are driving along the N3 from the north, the best way to access the northern and central Drakensberg is to take the N5 from Harrismith toward the Free State. Turn left onto the R712, and left again onto the R74 which will take you past Sterkfontein Dam and down the scenic Oliviershoek Pass towards Bergville and Winterton.

Protected areas

- The uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site, including Royal Natal National Park
- Coleford Nature Reserve
- Spioenkop Dam Nature Reserve
- Ntsikeni Vlei Nature Reserve
- Mount Currie Nature Reserve
- Ezemvelo Wildlife central reservations: +27 (0)33 845 1000
- Sehlabathebe National Park National Environmental Secretariat of Lesotho: +266 22 311 767
This region offers road trips from Maseru (the capital of Lesotho) through beautiful scenic landscapes with mountain passes, deep valleys and gently undulating hills.

West and Central Lesotho

Getting around the region

From Ladybrand in South Africa enter Lesotho at Maseru Bridge. From Maseru you can drive to Roma by taking the A2 to Mazenod, the A3 to Mokema, and the A5 to Roma. From here you can continue to Ramabanta, and on via a spectacular mountain route to Semonkong – boasting the Maletsunyane Falls, the second highest in southern Africa. Don’t miss the opportunity to visit the historically significant Thaba Bosiu mountain fortress, birthplace of the Basotho nation, not far from Maseru.

Alternatively, drive along the A3 to Likalaneng, next to the Mohale Dam, and on to Thaba Tseka via the breathtaking Molimo Nthuse Pass. This route takes you past the Basotho Pony Trekking Centre. From Thaba Tseka you could continue east on the A3 through the Senqu valley to Mokhotlong, and then to Sani Pass on the A1, or you could travel north on the A8 to Katse Dam, then on to Hotse and Ficksburg. With a rough-road vehicle you could drive the rugged and picturesque route to Sehlabathebe via Sehonghong by following the A3 to Taung, the A4 to Matebeng, and the B34 to Sehlabathebe.

The A2 from Maseru heads south to the historical Morija village, and on to Motsekuoa. From here one option is to head south-east on the B25 towards Malealea, with its stunning gorge, rock pools, hiking and pony trails and rock art. Alternatively, stay on the A2 south towards Mateleng, through the scenic corridor of Mohale’s Hoek, and on to the historically fascinating southern route which passes through the Quthing region, past Moorosi, and on to Qacha’s Neck.

Another route from Maseru heads north on the A1 towards Botha Bothe. This route is known for its exciting craft shops, particularly at Teya-Teyaneng and Hotse.
This region is fascinating not only for its historical and prehistoric relics, with numerous rock art and fossil sites, but also for its scenic drives through beautiful green valleys with crystal clear streams and crisp, clean air. The region is known for its wildwater fly-fishing, and is an excellent spot for flowers in the right season.

**Southern Lesotho and North-Eastern Cape**

**Getting around the region**

From Maclear you can take a scenic round trip, starting on the R56 through the quiet, picturesque towns of Ugie and Elliot, then along the R58 to Barkly East, and finally the R396 which will take you through the quaint hamlet of Rhodes, and back to Maclear via the stunning Naude’s Nek Mountain Pass. This route offers various rock art sites, dinosaur footprints, and some of the country’s best fly-fishing streams. You can also drive north from Rhodes to the Tifindell ski resort for exciting winter sport options.

Another option from Maclear is to follow the R56 north-east to Mount Fletcher, and on to Matatiele. From here you can enter Lesotho at Qacha’s Neck and head west along the A4 through Moorosi, with its historical San paintings and the mountain fortress of Chief Moorosi, dating back to 1879. From here the A4 route takes you through some of the most remote and unspoilt terrain in Lesotho, and on to Moyeni (Quthing). This region contains many historical and prehistoric remains, including San rock art and dinosaur tracks. Another option from Qacha’s Neck is to travel east along the B45 to the rugged and beautiful Sehlabathebe National Park.

From Aliwal North you could follow the R58 to Lady Grey, and drive along the R392 via the scenic rural town of Sterkspruit to the Lesotho border post at Tele Bridge. From here you could follow the northern A2 route to Maseru through Mohale’s Hoek and Maleteng, or the eastern A4 route to Moyeni, Moorosi and Qacha’s Neck.
The dramatic landscape of the Maloti Drakensberg Mountains has witnessed exciting, sometimes tragic and sometimes romantic, stories of peoples through the ages – stories of the earliest humans (*Homo erectus*), of wars lost and won, of nations built and broken, of outdoor art galleries created, of people worshipping, of people in hiding, of people fleeing and people returning – following secret paths to sacred places. The people and their interwoven histories have created a complex tapestry. Become immersed in layer upon layer of their interlinked experiences as you visit these sites today.
1 Morija Village (western Lesotho)

This is Lesotho’s earliest mission founded in 1833, when Moshoeshoe invited French missionaries to educate his people. Morija has the oldest house and printing works in the country, and a church built in the 1850s. The Morija Museum has displays on Basotho culture, the country’s history, Stone and Iron Age relics and dinosaur fossils. Highlights include a San Bushman girdle of eggshell beads, called “moletsa”, and specimens of San rock art. Dinosaur footprints can be seen on a short but steep guided walk. The annual Arts & Cultural festival is held at the end of September.

Getting there: Travel on the A2 from Maseru 45 km south or from Mafeteng 35 km north. The exit to Morija is marked.

Contact: +266 22 360 308, www.morijafest.com

Notes: Walking shoes are required for the fossil hike.

2 In the footsteps of Moshoeshoe (northern Lesotho)

A tour of Botha Bothe and Thaba Bosiu brings to life the history of the Basotho people. Moshoeshoe was born around 1786 near Botha Bothe where he built his first mountain fortress. He later moved to Thaba Bosiu from where he founded the Basotho Nation. The mountain is of special significance to the Basotho people and is the burial site of Moshoeshoe, Kings and principal Chiefs of Lesotho. The Thaba Bosiu Information Office offers short tours to the ruins and courtyard of Moshoeshoe’s Citadel, the gravesite and natural springs. Enjoy the beautiful view of the Basotho hat-shaped Qilaone Mountain. A similar tour at Botha Bothe is being developed.

Getting there: From Maseru follow the B21 to Thaba Bosiu.

Contact: +266 22 357 207, www.seelesotho.com

Notes: Book the tour a few days ahead and wear walking shoes.

3 The Basotho Cultural Village (free state)

Take a stroll through the history of the South Sotho people from the sixteenth century to the present (many similar cultural villages portray only a fixed historical period). Their lifestyle, design and architecture are accurately displayed. The village offers a cultural experience for all the senses; taste traditionally-brewed beer and other food items, gaze at the colourful outfits and décor, listen to the sounds of the rangoon and lesiba, and enjoy a game of morabaraba. The village includes an art gallery and craft centre. Traditional Basotho meals are served in the sandstone amphitheatre. Self-catering accommodation and campsites are available at Golden Gate Highlands National Park.

Getting there: From N3 at Harrismith turn off on the R712 to Phuthaditjhaba. Follow signs to Clarens/Golden Gate Highlands National Park, turn off to the Basotho Cultural Village before Golden Gate.

Contact: Basotho Cultural Village: +27 (0)58 721 0300; Golden Gate Highlands National Park: +27 (0)58 255 1000, www.sanparks.org

For more detailed information see the full size regional maps on pages 14-21.

PREVIOUS Women gather at Morijafest. The Basotho blanket is worn with pride. PHOTO: BR

LEFT The Morija Museum and Archives is an excellent source of information on Lesotho and Basotho culture. PHOTO: DS

MIDDLE The Basotho Cultural Village gives visitors a glimpse into the daily lives of traditional Sotho people, both past and present. PHOTO: SP

FAR LEFT The grave of Moshoeshoe I on the flat-topped Thaba Bosiu. Chiefs and important leaders of the Basotho nation are also buried here. PHOTO: DS
4 amangwane/mnweni cultural and hiking centre

Established as a sustainable community-based eco-tourism venture, the Centre celebrates the culture of the amaNgwane people. Set in a beautiful and remote part of the Drakensberg, it provides an authentic experience of local food and accommodation, as well as cultural activities such as a consultation with a sangoma, traditional dancing and a visit to local homesteads. You will see the unique art of Zulu beer-making, basket-weaving, beadwork, wood-carving and other traditional crafts. Trained guides from the local community, familiar with the fauna and flora of the region, can guide you on a hike to the escarpment. Self-catering accommodation and camping is available.

Getting there: From the N3 take the Bergville off-ramp onto the R74. At Bergville take the first turn-off to the left. From this road follow the signs to amaNgwane Mnweni Cultural and Hiking Centre.

Contact: Mnweni Cultural and Hiking Centre: +27 (0)72 712 2401; Bergwatch: +27 (0)33 394 4064 www.mnweni.co.za

5 kokstad town and museum (kwazulu-natal)

Kokstad is named after Adam Kok III, who was a leader of the Griqua people. He was originally based in Transorangia (Griqualand West). After land disputes with the Boer Republic of the Orange Free State and the British colonial government, Kok and his followers decided to trek over the Drakensberg in 1861, and founded Griqualand East and its capital, Kokstad. The Kokstad Museum takes you through the history of the Griqua people. The Museum, Griqua Church and old Town Hall in Main Street are national monuments. Other points of interest in Kokstad include the Cathedral, with its tall twin steeples, Adam Kok’s Memorial commemorating his leadership, and Adam Kok’s Laager monument in the Mount Currie Nature Reserve.

Getting there: From the N3 take the R103 to Nottingham Rd. Pass under the rail bridge and follow signs to Fort Nottingham and the museum.

Contact: +27 (0)39 797 6610

6 fort nottingham (kwazulu-natal)

In response to the raids on Voortrekkers and later British farms by the Drakensberg Bushmen, the colonial British government set up a military outpost and village at Fort Nottingham. The garrison was not very successful, and was soon withdrawn. The fort has since been made into a museum which not only recounts this period of history, but also richly captures the social dynamic of the region at the time.

Getting there: From the N4 take the R103 to Nottingham Rd. Pass under the rail bridge and follow signs to Fort Nottingham and the museum.

Contact: +27 (0)33 266 6482, www.fortnottingham.net

7 mission stations in south africa and lesotho

The missionary stations of the 1800s played a significant role in the history of the region. Many are still functioning, and offer insight into this fascinating period. Among the stations to be visited are Centocow, Reichenau, and Mariazell missions, all founded as satellite missions of the Roman Catholic Marianhill Monastery. Hermannsburg and the Emmaus missions were founded by German Lutherans.

The Masitise Cave House Museum and mission has recently been restored and is well worth a visit. Built in 1866 by the mission founder, DF Ellenberger, it now provides insight into local culture, Basotho history and Lesotho’s prehistory.

Getting there: Reichenau (near Underberg) and Centocow (near Creighton) are signposted from the R617. Mariazell is near Matatiele. Emmaus is near Cathedral Peak. The Masitise Cave House Museum is 8 km from Quthing on the Mohale’s Hoek Road.

Contact: Reichenau: +27 (0)33 701 1735; Centocow: +27 (0)39 833 0033; Masitise: +266 58 794 167
The dramatic landscape of the Maloti and Drakensberg Mountains is matched by the drama of its people’s history. The story of the mountain people is a story of the making and breaking of nations. Those who live here now are the descendants of those who, through interwoven circumstances and events, came to this region over the centuries and have made it their home.

the basotho

When you enter the Kingdom of Lesotho, you become aware of men on horseback, adorned with beautiful woven blankets and wearing woven grass hats. These are people of the welcoming Basotho Nation, a nation born out of extreme hardship and war and brought together by a young visionary named Moshoeshoe.

During the early 1800s, with the rise of Shaka, King of the Zulu, and the impact of encroaching colonial rule, central southern Africa was thrown into a state of turmoil and bloodshed, sometimes known as the Lifigane or Mfecane. Previously peaceful communities living quiet pastoral lives in the region were forced into brutal warfare over scarce resources. The land and all the creatures on it were decimated. Many of the Nguni-speaking and Sotho-speaking peoples sought refuge in the rugged and harsh Maloti Drakensberg Mountains.

It was during this time that Moshoeshoe strategically gathered the various splinter groups of Sotho-speaking peoples together on a steep slope of the Maloti Mountains called Botha Bothe, and later on a flat mountaintop called Thaba Bosiu. This provided a natural fortress for these peoples to defend themselves, and to grow into a consolidated nation known as the Basotho. Visiting Thaba Bosiu can be a moving experience as you recall or hear about the courageous birth of this nation.

It was also in this time of turmoil that scattered groups, who had survived Shaka’s military exploits, turned to banditry and cannibalism as a means of survival. Moshoeshoe’s own grandfather Peete fell prey to the cannibals. A testimony to Moshoeshoe’s stature as a great peacemaker was his treatment of the cannibals whom he captured and, instead of putting to death, assured of his forgiveness. These people later became extremely loyal subjects of Moshoeshoe.

Moshoeshoe’s strategizing also resulted in the British annexing Lesotho in 1869, ending a three-year siege by the Boers. Lesotho finally regained independence from the British in 1966 and is now under the leadership of King Letsie III.

Many Basotho still live as subsistence agriculturalists keeping livestock including cattle, sheep and goats. An industry of fine weaving contributes significantly to the local economy.

The Basotho blanket, as it has become known, has rich traditional significance, each motif having a very specific meaning and status. Starting with the early contacts between European missionaries, traders and Basotho people, the blanket gradually replaced the traditional animal skin garment, the kaross. With the rise in status of the blanket, so too the quality, colours and motifs improved. The British companies producing these blankets rose to the market demand, and produced more varied and beautiful blankets specifically for the Basotho.

Different blankets are worn by different groupings and for different purposes. But almost always, the blanket is worn with dignity. It has a high wool content, and is suitable for the harsh weather conditions of Lesotho. It sheds rainwater, and keeps the wearer dry and warm in the cold.

The Basotho hat or Mokorotlo with its distinctive cone shape, woven out of grasses, is a national symbol for the Basotho nation. It is said to represent the shape of the Qiloane Mountain near Thaba Bosiu. This hat has become the most familiar souvenir sold to tourists visiting Lesotho.
the nguni-speaking peoples of the mountains

This region holds a rich cultural tapestry of Nguni-speaking peoples. Exquisite beadwork, grass-weaving and thatched homesteads welcome the traveller to the Drakensberg Mountains.

Many of these communities have lived here since before Shaka’s time. Others came as refugees of the time of turmoil and, although some speak isiZulu, were never formally part of Shaka’s Zulu state. Yet others were settled here by Lord Shepstone, “Native Administrator” of Natal, in the borderlands between Natal and the mountains, as a “buffer community” to shield the white farmers from the San and their cattle raids.

In 1873 the British ordered the amaHlubi to register guns they had acquired at the diamond diggings. After resisting this order, and fleeing to Lesotho, Chief Langalibalele was captured and tried for treason. During the hunt for Langalibalele many amaHlubi villages were razed to the ground, and many women and children killed or captured for slave labour.

Langalibalele was found guilty by Sir Benjamin Pine and sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. He led the Baphuti, aided by the San, in fighting off the British army for eight months from a spectacular summit now named Mount Moorosi in southern Lesotho.

In the Mount Frere region and around Bulwer live the descendants of the amaBhaca, meaning “those who hide” (from the Zulu). Their language, isiBhaca, is one of the unofficial South African languages that could become extinct in the next 50 years. The amaNtlangwini, neighbours of the amaBhaca, were crucial to the ivory trade. They acted as brokers between the San, who hunted the elephant, and the British who bought the ivory. The internationally-acclaimed artist, Gerard Bhengu, hails from the amaBhaca and was born at Centocow Mission near Bulwer.

In 1879 he led the Baphuti, aided by the San, in fighting off the British army for eight months from a spectacular summit now named Mount Moorosi in southern Lesotho.

In the Mount Frere region and around Bulwer live the descendants of the amaBhaca, meaning “those who hide” (from the Zulu). Their language, isiBhaca, is one of the unof-

Famous in this region is the courageous and defiant chief of the amaHlubi clan, Langalibalele. The amaHlubi were the biggest Nguni clan before Shaka’s time – an indepen-dent chiefdom with a Paramount Chief. They suffered severely during the time of turmoil, enabling Shepstone later to set them in the Giant’s Castle area.

In 1873 the British ordered the amaHlubi to register guns they had acquired at the diamond diggings. After resisting this order, and fleeing to Lesotho, Chief Langalibalele was captured and tried for treason. During the hunt for Langalibalele many amaHlubi villages were razed to the ground, and many women and children killed or captured for slave labour.

Langalibalele was found guilty by Sir Benjamin Pine and sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. He led the Baphuti, aided by the San, in fighting off the British army for eight months from a spectacular summit now named Mount Moorosi in southern Lesotho.

In the Mount Frere region and around Bulwer live the descendants of the amaBhaca, meaning “those who hide” (from the Zulu). Their language, isiBhaca, is one of the unofficial South African languages that could become extinct in the next 50 years. The amaNtlangwini, neighbours of the amaBhaca, were crucial to the ivory trade. They acted as brokers between the San, who hunted the elephant, and the British who bought the ivory. The internationally-acclaimed artist, Gerard Bhengu, hails from the amaBhaca and was born at Centocow Mission near Bulwer.

Further south are the Mpondomise, also known as the “red blanket people”. (The traditional blankets of these people are actually coloured using ochre.) They too had a very close relationship with the San of this region, often employing them as rainmakers and ritual experts.

Other Nguni-speaking peoples in the region are the amaNgwane – living in the Mnweni area – and the amaZizi – living in the area adjacent to the Royal Natal National Park and expressing their culture in the most beautiful beading and weaving. The amaZizi were the first pastoralists to settle in this region before Shaka’s reign. Together with the Baphuti – a clan that formed when the amaZizi intermarried with the Sotho of the Eastern Free State – they were the last protectors of the San in this region.

The Baphuti are famous for their chief, Moorosi. In 1879 he led the Baphuti, aided by the San, in fighting off the British army for eight months from a spectacular summit now named Mount Moorosi in southern Lesotho.

In 2006 South Africa named a new submarine the “SAS Manthatisi” after the fearsome Batlokwa “Warrior Queen”, leader of a community of 25 000 in the early 1800s known as the “Wild Cat People”. Manthatisi, it is said, headed northwards from the Drakensberg region with her followers, raiding and looting all the way as far as present-day Botswana, before eventually returning to settle near present-day Ficksburg.

the significance of cattle for the nguni people

Cattle are central to the identity, culture, language and rituals of the Nguni people. Traditional homesteads are set up around a cattle byre. The number of cattle one owns is a measure of one’s wealth. In marriage rituals, cattle are the currency for “lobolo”, a dowry in Zulu tradition. Cattle are usually sacrificed for important ancestral rituals – not slaughtered simply for food. However, cattle do provide a regular food source: amasi or soured milk. Cattle skins are significant in tribal dress for traditional occasions. Warriors carried shields which were made of the tough hides of cattle.

However, protests in England exposed the trial as a travesty of justice. Queen Victoria overturned the sentence. The British army for eight months from a spectacular summit now named Mount Moorosi in southern Lesotho.

In the Mount Frere region and around Bulwer live the descendants of the amaBhaca, meaning “those who hide” (from the Zulu). Their language, isiBhaca, is one of the unoffi-cial South African languages that could become extinct in the next 50 years. The amaNtlangwini, neighbours of the amaBhaca, were crucial to the ivory trade. They acted as brokers between the San, who hunted the elephant, and the British who bought the ivory. The internationally-acclaimed artist, Gerard Bhengu, hails from the amaBhaca and was born at Centocow Mission near Bulwer.

Further south are the Mpondomise, also known as the “red blanket people”. (The traditional blankets of these people are actually coloured using ochre.) They too had a very close relationship with the San of this region, often employing them as rainmakers and ritual experts.

In 2006 South Africa named a new submarine the “SAS Manthatisi” after the fearsome Batlokwa “Warrior Queen”, leader of a community of 25 000 in the early 1800s known as the “Wild Cat People”. Manthatisi, it is said, headed northwards from the Drakensberg region with her followers, raiding and looting all the way as far as present-day Botswana, before eventually returning to settle near present-day Ficksburg.
the missionaries
Beautiful abbeys and churches built in European architectural style are located at various places in the region. Missionaries from different European Christian traditions settled in the area in the 1800s, and became extremely influential in the lives of the inhabitants.

The French Protestant missionaries established their mission at Morija in Lesotho in 1833, and became highly-valued strategic advisors and close confidants of Moshoeshoe. The high levels of literacy found in Lesotho are often attributed to these missionaries. The Morija Museum houses this rich history and is well worth a visit.

The Roman Catholic missions at Centecow, Mariahell, and Reichenau were set up as satellite missions of Marianhill by Trappist monks, a contemplative religious order where work and prayer are carried out mostly in silence. Trappists follow the Rule of St. Benedict, living “by the work of their own hands.” These monasteries, set up in the 1800s, were self-sufficient, producing and selling goods such as cheese and bread.

