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DRAKENSBERG TOURIST GUIDE

With links to useful websites

FORMATION:

The Drakensberg Mountains, known as "uKhahlamba" (Barrier of Spears) in Zulu, were formed about 200 million years ago during the breakup of the supercontinent Gondwana.

- Recommended:** [Geology \(thedrakensberg.net\)](http://thedrakensberg.net) [Geology \(Wikipedia\)](#) [Gondwana \(Britannica\)](#)

LOCATION:

Stretching over 1,000 kilometers (620 miles), the Drakensberg Mountains run along the eastern edge of the South African escarpment, bordering Lesotho to the west. They stretch roughly between 28° and 30° south latitude, and between approximately 28° and 30° east longitude. The mountains are approximately 200km from South Africa's east coast.

- Recommended:** [Map \(sa-venues.com\)](http://sa-venues.com) [Interactive Map \(karmalodge.co.za\)](http://karmalodge.co.za)

UNESCO World Heritage Site:

The Maloti-Drakensberg Park, encompassing much of the mountain range, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site recognized for its exceptional natural beauty, biodiversity, and cultural significance.

- Recommended:** [Maloti-Drakensberg Park \(UNESCO\)](#) [World Heritage Site \(africanworldheritagesites.org\)](http://africanworldheritagesites.org)

DRAKENSBERG TOURIST GUIDE

With links to useful websites



SCAN or CLICK HERE
to see an interactive map

DRAKENSBERG
MOUNTAINS

NOTABLE TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURES:

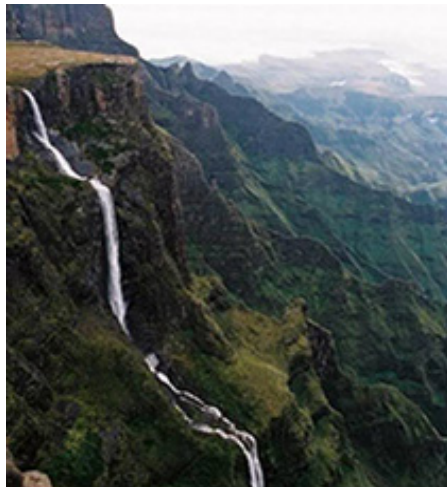
NORTHERN DRAKENSBERG

TUGELA FALLS

Tugela Falls, at the top of the Amphitheatre rock formation, officially ranks as the world's second-highest waterfall, with a total height of approximately 948 meters (3,110 feet). Recent measurements rank it as the world's highest waterfall, surpassing Angel Falls in Venezuela by 4 meters, however this has yet to be confirmed officially. With its five cascading tiers, it offers a natural spectacle that draws visitors from around the world. Hikers can explore several trails to reach the Tugela Falls viewpoint - one of which involves climbing 40 meter-high ladders - where they are rewarded with panoramic vistas of the surrounding mountains and the plunging waters below.

Recommended:

- [Tugela Falls \(Thukela Falls\) \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Tugela Falls Hike \(karmalodge.co.za\)](#)
- [News article - latest measurements \(IOL.co.za\)](#)
- [Tugela Falls video \(Youtube\)](#)



Tugela Falls

THE AMPHITHEATRE

The Amphitheatre is the most iconic and awe-inspiring natural rock formation of the Drakensberg. Stretching approximately 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) in length and rising to heights of over 1,200 meters (3,937 feet), this towering rock wall creates a dramatic backdrop against the surrounding landscape. Carved over millions of years by the forces of erosion, the Amphitheatre offers a stunning display of sheer cliffs, rugged peaks, and several waterfalls, including Tugela Falls and Mahai Falls. It is a popular destination for hikers.

