

Walking the Drakensberg and the Wild Coast of South Africa

Trip Code: WDC

Version: WDC Walking in the Drakensberg and the Wild Coast



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Day walks in the famous Drakensberg Mountains, including the Tugela Gorge Trail
- 3 days walking along the remote and unspoilt Wild Coast of South Africa
- See San Bushman Rock Art and visit the Nelson Mandela Capture Site

- Walk in the Golden Gate National Park, up Brandwag Rock and into Echo Ravine

AT A GLANCE

- 7 day walks
- Join at Johannesburg, ends in Durban

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 9 Breakfasts
- 4 Lunches
- 8 Dinners
- 7 nights Lodge
- 1 nights Hotel
- 1 nights Guesthouse

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

This outstanding series of day walks in the Drakensberg and on the Wild Coast in South Africa is a true gem. Having sought out these splendid walks we have combined them with comfortable accommodation to ensure that this walking holiday ticks all the boxes for a delightful time away. Our first stop is the Golden Gate National Park where we have a sunset walk on Brandwag Rock and take the Echo Falls Trail. Moving on to the stunning and rightfully famous, Drakensberg Mountains, we walk in the Tugela Gorge, see the Amphitheatre, and the region surrounding Cathedral Peak with its carved sandstone buttresses. The landscapes are rugged, with natural pools and glowing rocks as the sun lights them up. Our holiday ends on the Wild Coast where we have 3 nights in a lodge and enjoy some day walks in this lesser known part of the country. The well named, Wild Coast has untouched white sandy beaches, cliffs and crashing waves - making the coastal path a stunner! Our journey ends in Durban after a fabulous walking holiday in this part of South Africa.

Is this holiday for you?

The essence of the holiday is to enjoy the walks and the wine, as well as the culture and food of South Africa. The trails that we follow are undulating or reasonably flat - except of course Table Mountain. They are well-marked and sometimes stony. Our accommodation has been handpicked to ensure comfort in small, well-appointed hotels and guesthouses. We have included 3 wine tasting sessions and 1 brandy tasting with associated visits to the cellars and vineyards. South Africa has a lovely Mediterranean climate and because of the time zone jet lag is not usually a problem flying from the UK.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at Johannesburg Airport. Transfer to Golden Gate National Park, walk up Brandwag Rock.

Your holiday starts at Johannesburg Airport in the morning. Our guide gives us a briefing before we head off on the start of our journey in South Africa. The drive to the Golden Gate National Park is around 5 hours. We stop for lunch in the small town of Clarens. The park is nestled in the rolling foothills of the Maluti Mountains, a secret gem often overlooked by visitors, and includes habitat for various antelope and sandstone cliffs which glow gold in the sun. The most imposing cliff is the Brandwag Rock, which we enjoy walking up (approximately 1 hour to the top) once we have arrived. The sunset from here is magical and is the perfect start to our holiday.

Actual drive time approximately 5 hrs. With stops expect approximately 6hrs journey time.

Meals: **D**



Accommodation
Lodge



Time
2 hrs walking

DAY 2

Echo Ravine morning walk in the Golden Gate Park, transfer to the Drakensberg Mountains for a longer afternoon walk.

After breakfast we walk along the Echo Ravine hiking trail. One of the most picturesque short routes in the area we ascend gently into the ravine where the curving cliffs reach 10-15m on each side. It is a pretty walk and a good opportunity to stretch our legs before we set off for the Drakensberg. We transfer slowly stopping at various viewpoints with a chance to see Mountain Zebra, wildebeest and Africa's largest antelope, the Cape Eland. Also we might see the Cape Vultures at Sterkfontein dam. Driving onto our lodge in the Sungubala Valley in the Northern Drakensberg we check in and head out for an afternoon walk on one of the many walking trails which criss-cross this beautiful area. We will choose a suitable walk for the group and the weather, which will be around 4 hours. There are numerous walks available here. We have the next two nights at our accommodation allowing us to relax and enjoy the food and beauty of the surroundings.

Actual drive time approximately 3 hrs. With stops expect approximately 4hrs journey time.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Lodge



Time
2 hrs morning walking, 4 hrs afternoon walking

DAY 3

Drakensberg Mountains. Tugela Gorge Trail and Amphitheatre views.