German Lutheran missionaries began work in KwaZulu-Natal in 1841, setting up Emmaus Mission in 1847 and opening the way for the Hermannsburg Mission to be established in KZN.

Many of the mission churches still operate today, as do associated schools and hospitals. They are now run largely by local priests and religious communities. All are worth visiting, to be surrounded by their beautiful architecture and fascinating histories.

the british
The British involvement in this area is interwoven with these histories. Most significant is the major role played by the British in the annexure of Lesotho at the request of Moshoeshoe and in the establishment of the border communities, placed by Shepstone to stop the San from raiding cattle from the new British farms in the Natal Midlands.

The cattle raids, Giant’s Castle being the entry point, had become so severe that in 1856 the British sent the 1st Sherwood Foresters, the 45th foot regiment from Nottingham in England, to establish Fort Nottingham. But the raids continued – partly, it seems, because the garrison was small and on unfamiliar terrain, and partly because much alcohol was brewed and consumed on site. The garrison was withdrawn and the fort sold to a private family, the Cloustons, in 1875. The fort is now a museum which recounts this story.

The ongoing involvement in Natal by the British was not unrelated to the thriving trade in ivory that involved the San and many Nguni communities – and decimated the elephants of this area.

Descendants of both the British and the Voortrekkers are still living in this region today.

the griqua
The Griqua are a people with a rich multi-cultural heritage rooted in the Khoi, European missionary, Boer and San communities, amongst others, of the Cape Colony of the 1700s. As the white settlers’ power increased in that area, so this multi-racial community became increasingly victimized. Dispossessed of their land and dignity, they often resorted to banditry and raiding.

In 1861, under the leadership of Adam Kok III, the Griqua community trekked over the Maloti Drakensberg Mountains, suffering many tragedies and deaths along the way. They passed through Ongeluksknek, a treacherous descent, often having to dismantle their wagons to negotiate the difficult terrain. (There is now a nature reserve at Ongeluksknek Pass, and the place where Adam Kok carved his name into the rock is still visible today.) Adam Kok III then founded Kokstad and established a government to rule over Griqualand East. However, the Griqua continued to suffer extreme hardship in the severe climate, and after many of them had sold their land to the settlers, the British succeeded in annexing the region in 1874. And so, once again, the Griqua lost their prime land. Many returned to the Cape. However, there is still a small community living in the area.
what has become of the san communities?

The history of the San people (also known as the Bushmen) is both inspiringly beautiful and tragically sad. A treasure of the mountains is the San rock art, created by the San communities who have lived in this area for over 20,000 years, and were still painting until as recently as the beginning of the 20th century. (Refer to the Rock art chapter of this book for more about the history of the San.) The rock art also tells of the rising turmoil in the region during these years, when King Shaka was consolidating his power base, followed soon after by the arrival of Europeans. These events ultimately resulted in the demise of the Drakensberg San as a cultural grouping – having been killed or driven out by the various invading communities.

Some of the San descendants of this region, sometimes referred to as the “Secret San”, have been absorbed into other cultural communities and are still living in the area today.

the voortrekkers

The Voortrekkers, or Dutch settlers, arrived in the region in search of new farming land where they would not be answerable to the British powers. They established farms and homesteads and later fought battles with the British in an attempt to retain their independence.

At Retief’s Pass, visible from Olivershoek Pass, grooves in the rock show where ox wagons were pulled over the mountain as the Voortrekkers descended into present-day KwaZulu-Natal. Soon after arriving they were attacked by the Zulu King Dingane. The graves of some of those who died can be seen at Bloukrans, near Ladysmith.

living heritage sites

To this day various groupings make regular pilgrimages to their significant places:

Centecow Mission: Devotees gather to pray at the “Black Madonna” of this Roman Catholic mission near Underberg.

Tekwaan’s Hill, Cobham: Thousands of scarlet-clad women and men of the Mabidia sect gather each year on this hill where the founding member had a vision from God in 1910.

Kerkenberg: At this mountain, also called Retiefklip, close to Sterkfontein Dam, the Voortrekkers held a church service before descending the escarpment into Natal. Piet Retief’s daughter painted her father’s initials on a rock here. This place has special significance for the Afrikaner people.

Mantsopa’s Grave: Mantsopa, a prophetess and advisor to Moshoeshoe, is buried near Ladybrand. Her grave, with the surrounding missionary sites and rock art, is considered a site of international importance.

Game Pass Shelter: The Duma clan, descendants of the Drakensberg San, gather at this shelter each year to interact with their ancestors.

Botha Bothe: Members of the Sotho royal lineage frequent the royal graveyard on this mountain, which is significant in the history of the formation of the Basotho nation.

further information and resources

- The Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg, +27 (0)33 345 1404, www.nmsa.org.za
- Morija Museum and Archives, +266 22 360 308, www.morijafest.com
- Alan Paton Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal, +27 (0)33 260 5926
- South African History Online, www.sahistory.org.za
From short rambles to overnight hikes, from leisurely valley walks to strenuous high-altitude treks – the allure of hiking in the Maloti Drakensberg Mountains lies in the soul-building scenery of towering peaks, deep valleys and clear streams; in strolling along peaceful grassy slopes, exploring narrow gorges and swimming in enticing mountain pools; in the desire to escape the noise of everyday life and to be immersed in a world of awe-inspiring natural beauty.
1 giant’s cup trail (southern drakensberg, kwazulu-natal)

The Giant’s Cup Trail winds its way over the foothills of the Drakensberg from the famous Sani Pass to Bushman’s Nek, offering five days of splendid mountain views, refreshing pools and rock art. You cover an average of 12 km per day on moderate terrain, allowing reasonably fit adults and children to complete each day with relative ease. The trail is well-marked and backpacker’s accommodation is provided.

Getting there: From the N3 take the R617 to Underberg via Himeville to Sani Pass. The starting point is past the Sani Pass Hotel, signposted on the left.

Contact: Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife +27 (0)33 845 1000, www.kznwildlife.co.za

Notes: Book this popular trail in advance. Minimum three people per group.

2 semonkong and malealea (western lesotho)

This remote area of Lesotho is well-known for its spectacular waterfalls and high mountain passes. A three-day guided hike between Semonkong and Malealea takes you to the Ketane, Ribaneng and Maletsunyane Falls. Malealea Lodge also offers a four-to-five-day guided hike to Moorosi Chalets, and several day hikes. Semonkong Lodge has tailor-made hikes and a four-to-five-day guided hike from Semonkong to Christ the King Mission, crossing the Senqunyane and Senqu Rivers.

Getting there: From the Maseru-Mafeteng road, take the turn-off to Roma and continue beyond Roma for another 18 km. At the T-junction turn off to Semonkong via Ramabanta. From Maseru, follow the A2, turn left at Motsekua onto the B25 and follow the signs to Malealea.

Contact: Semonkong: +266 27 006 037, www.placeofsmoke.co.ls; Malealea: +27 (0)51 436 6766, www.malealea.com

3 mehloding adventure trail (southern drakensberg and eastern lesotho)

On this community-owned trail you can experience the lesser-known far south of the Drakensberg Mountains. Mehloding offers tailor-made guided hikes that can take up to four days and five nights. The route meanders through the foothills of the Drakensberg from the Ongeluknek region to Qacha’s Nek region. On the way you pass through rural villages. Expect to see ancient rock art, sparkling streams, indigenous trees, and medicinal plants. The walking is not strenuous, and accommodation is in chalets with catering provided. Masakala Guesthouse (near Mariazell Mission in the Ongeluksnek region) is the first overnight on the trail and is a comfortable base for any visitor to the area.

Getting there: From Qacha’s Nek follow the road to Matatiele, situated on the R56 to Kokstad.

Contact: Mehloding Community Trust: +27 (0)39 737 3289, www.mehloding.co.za

Notes: Book ahead to arrange safe parking in Matatiele and a transfer to the start of the trail.

For more detailed information see the full size regional maps on pages 14-21.

LETSHTO

FREE STATE

LESTERO

KWAZULU-NATAL

EASTERN CAPE

SMITHFIELD

ALIWAL NORTH

ONGELUKNEK

QUTHING

ELLIOT

MOKHOTLONG

QACHA’S NEK

SMIRER

KOKSTD

HARRISMI

KONTSE

FICKSBURG

HARLEM

VOSWAGEN

KILIE

SANSI PASS

UNDERBERG

MOKHOTLONG

HARRISMITH

MATATIELE

KATSE

CLARENS

BERGVILLE

FICKSBURG

MOKHOTLONG

KATSE

MACHOKENG

LETSHTO

MELDING ADVENTURE TRAIL

PHOTO: SP
4 ukhahlamba drakensberg park hiking trails
The uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park is a World Heritage Site which encompasses the grandeur of the Amphitheatre in the north, Cathedral Peak and Giant’s Castle in the centre, and the legendary Sani Pass and Rhino Peak in the south. The uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park offers vast areas of magnificent mountain territory on well-maintained paths. This network of trails, for which a series of maps is available, makes the region an internationally-known hiking destination.

Getting there: There are numerous access points which are clearly marked on most tourist maps of the area. More specific information can be obtained from Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife’s head office or from the offices in the Park.

Contact: Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife: +27 (0)33 845 1000, www.kznwildlife.co.za

Notes: Always tell someone where you are going and fill in the mountain rescue register, even on a short hike.

5 the sentinel and amphitheatre (qwawqa, eastern free state)
For the visitor without much time to spare, this moderate five-hour return hike from the Sentinel Car Park to the top of the Amphitheatre (in the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site) is a truly exhilarating experience. You can stand high on the soaring heights of the Drakensberg and look out over the countryside stretching into the distance far below. An added bonus is to stand at the top of the Tugela Falls, the second-highest waterfall in the world! Once you’ve scaled the chain ladder and reached the summit, you enter the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site. This is also the place to start the very challenging Drakensberg Grand Traverse – a hike along the whole length of the Drakensberg escarpment from Mont-aux-Sources in the north to Sehlabathebe in the south.

Getting there: From Harrismith, take the R712 to Phuthaditjhaba past Sterkfontein Dam. Follow the signs through Phuthaditjhaba, and follow a brick paved road, keeping right to the Sentinel Car Park.

Contact: Sentinel Car Park: +27 (0)58 713 5071

Notes: The 30-m chain ladder is not difficult to climb, but not recommended for those afraid of heights.

6 mnweni cultural centre (northern drakensberg, kwazulu-natal)
The rugged and intensely beautiful Mnweni area, on community land between the Amphitheatre and Cathedral Peak, falls outside the boundary of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site. This area has now been made more accessible by the creation of the Mnweni Cultural and Hiking Centre, a community project that offers secure parking, rustic self-catering accommodation and qualified guides. There are many hikes in this area, including the Rockeries, Mnweni Cutback, the Fangs, Nonjelona River and Ilidi Pass. Hikes in this area tend to be quite challenging.

Getting there: From the N3 take the Bergville off-ramp onto the R74. At Bergville take the first turn-off to the left. From this road follow the signs to amaNgwane Mnweni Cultural and Hiking Centre.

Contact: Mnweni Cultural and Hiking Centre: +27 (0)33 394 4064, www.mnwenicc.co.za

Notes: Trails are not marked. Have a good map and hike with a guide.

7 ts’ehlanyane to bokong
Ts’ehlanyane National Park comprises more than 5 600 ha of protected rugged mountain terrain. This park is tranquil and beautiful, with abundant high altitude flora and a fantastic range of birdlife. There are a number of walks and trails of varying difficulties in the park itself. These are either self-guided or with a local guide. One of the most beautiful walks is a four hour mountain trail to Matsa-maaro waterfall and pools. For those looking for a longer hike, there is a spectacular two to three day trail along the scenic alpine plateau between Ts’ehlanyane National Park and Bokong Nature Reserve. A number of walks are also available in the Bokong Nature Reserve.

Getting there: Ts’ehlanyane: From Botha Bothe the route is well sign-posted, initially west along the A1, followed by a left turn onto the Pela-Ts’ehlanyane road.

Bokong: From Hlotse follow signs to Katse Dam for 65 km.

Contact: +266 22 460 813, www.lhwp.org.ls
This magnificent mountain wilderness is celebrated for its natural beauty and diverse plant and animal life. It offers a great range of hikes, from the gentle to the extreme – day hikes, overnight hikes, summit hikes, high-altitude traverses. Whether you come for the tranquility of the valleys or the challenge of the high escarpment, you will find it here.

The Drakensberg has an extensive network of well-maintained footpaths. An exciting development in recent years is that of community-owned trails, which benefit the local rural communities directly. Local guides, food and accommodation are usually part of the package, as well as the opportunity to experience the culture of rural village life.

In Lesotho the villages are connected by a criss-cross of paths, making it easy to get from one point to another with the aid of a good map. Keep in mind that you will be hiking through rural farmland rather than a formally protected area. You are likely to meet shepherds and local villagers. Be friendly and treat them with respect – remember that you are a visitor in their land. You may also encounter dogs which are bred and trained to guard the sheep. Stay well clear of sheep to avoid provoking the dogs’ protective instincts.

Tibetan-style trekking, where you carry a minimum of supplies and depend on small villages along the way to buy food and accommodation, is an option for the more adventurous. When seeking accommodation in a village, speak first to the village chief and ask his permission. If you are unsure about tackling such a hike, rather entrust yourself to the care of a good guide.

Remember that Lesotho is an independent country. All visitors, including South Africans, must have their passports with them with an entry stamp from a designated entry point.

Below In the Drakensberg and on high ground in Lesotho the water is clean and pure and safe to drink. Purify water if it is not.

A strong, comfortable backpack
A good pair of hiking boots
Enough clothing for protection from rain, sun and severe cold
A warm sleeping bag
A sleeping mat
A sun-hat and sunglasses
A mountain tent
A camping stove
Camping lights
Eating utensils
A water bottle
A camping stove
A first aid kit
Water purification tablets

Below In the Drakensberg and on high ground in Lesotho the water is clean and pure and safe to drink. Purify water if it is not.

A strong, comfortable backpack
A good pair of hiking boots
Enough clothing for protection from rain, sun and severe cold
A warm sleeping bag
A sleeping mat
A sun-hat and sunglasses
A mountain tent
A camping stove
Camping lights
Eating utensils
A water bottle
A camping stove
A first aid kit
Water purification tablets

what is the best time of year for hiking?

Hiking can be enjoyed all year round. Choose times which suit your own preferences and level of experience.

The summer months (October to March) are generally warm to hot in the daytime. This is the rainy season, so expect humid conditions and regular afternoon thunderstorms. The key to hiking at this time of year is to start off as early as possible in the morning. Periods of continuous rain and mist, lasting several days at a time, can also occur in summer. Remember that the rain causes rivers to swell, making them difficult or dangerous to cross. Never camp in a stream bed – hikers have been swept away by flash floods in the past.

The winter months (May to August) tend to be dry with warm, sunny days, but the nights are extremely cold. Snow is likely at higher altitudes. The winters in Lesotho are very harsh.

No matter what the season, always be prepared for sudden weather changes and sub-zero temperatures. The Maloti and Drakensberg ranges have been known to get snow at any time of the year, including mid-summer!

a precious and vulnerable environment

The Maloti and Drakensberg Mountains are home to a great wealth of plants and animals adapted to survive in often harsh conditions – rocky, with thin soil and extremes of temperature. If plants or animals are harmed, or when conditions change because of our intervention, these species become vulnerable to extinction.

The mountains contain wealth in other forms – cultural treasures left by the people who have lived here, and ancient fossils and minerals which unlock for us the mysteries of our origins. These assets belong to us all, to enjoy but not destroy, to respect and protect, and to preserve for all who will follow us in the days and generations that lie ahead.

how to enjoy the environment responsibly

Stay on the paths to avoid damaging plants. Don’t pick any flowers.

Use only portable stoves, to avoid fires.

Carry all litter out with you.

Don’t disfigure, touch or pour water on rock paintings.

Don’t write or carve graffiti of any kind anywhere.

Leave all archaeological or fossil material where you find it for others to discover.

Observe wild animals you find, but don’t disturb them and never feed them.

Don’t harm or kill any animals, including snakes – this is their home, not yours.

Leave pets at home.
how can I ensure the safety of myself and my group?

Remember that the wildness which draws us to the mountains also holds many hazards.

■ When planning a hike, select routes and set a pace according to the abilities of the weakest or youngest members of your group. Always keep the group together.

■ Inform family or friends of your exact route and your planned starting and return times. Complete the Mountain Rescue Register at your starting point. Stick to your planned route. Have a good map of the area and know how to read it.

■ Never hike alone – preferably remain in groups of at least three.

■ Make sure you are properly equipped for all weather conditions, even if the weather forecast is favourable. In case of an emergency, take some extra food and carry a tent and a first aid kit.

■ It is also wise to have a whistle to help attract attention, as well as a cell- phone and a list of emergency numbers. Cellphone reception is available in some areas.

■ Keep alert for snakes and take care to avoid them. There are three extremely dangerous species in the region – the Puff Adder, the Spitting Cobra or Rinkhals, and the Berg Adder.

■ In a lightning storm, stay on lower, flat ground, away from water, trees, fences, horses and cattle. Don’t stand up, but don’t lie flat – sit down and draw your knees close to your chest.

■ If caught in thick mist, stay where you are, if possible, until the mist clears, while keeping as warm and dry as possible. Otherwise carefully follow a path or stream downwards to try to find help.

■ If trapped by snow, get out of the wind and keep as warm and dry as possible. To attract the attention of an air search, mark your position with as much brightly-coloured material (backpacks, etc.) as possible.

■ If overtaken by a fast-moving wildfire, get into a grove of live trees if possible. In open country, burn a fire-break around you. As a last resort, face the speeding fire and try to run through it.

■ If your feet are cold, cover your head.” – Hikers’ saying, based on the fact that most body heat is lost from the head.

snakebite do’s

■ Remain as calm as possible.

■ Reduce blood flow by applying a pressure bandage and immobilizing the limb.

■ Get professional medical help as quickly as possible.

snakebite don’ts

■ Don’t cut into the bite area.

■ Don’t try to suck the venom out.

■ Anti-venom serum is not recommended.

further information and resources

where to get good maps

■ KZN DRakensberg: Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife: +27 (0)33 845 1999; www.kznwildlife.co.za

■ LESotho: Map Office, PO Box 876, Maseru, 100, Lesotho. Phone: +266 22 322 818

contacts

■ GENERAL EMERGENCY: 082 911; MCSA RESCUE TEAM: Rob Thomas +27 (0)82 652 1490

■ MOUNTAIN BACKPACKERS CLUB: www.mountainbackpackers.co.za

■ MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA: www.mcsa.org.za

■ SOUTH AFRICAN WEATHER BUREAU: 082 231 1600

additional reading

■ Drakensberg Walks – 120 graded hikes and trails in the ‘Berg, by David Bristow

■ A Backpacker’s Guide to Lesotho, by Russel Suchet

■ Dragon’s Wrath, by James Byrom and R.O. Pearse

■ Hiking trails of Southern Africa, by Willie and Sandra Olivier

pony trekking is a fantastic way to experience the beauty of the Maloti Drakensberg region. Lesotho is particularly famous for its sure-footed, robust ponies, which take you deep into the heart of this rugged, majestic terrain. There is a range of day trails and overnight rides to choose from, enabling you to experience traditional cultures first-hand through your local guides and hosts.
1 southern drakensberg and eastern lesotho

There are a number of trails that take you into Lesotho on horseback. Drakensberg Adventures organizes three- to four-day trails beginning at Sani Lodge, either over Black Mountain Pass to Molumong in the Lesotho Highlands, or via Ramatseliso’s Gate and along the escarpment to the magnificent Sehlabathebe National Park. Khotso Trails offers guided trails ranging from three to five days, taking you to Sehlabathebe National Park. Overnight in remote Basotho villages with warm beds and hot water. The trails leave from Bushman’s Nek in KwaZulu-Natal.

Getting there: From the N3 take the R617 to Underberg, and via Himeville to Sani Pass. Sani Lodge is at the base of the pass. The Bushman’s Nek turn-off is clearly signposted on the R617 from Underberg to Swartberg.

Contact: Drakensberg Adventures: +27 (0)33 702 0330, www.sanilodge.co.za
Khotso Trails: +27 (0)33 701 1502, +27 (0)82 412 5540, www.khotsotrails.co.za

Notes: Bring your passport when crossing the border.

2 lesotho highlands

The Basotho Pony Trekking Centre, located on the Malimo Nthuse Pass (which means “God Help Me” Pass), was set up in 1983 to help preserve the Basotho pony. The Centre offers pony trails in the magnificent Lesotho Highlands region varying from one hour to five days. You will encounter high mountain peaks, picturesque gorges, and numerous streams and waterfalls.