Recommended:

- [The Amphitheatre \(drakensbergmountains.co.za\)](#)
- [Amphitheatre hikes \(karmalodge.co.za\)](#)
- [Tugela Gorge Hike \(drakensbergexperience.co.za\)](#)
- [Tugela Gorge Hike \(Youtube\)](#)



The Amphitheatre

NORTHERN DRAKENSBERG

CATHEDRAL PEAK

Cathedral Peak, part of the northern Drakensberg Mountains, earns its name from its striking resemblance to the spires and buttresses of a cathedral. Its towering presence, reaching approximately 3,004 meters (9,856 feet) above sea level, creates an awe-inspiring silhouette against the sky. This geological marvel is a key feature of the Maloti-Drakensberg World Heritage Site, due to both its natural beauty and its cultural significance, San rock art sites being a feature of the area. Hikes to its summit are a popular activity.

Recommended:

- [Cathedral Peak \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Cathedral Peak Advice \(anywhereweroam.com\)](#)
- [Summitting Cathedral Peak \(Youtube\)](#)



Cathedral Peak

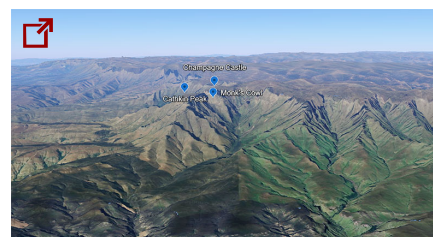
CENTRAL DRAKENSBERG

MONK'S COWL AREA

The Monk's Cowl area, nestled within the central region of the Drakensberg, is renowned for its iconic peaks. At the heart of this nature reserve stands Monk's Cowl, a towering sentinel rising to an elevation of approximately 3,229 meters (10,594 feet). Nearby, Cathkin Peak and Champagne Castle add to the area's allure, with Cathkin Peak reaching heights of around 3,181 meters (10,436 feet) and Champagne Castle soaring to approximately 3,377 meters (11,076 feet), making it one of the highest peaks in South Africa. The Monk's Cowl area offers a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, with an extensive network of hiking trails that wind through lush valleys, meandering streams, and pristine forests.

Recommended:

- [Monk's Cowl \(kznwildlife.com\)](#)
- [Champagne Castle \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [CathkinPeak \(naturebackin.com\)](#)
- [Champagne Castle video \(Youtube\)](#)



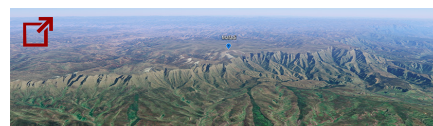
Google Earth view of Cathkin Peak, Monk's Cowl and Champagne Castle (looking south)

MAFADI

Mafadi Peak is as the highest peak in the Drakensberg and the highest point in South Africa, at an elevation of 3,446 meters (11,305 feet) above sea level. It is situated near the border of Lesotho, and offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape, including the dramatic valleys and rugged cliffs that characterize the Drakensberg Mountains. Its summit serves as a challenging yet rewarding destination for experienced hikers and mountaineers.

Recommended:

- [About Mafadi \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [Mafadi Hike \(southafricaadventures.com\)](#)
- [Mafadi Hike video \(Peak High Mountaineering\)](#)



Google Earth view of Mafadi Peak (looking west into Lesotho)

CENTRAL DRAKENSBERG

GIANT'S CASTLE

The Giant's Castle area, situated in the central Drakensberg mountains, is renowned for its scenic beauty, rich biodiversity, and cultural heritage. Named after the imposing silhouette of Giant's Castle peak, which rises to approximately 3,315 meters (10,876 feet) above sea level, this region offers a diverse range of outdoor activities and attractions. The area is home to the Giant's Castle Nature Reserve, which encompasses pristine grasslands, lush forests, and rugged cliffs. Visitors to the reserve can explore a network of hiking trails, including the popular Giant's Castle Loop Trail, which offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. The region is also known for its ancient San rock art sites, providing valuable insights into the cultural history of the region. Giant's Castle is a haven for wildlife enthusiasts, offering opportunities to spot a variety of species, including eland, mountain reedbuck, and the rare bearded vulture. With its combination of natural beauty and cultural significance, the Giant's Castle area remains one of the Drakensberg's favourite destinations.