This morning we have a short transfer of 30mins into the Royal Natal National Park. Here we start the famous Tugela Gorge Walk, said to be the finest day walk in the Drakensberg. Our destination is the gorge at the base of the Amphitheatre so we are rewarded by splendid views as we slowly make our way along the relatively flat path. We pass eroded sandstone rocks with names such as the Policeman's Helmet and you can see the Devil's Tooth. Back at the vehicle our return route includes a stop off at a Bushmen painting site which a local guide explains to us. We return to our accommodation in Sungubala.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Lodge



Time
5-6 hrs walking

DAY 4

Drakensberg Mountains. Cathedral Peak reserve section, walk with expert guide on ancient bushmen paintings to Doree Falls.

Making the most of the splendid walking opportunities in this area we step out after breakfast and follow a 2 hour walking trail. We then transfer east to the Cathedral Peak section of the Drakensberg Mountains. After an early lunch at our accommodation we head out for a walk to Doree Falls with an expert guide who will show us some ancient bushmen paintings along the way. It is thought that South Africa has the richest treasure trove of rock art in the world, and our guide will give us a great insight into the San people's lives from thousands of years ago, through these artworks. Our walk will continue through wattle plantations and over some streams to the pretty Doree Falls. The pool here is inviting for a quick dip. The walk will take approx 3 hours total. We then return to our accommodation which is our base for the next two nights.

Actual drive time approximately 1-2 hrs.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Lodge



Time
2 walks for 2 hrs

DAY 5**Drakensberg Mountains. Full day walking to the Blue and Neptune Pools, Xeni Caves and the Marble Baths.**

We follow the river walking up stream passing high cliffs and patches of natural forest. We pass a series of natural pools which are inviting, but the best is the Marble Baths where the waters have smoothed the rock and carved out some fun water channels. The water coming from the high plateau of Lesotho is however not bath temperature as the name suggests! The Marble Caves are a popular place for wild campers under the rock overhang, however we will retrace our steps to the vehicle and our accommodation for the night.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation
Lodge



Time
5-6 hrs walking

DAY 6**Transfer to South Africa's Wild Coast. Visit the Nelson Mandela Capture Site.**

Leaving the Drakensberg behind we travel south east to the coast. Our first stop today is the Nelson Mandela Capture Site, where in 1962 he was finally arrested. At this museum we learn the story of his journey through life and how he built a new nation. Our drive then continues south through Kokstad and into the old Transkei, now known as the Wild Coast. The countryside becomes more rural as we reach the coast, and the scenery is quite stunning. We arrive at our accommodation just north of Port St Johns in the afternoon. We have our first views of the enormous Indian Ocean and this rugged coast from which its name is derived. The next three nights we stay at an excellently located lodge on the coast. Actual drive time approximately 8 hrs. With stops expect approximately 10hrs journey time.

Meals: **B D**



Accommodation
Lodge

DAY 7**Walk the Ilityelentaka Trail along the Wild Coast.**

The beaches are sandy and pristine, and the coast is rural, rugged and remote. Our full day of walking starts from the accommodation. The first tropical white sandy beach we encounter is Mmzimpunzi and the following beaches are more and more remote to the previous. The path undulates as we make our way to the rocky outcrop of Ilityelentaka - the Rock of the Bird. Weather permitting this is a super spot for our sandwiches overlooking the magnificent Indian Ocean. The return route takes us through the village where we can meet the Pondo Tribe, and see how they live in this remote location. Back at the

accommodation we have earned a drink from the bar and we can enjoy the restaurant terrace with fabulous views.

Meals: **B D**



Accommodation
Lodge



Time
6 hours walking

DAY 8

Walk the Waterfall Bluff Trail on the Wild Coast.

A second fabulous full day walking today. We begin with an exciting 4X4 transfer to the small village of Cutwini. From here we walk to the iconic waterfall which drops straight into the Indian Ocean. We then walk to the Cathedral Rock passing the cliffs which form a huge overhanging cave, called Grotto Cave and crossing the Mlambomkulu River, with its pristine pools. With luck we will see whales and dolphins out to sea. We return back to our vehicle and transfer back to the lodge for our final night soaking in this incredible place.

Meals: **B D**



Accommodation
Guesthouse



Time
6 hrs walking

DAY 9

Drive to the Dolphin Coast.

We can enjoying some time at the pool or a leg stretch through the gardens before we depart these remote lands of this widely unknown part of South Africa and drive north to Durban. The journey does take the majority of the day, and we will stop for some short breaks. We drive to the North of Durban for a final night of the holiday staying at Umdloti beach on the Dolphin Coast. There are 5km of beautiful beaches, which are great for a walk, and dolphins are often seen in the early mornings playing in the waves!