Getting there: From Maseru take the A5 to Roma, turn off onto the A3 to Thaba Tseka. The Basotho Pony Trekking Centre is on the Malimo Nthuse Pass (55 km from Maseru).

Contact: Basotho Pony Trekking Centre: +266 22 317 284

Notes: The Lesotho Highlands are extremely cold and snowy in winter, so bring appropriate clothing.

3 kohlo-ntso pony trekking co-op

A variety of pony trails for all ages and experience-levels are available at this community-based pony trekking co-op. These trails take you into rugged and scenic terrain, through rare bird habitats and remote rural villages. You could choose to visit the nearby San rock paintings or Chief Katse’s former home on some of the shorter trails, or you could explore the surrounding waterfalls and mountains, which offer spectacular views, on some of the longer rides. For overnight trails you will stay in local villages, where you can experience traditional Basotho singing, dancing, and meals.

Getting there: From Katse Dam take the A8 to Thaba-Tseka. Khohlo-Ntso is 3 km beyond Makhoabeng village. Once at the village you will need to ask for Ntate Selebalo Ntsekele, who organizes the pony trails.

Contact: +266 63 193 683; www.geocities.com/katseponytreks

Notes: You will need to arrange accommodation at Katse Lodge (+266 22 910 202). For overnight trails, take your own toilet paper.
key attractions

4 southern lesotho (quthing)

A partnership between a community organization, the Quthing Wildlife Development Trust and Malealea Lodge has opened opportunities for pony trekking, hiking and birding in this area.

Moorosi Chalets offers short and long pony treks up Mount Moorosi with panoramic views and fascinating historical relics from the Moorosi war of 1879.

Ha Liphaphang and Ha Tlhaku villages offer accommodation in huts, and guided trails that are among the most beautiful in the region. Waterfalls, rock art, wild bamboo forests, vulture colonies, and various antelope species can be seen.

Getting there: Moorosi Chalets: From Maseru take the A2 past Quthing (Moyeni) towards Qacha’s Nek. About 5 km after Mt Moorosi take the signposted turn-off to the chalets. From South Africa, take the Telebridge border crossing to Quthing and proceed as above.

Ha Liphaphang and Ha Tlhaku: Contact Malealea for accurate directions to the villages.

Contact: Malealea Lodge: +27 (0)51 436 6766, www.malealea.com

5 western lesotho

Ribangeng, Ketane and Maletsunyane Waterfalls are all situated in this region of Lesotho. The Maletsunyane Falls are the second highest in southern Africa, with a straight vertical drop of 196 m. There are a number of lodges in the area which offer pony trails in partnership with local communities ranging from a few hours to six days.

Malealea Lodge and Pony Trek Centre is one of Lesotho’s main pony trekking bases.

Getting there: Take the main road south from Maseru towards Maleteng. At the Motsekua junction turn left and drive for 10 km along the tarred road, then take the right fork and drive for 15 km. Turn left at the Malealea sign and proceed to the lodge.

Contact: Malealea Lodge and Pony Trek Centre: +27 (0)51 436 6766, www.malealea.com

Semonkong Lodge works closely with the local community to organize ponies, guides and overnight accommodation for the trails in this region. The lodge is near the Maletsunyane Falls.

Getting there: From Maseru-Mafeteng road take the turn-off to Roma. Continue through Roma and keep going for a further 18 km. At the T-junction turn left and travel along this dirt road for approximately 65 km to reach Semonkong. You will pass through Ramabanta on the way.

Contact: Semonkong Lodge: +266 27 006 037, www.placeofsmoke.co.ls

other horse-riding options

Besides the pony treks offered in Lesotho, many resorts and tourism operators in the region also offer other horse-riding activities. For more information, refer to the directory at the back of this book.
he Maloti Drakensberg region is renowned for its incredible views and breathtaking scenery. On horseback you can reach some of the most remote and scenic areas without the slog of hiking. The trails take you through peaceful grassy valleys and alongside tumbling rivers into the heart of these majestic mountains. You can see some of southern Africa’s most spectacular waterfalls, and ride through deep, rugged gorges. Some of the trails lead you up steep passes to high mountain peaks. On most of the trails you stay overnight in village huts, and experience the local food and friendly culture first-hand. Pony trekking through this region is an unforgettable experience.

what is the history of the basotho ponies?
The first ponies in Lesotho are said to have been captured from the roaming Griqua tribes in the early 1800s. In 1829 Chief Moorosi gave a pony as a gift to King Moshoeshoe, who was so taken with his pony that he brought many more into the country. Pony riding rapidly took off as the main form of transport in Lesotho.

The Basotho pony is a cross-breed between the full-size European horse and the shorter Javanese pony. These ponies are widely known for their strength and sure-footedness, which make them ideal for trails through rugged mountainous terrain.

involving the whole family
Pony trails are an ideal venture for the whole family, as you don’t have to be an experienced rider to feel secure in the saddle. Most of the ponies are extremely tame and well-trained, and are used to being ridden by a wide variety of riders. You are always accompanied by a guide who is very familiar with the terrain and the ponies. Overnight rides may be too demanding for young children, but there are many short trails available which can be enjoyed by the whole family.

what is the best time of year for pony trekking?
Riding is excellent through most of the year, but remember that the winter months can be harsh in this region, with extremely volatile weather patterns. For this reason, all rides are subject to change due to bad weather.
**preparing for a pony trek**

All trails are accompanied by an experienced guide, and all horse-riding equipment is provided. The weather in winter is cold and snowy, so bring appropriate clothing, including long pants to protect you from the riding gear. Bear in mind that the weather throughout the year is very changeable, so have rain gear with you, and make sure that you are always prepared for sub-zero temperatures as most of the trails are at high altitudes.

Although most of the water on the trails is suitable for drinking, it is safest to purify it beforehand. Ultraviolet radiation is high in the thin atmosphere of the Drakensberg and Maloti Mountains, so make sure that you have sun protection.

Depending on the village in which you will stay, you may need to bring your own food, and utensils for cooking and eating. Check with your travel guide beforehand to make sure that you have all the equipment you need for the overnight trips. On some trips a packhorse is used to carry your overnight luggage. It is therefore a good idea to have a small day-pack in which you keep items that you may need during the day.

Some of the overnight trips are strenuous, as they involve six or seven hours of riding each day. If you are not used to riding, your body will be quite sore at the end of the day, so be prepared for a bit of character-building discomfort! You may find it useful to have some kind of soothing balm for chafed skin.

**how can you support the local community?**

Pony trekking in Lesotho is a unique tourist activity, in that the local communities are closely involved with its organization. Most of the ponies belong to them, and your guides are local people. Pony trekking therefore provides sustainable income to the communities.

Most of the overnight stops are in villages, where you have the opportunity of engaging in the culture and lifestyle of Lesotho in a truly authentic way, at the same time knowing that you are contributing to the economic development of the community. In addition, the villagers are encouraged to protect the natural environment to ensure the appeal of these areas to tourists. This results in a mutually beneficial and sustainable relationship.

**what to take with you:**

- a wide-brimmed sun-hat
- warm clothing
- rain gear
- strong riding pants or jeans
- sturdy closed shoes
- low-temperature sleeping bag
- sleeping mat
- sun protection cream
- water bottle and water-purifying tablets
- skin-balm (for chafed limbs and buttocks)
- a torch and batteries
- a day-pack
- food and cooking utensils for self-catering trails

**a sustainable source of income**

- Ponies are rented from the communities
- Local guides are used
- Accommodation, and in some cases, meals, are provided in rural villages
- Keep trails pristine and encourage operators and other visitors to do likewise; contribute to sustainable livelihoods through tourism.

**further information and resources**

**THE MALEALEA WEBSITE** has a wealth of information about the region, including Basotho ponies, Sotho cultural traditions and tourism opportunities; www.malealea.com

**INFORMATION ON PONY TREKKING** and related activities can be found on the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation website; www.ltdc.org.ls
beautiful scenery, undiscovered fishing spots and plenty of strong, wild fish. When the conditions are right, the Maloti Drakensberg Mountains are a fly-fisher’s dream. The clean, cold mountain streams and dams ensure ideal conditions for yellowfish and trout.

The region still offers the possibility of undiscovered fishing sites, with fish that are exceptional in size and condition, and some of the country’s best sight-fishing locations for Smallmouth and Largemouth Yellowfish. Step out into the beautiful waters of these mountains and try your hand at an age-old pastime that is creating new opportunities in community tourism.
1 Sterkfontein Dam (Eastern Free State)

This is considered the best still-water sight-fishing location in the country for Smallmouth and Largemouth Yellowfish. Bass, carp, catfish and some Rainbow Trout are also resident in this dam. Fishing conditions are usually very good, as the water is crystal clear, fresh and clean. It is primarily a summer fishing venue, as the yellowfish remain in the deep waters in winter, feeding off the underwater plant life. Self-catering accommodation and campsites are available.

Getting there: From Harrismith take the N5 turning onto the R74. From Bergville take the R74 to reach the reserve.

Contact: +27 (0)58 622 1093

Notes: A boat is useful to get to the best fishing areas. See www.fosaf.co.za

2 Katse Dam (Lesotho Highlands)

Katse Dam offers the intrepid fly-fisher the challenge of discovering the best fishing areas for yellowfish and trout. Some of the areas around the dam have very steep valley sides, making shore-fishing difficult and dangerous. It is worth exploring the inlets of the Bokong and Mallibamatso rivers which contain large numbers of trout. A boat is useful to reach less accessible parts of the dam.

Getting there: From Maseru follow the A1 to Leribe. Follow signs for 122 km to Katse Dam. Alternatively, follow the Mountain Road from Maseru towards the east via Molimo Ntuse Pass to Thaba Tseka.

Contact: +266 22 910 805

Notes: Motorized boats are not allowed on the dam.

3 Ha Liphaphang Village (Qu’thing, Southern Lesotho)

Ha Liphaphang village is a destination for fly-fishers who want to try an undiscovered location. It is part of the Qu’thing Wildlife Development Trust ecotourism initiative. This rugged mountain area has two very clean rivers which are home to a large Rainbow Trout population. The area has diverse fauna and flora, and boasts nine recorded sites of well-preserved San rock art. There are guides, a basic campsite and traditional huts.

Getting there: From Maseru take the A2 through Qu’thing (Moyeni) to Mount Moero. Follow the signs to Tsatsane Bushman paintings. From South Africa, take the Tele Bridge border crossing to Qu’thing and proceed as above.

Contact: Malealea Lodge: +27 (0)51 436 6766, www.malealea.com

Notes: Pay a fishing fee of M50 to the Ha Liphaphang Tourist Office. A high-clearance or 4×4 vehicle is needed.
4 mokhotlong (eastern lesotho)

Mokhotlong is a destination for those who appreciate solitude and stark beauty. This still largely unexplored fly-fishers’ heaven has many streams with abundant small yellowfish, as well as Rainbow and Brown Trout. Some of the recognized fishing sites are the Mokhotlong River, the Khubelu River, the Soloane River and the De Beers Dam. Mokhotlong is one of the most remote areas of Lesotho. Other rivers in eastern Lesotho, which you can reach via Sani Pass, are the Sani, Linakeng and Sehonghong rivers. The MDTP District office is working to open up nature and culture-based tourism opportunities in the area.

Getting there: Take the A1 from Botha Bothe via Oxbow to Mokhotlong, or take the R617 to Underberg, then go on to Himeville and drive up to Sani Pass.

Contact: MDTP Mokhotlong District office: +266 22 920 338

Notes: Be sure to get permission from the Chief before fishing. You need a 4x4 vehicle for Sani Pass.

5 clarens (eastern free state)

There are numerous fishing opportunities for yellowfish, Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout near the picturesque town of Clarens, in dams and on the Ash and Small Caledon rivers. The South African record Rainbow Trout (8,25 kg) was caught in the Mitsei Matso Dam near QwaQwa. Excellent trout-fishing is available at private farms. Contact the local fishing club to find the best sites. You can also visit the Caledon Flies factory, a job creation project employing local women who tie flies for export.

Getting there: Clarens can be reached from the N5 between Harrismith and Bethlehem.

Contact: Trouthunter Fly Club +27 (0)58 256 1742, www.trouthunter.co.za, www.caledonflies.com

Notes: Fishing is closed in the spawning season (31 May to 31 August).

6 rivers of the kwazulu-natal drakensberg

The cold, clean streams coming off the top of the Drakensberg are considered the heartland of South African trout-fishing. Some of the best fishing rivers are:

Southern Drakensberg: Mzimkhulu River (Underberg); Pholela River (Himeville); Ngwangwane River (Colesford Nature Reserve/Umngano Project area).

Central Drakensberg: Bushirani’s River (Giant’s Castle – one of the best sites); Mooi River (Kamberg); Loteni River (Loteni).

Northern Drakensberg: uThukela River (Royal Natal National Park).

Parts of the rivers flow through community-owned land. The uThukela River is administered by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site.


Getting there: All areas can be reached from the N3. SOUTHERN DRAKENSBERG: take the R517 to Underberg. CENTRAL DRAKENSBERG: follow signs from the highway at Estcourt and Mooi River. Take the R74 to Winterton and Bergville for the NORTHERN DRAKENSBERG.

Notes: Always get permission from the landowners.

7 north-eastern cape

This beautiful region in the northern part of the Eastern Cape has many clean, accessible streams. Yellowfish and wild-bred trout are available in abundance. The main fishing rivers are: Bell River (near Rhodes), Rille Spruit (near Barkly East), Bok Spruit (near Rhodes), Sterk Spruit (near Lady Grey), Joggem Spruit (between New England and Rhodes), Langkloof River (between Barkly East and Lady Grey), Sallboomp Spruit (between Barkly East and Lady Grey) and Karingmelk Spruit (between Barkly East and Lady Grey). The association recommends that fish be released to ensure that the supply remains strong. The best fishing is in April and May. Most of the waters here are administered by the Wild Trout Association (WTA).

Getting there: The area is reached from the R58 between Aliwal North and Barkly East, or the R56 from Molteno through Ugie to Maclear.

Contact: Wild Trout Association: +27 (0)45 974 9290, www.wildtrout.co.za

Notes: Fishing is closed in the spawning season (31 May to 31 August).

key attractions
“I have found that fish at Sterkfontein are most likely to take a dry line with small nymphs between the sizes of 12 and 14. A dry fly is especially effective during evening hours.”

Dr Mike Birkett

Southern African still-water fish are comparatively large and strong. There is a growing interest in South Africa and internationally towards fly-fishing for indigenous fish. In the Maloti Drakensberg region yellowfish are favoured, as these are strong, wild fish which offer rewarding angling. There are ten species of yellowfish in South Africa. Two of these are common in the Maloti Drakensberg region. The Eastern Cape and Lesotho are home to the Smallmouth Yellowfish. The Natal Yellowfish (“Natal Scaly”) occurs in KwaZulu-Natal waters.

Skilled fly-fishers may have the rare thrill of hooking the endangered Large-mouth Yellowfish in areas of the Eastern Free State such as Sterkfontein Dam. This species can reach sizes of more than 5 kg. Considering its endangered status, you should always return this fish to the water immediately.

Rainbow and Brown Trout are abundant in the many mountain streams and dams of the region. Trout are not indigenous to southern Africa. Brown Trout were introduced from Scotland over 100 years ago, and Rainbow Trout about a decade later. Alien fish introductions worldwide have had a negative impact on aquatic fauna, and once introduced they are difficult to eradicate.

Trout do, however, bring advantages to local communities, as many fly-fishing rivers run through community-owned land. This creates opportunities for economic development in these areas. Trout are now considered to be a part of the cold river systems of South Africa, but you should never introduce them into water where they do not yet occur. This is because they prey on the indigenous species, including the critically endangered Maloti Minnow which now occurs only in the higher reaches of mountain streams and was at one time thought to have become extinct.

What fly should I use?

The flies which are mainly taken by yellowfish and trout represent mayflies, caddis flies, midges and stoneflies. Yellowfish are omnivorous, and supplement their diet with aquatic plants and algae, particularly in the winter months. Most yellowfish are caught on the riverbed, so depth is important. During the early morning and evening, however, dry flies have proven productive.

Because of the wide variety of flies and other insects on which the fish in this region feed, there is no one particular fly which is more successful than any other. The best fly to use is one that you feel confident with.

Which seasons are best for fly-fishing?

Summer, if the rivers are not flowing too strongly, is the best time for yellowfish. While they prefer warm water, at the end of summer they swim upstream into the cooler mountain waters to spawn. The best seasons for trout-fishing are spring and autumn. Autumn is particularly productive, since the fish are pregnant and need food. They therefore take the fly easily. Note that trout in Lesotho spawn earlier than those in South Africa. Summer is not as rewarding, as the rivers are often too high and “in spate” with unclear water. In winter the rivers are low, and many waters are closed to fishing from June to August.

During summer the fish are often most active at first light, although the larger, deeper lakes can fish well throughout the day. In winter the nights are bitterly cold and the days bright and clear. Best fishing during this period is often at last light, when the water is at its warmest.

Practical and safety tips:

- Always have warm clothing and rain gear with you, as temperatures can fluctuate enormously, even in summer.
- Use high-factor sunblock, sun-hats, long trousers and long-sleeved shirts.
- Take cover in your car during thunderstorms. Stand away from trees and tall structures.
- Don’t leave valuables unattended.
- Be alert for snakes.
fun for the family
Fly-fishing is great fun for everyone – you can learn as you go, spend some time with an experienced angler or join one of the many fly-fishing clubs and have a few lessons before you hit the big time. Remember, if you are letting small children participate it is a good idea to make sure that they wear a life jacket at all times. Learning to tie flies is an art form in itself and should carry a reward for the younger participants producing the best flies.

how can I be an eco-friendly fly-fisher?
Part of the attraction of southern African fly-fishing waters is the unspoilt ecology of the locations, the wilderness experience and the good condition of the fish. These conditions are only sustainable if fly-fishers practise sensitive, eco-friendly fishing. If you are fishing for your evening meal, keep only one or two trout – any other fish, including all yellowfish, should be released immediately. Keep to established tracks and trails wherever possible. Carry out whatever you have brought in and any litter you may find. Encourage landowners to keep their streams free of alien plants which reduce the water flow and impact on the aquatic plants and animals.

do I need permission to fish?
Gone are the days when you could wander up to any piece of water and simply cast your line. You should make sure that you have permission to fish in the river or dam that you are interested in.

   It is a good idea to get in touch with the local fishing club, where you will be able to get a temporary fishing permit at reasonable cost. They will fill you in on their rules and guidelines, and will also be able to give you good tips on the area, and ideas of where the best fishing locations are.

   If you want to fish on a stretch of privately owned river, ask the land-owner for permission in return for a fee. The land-owner should be able to give you hints and ideas for fishing in these rivers. If the river that you want to fish is on community-owned land, you will need to approach the community leader for permission in return for a fee.

fishing regulations in lesotho
   ■ The licence fee is M5.00. Licences are obtainable from: The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Division, Private Bag A82, Maseru 100. Tel: (+266) 22 323 986
   ■ Closed season for trout-fishing is between 1st June and 31st August.
   ■ Fishing tackle for trout: only rod and line and artificial non-spinning flies may be used. Landing net and gaff are not permitted.
   ■ Bag limit for trout: twelve trout over 10 inches (25 centimetres) in length. Other trout must be returned to the water.

further information and resources
   ■ For fishing clubs in South Africa contact the Federation of Southern African Fly-fishers, www.fosaf.co.za
   ■ Lesotho: The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock Division, Private Bag A82, Maseru 100. Tel: (+266) 22 323 986
   ■ For more information on yellowfish: www.yellowsonfly.com

additional reading:
   ■ Favoured Flies and Techniques of the Experts, Vol 2, Edited by Malcolm Meintjes and Murray Pedder, distributed by FoSAF
The unique and inspiring rock art of the Maloti Drakensberg makes this region one of the finest outdoor art galleries in the world. The range of colours and skilful techniques is seldom seen in rock paintings elsewhere, while the sheer concentration of some 45 000 images in 2 000 sites is unrivalled anywhere in the world. This immense wealth of spellbinding imagery provides us with fascinating insights into the lives and beliefs of the people who painted them; some many thousands of years ago, others within living memory.
Liphofung (Eastern Lesotho)

Stand in hushed awe beneath the magnificent sandstone overhang of Liphofung – “the place of the eland” – and experience a deep sense of ages past. This was the domain of the San before herdsmen sheltered their flocks here or before King Moshoeshoe, founder of the Basotho nation, hid here from his enemies. The art includes splendid depictions of human figures and of eland superimposed on older paintings. Guides and overnight accommodation are available at the Liphofung Cultural Village.

Getting there: Enter Lesotho at the Caledonspoort border post and drive to Botha Bothe. From there, take the Oxbow road for about 30 km, then turn left to Liphofung.