Recommended:

- [Giant's Castle \(giantscastle.info\)](#)
- [Champagne Castle \(Wikipedia\)](#)
- [CathkinPeak \(jonathantheghaznavid.com\)](#)
- [Champagne Castle video \(Youtube\)](#)



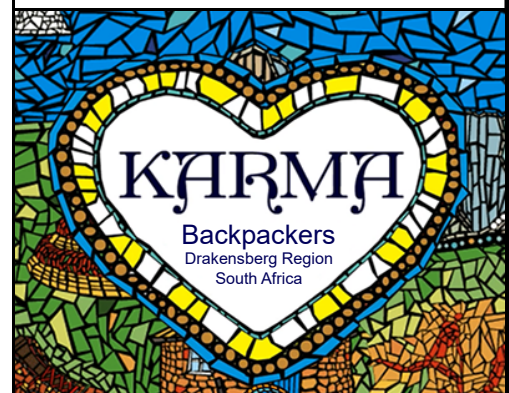
Giant's Castle

SANI PASS

Sani Pass, situated in the southern Drakensberg mountains of South Africa, is a legendary mountain pass renowned for its rugged beauty and adventurous spirit. Rising to an altitude of approximately 2,874 meters (9,429 feet) above sea level, Sani Pass provides a vital link between KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho. This iconic pass is famous for its steep gradients, hairpin bends, and breathtaking scenery, offering a thrilling journey for adventurous travelers and 4x4 enthusiasts. The surrounding area is characterized by pristine alpine landscapes, with rolling hills, rocky cliffs, and cascading waterfalls creating a dramatic backdrop. At the top of Sani Pass lies the Sani Mountain Lodge, which serves as a popular stopover for visitors, offering stunning views of the surrounding mountains and a chance to experience the unique culture of the local Basotho people. Sani Pass and its surrounding area provide a memorable adventure for those seeking to explore the natural wonders and cultural heritage of the southern Drakensberg mountains.

Recommended:

- [Sani Pass \(southafrica.net\)](#)
- [Sani Pass \(bookmundi.com\)](#)
- [Sani Pass Tour \(sanipasstours.com\)](#)
- [Sani Pass video \(Youtube\)](#)



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HISTORY OF THE DRAKENSBERG






The history of the Drakensberg area is deeply intertwined with the diverse peoples and cultures that have inhabited the region over thousands of years. Among the earliest known inhabitants were the San people, also known as Bushmen, who left a rich legacy of rock art scattered throughout the mountains. These hunter-gatherers lived in harmony with the natural environment, utilizing the abundant resources of the area for their sustenance.

In the early 19th century, the Zulu kingdom, under the leadership of King Shaka, expanded its influence into the foothills of the Drakensberg. The Zulu people utilized the fertile valleys for agriculture and grazing, establishing a presence in the region that would shape its history for decades to come.

During the 1830s, the Drakensberg Mountains became a refuge for various groups seeking to escape the upheaval caused by the Mfecane, a period of widespread warfare and displacement in southern Africa. The Boers, descendants of Dutch settlers who migrated inland from the Cape Colony in search of land and freedom from British rule, arrived during this time. Amid conflict with the Zulu, they established farms and settlements in the foothills of the Drakensberg, contributing to the cultural and ethnic diversity of the region.

In the mid-19th century, the British Empire began to assert its dominance in South Africa, leading to conflicts with both the Boers and the indigenous peoples of the region. One of the most significant figures of this period was King Moshoeshoe 1 of the Basotho people, who established the Kingdom of Lesotho in the mountainous areas adjacent to the Drakensberg. King Moshoeshoe successfully resisted British attempts to annex his territory, forging alliances with various groups and maintaining the independence of his kingdom.

Throughout its history, the Drakensberg area has been a place of cultural exchange, conflict, and coexistence, reflecting the complexities of South Africa's diverse heritage. Today, the region remains a symbol of natural beauty and cultural significance, attracting visitors from around the world to explore its rich history and stunning landscapes.