Actual drive time approximately 7 hrs. With stops expect approximately 8hrs journey time.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 10**Departure from Durban Airport.**

As our hotel is not far from the airport, depending on flight times we may have some time for a last walk along the beach before our single timed transfer to Durban Airport.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival and departure
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- All activities and excursions mentioned except where specified as optional
- National Park entrance fees

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

TRAVEL TO YOUR DESTINATION

If flying from the UK there are low cost airlines available to the start and from the end of your holiday.

To benefit from full financial protection, ease your holiday planning, and avoid dealing with airlines, we can book scheduled flights from the UK as part of a flight inclusive package. Scheduled flights are usually more expensive than low cost alternatives, however potentially less stressful if your flight is cancelled or delayed. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

The group will meet at Johannesburg Airport.

A single timed transfer (5hrs) from the airport to the Drakensberg is included. You need to arrive into Johannesburg Airport at the latest time of 1130.

On the last day of the Land Only itinerary, we have a single timed transfer to Durban Airport for flights leaving in the early evening. Check out from the hotel is 10am, but you will be able to keep your luggage at the hotel and enjoy the beach and town before your flight.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Private arrival transfers are expensive due to the distances. A money saving tip might be to arrive the day before. Additional nights at an airport hotel are available. On the return, Durban Airport is not far from the hotel, so private transfers are available on request for different flight times.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included except for 5 lunches (including the lunch on day 1) and 1 dinner. The lunches can either be purchased in a picnic style from the accommodation or in a local cafe/restaurant. The dinner not included will be taken in a local restaurant.

Food & Water

Many places on this holiday have drinkable water from the tap to fill your personal water bottles. Please check with the leader at the various locations. Please take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) for days when drinking water out of the tap is not available. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader. Additionally there is a driver for the vehicle. When at the coast you will also have a local leader for the walks.

Spending Money

Approximately £250 per person (or equivalent in US dollars or Euros) should be allowed for tips, soft drinks, snacks, non-included meals and miscellaneous expenses. Alcoholic drinks, souvenirs and optional activities are additional so you may wish to budget for these.

You can choose to take your money in pounds sterling, dollars or euros. There will be the opportunity to change money into local currency on arrival at the airport and your local leader will advise the best places to change money en-route. Additionally, you will be able to get currency from bank ATMs in the towns that we will visit. Credit cards are useful and it is a good idea to carry one in case of emergency.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your leader and local team. Tipping is entirely voluntary and should be dependent on good service. We recommend that you decide levels of tipping and give any tips as a group rather than from individual group members.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Please keep the weight of your main luggage to 20kg or less. You should bring a soft bag, as these are more suitable to pack in the vehicle. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

South Africa Indemnity Form

As a member of the South African Tourism Service Association, our ground agent in South Africa may require you to complete an indemnity form at the start of your holiday, which you will need your insurance details for. As a client of KE Adventure Travel, your rights under the Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangement Regulations (2018) are unaffected and KE Adventure Travel will remain liable for the actions of our suppliers.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Visa South Africa

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. You must have 2 blank pages in your passport.

Rules on **travelling with children under 18 years** have been relaxed. Visa exempt children entering South Africa only need passports, and not birth certificates as previously required. This applies if the child is travelling with both parents, one parent or an adult who is not a biological parent, and school groups. There are some different requirements for unaccompanied children, and children who do not have UK passports or visa exempt passports. For full details please see the FCDO website.

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Preparing for your Holiday

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

Climate

South Africa has a generally sunny and pleasant climate, with regional differences due to the weather systems from the surrounding oceans and altitude above sea level. This area experiences most of its rainfall in the southern hemisphere summer, from October to March. From May through to August is drier, with long spells of mild, stable weather. However, cold fronts moving in from the south-west can bring rain and even snow-fall to the Drakensberg Mountains. Daytime temperatures range from around 10 - 20°C from April to September, to 20 - 30°C from October to March.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining at Johannesburg Airport. The holiday ends at Durban Airport. Single timed airport transfers are provided.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Johannesburg Airport, and returning from Durban Airport.

Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the evening, arriving in the morning of the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Durban in the late afternoon of the last day of the itinerary, going via Johannesburg, and arriving in the UK the following morning.

Why Choose KE

Why KE?

A unique KE itinerary combining a series of day walks in the splendid Drakensberg Mountains and the unspoilt and rural Wild Coast of South Africa.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 21/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change