Contact: Liphofung Bookings: +266 22 460 273

Ha Baroana (Western Lesotho)

In this massive overhang the San have left a magnificent gallery – paintings of animals and birds such as leopard, eland, blue crane and guinea fowl, and of San hunting and dancing.

Getting there: From Maseru travel 39 km east on the main Mountain Road, then turn left for 5.5 km on a gravel road. A trail winds down to the Liphiring Stream which you cross to enter the shelter.

Contact: Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture: +266 22 313 034

Sehlabathebe National Park (South-Eastern Lesotho)

This high mountain wonderland of amazing rock formations, small lakes and massive rock overhangs has some of the last paintings made by the San. You can hire a guide to lead you to the best rock art sites in this remote wilderness.

Getting there: Enter Lesotho via Ramatseliso’s Gate or Qacha’s Nek border posts and continue to Sehlabathebe. Alternatively, it is a two- to three-hour hike or horse ride from Bushman’s Nek near Underberg.

Contact: Sehlabathebe National Park: +266 22 311 767

Notes: You need your passport. If you travel by road, a 4x4 vehicle is a must. There is no fuel available at Sehlabathebe.

---

For more detailed information see the full size regional maps on pages 14-21

PREVIOUS: Game Pass Shelter. uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site, considered one of the 10 best rock art sites in the world. In 1916 it became the first internationally-recorded rock art site in South Africa. PHOTO: SP

CONTINUED OVERLEAF
uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site

Kamberg Rock Art Centre is the gateway to Game Pass Shelter, famous for its vivid and well-preserved rock art. A DVD presentation gives insight into the history of the rock art and its creators. A 1½-hr walk takes you to the shelter where you can see the renowned “Rosetta Panel”, considered by some as the key to interpreting San rock art.

Getting there: From Nottingham Road or Rosetta, near Mooi River, follow the signs to Kamberg Nature Reserve.

Contact: Kamberg Rock Art Centre: +27 (0)33 267 7282

Notes: The centre is open seven days a week, but you must phone ahead to book a guide.

Didima Rock Art Centre has innovative displays and a mesmerizing audiovisual show about the Drakensberg rock art. Vivid paintings can be seen at Lower Mushroom Shelter, Brotherton and Procession Shelter. Knowledgeable community custodians can be hired at Didima Camp.

Getting there: From Winterton, follow signs to Didima. The Centre is just before the Cathedral Peak Hotel.

Contact: Didima Rock Art Centre: +27 (0)36 488 8025; Didima Camp: +27 (0)36 488 1332

Injasuthi, Battle Cave shows the conflict between two San groups among hundreds of other images. There are beautiful paintings of eland and rare paintings of a mongoose and an aardvark. The walk is not difficult and will take 2½ hours each way.

Getting there: From the N3 take the Loskop Rd and follow signs to Injasuthi.

Contact: Injasuthi: +27 (0)36 431 7848

Notes: You must book in advance for a custodian to accompany you.

Clarens (Eastern Free State)

Caves abound in the unique landscape of golden sandstone cliffs in the Clarens area, making it a wonderful place to drive from site to site in search of fascinating artistic imagery. Noteworthy sites in the area include Koerland, Allandale, Basotho Cultural Village and St Fort. The famous Schappplaats site has intriguing renditions of half-human, half-antelope figures and Dassie Rock at Kora Lodge boasts the only known San painting of a dassie, or rock hyrax.

Getting there: Clarens is about 40 km south of Bethlehem, it can be reached on the R712 or R711.

Contact: Clarens Tourism: +27 (0)58 256 1542

Notes: Most sites in this area are on private land and many require prior booking. You can contact Clarens Tourism for more information.

North-Eastern Cape

The inevitable meeting of cultures with the arrival of Europeans is captivatingly recorded in some of the caves of the picturesque North-Eastern Cape. Contemplate astonishing paintings of ox wagons and people on horseback, side by side with more traditional paintings. Many sites have stunning examples of polychrome-shaded antelope in a wide variety of stances. Accessible and impressive sites include Dunorbin, Chamiso, the Prentjiesberg hiking trail, Kalkoenkranz and Craigmore.

Getting there: The sites are in the areas surrounding the towns of Maclear, Rhodes and Ugie.

Contact: Eastern Cape Tourism: +27 (0)51 633 3567

Notes: These rock art sites are all on private land and require prior booking.

For more attractions consult the directory at the back of the book.
The Maloti Drakensberg region is a treasure trove of some of the most outstanding rock art to be found anywhere in the world. The unique style of the paintings is instantly recognizable, by children and adults alike, and the techniques that the San used to achieve this visual distinctiveness are truly remarkable. Even if you have seen examples of some of this rock art in museums, or in photographs, nothing can quite prepare you for the wonder and excitement of seeing the real thing close-up.

There is something deeply spiritual about standing in the very spot where the original artist stood as he painted a majestic eland, skilfully using black, white, and different shades of red, yellow, and brown to define its form and to make its muscles ripple under the surface of its skin. Marvel at the way the magnificent animal is shown in a three-dimensional pose, looking backwards over its shoulder at the hunters who are closing in on it. Puzzle over mystical-looking creatures and strange markings painted near them – then turn and gaze over the beautiful grassy hills and valleys, as the artist might have done.

**what did they use for paint?**

- Red, orange and yellow paint were made from rock or soil rich in iron oxide.
- Black pigment was usually made from black clay or soils rich in manganese, and occasionally from burnt bone or charcoal.
- White pigment, the least durable, was made from fine clay and perhaps sometimes from bird droppings.

Sometimes binders such as melted fat, egg white or eland blood were used in the paint. Earlier paintings have survived better than those done more recently, suggesting that artists in more recent times had lost the knowledge about binding paints.

**what do the paintings show?**

Until recently people saw the rock paintings as scenes taken from San daily life: quaint depictions of hunting, fighting, food collecting and strange rituals. But in the 1970s researchers came to believe that the paintings relate to the religious beliefs of the San and are reflections of the spirit world.

A popular view is that the paintings were probably created by shamans – healers or medicine people. According to this view, a shaman would go into a hallucinatory trance, enter the spirit realm and interact with the spirits. The paintings are a record of what was revealed in that altered state of consciousness.

As such, the paintings are believed to be imbued with a special power. So much so that some African izangoma (diviners) scrape pigment off the paintings to use in making particularly powerful muti (medicine). Others use these powerfully sacred places as venues to train their students, and some rock art sites are still visited in secret by people of San descent.

Many of the paintings show fantastical spirit creatures such as rain animals (often eland) and therianthropes (partly human, partly animal forms). These suggest that the medicine person has taken on the power of the animal. A shaman in a trance would experience nasal bleeding like a wounded eland and this blood was sometimes rubbed onto other participants of the ritual to ward off bad luck and sickness.

Eland are the most frequently-painted animal subjects and are the most elaborately-treated of all the images. Depictions of eland have multiple meanings – related to rainmaking and puberty ceremonies; used as a symbol of group identity or a metaphor for the trance state; or an attempt to capture the spirit of selected animals to ensure a successful hunt.

**talk the talk – sound like a rock art expert!**

**SHADIED POLYCHROME:** Skilful use of colours and shading to give the painting a distinctive visual realism.

**FORESHORTENING:** Relative sizing of an image to give it a 3D look by making areas of the painting that should appear to be closer to the viewer proportionally larger than areas that are further away.

**THERIANTHROPES:** Depictions of part-human, part-animal forms (often part-eland); believed to have held great spiritual significance.

**SUPERIMPOSITION:** New artwork painted over existing images; believed to have been done sometimes to “recharge” the site with spiritual potency.
what makes this rock art unique?

- An uncommonly wide range of colours
- Foreshortening and shading used
to give 3D realism – rare in rock art
- Animals depicted in a wide variety of stances
- Many paintings are very detailed
  with exquisitely fine lines
- Interesting and varied subject
  matter – including hunter gatherer
  life, mystical imagery and the
  arrival of other peoples
- Expression of the religious
  and mythological world of the
  Mountain San
- The vast number of images and
  sites
- Painted over a time span of 4 000 years
- Many images in extremely good
  condition
- Some shelters are living heritage
  sites – they are still visited by
  San descendants and others who
  regard the paintings as sacred and
  containing potency.

what do we know about the san of this area?

The San have lived in this region for many thousands of years. Carbon dating suggests that the oldest remaining paintings were created about 4 000 years ago. Other archaeological evidence indicates that the San people were already here thousands of years before that.

The themes and styles of the rock art over the centuries appear to be relatively consistent, but there is evidence that stone tools, social networks, and even economic strategies changed over the last 18 000 years. The San remained hunter gatherers and foragers until the arrival of other immigrant groups.

That has changed dramatically over the last few hundred years, with the arrival of the black Nguni tribes, followed later by white hunters and farmers of the European colonial period. Some of the rock art shows these intruders as seen by the San – in fascinating paintings of black herdsmen and their cattle, of men on horseback, covered wagons and soldiers carrying rifles. These images testify to what must have been fearful times for the short-statured and relatively peaceable San. They could no longer roam freely in the area between the coast and the Drakensberg. They withdrew to the relative safety of the mountains, from where they raided the intruders’ cattle in the surrounding countryside. This led to a British garrison being stationed at Fort Nottingham to halt such raids and pursue the San raiders. The retribution of the farmers was merciless and by the dawn of the twentieth century there was almost no trace of the many San who had lived in the area.

the living heritage of the secret san

By the 1920s popular opinion held that the San of the Maloti Drakensberg were extinct. Then in 1928 a farmer found a perfect bow and arrow set in Eland Cave in the Didima area, giving rise to much speculation that there were still pockets of San living deep in the mountains. This did not prove to be the case, but it is certainly true that the descendants of the San have secretly continued to visit significant sites.

Now that popular opinion toward the San is no longer hateful, the exciting truth is more readily announced: the San were not totally annihilated – many intermarried with their African neighbours, changing their names and taking on new cultural identities. Some kept aspects of their culture alive, visiting each other in secret, frequenting their rock art sites under cover of darkness and still performing healing and rainmaking ceremonies for their African neighbours as their ancestors had for centuries. Today about 600 people in the area are proud to regard themselves ethnically as San, and have adopted the Nguni term Abathwa – meaning “first people” – for themselves.

This includes the Duma clan in the Kamberg area, who have recently been granted the right to perform their annual sacred eland ceremonies at Game Pass Shelter.

The last known painters were Lindiso Majola, from the Maclear area, and Kerrick Ntusi, who is still alive, living in the southern KZN Drakensberg. Both painted around 1920.

the changing names of a timeless people

The exotic clicking sounds of the San languages often prove too much for most European tongues to cope with. Linguists use various symbols to represent these clicks. The original name of the San in the Giant’s Castle and Kamberg area was //XIGWI. Those in the Tsolo, Ugie and Maclear area were IGA INE, and the groupings in Lesotho were known as BABOA, a Sotho term.

BUSHMAN is the English form of the old Dutch term Bosjesman, meaning people of the bushes. Although regarded by some as derogatory, other groups prefer the term.

Recently the San descendants in the Drakensberg area agreed to adopt the term ABATHWA for themselves.

ABATHWA is an Nguni term referring to all “first people” throughout Africa.

SAN, a Khoikhoi word meaning Outsider, is still the most commonly used term.
**rock art etiquette**

Rock art is of immense archaeological and cultural worth – and it is irre-placeable. It is protected by law. Observing the following basic rules will ensure that you uphold the spirit of the law and help to preserve this wonderful heritage for future generations.

- **Rock art sites must only be visited with a guide. Get permission in advance from the relevant authorities or landowner.**
- **Never touch or lean on the paintings – fats and oils from your skin damage the paint.**
- **Never wet the art with water, saliva, or any other liquid, not even “just to make the colours stand out”.**
- **Avoid stirring up dust – some of it settles on the art and hardens into a crust which obscures the paintings.**
- **Never trace the art – it is easily damaged.**
- **Don’t interfere with the paintings in any way. Don’t scrape them, highlight the outlines or add your own drawings. The damage is irreversible and graf-fiti anywhere within 50 m of a rock art site could cost you a fine of up to a million rand and/or imprisonment for up to five years.**
- **Never remove stone tools, pottery, bones or other objects from a site.**
- **If you see anybody damaging the art, please report the incident.**
- **Never make fires in shelters containing rock art.**
- **In the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site you may not overnight in shelters where there is rock art.**

In addition, remember that for some the rock art sites are sacred places worthy of reverence. Behave respectfully and speak quietly, especially when accompanied by descendants of the San.

**enjoying rock art with children**

Most children love tales of long ago and are enchanted by the idea that people lived in these caves and overhangs, in the heart of the beautiful mountains.

Before entering a rock art site, be sure that your children understand the do’s and don’ts of how to behave around rock art. The challenge with younger children is sure to be that they naturally want to touch the paintings, so you will need to keep your eyes on them at all times.

An easy way to include them in the experience is to ask them to tell you what animals they can see in the paintings and also what the people are doing, carrying or wearing. They usually thoroughly enjoy piecing together stories from pictures, so stand back and enjoy a stream of highly imaginative interpretations!

Older children will be able to appreciate some of the finer details of the history and interpretations of the art – if you don’t have a guide with you, be prepared to give them some of the background information yourself.

After the outing, give your budding artists some paints and paper, and watch them produce their very own “rock art” – at this stage a reminder to “never draw on walls” would probably be a good idea!

**further information and resources**

- Basotho Cultural Village: +27 (0)58 721 0300
- The Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg: +27 (0)33 345 1404

**additional reading**

The Maloti Drakensberg is a world of botanical opulence; an Eden of beautiful and rare plants, many with spectacular flowers, at least 16 percent of which occur nowhere else in the world. Its wooded valleys, grassy slopes and high summits harbour in excess of 3,000 species of flora – more than 10 percent of the plant diversity of southern Africa. This is more than the native flora of Switzerland or Germany and double that of Britain. In the right season you can step out into any part of this floral wonderland and find yourself fascinated and enchanted by the treasures that await you.
1 Sani Pass, Black Mountain Pass and the Sehonghong Valley, Lesotho

Travelling by 4x4 vehicle (with a driver who is prepared to make lots of stops) is the best way to see the plants of the spectacular Sani Pass. Crossing the different altitude zones enables you to see an exceptionally rich range of species. Allow a few hours to continue travelling to the top of the Black Mountain Pass where you will find some wonderful alpine specials. Proceed on the road to Mokhotlong winding down into the Sehonghong Valley and along the river for a few kilometres – the scenery, plants and birds will reward your time.

Getting there: From the N3 at Howick take the R617 to Underberg. Travel via Himeville to Sani Pass. In Lesotho, follow the A1 from Botha Bothe via Oxbow to Mokhotlong.

Contact: Underberg Tourism Office: +27 (0)33 701 1471, www.drakensberg.org, Mokhotlong MDTP District office: +2766 22 920 338

Notes: Bring your passport. The South African border post opens at 08h00 and closes at 16h00.

2 Naude’s Nek (North-Eastern Cape)

At an altitude of 2 623 m, this is the highest dirt road mountain pass in South Africa. Around Rhodes, Tifﬁnndell and Wartrail you ﬁnd alpine and sub-alpine ﬂower genera such as Lachenalia, Harveya, Jamesbrutenia, Cyttanthus, Erica, Dierama and Gladiolus. In November, January and February you can ﬁnd ﬁelds blooming with large lilac daisy ﬂowers of Berkheya purpurea, the white-ﬂowering grey-leaved Eumorphia sericea, a low-growing shrub, the tall yellow iris Moraea alticola, and Giant Pokers Kniphofia northiae. Don’t miss the wild orchids in Maclear. The region is also famous for its wild trout, rock art, and dinosaur fossils.

Getting there: Naude’s Nek is on the R396 between Rhodes and Maclear, off the R56 in the Eastern Cape Drakensberg.

Contact: uKhahlamba Tour Guide Association: +27 (0)45 971 9078, www.senqutourism.co.za

Notes: A 4x4 vehicle is recommended, especially after heavy rains. Check road conditions before attempting Naude’s Nek.

3 Lady Grey – Joubert’s Pass (North-Eastern Cape)

This pass in the southernmost extension of the Drakensberg – the Witteberg – and opened in 1914, takes you into Karoo sandstone and basalt peaks with succulents and high-altitude plants. You ﬁnd the scarlet Phylgerus capensis (Cape fuchsia), purple geraniums and a wide variety of daisy ﬂowers and bushes endemic to the high mountain region. Take the scenic route over the pass to Barkly East to see the Gladolus oppositiflorus in season and unusual species of Zakuziansky (Drumsticks). The Lady Grey area, rich in fossil beds and rock art, offers bird-watching, hiking and fly-ﬁshing. Historical and botanical tours are available.

Getting there: From Lesotho take the Tele Bridge border crossing outside Quthing (Moyeni) to Sterkspruit, and turn left to Lady Grey. The town is off the R56 between Aliwal North and Barkly East.

Contact: Lady Grey Tourism: +27 (0)51 603 0176, www.ladygreytourism.co.za

Notes: The road is rough, but passable to cars except after rain.

For more detailed information see the full size regional maps on pages 14-21.
4 the sentinel (northern drakensberg)
This important area for alpine plants is one of the easiest high-altitude sites to reach. A moderate five-hour return walk from the Sentinel Car Park allows you to see a myriad of flowers. Highlights include a large form of Nerine bowdenii, Eucomis bicolor and Galtonia regalis (endemic) on the basalt cliffs, Crocosmia pearsii, a northern Drakensberg endemic, Gladiolus microcarpus, the Lesotho Carnation Dianthus basuticus and the yellow Sebaea thomasii. A relatively easy climb up a 30-m long chain ladder takes you onto the escarpment and into the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site.

Getting there: From Harrismith, take the R712 to Phuthaditjhaba. Follow the signs through Phuthaditjhaba, follow a brick paved road, and keep right to the Sentinel Car Park.

Contact: Sentinel Car Park: +27 (0)58 713 5071

Notes: Be prepared for all weather as storms and mist can come up quickly, making conditions dangerous.

5 bokong nature reserve (northern lesotho)
Good examples of Afro-alpine wetlands containing endemic plant species can be found in this high-altitude reserve, which reaches an altitude of up to 3 090 m. Entirely in the alpine zone, this is one of the highest nature reserves in Africa. It is the source of the Bokong River and Lepaqoa Stream, with its spectacular waterfall that can be seen from the visitors’ centre. A small museum and restaurant round off the visit.

Getting there: From Harrismith, take the R712 to Phuthaditjhaba. Follow the signs through Phuthaditjhaba, follow a brick paved road, and keep right to the Sentinel Car Park.

Contact: Lesotho Northern Parks: +266 22 460 723

Notes: Be prepared for all weather as storms and mist can come up quickly, making conditions dangerous.

6 montane forests of the ukhahlamba drakensberg park world heritage site (kwazulu-natal)
The Drakensberg montane forests are found at the mid- to upper elevations of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, and can be easily reached on most of the walks in the park. Here you will find lush, cool forests with trees such as Yellowwood, Mountain Hard Pear, Cape Chestnut, Cape Holly and White Stinkwood. In the shelter of these forests you can also find small plants such as the wild Orange Begonia, the striking purple Streptocarpus gardenii, and the orchid Disperis corniuvie. Good examples of these forests are found on the walk up the Tugela Gorge at Royal Natal National Park, and the Rainbow Gorge walk that is accessed from Didima at Cathedral Peak.

Getting there: All areas can be reached from the N3. Southern Drakensberg: take the R617 to Underberg. Central Drakensberg and Northern Drakensberg can be reached via Mooi River and Estcourt or by following signs from the R74 to Winterton and Bergville.

Contact: Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife: +27 (0)33 845 1000

7 katse botanical gardens
Most of Lesotho’s major ecosystems are represented in this unique living collection of flora. Enjoy the beautiful and rare flowers in fascinating areas such as the Rock garden, the Medicinal garden and the Aquatic garden. One of the aims here is the conservation of threatened species, with the current focus being on the endangered Spiral Aloe (Aloe polyphylla) and Berg Bamboo (Thamnochotamus lesolihus). The gardens contribute to education, horticulture and income generation for local communities. They also propagate medicinal plants and offer support for traditional healers.

Getting there: From Leribe follow the B25 to Ha Lejone, then travel on to Mphorosane, and follow the B31 to Katse.

Contact: +266 22 910 311
The Maloti Drakensberg region supports an amazing diversity of plants, many of them found nowhere else in the world. There is something to be seen everywhere, but it is often the alpine plants of the remote higher altitudes that offer the most rewarding and remarkable experiences. These plants are often small, but exquisite. Although rare in distribution, they can be locally abundant. For example, the Basotho use *Helichrysum trinerve*, amongst others, as fuel, collecting large bundles and transporting it home by donkey. These plants, although endemic to the high mountain region, are widespread in that habitat.

Interesting plants can be seen at any time of the year, but the peak flowering months are November to February.