-  **Recommended:**
-  **Drakensberg History** (nondela.com)
-  **Secret San** (researchgate.net)
-  **King Moshoeshoe** (sahistory.org.za)
-  **Drakensberg History** ([Youtube](#))








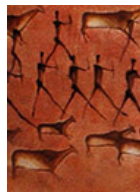
King Moshoeshoe 1

Boers crossing the mountains

SAN ROCK ART





The Drakensberg Mountains contain the most extensive collection of San rock art in Africa, offering a fascinating glimpse into the ancient cultures that once thrived in the region. The rock art, created by the San people over thousands of years, depicts scenes of hunting, dancing, and spiritual rituals, providing valuable insights into their way of life and belief systems. One of the premier centers for experiencing this extraordinary cultural heritage is the Rock Art Centre in Kamberg. Situated within the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this center features interpretive displays, guided tours, and access to some of the most significant rock art sites in the area. Other notable centers include the Didima Rock Art Centre and the Giant's Castle Rock Art Centre, each offering visitors an immersive journey through the ancient history and artistry of the San people. These centers play a crucial role in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the Drakensberg Mountains for future generations to appreciate and learn from.

-  **Recommended:**
-  **San People** (sahistory.org.za)
-  **Kamberg Rock Art Centre**
-  **Rock art locations** ([map](#))
-  **Drakensberg Rock Art** ([Youtube](#))



BIRDWATCHING IN THE DRAKENSBERG

Birdwatching in the Drakensberg Mountains offers enthusiasts a remarkable experience with over 300 bird species recorded in the area. Endemic species like the Drakensberg rockjumper and Drakensberg siskin are highlights, while raptors such as Verreaux's eagle and the endangered bearded vulture are commonly sighted. The diverse habitats also attract migratory birds like sunbirds and cuckoos during the summer months. With grasslands, forests, wetlands, and rivers to explore, birdwatchers in the Drakensberg are treated to memorable sightings amidst stunning scenery.





-  **Recommended:**
-  **Bird list Drakensberg** (drakensbergexperience.co.za)
-  **Where to go birding** ([Getaway magazine](#))
-  **Birding in the Drakensberg** ([Youtube](#))

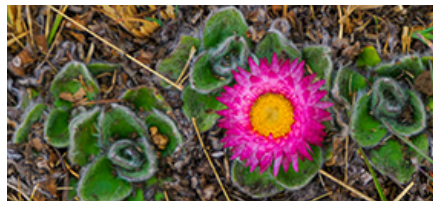


Cape Vultures above the Drakensberg Mountains

FLORA OF THE DRAKENSBERG




The flora of the Drakensberg is as diverse as it is stunning, encompassing a wide range of plant species adapted to the region's varying altitudes and climates. From lush grasslands to montane forests and alpine meadows, the Drakensberg is home to an array of botanical wonders. Among the notable species are the iconic proteas, which thrive in the mountainous terrain, as well as numerous species of wildflowers that carpet the hillsides during the summer months. Additionally, the region is known for its indigenous trees, including yellowwoods, cedar trees, and ancient cycads.

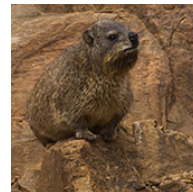
-  **Recommended:**
-  **Drakensberg Mountain Centre** (inaturalist.org)
-  **Drakensberg flora** (southafrica.co.za)
-  **Drakensberg flora** ([Facebook](#))



FAUNA OF THE DRAKENSBERG





The fauna of the Drakensberg is as diverse as the region's landscapes, offering a rich tapestry of wildlife adapted to its varied habitats. Among the notable inhabitants are numerous species of mammals, including eland, the largest antelope species in Africa, as well as mountain reedbuck, grey rhebok, and klipspringer, which are well adapted to the rocky terrain. The Drakensberg is also home to a variety of smaller mammals such as chacma baboons, dassies (rock hyraxes), and various rodent species. Reptiles such as snakes and lizards are common, while amphibians such as frogs and toads inhabit the wetter areas near rivers and streams. Additionally, the Drakensberg provides habitat for a diversity of insects and invertebrates, contributing to the overall ecological balance of the region.