**flowers: north and south, high and low**

It is worth noting that the types of flowers you can expect to find at any location depend mainly on two things – the aspect (which way a slope faces) and the altitude (height above sea level).

- North-facing slopes are exposed to more direct sunlight, so plants growing there must withstand drier and hotter conditions than plants growing on the south-facing slopes.
- Also, the higher you go, the harsher the climate, resulting in three floral zones linked to altitude. The lowest is the montane zone, with grasslands, shrubs and forests. Next is the sub-alpine zone, consisting mainly of grasslands, followed by the unforgiving alpine zone at the summit, where only the hardiest of plants can thrive, adapted to strong winds, heat in summer, snow and ice in winter.

The interplay of aspect and altitude means that two sites with the same altitude, but different aspects, will have different plants; and two sites with the same aspect, but different altitudes, will also have different plants. This means you may find a wide variety of species within a relatively small area, simply by changing altitude or moving horizontally along the mountainside.

**enjoy magical montane forests**

To stumble from a hot grassland walk into a cool forest, in a sheltered gorge or on a south-facing slope, is a dramatic and refreshing experience.

Here you will find forests of Yellowwood trees (*Podocarpus latifolius*, *P. henkelii*, *P. tulpaeus*), renowned for their fine yellow timber. Other trees include the Mountain Hard Pear (*Alpinia emarginata*) with bright red berries, the Cape Chestnut (*Calodendrum capense*) with stunning pink flowers, the Cape Holly (Ilex mitis) and the White Stinkwood (*Combretum abietinum*).

In this sheltered world you will also find small plants such as the wild Orange Begonia and the striking purple *Streptocarpus gardnerii*, a relative of the African violet, growing on damp rocks, and the little white granny bonnet orchids *Disperis laninae*.

**appreciate the wonders of the grasslands**

At first the wide expanses of open grassland, beautifully coloured in season, may seem monotonous. But step out of your vehicle and start walking: within this sea of grass the plant variety is enormous. Throughout spring and summer different plants come into flower. Shorter flowers like the lovely lilac cushions of *Barleria monticola* emerge in spring when the grass is short, while late summer flowers are taller in order to compete with the grass. The high season for orchids is January/February.

Some of the grasslands are scattered with a variety of *Protea* species such as the widespread Common Sugarbush (*Protea caffra*) and Silver Sugarbush (*Protea roupelliae*), forming *Protea* savannas.

Keep a lookout for brilliant orange or pink *Watsoniellas*, magnificent *Brunsvigias* (tumbleweeds) and the delicate dangling pink or purple flowers of the Hairbells (*Dierama*). Deep blue *Agapanthus* cluster on cool, damp rocky slopes and white arum lilies thrive in marshy areas.
discover high-altitude treasures

The most widespread flowering plants gracing the alpine zone are Erica (heather) and Helichrysum (everlasting daisies).

Spring (September to November) is a good time to see wild irises (Moraea spp.), including the large yellow Moraea huttonii found along streams. In summer, wetlands are lined with glowing patches of red-hot pokers, including the Lesotho Poker (Kniphofia caulescens) – a traditional charm against lightning.

The red Suicide Gladiolus (Gladiolus flanaganii) clings to the rocky basalt cliffs where it is pollinated by the malachite sunbird, while the Lesotho lily (Gladiolus saundersii), an alpine endemic, is traditionally used as a remedy for diarrhoea.

The rare Cloud Protea (P. nubigena) is found in a single site at Royal Natal National Park. The magnificent Spiral Aloe (Aloe polyphylla), which is close to extinction due to excessive harvesting, is found only in Lesotho. You can see them in the Katse Botanic Gardens.

High-altitude tarns around Sehlabathebe are home to the Sehlabathebe “water lily” (Aponogeton ranunculiflorus) which is found here and nowhere else in the world.

understand the issues

Sadly, the floral wealth of this region is under threat. There are too many domesticated animals to be supported on the present grazing land and livestock are being herded into previously untouched areas, causing grassland degradation, soil erosion and damage to alpine wetlands.

Traditionally many plants have medicinal or spiritual uses. In the past, harvesting by traditional healers for local use was sustainable, but now large-scale harvesting is causing a decline in many species.

The hope of ecotourism, and of community-owned ventures in particular, is that they will contribute to the livelihoods of rural communities, and in so doing, encourage rural communities to preserve the floral asset in their care.

Plants may not be collected and removed from the region without a collecting permit. Take only photographs.

Finally, we can grow a love for the beauty and value of our rich floral wealth by encouraging children to look for the special features of these flowers, such as their smell or shape or the fact that they’re not found anywhere else on this planet!

further information and resources

- Botanical Society of South Africa: +27 (0)33 394 0210 or +27 (0)31 201 5111
- Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa: +27 (0)31 201 3126 or +27 (0)33 330 3931
- Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife for all nature reserves in the KZN Drakensberg: +27 (0)33 845 1000
- Lesotho Ministry of Tourism Environment and Culture, Maseru: +266 22 313 767

additional reading

From majestic raptors to exquisite little thrushes and pipits, there are over 350 bird species for which the Maloti Drakensberg is home – some of them found nowhere else in the world. This spectacular mountain region and its dramatic escarpment contain a myriad of micro-habitats – from high-altitude alpine sites to grassy ridges and forested rivers in the foothills – giving rise to a great diversity of birdlife. There is a growing network of experienced local bird guides at many key sites who can assist you in finding them.
1 Sani Pass and Lesotho Highlands

This route takes you through habitats rising rapidly from 1600 m to 3240 m. Along Sani Pass you can see Gurney’s Sugarbird in the Protea veld on the lower slopes. Buffstreaked Chat, Cape Eagle Owl, Mountain and Rock Pipits, Bush Blackcap, Barrass’s Warbler, Swainson’s Thrush, Shap-billed Honeyguide and Ground Woodpecker. Sought-after species at the top include Drakensberg Siskin, Sentinel Rock Thrush, Mountain Pipit, Fairy Flycatcher, Mountain Chat and Malachite Sunbird. Sought-after species at the top include Drakensberg Siskin, Sentinel Rock Thrush, Mountain Pipit, Fairy Flycatcher, Mountain Chat and Malachite Sunbird. Sought-after species at the top include Drakensberg Siskin, Sentinel Rock Thrush, Mountain Pipit, Fairy Flycatcher, Mountain Chat and Malachite Sunbird.

Getting there:
From the N3 take the R617 to Underberg, and via Himeville to Sani Pass. In Lesotho follow the A1 to Mokhotlong.

Contact:
Book a birding guide at Underberg Tourism: +27 (0)33 701 1471, www.drakensberg.org or Mokhotlong +266 22 920 338

Notes:
A 4x4 vehicle is essential. You will need your passport.

2 Giant’s Castle Game Reserve

The birding in Giant’s Castle Game Reserve, with over 100 species, is tremendously rewarding, even on short walks. You may see Bearded Vulture, Verreaux’s (Black) Eagle, Jackal Buzzard, Lanner Falcon and Cape Griffon (Cape Vulture). Smaller birds include Ground Woodpecker, Yellow Warbler, Broad-tailed Warbler, Grassbird, Spotted Prinia and Fairy Flycatcher. Deeper into the mountains you could see Grey-wing Francolin, Blue Crane and Yellow-breasted Pipit. Near the top you should see Orange-breasted Rockjumper and Drakensberg Siskin, amongst others. The vulture hide at Giant’s Castle offers spectacular close-up sightings of the vultures and buzzards.

Getting there:
From the N3, turn off and pass through Mooi River, travel another 64 km following the signs to Giant’s Castle.

Contact:
Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife – Central Reservations: +27 (0)33 845 1000. Book the vulture hide with the camp manager: +27 (0)36 353 3718, www.kznwildlife.com

Notes:
The hide is very popular and bookings must be made in advance.

3 Sehlabathebe National Park (Lesotho)

The first national park established in Lesotho is remote, rugged and beautiful. It is well-known for its birdlife, with high-altitude birds such as Drakensberg Siskin, Mountain Pipit, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Orange-breasted Rockjumper and Bearded Vulture, and Karoo species such as Sickie-wing Chat. Egyptian Vultures have been seen, as has Rudd’s Lark on rare occasions.

Getting there:
Follow the R56 via Matatiele to Qacha’s Nek. Continue for two hours on a gravel road. You need a 4x4 vehicle for the last stretch into the park. From Maseru or Leribe you take the A4 and B46. You can also hike the 10 km up the escarpment from Bushman’s Nek in KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact:
Book at Parks Department: +266 22 311 767

Notes:
You need a 4×4 vehicle to drive in the park. The park has self-catering accommodation. Bring your passport when hiking from Bushman’s Nek. Be prepared for all sorts of weather. Thick mist is common in summer.

Key attractions

- **Sani Pass and Lesotho Highlands**: This route takes you through habitats rising rapidly from 1600 m to 3240 m. Along Sani Pass you can see Gurney’s Sugarbird, Buffstreaked Chat, Cape Eagle Owl, Mountain and Rock Pipits, Bush Blackcap, Barrass’s Warbler, Swainson’s Thrush, Shap-billed Honeyguide and Ground Woodpecker. Sought-after species at the top include Drakensberg Siskin, Sentinel Rock Thrush, Mountain Pipit, Fairy Flycatcher, Mountain Chat and Malachite Sunbird.
- **Giant’s Castle Game Reserve**: The birding in Giant’s Castle Game Reserve, with over 100 species, is tremendously rewarding, even on short walks. You may see Bearded Vulture, Verreaux’s (Black) Eagle, Jackal Buzzard, Lanner Falcon and Cape Griffon (Cape Vulture). Smaller birds include Ground Woodpecker, Yellow Warbler, Broad-tailed Warbler, Grassbird, Spotted Prinia and Fairy Flycatcher.
- **Sehlabathebe National Park (Lesotho)**: The first national park established in Lesotho is remote, rugged and beautiful. It is well-known for its birdlife, with high-altitude birds such as Drakensberg Siskin, Mountain Pipit, Yellow-breasted Pipit, Orange-breasted Rockjumper and Bearded Vulture, and Karoo species such as Sickie-wing Chat. Egyptian Vultures have been seen, as has Rudd’s Lark on rare occasions.
4 Quthing (Southern Lesotho)

The Upper Quthing Valley supports two "nucleus" breeding colonies of Cape Griffon (Cape Vulture). The Bearded Vulture found here is protected by the Quthing Wildlife Development Trust. Other key species which you can see in the area are Bald Ibis, Ground Woodpecker, Layard’s Warbler, Orange-breasted Rockjumper, Sickle-wing Chat, Mountain Pipit and Drakensberg Siskin. White-necked Raven, Booted Eagle, Rameron Pigeon and Cape Batis have also been spotted here. Quthing Wildlife Development Trust with Malealea Lodge offers hikes up to Mount Moorosi and along the Senqu and Quthing Rivers.

Getting there: Quthing (Moyeni) is easily reached by tarred road from Maseru via Mohale’s Hoek, and from South Africa via Tele Bridge border crossing.

Contact: Malealea Lodge: +27 (0)51 436 6766, www.malealea.com

5 Bokong Nature Reserve (Lesotho)

Bokong Nature Reserve, in the upper catchment of the Bokong River and the Lepaqoa Stream, contains alpine wetlands, grasslands and heathlands. It is probably the most accessible site for birders to see high-altitude endemic species such as Drakensberg Siskin, Mountain Pipit and Orange-breasted Rockjumper. Other birds seen in the reserve and its surrounds are Bearded Vulture, Alpine Swift, Lanner Falcon, Ground Woodpecker, Grey-winged Falcon, Malachite Sunbird, White-necked Raven, Sentinel Rock Thrush, Rock Kestrel and Black Stork. Walks to view the Bearded Vultures are available from the visitors’ centre. You can book guides, short pony trails, and accommodation in rondavels.

Getting there: From Leribe follow the signs to Katse Dam for 65 km. Bokong Nature Reserve is on the left at the top of Mount Moerosi and along the Senqu and Quthing Rivers.

Contact: Malealea Lodge: +27 (0)51 436 6766, www.malealea.com

6 Ntsikeni Vlei Nature Reserve (East Griqualand, KwaZulu-Natal)

Ntsikeni Vlei is a large wetland with an impressive waterfall. Among the birds that can be spotted here are Wattled Crane, Cape Griffon and Bearded Vulture, Yellow-breasted Pipit, African Marsh Harrier, Black Harrier, Montagu’s Harrier and the rare Western Marsh Harrier. This is probably the best site to see the elusive Great Bittern. Self-catering family chalets are available.

Getting there: The turn-off to Ntsikeni Vlei Nature Reserve is on the dirt road between Creighton and Franklin off the R612.

Contact: +27 (0)39 833 1029, www.buttonbirding.com

Notes: The critically endangered Cape Parrot can be seen in the Xumeni Forest, a protected area which you can visit with a guide, and from the Marutswa Forest Boardwalk near Bulwer.

7 Hlatikulu Crane and Wetland Sanctuary (KwaZulu-Natal)

All three species of southern African crane are found here, including the critically endangered Wattled and Blue Cranes. You can see African Spoonbill, a wide variety of ducks, three ibis species, Stanley’s Bystard, Cape Griffon and Bearded Vulture, Verreaux’s (Black) Eagle, Lanner Falcon, Great Bittern, African Marsh Harrier, Black Harrier, Secretary Bird and Cape Eagle Owl. In the grasslands you find Buff-streaked Chat and Striped Flufftail, and on higher ground Redwing Francolin, Ground Woodpecker, Sentinel Rock Thrush and Cape and Rock Buntings. Malachite Sunbird and Gurney’s Sugarbird are attracted to the proteas. There are short interpreted trails on horseback, and a self-catering cottage for five.

Getting there: From the N3 in KwaZulu-Natal turn off at Nottingham Road, take the R103 to Rosetta and turn left to Kamberg Valley. Follow this road for about 35 km and turn left onto the D11.

Contact: +27 (0)33 263 2441, www.enviroed.co.za

Key attractions

For more attractions consult the directory at the back of the book.
The range of habitats in the Maloti Drakensberg region ensures a wide variety of birds. There are mountain streams, wetlands, steep grassy slopes, sandstone cliffs, basalt precipices and buttresses. The conservation laws governing many of the areas in this region seek to protect globally endangered species such as the Bearded Vulture, the Cape Griffon (formerly Cape Vulture) and the Wattled Crane. There are a number of species which are endemic to the region, such as the Orange-breasted Rockjumper, the Drakensberg Siskin and the Mountain Pipit.

**some endangered species in the region**

The much-maligned **Bearded Vulture** (commonly but mistakenly known as the lammmergeier, from the German for “lamb-hunter”) has been persecuted to near extinction in North Africa. Although breeding sites are still found in the Ethiopian Highlands, the second most important African breeding site for these magnificent birds is the Maloti Drakensberg. There are approximately 200 breeding pairs of Bearded Vultures remaining in the Maloti Drakensberg Mountains and currently none of the breeding sites are in protected areas.

The Bearded Vulture is primarily a scavenger, but prefers bone marrow over flesh and will drop bones from great heights onto flat rocks (known as ossuaries) to shatter them, then extract the marrow or swallow and digest the pieces. They are easily recognizable in flight by the long, narrow wings and wedge-shaped tail. The bird’s striking colours – black wings, ferric chest, white-feathered head and black mask and beard decoration – make it exceptionally handsome. Legend has it that the rust-coloured feathers on the chest were caused by the bird rubbing white feathers against oxidized rocks to smooth and condition them.

The **Wattled Crane** is a very large, conspicuous bird with a white neck, grey back and black belly. It has two whitish wattles beneath its chin. Its habitat ranges from midland to highland wetlands and moist grasslands. These cranes, of which there are only about 70 nesting pairs in South Africa, are severely endangered due to the loss of their spongy wetland habitats, and deaths caused by power line collisions and consumption of poisoned grain left for other problem animals. They have the slowest reproductive rate of the three South African crane species.

In terms of global conservation, the **Cape Griffon** (formerly known as the Cape Vulture), a southern African endemic, is also extremely important. Once common in the region, the Cape Griffon has fallen prey to poisoned bait and is regarded as vermin by many farmers, despite the fact that it rarely kills. Its decline is also attributed to electrocution on power lines, and to reduced breeding success resulting from juvenile mortality. Estimates put the numbers of the Cape Griffon at between 8,000 and 10,000. About 10-15% of these nest within the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, foraging beyond the borders of the park during the daytime. Groups roost and nest on precipitous cliffs which are white with their droppings. They prefer mountainous country or open country with inselbergs and escarpments. They are late risers, soaring out between two and three hours after sunrise. Their tongues are serrated, enabling them to feed rapidly on the soft tissue of carcasses.

The **Cape Parrot** lives in and near evergreen mist belt forests along the eastern escarpments of the region. They can be seen actively clambering around in search of fruits and berries, or flying high overhead in pairs or larger groups with their loud screeches resounding between cliffs of remaining forest. This is a critically endangered species, primarily due to loss of habitat. Good places to see them include the Marutswa Forest Boardwalk near Bulwer, and the Xumeni Forest near Creighton.

**fun for the family**

Birding is a great family activity. Compact field guides are available which are easy to use, listing birds endemic to the regions. Let one of the younger members of your group be responsible for marking off all the birds identified on your trip.
The Bald Ibis is notable for its naked red-domed crown, with red bill, iris and legs, and glossy green plumage. It enjoys foraging in short grasslands at mid- to high altitude (especially after burning) and is often found on overgrazed pastures and cultivated lands. It breeds in communal roosts, the nests precariously perched on ledges against high cliffs such as those in the Mokhotlong area. The word Mokhotlong means the “place of the Bald Ibis”.

The Orange-breasted Rockjumper (sometimes called the Drakensberg Rockjumper) is found on the steeper rocky slopes and low cliffs of the region. These birds are often found in pairs or family groups, leaping from rock to rock with little wing action, although they do fly and glide well. They also run fast, sometimes with their tails cocked. If you approach their nest or their young, they become very wary and vocal, running to and fro, disappearing and reappearing at different places.

The Drakensberg Siskin is a well camouflaged small bird, endemic to the Drakensberg, which sings all day long. It is found in montane scrub and in Afro-alpine grasslands. Its diet consists mainly of seeds and insects, and it forages on the ground amongst rocks and low vegetation, or in bushes and trees. The nest, made of grass and lined with animal hair, is built in a hollow rock or in a bush among rocks.

The endemic and rare Mountain Pipit breeds at altitudes above 2 000 m. It is very similar to the Grassveld Pipit, although somewhat larger. Its habitat is short montane grassland and the eastern slopes of the escarpment. The Mountain Pipit has very recently been awarded full status as a species, having previously been considered a race of the Grassveld Pipit.

Birds in this region which are endemic to southern Africa include Jackal Buzzard, Buff-streaked and Sickle-wing Chats, Fairy Flycatcher, Rudd’s Lark, Yellow-breasted, Rock and Long-billed Pipits, Gurney’s Sugarbird, Cape and Sentinel Rock Thrushes, Grey-wing Francolin, Ground Woodpecker, Barratt’s Warbler, Spotted Pinia and Layard’s Tr-t-babbler.

Some other birds of interest in the region are Black-headed Canary, Lanner Falcon, Alpine Swift, Cape Eagle Owl, Yellow-throated Warbler, Verreaux’s (Black) Eagle and Half-collared Kingfisher.

other interesting bird species in the region

The near-endemic Bush Blackcap is an uncommon resident in the Lesotho Highlands and the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, with its status listed as near-threatened. This small bird (slightly bigger than a sparrow) is jet black from the top of its head to its mantle, with a pale throat and belly. It enjoys evergreen mistbelts and montane forests as well as adjacent scrubby hillides. It is quite an inquisitive bird, and creeps around the middle layers of the forest edge or low down in the scrub with slow, deliberate movements. Its diet consists largely of fruit.

Birds in this region which are endemic to southern Africa include Jackal Buzzard, Buff-streaked and Sickle-wing Chats, Fairy Flycatcher, Rudd’s Lark, Yellow-breasted, Rock and Long-billed Pipits, Gurney’s Sugarbird, Cape and Sentinel Rock Thrushes, Grey-wing Francolin, Ground Woodpecker, Barratt’s Warbler, Spotted Pinia and Layard’s Tr-t-babbler.

Some other birds of interest in the region are Black-headed Canary, Lanner Falcon, Alpine Swift, Cape Eagle Owl, Yellow-throated Warbler, Verreaux’s (Black) Eagle and Half-collared Kingfisher.

when to go birding

Birding in the higher areas is at its best in the summer months (October to April) when the areas are accessible and not blanketed by snow. Make sure that you take warm clothing and rain gear – there are regular afternoon thunderstorms in summer and the weather can turn suddenly to freezing mist at any time of the year.

what to take

- Binoculars
- Birding field guide
- Notebook, pencil/pen
- Good walking shoes
- Warm clothing
- Rain gear

further information and resources

- BirdLife South Africa: www.birdlife.co.za
- Roberts’ Birds of Southern Africa, Austin Roberts, revised by Gordon Lindsay Maclean
- Newman’s Birds of Southern Africa, Kenneth Newman

additional reading
The dramatic escarpment, valley walls and mountain passes of the Maloti Drakensberg reveal layer upon layer of rock - successive pages in the geological history of this region. Each layer tells us more of the dramatic events that built these mountains over 260 million years, and of the life that thrived here: dinosaurs with their eggs; the very first mammals and the trees and ferns that surrounded them. These mountains abound with treasures etched in stone.
1 lets’eng diamond mine
This diamond mine, the highest above sea level in the world, produces diamonds of exquisite beauty and quality. The cretaceous diamond pipe (70 million years old) is one of many in Lesotho. You can enjoy a guided tour to view the kimberlite pipe where a privately run concern earns royalties for the government of Lesotho. The mine also boasts a nature reserve with exquisite flowers.

Accommodation is available at a fully-catered community-based lodge administered by the Lets’eng Diamond Company. A guided 4×4 trail and fly-fishing in the Khubelu River are added attractions in this Northern Lesotho paradise.

Getting there: Enter Lesotho at Caledonspoort Border Post and follow the Botha Bothe road towards Mokhotlong, past the Oxbow Lodge and Mahlasela Ski Resort.

Contact: Manager of Lets’eng Diamond Mine, Ntate Moruti Mphatso; +266 62 776 288
Dr Gideon Groenewald, Community Facilitator: +27 (0)82 829 4978

Notes: Visits to fossil sites must be undertaken with a guide.

2 golden gate highlands and qwaqwa national parks (north-eastern free state)
These two parks boast some of the most important finds of dinosaur remains in the world. With a guide you can explore the famous site where fossilized Massospondylus eggs were discovered in 1978 – the oldest known dinosaur eggs with embryos. You can also see dinosaur footprints, fossilized ferns and the fossilized burrows of the world’s oldest mammal-like reptiles. The impressive Brandwag rock is the best-known view of the golden Clarens Sandstone cliffs which abound throughout the Golden Gate and QwaQwa Parks. Hikes and motor trails enable you to explore the area on foot or by car.

Getting there: From Harrismith take the N5, then the R74 towards Bergville. Follow the R712 to Clarens – it will take you right through the National Park. From Bethlehem drive via Clarens along the R711 and the R712.

Contact: Golden Gate Highlands National Park; QwaQwa National Park: +27 (0)58 255 0012

For tours: Dr Gideon Groenewald: +27 (0)82 829 4978

Notes: The centre is open seven days a week, but you must phone ahead to book a guide.

3 waterfall cave, ukhahlamba drakensberg park world heritage site
Fossilized plants can be seen in the light stones of Waterfall Cave at Kamberg section of the UDPWHS. This is one of relatively few sites where trained community custodians are available to show the fossils to visitors. The cave can be seen en route to the spectacular Game Pass Shelter, one of the top rock art sites in the world.

Getting there: From Nottingham Road or Rosetta, near Mooi River, follow the signs to Kamberg

Contact: Kamberg Rock Art Centre: +27 (0)33 267 7282

Notes: For more detailed information see the full size regional maps on pages 14-21
An impressive collection of dinosaur tracks can be found at Quthing, in Lesotho. The tracks are very obviously those of a bird-foot dinosaur, most probably *Massospondylus*, known from Golden Gate in South Africa and Mount Moorosi in Lesotho. There is an interpretive centre open to the public. Guides are being trained, but visitors are presently required to do their own guiding.

**Getting there:** Travel on the main highway from Maseru to Quthing. Be on the lookout for a prominent sandstone building, situated on the sandstone outcrops some kilometres west of Quthing.

**Contact:** Dr Gideon Groenewald, Dinosaur Fossil Hunting Expeditions: +27 (0)82 829 4978

Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation: Information Office: +266 22 312 427

**Notes:** Fossil remains are protected by law. Do not attempt to remove any of the traces in this museum. It is advisable to inform the chief of the village of your visit and acknowledge any offer for guiding from the local community.

---

The Barkly Pass between Elliot and Barkly East represents one of the most complete sections through the geology of the Upper Karoo Sequence. The pass cuts through the coarse-grained sandstones of the Molteno Formation, the red mudstone-rich Elliot Formation, and the prominent creamy-coloured sandstone known as the Clarens Formation. One of the most exciting finds in this formation is that of very small bivalves that were probably blown from South America during the Jurassic period (140-200 million years ago). About halfway up the pass is one of the most exciting exposures of a dolerite dyke in South Africa, which produces a constant stream of clear drinking water to travellers on the pass. The top of Barkly Pass enters the new world of the Drakensberg Lava Formation, with amygdales and quartz crystals, pillow lavas and other unique and exciting geological features.

**Getting there:** Drive from Barkly East to Elliot on the R58.

**Contact:** Barkly East Community Tourism Association (PRO): Joey Jardaan: +27 (0)82 900 8362

**Notes:** Moteng Pass is a landmark pass in Lesotho and the environment is very rural. Greet the local people with dignity and respect.

---

The Moteng Mountain Pass is a gateway to the northern alpine region in Lesotho. The route passes through some of the most pristine vegetation zones in the Lesotho Highlands, whilst also cutting through all the significant geological layers. This high mountain pass is well worth the visit for its unique geological features, as well as beautiful views towards the lowlands of Lesotho and the vistas of the Eastern Free State. Of particular interest is the red siltstone of the Elliot Formation, creamy coloured sandstone of the Clarens Formation and the spectacular Lesotho Formation lava outcrops, including a well defined pillow lava deposit.

**Getting there:** Enter Lesotho at the Caledonspoort border post and drive through Botha Bothe. Moteng Pass is about 30 km from Botha Bothe on the way to Oxbow and is an easy drive from South Africa.

**Contact:** Semonkong Lodge: +266 27 006 037; www.placeofsmoke.co.ls

---

When the supercontinent of Gondwanaland broke apart approximately 180 million years ago, the consequent volcanic eruptions deposited thick layers of liquid basalt over southern Africa. Although much of this has been weathered away, most of Lesotho still stands on this layer of basaltic rock. The Maletsunyane Falls are a spectacular cut-back into this very thick lava layer, and provide unique insight into the various levels of basaltic deposits. This waterfall, which is situated near the Semonkong Lodge in Lesotho, is the second highest waterfall in southern Africa, with a straight vertical drop of 196 m.

**Getting there:** From the Maseru-Mafeteng road take the turn-off to Roma. Continue through Roma and keep going for a further 18 km. At the T-junction turn left and travel along this dirt road for approximately 65 km to reach Semonkong.

**Contact:** Semonkong Lodge: +266 27 006 037, www.placeofsmoke.co.ls

---

For more attractions consult the directory at the back of the book.
As you travel up the mountain passes in this dramatic landscape, rising from the river valleys to the high peaks, you pass through a succession of very distinct layers in the rock. The impressive Drakensberg escarpment and the deep gorges of Lesotho expose these rock layers. In so doing they reveal fossils of the numerous plants, reptiles (including a number of dinosaur species) and mammals that lived here, and the traces that they left behind.

**why was this region so full of life?**

To help us understand what this region was like so long ago, geologists encourage us to look for similar landscapes in our present world. The eastern part of present-day southern Africa was once largely covered by giant marshes. Sediments settled there over many millions of years, forming the rocks of the Beaufort Group. The continents then were not separate as they are now, but still joined together as a vast landmass called Gondwanaland. At that time the area where the Maloti Drakensberg Mountains now stand was very far from the sea. This area would have been very dry had it not been for the presence of huge snow-covered mountains in the south and east of Gondwanaland.

The melt-water from these mountains fed the huge inland marshes, sustaining plant and animal life over a period of approximately 60 million years. The fossil evidence of this is abundant. There are numerous places where dinosaurs and other animals walked across mudflats and left their footprints. Where marshes dried up, as they did from time to time, the remains of literally thousands of creatures were buried in the mud and turned into the fossils that we now discover in the mudstones.

**what fossils can be seen?**

The fossils of two reptiles, Dicynodont and Lystrosaurus, occur repeatedly in the Beaufort rocks. Their presence in these sediments tells of widespread marshy conditions. Triarchodon, a mammal-like reptile, survived harsh conditions by burrowing. The remains of these burrows were preserved in the red rocks of the upper Beaufort Group. Above this, in the Molteno Formation, fossilized ferns are found.

Around 200 million years ago the water supply from the mountains diminished and the region became far less hospitable. Silt was still carried down the rivers into the marshes, but there was much less water – resulting in the red rocks of the Elliot Formation. As the climate became drier still, the whole area was covered by sand dunes, still visible today in the yellow sandstone of the Clarens Formation. The fossil record shows, however, that many animals still inhabited the region, including two dinosaurs, Massospondylus and Lesothosaurus.

Fossils of Massospondylus have been found throughout the region. This was a bird-like reptile approximately six metres long which lived near water and laid eggs in the sand – much as crocodiles do today. One of the most dramatic fossil
The formation of the Maloti and Drakensberg mountains

About 180 million years ago a new era began. The supercontinent of Gondwana began to break apart. Molten magma from beneath the earth’s crust erupted through fissures stretching for hundreds of kilometres across southern Africa. These eruptions continued intermittently over 45 million years, layer upon layer of liquid basalt oozing out and covering the surrounding earth. The eruptions ended 135 million years ago, leaving a layer of basalt up to 3 km thick covering much of what is now southern Africa. After the weathering which has taken place through all the millennia since then, the thickest layers remain as the high mountain land of Lesotho.

In places the magma forced its way through cracks and between layers of the sedimentary rock, but solidified before it reached the surface. These vertical and horizontal intrusions of hard dolerite rock are known as dykes and sills. Some very good examples can be seen in the Impendle area of KwaZulu-Natal, and in the Golden Gate area, where the dolerite has been exposed by the weathering of the surrounding rock. It is interesting that the Lets’eng la Terai diamond pipe erupted only about 75 million years ago, thus indicating the continuation of intermittent volcanic activity.

By 135 million years ago, due to plate tectonics and continental drift, Antarctica and India had split from Africa. A very high escarpment was formed where the African coastline is today. Ever since then the escarpment has been weathered by the relentless effects of sun, rain and snow, which have eroded it back to where the Drakensberg escarpment is now, far inland. This process continues to this day, causing the edge of the escarpment to recede about 3 cm every 100 years. The same weathering forces continue to carve the myriad valleys of Lesotho ever deeper into the rock.
Standing among these mountains, we are overwhelmed by their sheer scale and power. For the longest time the mountains shaped the lives of the people who lived here – but in recent history people have begun to shape the mountains – to meet humanity’s ever-increasing needs for water, power, land and trade. The engineering exploits of this region tell stories of human endeavour in the face of great odds – but they also stand as a stark reminder of humanity’s ability to create or destroy.
1 Katse Dam

The Katse Dam boasts an elegant 185 metre-high double-curvature concrete arch wall with a crest 710 m long. It has a storage capacity of 1 950 million cubic metres and is one of the ten largest concrete arch dams in the world. It is little wonder that this magnificent structure confidently lays claim to being both the heart and focal point of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. Guided tours of the wall of the dam can be arranged at the information centre. Katse Lodge offers accommodation and spectacular views of the dam.

Getting there: From Maseru follow the A1 to Leribe, then follow the signs for 122 km past Pitseng and Ha Lejone to Katse Dam. Katse Village is on your right, past the dam wall.

Contact: Visitors’ Information Centre: +266 22 910 377; www.lhwp.org.ls; Katse Lodge: +266 22 910 202

2 ‘Muela Dam and Power Station

With a double-curvature concrete arch construction 55 m high, and with a storage capacity of 6 million cubic metres, the ‘Muela Dam is a must-see for visitors to this area, especially since there is the added attraction of dinosaur footprints and San paintings in the region. The ‘Muela Hydropower Project, which is driven by water from the ‘Muela Dam, generates 72 MW of electrical power. During the summer months this is sufficient power not only to meet Lesotho’s national energy requirements, but also for export to South Africa. Tours of the underground powerhouse that drives this hydroelectric power station can be arranged at the Information Centre.

Getting there: Take the tarred road from Botha Bothe towards Mokhotlong and drive for approximately 30 km. Turn right at the junction to ‘Muela. The Operations Building is on the right-hand side of the road against the hillside.

Contact: Visitors’ Information Centre: +266 22 936 217; www.lhwp.org.ls; ‘Muela Lodge: +266 22 936 432

Notes: Tours should be booked in advance. The LHDA facilities were designed to be used as tourism accommodation.

3 Mohale Dam

The Mohale Dam is the highest rock-fill dam in Africa, with a wall which is 145 m high, 620 m along the crest, and holds 958 million cubic metres. It is the tunnel connecting the Mohale and Katse dams – 31 km long and 3.4 m in diameter – that makes this site well worth visiting. This tunnel is unusual in that it operates as an automatic pressure tunnel, allowing water to flow to Katse to augment the level of the Katse Dam. Accommodation is available at Mohale Lodge and a “high-altitude training facility” is soon to be opened.

Getting there: Take the A1 south from Maseru to the Roma-Mohale intersection. Turn left and follow the road over the Bushman’s, Molimo Nthuse and Blue Mountain Passes to Mohale Village. Drive past the village to the Operations Building.

Contact: Visitors’ Information Centre: +266 22 936 217; www.lhwp.org.ls; Mohale Lodge: +266 22 936 432

Notes: Tours should be booked in advance. The LHDA facilities were designed to be used as tourism accommodation.
**4 ash river outfall**

Huge volumes of water pour into the Ash River watercourse from Katse, via the ‘Muela Hydropower Station. This caused serious soil erosion problems downstream between Clarens and Bethlehem in the eastern Free State. The Ash River Outfall was developed as a solution to this problem. This consists of a concrete channel with an uphill gradient, which decreases the rate of the water flow by forcing it uphill. In addition, a series of weirs has been constructed downstream of the outfall to further reduce the energy and flow rate of the water.

**Getting there:** 9 km outside Clarens on the tarred road to Bethlehem, turn left at the LHWP sign. The road leads to the visitors’ parking.

**Contact:** Guided tour: contact TCTA of Caledon: +27 (0)76 989 9329

**Notes:**
- The increased water flow in the Ash River resulting from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project has made it an exciting destination for white-water kayaking.

---

**5 drakensberg pumped storage scheme**

If you are interested in hydropower, the Drakensberg Pumped Storage Scheme is a fascinating facility to visit. This scheme is unique in that the hydroelectric power station has been built inside the mountain. Water from the Kilburn Dam in the Tukhela catchment area is pumped up more than 470 metres during off-peak hours into the high-altitude Driekloof Dam, which adjoins the Sterkfontein Dam. At peak demand hours, the water is allowed to flow back down, driving turbines that generate up to 1 000 MW of electrical power. The visitors’ centre offers a photographic exhibition, a presentation and slide show, and a tour of the power station.

**Getting there:** From Harrismith: Take the N5 towards Bloemfontein, turn off onto the R74 and follow it towards Bergville. The visitors’ centre is at the bottom of Oliviershoek Pass. Coming from Estcourt: From the N3 turn onto the R74 towards Winterhoek and carry on past Bergville.

**Contact:** Visitors’ Centre: +27 (0)36 438 6046

**Notes:**
- The visitors’ centre is closed on weekends and public holidays.

---

**6 mafika lisiu pass and malibamatso bridge**

This high-altitude pass (3 090 m) was built as part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project to provide access for the construction of Katse Dam. There are 204 major bends on this 53-km stretch of road which was built between 1987 and 1991 at a cost of about R3 million per kilometre. This route is of interest from an engineering point of view as it has received a construction award from the SA Institute of Civil Engineers. Most fascinating is the 465 m-long Malibamatso Bridge, which is built over a deep water-filled valley, 86 m below, about halfway up the Malibamatso leg of the Katse Dam. This bridge received the Fulton Award from the Concrete Society of Southern Africa. The Visitors’ Information Centre at Katse Dam can provide you with further information.

**Getting there:** From the N3 take the R617 to Underberg, turn right to Himeville and follow the signs to Sani Pass. In Lesotho follow the A1 to Sani Pass via Mokhotlong.

**Contact:** Sani Pass Tours +27 (0)33 701 1064; www.sanitours.co.za

**Notes:** A 4×4 vehicle is essential. You will need your passport.

---

**7 sani pass**

This spectacular pass is the only direct road route through the Drakensberg between KwaZulu-Natal and Lesotho. It provides exhilarating views, and culminates in a summit which is 2 865 m above sea level. Sani Pass was once only a rough bridle path for Basotho ponies carrying provisions. It was first ascended by a vehicle in 1948, when a former World War 2 Royal Air Force pilot, Godfrey Edmonds, negotiated it in his Willy’s jeep. In 1955 David Alexander founded the Mokhotlong Mountain Transport Company which arranged tours into Lesotho via this pass. This company is still operating today under the name Sani Pass Tours.

**Getting there:** From the N3 take the R617 to Underberg, turn right to Himivel and follow the signs to Sani Pass. In Lesotho follow the A1 to Sani Pass via Mokhotlong.

**Contact:** Sani Pass Tours +27 (0)33 701 1064; www.sanitours.co.za

**Notes:** A 4×4 vehicle is essential. You will need your passport.
The village of Mokhotlong, high in the Eastern Highlands of Lesotho, was once referred to by the British as the “remotest outpost of the colonial service”. It was reached by the British using horses and mules, following the route of the now world-famous Sani Pass. The story of its construction is wonderfully told by David Alexander in his book “Sani Pass – Riding the Dragon”. He recalls the moment when the first vehicle topped the pass – an ordeal that involved many people and “plenty of rope”. While the road has developed since those early days, Sani is still an exhilaratingly rugged pass, sometimes closed during winter due to snowfalls. Going up the pass requires the use of 4-wheel drive vehicles. The road link is an important one, especially for the Basotho, who come into South Africa to repair the road when parts of the pass are washed away by heavy rains.

water for export

While trade spurred on the development of Sani Pass, there was another commodity that gave rise to massive investment and infrastructure – water!

Southern Africa is on average a dry region, with most of its rain falling over a relatively small land area. The Maloti Drakensberg Mountains are one of just four areas where rainfall significantly exceeds evaporation. For a long time Gauteng, the industrial centre of southern Africa, has been unable to meet its demand for water from its own rivers and has relied on water transfers from rivers and dams in other areas. In 1986 a treaty was signed between the governments of South Africa and Lesotho paving the way for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. This would allow Lesotho to export its water to South Africa. The Maloti Drakensberg region presently supplies approximately 50 per cent of Gauteng’s water.

what is the lhwp?

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project makes use of the rivers and catchment areas of the Lesotho Highlands to deliver high quality water into two massive reservoirs – Katse Dam, which holds 1 950 million cubic metres of water, and Mohale Dam, holding 950 million cubic metres. Water from these dams is delivered into the South African water distribution system. This water earns royalties for Lesotho and generates hydropower at the ’Muela Power Station.

roads

Before work could begin on the dams it was necessary to build the roads and other facilities that would be required for the construction activities. Lesotho would benefit from these new roads, which could be paid off over time with the revenues derived from selling the water.

The challenge in building the access roads was not only the ruggedness and remoteness of the terrain, but also sensitivities regarding community-owned land through which the roads were planned. On numerous occasions the proposed route was changed to accommodate community wishes.

The Mafika Lisiu Pass is a dramatic section of access road. This road crosses Katse Dam about halfway up its length via the famous Malibamatso Bridge. This bridge, soaring 86 metres above the valley floor when it was built, now passes just above the waters of Katse Dam.

dams

The LHWP comprises 3 major dams and a large weir (the Matsoku Weir). Katse Dam is by far the largest, built in the valley of the Malibamatso River just below its confluence with the Bokong River. The massive dam wall is built of 2½ million cubic metres of reinforced concrete, laid between 1993 and 1997.
Mohale Dam is a rock-fill dam with a concrete lining on the upstream side of the wall. It is connected to Katse Dam by a 31 km tunnel which allows water to flow from Mohale to Katse. The ‘Muela Hydropower Station, fed from Katse Dam, empties into the ‘Muela “tailpond” dam, a reservoir which holds the water before it finally flows into the Ash River in South Africa.

power stations
A magnificent feature of high dams is the potential they have to generate electricity. When released in a controlled manner the energy of a large body of water can be used to drive large turbines which turn electricity generators. ‘Muela’s hydro-electric power station has three turbines which together generate 72 MW of power. This is almost enough power to meet Lesotho’s electricity demand year-round – and in summer months more than enough, allowing the extra power to be exported.