-  **Recommended:**
-  **Drakensberg fauna** (wildlifeworldwide.com)
-  **Drakensberg wildlife** ([Youtube](#))



GOLF IN THE DRAKENSBERG





Golfing in the Drakensberg offers enthusiasts the opportunity to tee off amidst stunning mountain vistas and lush greenery. The region boasts several world-class golf courses that cater to players of all skill levels. Among the notable courses is the Champagne Sports Resort Golf Course, set against the backdrop of the majestic Drakensberg mountains, offering a challenging yet rewarding experience. Another prominent venue is the Drakensberg Gardens Golf & Spa Resort, which features a scenic 18-hole course surrounded by natural beauty. Additionally, the Cathedral Peak Hotel offers a unique golfing experience with a nine-hole course nestled in the heart of the mountains. Each course provides a memorable golfing experience amidst the unparalleled beauty of the Drakensberg region.

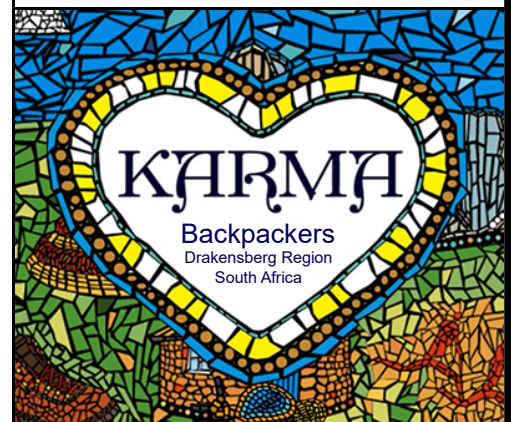
-  **Recommended:**
-  **Golf courses in the Drakensberg** (drakensberg.biz)
-  **Golf in the Drakensberg** (drakensbergexperience.co.za)
-  **Cathedral Park video** ([Youtube](#))



TRAIL RUNNING

Trail running in the Drakensberg offers enthusiasts the chance to explore rugged terrain, breathtaking vistas, and diverse ecosystems while enjoying the thrill of the sport. The region boasts a network of trails catering to all levels of runners, from leisurely routes to challenging mountain ascents. Among the notable trails is the Amphitheatre Heritage Trail, which winds through spectacular scenery and offers panoramic views of the surrounding mountains. Another popular route is the Giants Castle Trail, renowned for its abundance of wildlife and stunning rock formations. Additionally, the Cathedral Peak Trail provides runners with an exhilarating journey through pristine wilderness and alpine meadows. With its diverse landscapes and scenic beauty, trail running in the Drakensberg promises an unforgettable outdoor adventure for all.

-  **Recommended:**
-  **Ultra Trail** (ultra trail drakensberg.com)
-  **Alltrails trail runs** (alltrails.com)
-  **Ultratrail 2022 highlights** ([Facebook.com](#))



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FISHING IN THE DRAKENSBERG

Fishing in the Drakensberg offers anglers a serene and picturesque experience amidst breathtaking landscapes. With pristine rivers, crystal-clear lakes, and abundant trout populations, the region provides ample opportunities for both novice and experienced fishermen. Whether fly fishing in tranquil streams or casting lines in tranquil lakes, anglers can enjoy a variety of fishing experiences in the Drakensberg. For those looking to explore fishing options and book guided trips or accommodations, several tour operators and fishing lodges cater to visitors seeking the ultimate fishing adventure. Some of the prominent tour operators and fishing lodges in the area are included in the links below.

Recommended:

-  [Drakensberg fly fishing \(Drakensberg Tourist Map\)](#)
-  [Fly fishing article \(nickdall.co.za\)](#)
-  [Drakensberg fishing lodges \(sa-venues.com\)](#)
-  [Drakensberg fly fishing video \(Youtube\)](#)






Rainbow trout caught in a Drakensberg mountain stream

MOUNTAINEERING & ROCK CLIMBING

Mountaineering and rock climbing in the Drakensberg offer adventurers a thrilling challenge amidst some of South Africa's most spectacular landscapes. The rugged cliffs, towering peaks, and dramatic escarpments of the Drakensberg provide a playground for climbers of all levels, from beginners to seasoned professionals. Popular routes such as the Amphitheatre and Cathedral Peak offer exhilarating ascents, while the sheer cliffs of the Sentinel provide a test of skill and endurance.




Recommended:

-  [Drakensberg mountaineering \(peakhigh.co.za\)](#)
-  [Drakensberg rock climbing \(thecrag.com\)](#)
-  [Climbing Sentinel Peak \(Youtube\)](#)

ARTS & CRAFTS

Arts and crafts in the Drakensberg region showcase the rich cultural heritage and creative talents of the local communities. From traditional crafts to contemporary artwork, visitors can explore a variety of artistic expressions in the area. Several art galleries contribute to this vibrant scene, offering a platform for local artists to showcase their work. Among the prominent galleries is the Ardmore Ceramic Art Gallery, known for its exquisite handcrafted ceramics depicting African wildlife and cultural motifs. Another notable destination is the Little Artists Studio, which features a diverse collection of paintings, sculptures, and crafts created by local artists. Additionally, the Antbear Gallery showcases a range of artworks, including paintings, sculptures, and handcrafted furniture, providing visitors with an opportunity to discover unique pieces inspired by the beauty of the Drakensberg. With its thriving arts scene and eclectic array of galleries, the Drakensberg offers a captivating journey through the world of visual arts and craftsmanship.

Recommended:




-  [Drakensberg art galleries \(drakensbergexperience.co.za\)](#)
-  [Africa's oldest gallery \(news article\)](#)
-  [Ardmore Ceramics video \(Youtube\)](#)



MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain biking in the Drakensberg offers riders an exhilarating adventure through some of South Africa's most stunning landscapes. With a variety of trails catering to different skill levels, cyclists can explore rugged terrain, lush forests, and sweeping valleys while enjoying breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains. Among the notable trails is the Sani Pass, a challenging route that climbs steep gradients and offers panoramic vistas of Lesotho's highlands. Another popular trail is the Giants Castle Mountain Bike Trail, which winds through grassy plains and rocky outcrops, providing riders with a thrilling off-road experience. Additionally, the Champagne Sports Resort offers scenic trails that meander through rolling hills and pristine countryside, providing cyclists with a leisurely ride amidst tranquil surroundings. With its diverse terrain and picturesque scenery, mountain biking in the Drakensberg promises an unforgettable outdoor adventure for riders of all levels.

Recommended:




-  [Drakensberg mountain biking trails \(trailforks.com\)](#)
-  [Top 10 MTB Drakensberg trails \(komoot.com\)](#)
-  [Drakensberg MTB video \(Youtube\)](#)



TAKE TO THE SKY

The Drakensberg offers a plethora of exhilarating aerial adventures, inviting thrill-seekers to explore its stunning landscapes from above. Hot air ballooning provides a serene and scenic experience, allowing passengers to float gently over the rugged peaks and verdant valleys while soaking in breathtaking panoramic views. Paragliding enthusiasts can take to the skies, gliding gracefully through the air and soaring above the majestic mountains. For those seeking a more intimate flying experience, microlighting offers a thrilling opportunity to pilot a small aircraft, providing a unique perspective of the Drakensberg's diverse terrain. For the ultimate adrenaline rush, skydiving allows adventurers to leap from planes high above the mountains, freefalling through the crisp mountain air before parachuting to the ground below. With its diverse array of aerial activities, the Drakensberg promises unforgettable adventures and breathtaking vistas for adventurers of all kinds.