In addition to the LHWP, South Africa’s water and electrical power needs are boosted by Sterkfontein Dam and the Drakensberg Pumped Storage Scheme. Water at the top of the escarpment is used to generate power as it flows down to a holding dam at the bottom. When there is spare capacity on the power grid, this is used to pump the water up again. The system can be thought of as a rechargeable battery for storing excess electrical power.

impact on the people
The LHWP has, as one of its goals, to “promote the general development of the remote and underdeveloped mountain regions of Lesotho”. Improved roads and infrastructure have provided many people with better transport, education and health facilities. In addition, tourism has been given a major boost. The project has undoubtedly been of huge benefit to Lesotho’s economy.

However, many people were removed from their homes and land to make way for the dams. This has left people feeling destitute and hopeless, and some feel that compensation has been inadequate and delayed. The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority is challenged with the ongoing development needed in the affected communities. Local people who worked on the project need training to apply these skills elsewhere. Income-generating development initiatives are being pursued and the LHDA provides training in sustainable agriculture.

evironmental impact
The flooding of valleys to create huge dams had obvious environmental impacts. As part of its compensation to Lesotho, the LHWP has funded the development of a number of conservation areas: Katse Botanical Gardens, Bokong Nature Reserve, Ts’ehlanyane National Park and ‘Muela Reserve, as well as the Lipho-fung Cave and Cultural Historic Site.

The Maloti Drakensberg region forms a key water catchment area, and good vegetation cover is important in trapping and slowly releasing the rainwater. Local communities must be empowered to take responsibility for and maintain the integrity of the catchment area. This involves training people in land care and effective farming methods, and developing awareness of environmental threats such as pollution and soil erosion.

further information and resources
- Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA): +266 22 311 280, www.lhwp.org.ls; Public Relations Division: +266 22 312 442

additional reading
- Sani Pass – Riding the Dragon, David Alexander
- The Saga of the Sani Pass and Mokhotlong, Mike Clark

the challenge of development and conservation
The challenge for every engineering project is to balance the social benefits against the social and environmental impacts. No development is possible without some impact. Informed and creative planning can minimize negative impacts and secure the long-term conservation of the environment.
The sheer ruggedness of the Maloti Drakensberg attracts a special type of adventurer. They need to test their own limits – of skill, experience, strength, endurance and nerve – against the extreme demands of this beautiful but challenging mountain wilderness.

The adventures and challenges offered by rock, water, ice and air, together with the elation you feel in this magnificent scenery, enable your spirit to reconnect with the wilderness of nature – and allow you to return to your home and workplace refreshed and invigorated.
1 abseiling – maletsunyane falls (southern lesotho)

Lesotho holds the Guinness record for the highest commercial abseil in the world, at 204 metres – definitely not for the faint of heart – situated in the gorge of the Maletsunyane Falls. The abseil is organized by Semonkong Lodge, who provide initial training, as well as transport to the top of the falls. Maletsunyane Falls is the highest single-drop waterfall in southern Africa, and is a hike of 1½ hours from Semonkong. There is a camp site at the bottom of the gorge. The falls are at their most spectacular in summer.

Getting there: From the Maseru-Mafeteng road take the turn-off to Roma. Continue through Roma and keep going for a further 18 km. At the T-junction turn left and travel along this dirt road for approximately 65 km to reach Semonkong.

Notes: Booking is essential.

Contact: Semonkong Lodge: +266 27 006 037; www.placeofsmoke.co.ls

2 rock-climbing – ukhahlamba drakensberg park (kwazulu-natal)

The following are just a few sites selected from the very many available all over the Drakensberg.

Sentinel Peak North Face Route: This peak is 3 166 m in altitude. The North Face Route is 6 pitches long and carries a grade of 14 (UK 4a, US 5.7).

Sentinel Peak Standard Route: An easy climb, often used as an introduction to Drakensberg climbing for beginners. It consists of one pitch followed by scrambling.

Monk’s Cowl Standard Route: Another classic climb on a major free-standing peak (3 234 m). The hardest pitch is grade 16 (approx. UK 4c, US 5,8). A six-hour hike gets to the campsite (day 1). The climb takes place the next day and then a third day is spent walking out. Best climbed during the months April to October.

Getting there: Sentinel – From Harrismith, take the R712 to Phuthaditjhaba and follow the signs to the Sentinel Car Park. Monk’s Cowl – From the N3 take the R74 to Winterton, then the R600 to the Central Drakensberg. Follow the signs to Monk’s Cowl.

Contact: Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife: +27 (0)33 845 1000, www.kznwildlife.com; Mountain Club of South Africa: www.mcsa.org.za

3 ice-climbing – giant’s castle area (kwazulu-natal)

Climbs are generally accessed from the top of Giant’s Castle and reached by either abseiling or scrambling down to the beginning of the icefall. The top of Makaza is the normal base camp. Grades are explained on page 125.

Eastern Gully Grade: II. It takes 6 hours from Giant’s Hut to the summit. Be cautious of a small waterfall at the beginning which can be awkward.

Makaza Grade: III, WI 4: A long icefall in a series of drops totalling 300 m running over the south escarpment edge of Giant’s Castle. Time: 4 hours of actual climbing.

Main Event Grade: III, WI 4: From the top of Giant’s Pass, walk straight south to the escarpment edge and a few hundred metres west. This huge 150 m icefall has several possible climbable lines. Abseil to the start. Bellays at the top are hard to find. Some grass pitons can be useful. Time: 3 hours of actual climbing.

Getting there: From the N3 take the Mooi River turn-off. From the town follow the signs to Giant’s Castle.

Contact: Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife: +27 (0)33 845 1000, www.kznwildlife.com; Mountain Club of South Africa: www.mcsa.org.za
skiing – tif findell ski resort (north-eastern cape)

Situated at high altitude on the south-facing slopes of Ben McGhui, the resort experiences snowfalls and low temperatures in winter. There are snow machines to ensure that visitors can ski throughout the winter months – in fact, they guarantee 100 days of snow per season. The main slope is about 1 km long. The slopes cater for about 300 skiers per day. After good snowfalls guests can ski off-piste for up to 1.5 km. Snowboarding is also a popular activity. Lessons are available for beginners. Equipment can be hired at the resort and there is also a child-minding service.

Getting there: From Barkly East head towards Rhodes, and from there follow the signs northward to Tif findell. There is a landing strip just 25 km from the resort if you choose to fly in.

Contact: Tiffindell: +27 (0)45 974 9004; www.snow.co.za

Notes: Remember to take warm clothes as daytime temperatures can remain as low as -6ºC on some days. There is also a ski resort in Lesotho – the Mahlasela Ski Resort near Oxbow – developed as Afri-Ski Leisure Kingdom. The main objective of this initiative is for the local communities to benefit from the ski resort development. Contact: +27 (0)12 347 7215; www.afriski.co.za

water adventures – lesotho-durham link (maseru)

The Lesotho-Durham Link is a community development NGO. A number of water sports, such as canoeing, sailing and wind-surfing, are on offer at the Lesotho-Durham Link campsite on the banks of the Maqalika Dam in Maseru. Additional activities such as abseiling, rock-climbing and archery are available. The project also offers river trips down the Senqu (Orange) River in open Canadian canoes, either from Molhlotlong to Thaba Tseka, or from Qacha’s Nek to Mount Moorosi. The Senqu trip is particularly exciting for its white-water rapids.

Getting there: From Mohosheshoe Road in Maseru turn into Old Airport Road, then left into Agric Road. The turning to Lesotho-Durham Link is on the right, and is clearly marked.

Contact: Lesotho-Durham Link: +266 22 325 166; www.durham-lesotholink.org.uk

Notes: The campsite is electrified, and has ablution facilities with hot and cold running water. Caravans can be accommodated.

4×4 and quad trails (central lesotho and drakensberg)

Baboon’s Pass between Ramabanta and Semonkong. This challenging tour has been described as a “mud, sweat and tears” expedition.

Contact: Ramabanta Lodge: +266 22 340 202

Sani Pass between Himeville in South Africa and Sani Top in Lesotho. This is a fairly challenging 4×4 route which reaches the top of the Drakensberg escarpment at 2 873 m. This is one of the only points where the high Drakensberg can be directly accessed by vehicle. This route was originally developed as a trade route with Mokhotlong.

Ramatseliso’s Gate border post is reached from Matatiele by a road which is best tackled in a 4×4 and takes you high into the southern Drakensberg. On the Lesotho side of the border the track goes east to Sehlabathebe National Park.

Getting there: From Rome take the Main South Road and turn left onto the A3 to Roma. After 15 km look for the signs to the Trading Post. Ramabanta Lodge: From Roma continue on the A5 for 40 km.

Contact: Ramabanta Lodge and Trading Post Guest House: +266 22 340 202

Mountain biking – trading post guest house and ramabanta lodge (lesotho)

The Trading Post Guest House in Roma and the Ramabanta Lodge, situated 40 km further on, offer numerous mountain biking trails in the region. These trails take you through spectacular, rugged terrain, and into traditional rural villages. You will have a trained guide from the local community, and you have the option of over-nighting in local villages, where you can experience Basotho culture first-hand. In this way you can contribute to the economy of the local communities.

Getting there: Trading Post. From Maseru take the Main South Road and turn left onto the A3 to Roma. After 15 km look for the signs to the Trading Post.

Contact: Ramabanta Lodge and Trading Post Guest House: +266 22 340 202

For more attractions consult the directory at the back of the book.
**rock-climbing**

With more peaks per square kilometre than any other country in Africa, and spectacular cliff faces, ridges and chimneys, the Maloti Drakensberg Mountains attract climbers from all over the world. There are operators (see Directory at the back of this book) who can inform you of the many available routes and local conditions.

Climbs in the high Drakensberg are on volcanic rock, often consisting of successive rock faces separated by narrow grass ledges. The rock also forms rounded overhangs, blocks and gullies, often making the climbing quite awkward. The rock quality varies considerably. Two “rules of thumb” are relevant:

(i) The lower rock is generally the worst, while that near the summits is often quite good.

(ii) The higher the technical grade, the greater the likelihood of good rock.

**Protection:** The following are recommended: a selection of wired stoppers and small hexes; self-adjusting cams (“friends”); a selection of knife-blade and channel pegs.

**Rescue:** Medical emergencies in the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg are managed by the provincial EMRS (Emergency Medical Rescue Services). Rescues are carried out in conjunction with the Mountain Club of South Africa, supported by helicopters.

**Further information:**
- ClimbZA: www.climb.co.za
- Mountain Club of South Africa: www.mcsa.org.za
- SA Climbing Info Network: www.saclimb.co.za

---

**ice-climbing**

This spectacular sport has been growing in the Maloti Drakensberg region. The Giant’s Castle area has been known to ice-climbers for some years. Recently the Sani Pass and Lesotho areas have been explored, and several new ice-climbing routes have been opened. A grading system enables climbers to match the climb to their skills levels.

There is ice on the high cliffs from late May to late August. The best time to climb is from mid- to late July.

---

**skiing**

Skiing is a recent development among the tourism offerings of the Maloti Drakensberg region. There are ski resorts available in Lesotho and the Eastern Cape. They vary in the quantity and reliability of snowfalls, and some use snow machines to supplement the natural snow. Some resorts offer skiing lessons and equipment rental. The ski slopes at present vary in length between 500 m and 1 000 m, sometimes served by ski lifts. Out of the skiing season the resorts generally also offer other activities such as golf, fly-fishing, kayaking and hiking.

Up-to-date details and directions can be obtained from each resort.

**Notes:** Remember to put antifreeze into your car radiator and window bottle.

**Further information:**
- Afriski Leisure Kingdom – Mahlasela Ski Resort (Northern Lesotho):
  +27 (0)12 347 7215; www.afriski.co.za
- Club Maluti (Northern Lesotho): www.clubmaluti.co.za
- Tiffindell Ski Resort (North-eastern Cape): see key attractions:
  +27 (0)45 974 9004/5; www.snow.co.za

---

**safety first**

- If you are a “beginner”, do initial climbs with an experienced person.
- Always remain aware of where your nearest descent route is, particularly once you reach the top, as mist and snow can obscure the route.
- Before setting out ensure that you have all your climbing equipment and test it – make sure your ropes are in good condition, and that you have good climbing boots and gloves. Always keep your equipment in good repair – your life could depend on it.
- Find out about rescue options in your area, inform people where you are going and fill in the mountain rescue register.

---

**are you fit enough?**

**Grades for ice-climbing:**

**The Commitment Grade** – in roman numerals I-III – indicates the difficulty of the approach and descent, the availability of escape routes, and how sustained the climbing will be (how many pitches), with I being the easiest.

**The Technical Grade** – ranging from 1 to 6 – indicates how hard any single section of climbing is likely to be under average conditions. Pitches that normally take place on water-ice are prefixed by WI.
abseiling
Towards the end of the twentieth century abseiling, (and the closely associated rappelling), became a sport in its own right - before then it was simply a method used to get off a mountain! Abseiling is the art of lowering yourself down a rope to which you are attached by means of a harness. Supported by the rope you “walk” backwards off the cliff face, controlling the rate as you go. Once you get over the initial shock, abseiling is great fun – you can even stop yourself and enjoy the scenery.

If this sounds tame to you, consider rapp jumping, which is abseiling with the ropes attached to your back instead of in front, which means you go down face first!

Further information:
- Malebunyan Falls: see key attractions
- Semonkong Lodge: +266 27 006 037; www.placeofsmoke.co.ls

mountain biking
The Southern Drakensberg is one of the best mountain biking destinations in South Africa. It offers a wide range of self-guided mountain bike trails for both the competitive and the casual rider. Trails range from gentle gradients to the challenge of the Sani Pass – an ascent and descent of 900 m between the South African and Lesotho border posts – amidst the magnificent mountain scenery of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site.

Many of the mountain trails are suitable for exploring on bikes and this is becoming an increasingly popular activity. You are asked to keep to recognized trails to avoid damaging the flora and fauna.

Some MTB events:
- **THE SANI PASS TRANSFRONTIER MOUNTAIN BIKE EPIC**: 72-km single-day endurance MTB event in early December, involving a climb of 1 674 m, from the Sani Pass Hotel via Sani Pass to the top of Black Mountain Pass and back. There are two shorter events (42 km and 27 km) on the same day.
- **DRAKXPERIENCE**: similar event in early May.
- **SANIC2**: 3-day race from Underberg via back roads and tracks to Scottburgh on the Kwazulu Natal south coast.
- **LESOThO THIN AIR CHALLENGE**: 4-day trail in south-eastern Lesotho

Further information:
- The Sani Pass Transfrontier Mountain Bike Epic and DrakXperience: Drakensberg Mountain Bike Club: www.drakensbergmtb.co.za
- Lesotho Thin Air Challenge: www.lesothothinair.co.za; www.sani2c.co.za

white-water rafting
Southern Africa, despite being relatively dry, has some challenging rivers in the rainy summer months. The mighty rivers that form high in the Maloti and Drakensberg Mountains offer many opportunities to the adventure seeker: rivers that flow and cascade through mountain, grassland and bush, then meander through straight, quiet stretches before bursting into life again in a series of plunging waterfalls and churning rapids. These are powerful waterways, begging to be tamed by raft, canoe, kayak or tube.

Rapids are graded from 1 to 6, Grade 1 being quiet-moving water with no obstacles while Grade 6 offers extreme excitement and challenge.

Some white-water trips:
- **ASH RIVER (NORTH-EASTERN FREE STATE)**: The Ash River, near Clarens, is probably South Africa’s most dependable white-water rafting spot, thanks to the Lesotho Highlands Water Project which releases water on a continual basis.
- **CENTRAL DRAKENSBERG RIVERS**: Daily river trips are offered (subject to river conditions) on the four main rivers in the area: Injasuti, Mlambonja, Bushman’s and Thukela. The Thukela River trip is the most popular and includes a Grade 5 rapid, the strongest rapid allowed to be run commercially. Two-person inflatable rafts and all the equipment are provided. Trips are led by experienced guides.
- **SENQU RIVER (LESOTHO)**: see key attractions

Further information:
- Lesotho-Durham Link: +266 22 325 166; www.durham-lesotholink.org.uk
- See directory for other operators.

**4×4 driving and quad bike experiences**
The Maloti Drakensberg region is a 4×4 driver’s paradise. However, bear in mind that these areas have great environmental importance, so take care to avoid damaging the environment. Keep to established trails at all times.

Quad biking is also fast gaining popularity and when enjoyed responsibly is a fantastic way to experience the region. Unfortunately it has the potential to destroy rare species and damage sensitive ecosystems as even just one trip off the established path can cause irreversible damage. Please respect this ancient landscape so that it can be enjoyed by future generations.

**4×4 routes**:
- **SANI PASS**: The legendary Sani Pass is one of the better-known 4×4 and quad bike routes. The steep zigzag pass climbs to 2 874 m. Sani Top Chalet offers a pub, hearty meals and accommodation.
- **LESOThO HIGHLAND ROUTES**: From Sani Top a 4×4 is the best way to travel the gravel roads and dramatic passes which give access to the majestic scenery of the highland areas. Possible destinations are Mokhotlong, Oxbow, Katse Dam, (the base for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project), Thaba Tseka and Semonkong. Notable passes include the Moteng Pass and Molimo Nhuse Pass (“God Help Me Pass”).
Further information:
- Airborne Adventures Africa: +27 (0)84 504 2171; www.airborneadventuresafrica.com

paragliding
Paragliding is probably the most affordable form of free flight. Having launched from a mountain or hill, you are able to ride the air currents and soar with the eagles in absolute silence and at one with nature. Bulver Mountain, next to the village of Bulver in the foothills of the southern Drakensberg, is a favourite spot for paragliders, hang gliders and ‘wannabe’ pilots.

Bulver Airsports Club controls the flying sites around Bulver. Through the club you can access a number of paragliding operators. There is a two-day introductory course. Starting off on a nursery slope in a safe environment, the course gives you the opportunity to decide whether flying is really for you! Should you decide to continue, the flights that you take during the two days are incorporated into the basic licence course.

Notes: While paragliding is largely an adult sport, the whole family can enjoy the spectacular views from the take-off points.

Further information:
- Bulver Airsports Club: Hans Fokkens: +27 (0)82 395 3298 or +27 (0)39 832 0224.

hot-air ballooning
Hot-air ballooning offers a serene way to enjoy the region. Half an hour before sunrise your group meets at the launch site. Once the balloon has been inflated, you’re off on a flight over some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. There are various take-off sites around Kamberg, in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands and near some resorts within sight of the Drakensberg.

Notes: Air temperature decreases with altitude, so if it is cold on the ground it will be colder in the air, so dress accordingly. Ballooning is fun for the family, but remember that children should be tall enough to see over the edge of the basket, which is about 1,1 m high.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nearest Town</th>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monja</td>
<td>Monja Guest House</td>
<td>+27 61 065 093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monja Museum and Archive</td>
<td>+27 62 360 368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Drakenswater Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 141 1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham Rd</td>
<td>Airborne Adventures Afri a</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 504 2717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ferdinand Hostel</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 366 6217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fort Nottingham Museum</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 266 4482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glengarry</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 267 7225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prosperity Self-Catering</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 481 2567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qacha’s Nek</td>
<td>+27 62 950 381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nottala Hotel</td>
<td>+27 62 250 260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sehlabathebe National Park</td>
<td>+27 62 311 767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quthing</td>
<td>+27 62 152 4215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rhodes</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 574 9305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malawian Self-Catering</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 574 5168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Old Bank</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 867 8174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Wild Fesci Association</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 574 2920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wildlife Africa</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 574 2940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wild Flower Viewpoint</td>
<td>+27 (0)72 291 5128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 212 3711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roema B&amp;B &amp; Caravans</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 234 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kambas Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 225 3503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sehlabathebe National Park</td>
<td>+27 62 317 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sai Top</td>
<td>+27 (0)74 241 2352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selfabathebe</td>
<td>+27 (0)74 241 2352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samorong</td>
<td>+27 62 306 037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skopskrug</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 611 1453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belle Gardens B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 611 1422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mountain Valley Hill B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 266 7288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tsenyane</td>
<td>+27 66 30 44 365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Country House</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 533 2367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Underberg</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 702 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hermitage Inn</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 2920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grey's Dist Tents</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 607 5731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drakensberg Gardens Golf &amp; Leisure Resort</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sani Top Guesthouse</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elysium B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 223 4404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The House B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gaunt's House</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 2629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gaunt Cup Wilderness Reserve</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kleinloog Cabin</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riverhouse Trails</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lake Pienaar</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lothers Nature Reserve</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 702 0540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major Adventures</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mountain River Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 562 1651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Off Road Adventures</td>
<td>+27 (0)83 404 4222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pemba Country Lodges</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pride Point Expeditions</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riverlea Farm</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roughly Farm Cottage</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sani Pools</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sheenwood Shallows</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seventhrooms Country Estate</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 859 8419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Berg Escape Station</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 191 1471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Secrets Recreational Park</td>
<td>+27 (0)99 197 1817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stonyhill Farm</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toddler Park B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 701 1656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Underberg Adventures</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 494 9149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Underberg Highlands</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 343 1217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

2 places to stay

**Bed and Breakfast (B&B), Self Catering (SC), Camping and Caravanning (C&C), Lodge (L), Conference Facilities (CF), Guest House (GH), Hotel (H), Backpackers (BP), Homestay (HM), Health Spa (HS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nearest Town</th>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bailey's Pass</td>
<td>Waghals Khao B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)62 407 9406</td>
<td>B&amp;B, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Babutsean Guest Farm</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 633 2263</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brookeshead Guest Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 633 2063</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lolo's Int B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 634 2656</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lord Sommerrt Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 634 1114</td>
<td>GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Queens Forest</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 633 2291</td>
<td>B&amp;B, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riverside Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 633 3292</td>
<td>SC, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saddle Down Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 634 2083</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phala Ndi</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 633 3277</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lelo's Int B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)62 465 2460</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holwayeckles Chutes</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 633 2929</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kalmont Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 974 0228</td>
<td>SC, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edemphol Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 633 2041</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairmonte B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 634 2560</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack Surf Self-Catering</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 510 4270</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Millid Mountain Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 973 7087</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old Mill Inn</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 633 2277</td>
<td>B&amp;B, SC, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bradfield Country Guest Farm</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 633 9000</td>
<td>B&amp;B, SC, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sider's B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 634 9000</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majac Valley Resort</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 633 9000</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tigerlily Ski Resort</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 465 2470</td>
<td>SC, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Athlone's B&amp;B and Self Catering</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 134 4788</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATKV Drakensberg Mountain Resort</td>
<td>+27 (0)36 488 2470</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blyde River</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 634 9016</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sabina B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)51 634 9116</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B, GH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**HOTENOSISES TSELETSE BINFHAGABA, NAKAEWA, PHOSI LLOHO MOLELEKETSE MOKHOTLONG**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEAREST TOWN</th>
<th>ESTABLISHMENT</th>
<th>TELEPHONE</th>
<th>ACCOMMODATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mont-Aux-Sources</td>
<td>+27 (0)36 438 6322</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Little Switzerland Resort</td>
<td>+27 (0)36 438 6220</td>
<td>SC, H, MF, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Montusi Mountain Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)36 438 6201</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Montusi Cultural and Hiking Centre</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 212 2401</td>
<td>SC, BP, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Montusi Mountain Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)36 438 6243</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Union Mont-Aux-Sources</td>
<td>+27 (0)36 438 6000</td>
<td>L, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Johannesburg Park Country Hotel</td>
<td>+27 (0)44 181 001</td>
<td>L, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Sibagabala Mountain Bush Camp</td>
<td>+27 (0)36 438 6000</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Thembumaco</td>
<td>+27 (0)44 181 132</td>
<td>L, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Falun Forest Camp Nature Reserve</td>
<td>+27 (0)36 438 6411</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Tower of Pizza</td>
<td>+27 (0)36 438 6480</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Tozer’s B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 925 1849</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Abrahim’s Luxury Kingdom</td>
<td>+27 (0)66 111 7111</td>
<td>B&amp;B, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Abrahim’s Youth Hostel</td>
<td>+27 (0)66 111 2140</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Crosslee Inn</td>
<td>+27 (0)66 22 402 23</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Hlalanathi Village</td>
<td>+27 (0)55 666 6669</td>
<td>L, EF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mtnbusha Rural Stay B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 048 438</td>
<td>B&amp;B, SC, GC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mountain View Hotel/On the Hotel</td>
<td>+27 (0)66 22 401 109</td>
<td>M, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Klebe Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 933 2247</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Godalville</td>
<td>+27 (0)83 262 5646</td>
<td>B&amp;B, SC, CF, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Champagne Valley</td>
<td>+27 (0)83 468 5647</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>York Gardens</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 447 2240</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Nearhouse</td>
<td>+27 (0)83 468 1693</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Cloverburn</td>
<td>+27 (0)83 469 9011</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Boschkloof Country Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)83 453 5804</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Boschkloof Cultural Village</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 721 0300</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Beek en Clovern Conferencing and Event Company</td>
<td>+27 (0)83 219 1443</td>
<td>BP, B&amp;B, GC, GE, MR, H, L, M, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Brandwag Hotel Golden Gate Mountain Resort</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 255 1000</td>
<td>M, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Calvinus Gardens</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 255 0442</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Clorens Destinations</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 256 1889</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Clorens Golf and Trout Villas</td>
<td>+27 (0)93 292 5832</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Cottage and Snowy Pine</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 256 5124</td>
<td>SC, H, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Clorens Trout</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 256 5142</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Die House</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 256 1085</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Ohr Satire</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 274 8814</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Golden Gate Highlands National Park</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 255 0000</td>
<td>SC, H, MF, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>lake Clorens Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 251 3248</td>
<td>GC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mountain Odyssey</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 256 1480</td>
<td>SC, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Ramp Car Place B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 256 1017</td>
<td>SC, H, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Red Mountain House</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 256 1456</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Rent-a-Whale</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 256 1126</td>
<td>B&amp;B, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Rock Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 256 1518</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Eld Forest Country House</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 256 1345</td>
<td>B&amp;B, L, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Myndus Country Estate</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 256 1381</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B, GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Clooben</td>
<td>+27 (0)91 943 9031</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Makabola B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)91 943 0273</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Nova Bullela</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 571 6290</td>
<td>B&amp;B, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Kloofschat Guest Farm</td>
<td>+27 (0)91 943 0291</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Button Birding and Smithfield Guesthouse</td>
<td>+27 (0)93 833 1029</td>
<td>B&amp;B, SC, GC, HF, MM, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Blott</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 393 2913</td>
<td>CE, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Langshurst Estate B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 393 2942</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Langshurst B&amp;B and Pub</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 393 2942</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mtnshadows Hotel</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 393 2223</td>
<td>B&amp;B, H, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Pina Gardens, Ornied B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 393 1156</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>The old Mill Inn</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 397 0227</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Topary B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 393 1384</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Estcourt</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 352 7770</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Blue Nile Country Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 352 7772</td>
<td>L, EF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Oakdale</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 571 6000</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Athollville Gardens</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 571 6000</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Athollville Terraces Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 571 6000</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Athollville Terrace Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 571 6000</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Athollville Terrace Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 571 6000</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Athollville Terrace Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 571 6000</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Athollville Terrace Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 571 6000</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Athollville Terrace Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 571 6000</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Athollville Terrace Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)92 571 6000</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEAREST TOWN</td>
<td>ESTABLISHMENT</td>
<td>TELEPHONE</td>
<td>ACCOMMODATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marakebe</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+266 22 312 653</td>
<td>L, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohale</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+266 22 936 432</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mmelesi</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+266 52 500 007</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maseru Sun</td>
<td>Hotel and Casino</td>
<td>+266 22 312 434</td>
<td>H, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maseru</td>
<td>Backpackers and Campsite</td>
<td>+266 22 325 166</td>
<td>C&amp;C, BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vogel's Nest</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 924 0129</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumela Caravan Parks</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 811 7062</td>
<td>C&amp;C, SC, BP, GH, CF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands Cottage</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 784 0168</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memel Antique</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 924 0129</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molengoane</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+266 22 347 766</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B, CF, L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molemo</td>
<td>Guest House</td>
<td>+266 22 331 376</td>
<td>GH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandstone Mountain Retreat</td>
<td>+27 (0)82 784 0168</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pampoenspruit</td>
<td>Heiberg</td>
<td>+27 (0)84 945 3190</td>
<td>B&amp;B, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahem Guest</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 924 0034</td>
<td>SC, GH, BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Gai-Roi</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)58 924 0129</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resthaven</td>
<td>Guest House</td>
<td>+27 (0)39 737 4067</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehloding Hiking Trail</td>
<td>+27 (0)39 737 3289</td>
<td>B&amp;B, SC, GH, BP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tloung B&amp;B</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+266 22 311 832</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpilo Lodge</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+266 22 317 800</td>
<td>B&amp;B, L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham Road Fordoun Leisure</td>
<td>+27 (0)33 266 6217</td>
<td>H, CF, HS, HS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Drakenswater Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)53 341 1909</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham Road Field House</td>
<td>+27 (0)53 366 2475</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Drakenswater Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)53 341 1909</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greyhounds</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)53 267 7225</td>
<td>SC, B&amp;B, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosopity Self Catering Lodges</td>
<td>+27 (0)52 481 2761</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phezane</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)53 360 335</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palace Hotel</td>
<td></td>
<td>+266 58 564 905</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qacha’s Nal</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)53 560 137</td>
<td>C&amp;C, LC, SC, L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 974 9309</td>
<td>SC, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>Lodge</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 974 9309</td>
<td>SC, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qacha’s Nek</td>
<td>Anna’s B&amp;B</td>
<td>+266 22 950 374</td>
<td>GH, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartford House</td>
<td></td>
<td>+27 (0)33 263 2713</td>
<td>B&amp;B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafeteng</td>
<td>Golden Hotel</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 974 9309</td>
<td>SC, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafeteng</td>
<td>Golden Hotel</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 974 9309</td>
<td>SC, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qacha’s Nek</td>
<td>Anna’s B&amp;B</td>
<td>+266 22 950 374</td>
<td>GH, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafeteng</td>
<td>Golden Hotel</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 974 9309</td>
<td>SC, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafeteng</td>
<td>Golden Hotel</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 974 9309</td>
<td>SC, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qacha’s Nek</td>
<td>Anna’s B&amp;B</td>
<td>+266 22 950 374</td>
<td>GH, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafeteng</td>
<td>Golden Hotel</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 974 9309</td>
<td>SC, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafeteng</td>
<td>Golden Hotel</td>
<td>+27 (0)45 974 9309</td>
<td>SC, CF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qacha’s Nek</td>
<td>Anna’s B&amp;B</td>
<td>+266 22 950 374</td>
<td>GH, SC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NEAREST TOWN | ESTABLISHMENT | TELEPHONE | ACCOMMODATION
--- | --- | --- | ---
Champagne Valley | Clarens | +27 (0)36 468 1684 | BC
| | | +27 (0)36 468 1000 | LC, CF
| | | +27 (0)36 468 9002 | M
| | | +27 (0)36 468 1025 | SC
| | | +27 (0)36 468 1103 | CAC
| | | +27 (0)36 468 1172 | CAC
| | | +27 (0)36 468 1342 | SC
| | | +27 (0)36 489 7834 | SBC, SC, GH, MM
| | | +27 (0)36 468 1049 | SB
| | | +27 (0)36 468 1072 | SC
| | | +27 (0)36 468 1113 | SC

3 places to eat

**Akasia North**
- Abrego Vista B&B
- Railroad Guest Lodge
- Lakker da Jan B&B
- Loyal Somuri Guest House
- Riverside Lodge
- Edgehill Guest Farm
- Edelweiss B&B
- Lechwe Country Guest Farm
- Sondia 1 B&B
- Sondia 2 B&B
- Zimona Cultural and Hiking Centre
- Mountain Lodge
- Osoo Boma Guest House
- Sandford Park Country Hotel
- Sangubula Mountain Bush Camp
- The Hundred
- Tower of Pizza
- Afrileki Leisure Kingdom
- Crocodile Inn
- Lokiesberg Village
- Maliba Mountain Lodge
- Mahonare Rural Stay B&B
- Mountain View Lodge/Game House
- Ball Park
- Baoshou Cultural Village
- Room in a Clouds Guesthouse and Event Company
- Caledon Gardens
- Clarens Golf and Golf Villas
- Destiny Explorations
- Driehuis
- Golden Gate Highlands National Park
- Rind Mountain House
- Die Huis

**Bergville**
- AFRY Drakensville Mountain Resort
- Bangsolo
- Little Switzerland Resort
- Montais Cultural and Hiking Centre
- Mountain Lodge
- Onsoi Mount Air Guesthouse
- Sandford Park Country Hotel
- Sangubula Mountain Bush Camp
- The Hundred
- Tower of Pizza
- Afrileki Leisure Kingdom
- Crocodile Inn
- Lokiesberg Village
- Maliba Mountain Lodge
- Mahonare Rural Stay B&B
- Mountain View Lodge/Game House
- Ball Park
- Baoshou Cultural Village
- Room in a Clouds Guesthouse and Event Company
- Caledon Gardens
- Clarens Golf and Golf Villas
- Destiny Explorations
- Driehuis
- Golden Gate Highlands National Park
- Rind Mountain House
- Die Huis

**Botha Buthe**
- Afriki Leisure Kingdom
- Crocodile Inn
- Kweekeling Village
- Maliba Mountain Lodge
- Mahonare Rural Stay B&B
- Mountain View Lodge/Game House
- Ball Park
- Baoshou Cultural Village
- Room in a Clouds Guesthouse and Event Company
- Caledon Gardens
- Clarens Golf and Golf Villas
- Destiny Explorations
- Driehuis
- Golden Gate Highlands National Park
- Rind Mountain House
- Die Huis

**Champagne Valley**
- Clarens | +27 (0)36 468 1684 | BC
- Dragon Peaks Mountain Resort | +27 (0)36 468 1031 | CAC, SC, CF
- Drakensberg Sun Hotel | +27 (0)36 468 9002 | M
- Jackal Lodge and Trekking | +27 (0)36 468 1025 | SC
- Monks Cowl Nature Reserve | +27 (0)36 468 1103 | CAC
- Mountain Splendor Resort | +27 (0)36 468 1172 | CAC
- Klein View Cottage | +27 (0)36 468 1342 | SC
- Rolling Il Ranch | +27 (0)36 489 7834 | SBC, SC, GH, MM
- Rose Cottage B&B | +27 (0)36 468 1049 | SB
- Lagomatho Monks Cowl Adventures | +27 (0)36 468 1072 | SC
- Spion Kop Nature Reserve | +27 (0)36 488 1578 | CAC, SC
- The Nest Hotel | +27 (0)36 468 1064 | M
- Tintu, Typa and Tsukh | +27 (0)36 468 1020 | SC
- Mts End Mountain Resort | +27 (0)36 468 1113 | SC
### 6 tourism information offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Office</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maloti Route Info</td>
<td>+27 (0) 91 924 5331</td>
<td><a href="http://www.malotiroute.co.za">www.malotiroute.co.za</a>; <a href="mailto:info@malotiroute.co.za">info@malotiroute.co.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu Natal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu Natal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maloti Route Info</td>
<td>+27 (0) 91 924 5331</td>
<td><a href="http://www.malotiroute.co.za">www.malotiroute.co.za</a>; <a href="mailto:info@malotiroute.co.za">info@malotiroute.co.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu Natal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu Natal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maloti Route Info</td>
<td>+27 (0) 91 924 5331</td>
<td><a href="http://www.malotiroute.co.za">www.malotiroute.co.za</a>; <a href="mailto:info@malotiroute.co.za">info@malotiroute.co.za</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In May 2006 a historic agreement was signed between the agencies responsible for tourism development and marketing in the Maloti Drakensberg Mountain Region. They are now working together to develop a common branding for the region. The agencies are: Eastern Cape Tourism Board, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Free State Tourism Authority, Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation, South African National Parks and Tourism KwaZulu-Natal. This book embodies the spirit of that agreement which has now manifested itself in the creation of the Maloti Drakensberg Route.
The whole region is 2 hours ahead of standard time

**New Year's Day**  1 Jan
**public holidays**
- Moshoeshoe's Day (Lesotho)  11 Mar
- Human Rights Day (SA)  21 Mar
- Easter Monday  Variable
- Ascension Day (Lesotho) Variable
- Africa/Hero’s Day (Lesotho)  25 May
- Freedom Day (SA) 27 Apr
- King's Birthday (Lesotho)  17 Jul
- National Women's Day (SA)  9 Aug
- Heritage Day (SA)  24 Sep
- Boxing/Family Day (Lesotho/SA)  26 Dec

**currency**
- Maloti (M), divided into 100 lisente (cents), have an equivalent value to South African rand which are used interchangeably in Lesotho. Note that Maloti are not accepted in Maseru. All foreign currency exchange should be conducted in Maseru.
- The Rand (R) is divided into 100 cents. Most traveller's cheques and major credit cards are accepted in South Africa in place of rand.

**languages**
- The official languages are Sesotho and English. Many people can speak some English.
- South Africa has 11 official languages. Most people speak Afrikaans, Xhosa, Setswana, Zulu or English.

**air travel**
- The national airline is South African Airways (SAA) (website: www.flysaa.com). Many other airlines operate in South Africa and offer frequent flights from all over the world.
- Flights connect to Moshoeshoe I International Airport in Lesotho, or to Durban, Bloemfontein or East London, among others.

**road travel**
- South African roads are mostly tarred, and generally in good condition. Rural roads may require caution.
- The extreme topography does mean that most roads, especially in the highlands, have sharp bends and steep hills, resulting in slower than anticipated progress.
- Non-citizens must carry a passport. Visas are required unless your country has a visa abolition agreement with Lesotho (contact your Lesotho Embassy). Upon entering Lesotho through Moshoeshoe International Airport, you will be granted a one-month stay. Extensions can be applied for at the Immigration Office in Maseru +266 22 323 771.

**post**
- Post offices are open Mon to Fri 08h00–16h30, Sat 08h00–12h00.
- Services are available in main towns. Automatic post offices are found in most towns and operate on a 24-hour basis.

**petrol and diesel**
- Petrol and diesel are available in larger towns. It is advisable to fill up when you see a pump, rather than waiting until your tank is nearly empty.

**hospitals**
- Medical facilities are good in urban areas, but more limited elsewhere. Many doctors and hospitals require immediate cash payment. Comprehensive health insurance is recommended. A leaflet on health precautions is available from the South African High Commission.

**driving licences**
- International driving permits are recognized in South Africa. Driving licences from most countries are also valid, up to a period of 12 months. They should be printed in English, or accompanied by a certified translation.
- International driving permits are recognized in Lesotho. Driving licences from most countries are also valid, up to a period of 12 months. They should be printed in English, or accompanied by a certified translation.

**car hire**
- To hire a car, travellers must have held a valid driving licence for at least one year.
- There are car and 4x4 rental companies based in Maseru, including Avis, Budget and Thrifty.
- International driving permits are recognized in South Africa. Driving licences from most countries are also valid, up to a period of 12 months. They should be printed in English, or accompanied by a certified translation.
- Non-citizens must carry a passport. Visas are required unless your country has a visa abolition agreement with Lesotho (contact your Lesotho Embassy). Upon entering Lesotho through Moshoeshoe International Airport, you will be granted a one-month stay. Extensions can be applied for at the Immigration Office in Maseru +266 22 323 771.

**travel tips for the maloti drakensberg region**

**lesotho**
- Contact: ECTB, +27 (0)43 701 9600 www.ectb.co.za, info@ectb.co.za
- Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, +27 (0)41 396 6700 www.npww.org.za
- Eastern Cape Tourism Board, +27 (0)43 701 9600 www.ectb.co.za, info@ectb.co.za
- Free State Tourism Authority, +27 (0)51 411 4300 www.fsteea.fs.gov.za
- Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC), +266 22 312 238 www.ltdc.org.ls; touristinfo@ltdc.org.ls
- South African National Parks, +27 (0)12 426 5000 www.sanparks.com
- Tourism KwaZulu-Natal, +27 (0)31 366 7500 www.zulu.org.za; tkzn@iafrica.com
- Eastern Cape Tourism Board +27 (0)43 701 9600 www.ectb.co.za, info@ectb.co.za
- Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife +27 (0)41 396 6700 www.npww.org.za
- Eastern Cape Tourism Board +27 (0)43 701 9600 www.ectb.co.za, info@ectb.co.za
- Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife +27 (0)41 396 6700 www.npww.org.za

**south africa**
- Contact: SANParks, +27 (0)11 205 8500 www.sanparks.com
- SOUTH AFRICA has 11 official languages. Most people speak Afrikaans, Xhosa, Setswana, Zulu or English.
- Non-citizens must carry a passport. Visas are required unless your country has a visa abolition agreement with Lesotho (contact your Lesotho Embassy). Upon entering Lesotho through Moshoeshoe International Airport, you will be granted a one-month stay. Extensions can be applied for at the Immigration Office in Maseru +266 22 323 771.
The dramatic Maloti and Drakensberg mountain ranges form the high point of the southern African escarpment. This is a living landscape that bursts with natural and cultural splendours - from rare and unique alpine flowers to internationally acclaimed rock art. It is home to an exciting and vibrant fusion of peoples – renowned for their warmth and hospitality. The mountains abound with exciting activities for the lone traveller and families alike: hikes and walks • fly fishing • rock art • dinosaur fossils • rare birds • floral splendour • fascinating cultures • engineering exploits • pony trekking • adventure sports. This book offers a unique guide to the Maloti Drakensberg Route in Lesotho and South Africa. It provides practical travel information and maps, highlights the must-see attractions and includes a comprehensive directory of places to stay, eat and visit.