Recommended:

-  [Ballooning \(drakensbergballooning.com\)](#)
-  [Skydiving & helicopter tours \(skyadventures.co.za\)](#)
-  [Wingsuit basejump video \(Youtube\)](#)






NATURE RESERVES

-  [Maloti-Drakensberg Park \(Wikipedia\)](#)
-  [Royal Natal National Park \(Wikipedia\)](#)
-  [Cathedral Peak Nature Reserve \(Lonely Planet\)](#)
-  [Monk's Cowl Nature Reserve \(thetravelinfoblogger.com\)](#)
-  [Giant's Castle Nature Reserve \(nature-reserve.co.za\)](#)
-  [Highmoor Nature Reserve \(central-drakensberg.co.za\)](#)
-  [Kamberg Nature Reserve \(Lonely Planet\)](#)
-  [Mkhomazi Nature Reserve \(sa-venues.com\)](#)
-  [Loteni Nature Reserve \(kznwildlife.com\)](#)
-  [Vergelegen Nature Reserve \(natureconnect.earth\)](#)
-  [Cobham Nature Reserve \(Mpophomeni Conservation\)](#)
-  [Garden Castle Nature Reserve \(landlubbers.co.za\)](#)

WELLNESS AND BEAUTY

Wellness and spa experiences in the Drakensberg offer visitors a serene retreat amidst the stunning natural beauty of the mountains. Several establishments provide a range of rejuvenating treatments and relaxation amenities to help guests unwind and recharge. Among these is the Champagne Sports Resort, which offers a luxurious spa with a variety of massages, facials, and body treatments, all set against the backdrop of the majestic Drakensberg. Another option is the Cathedral Peak Hotel, where guests can indulge in holistic wellness experiences, including yoga classes, hydrotherapy, and outdoor hot tubs overlooking the mountains. Additionally, the Drakensberg Sun Resort boasts a tranquil spa offering a range of therapeutic treatments designed to soothe the body and mind. With their tranquil settings and holistic approaches to wellness, these establishments provide the perfect opportunity for visitors to escape the stresses of everyday life and embrace a sense of relaxation and rejuvenation in the heart of the Drakensberg.

Recommended:

-  [Spa treatments \(drakensbergexperience.com\)](#)
-  [Hotels with gyms \(Tripadvisor\)](#)
-  [Running in the Drakensberg \(Tiktok\)](#)

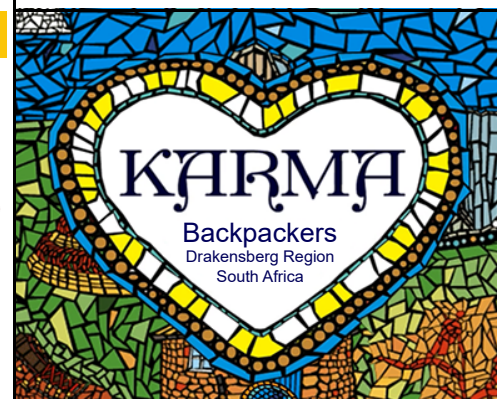


WINING & DINING

Eating and drinking in the Drakensberg region offer visitors a delightful culinary journey amidst breathtaking mountain scenery. Several restaurants in the area cater to a variety of tastes and preferences, serving up delicious meals made with locally sourced ingredients. Among these establishments is the Bistro at Cathedral Peak Hotel, known for its gourmet dishes and stunning views of the surrounding mountains. Another popular dining spot is the Falcon Ridge Restaurant, offering hearty meals and warm hospitality in a rustic setting. For those seeking a taste of local cuisine, the Drakensberg Sun Resort features the Lakeview Restaurant, where guests can enjoy traditional South African dishes alongside panoramic views of the countryside. In addition to dining options, visitors can also explore local wine estates such as the Cathedral Peak Wine Estate, which offers tastings of its award-winning wines amidst scenic vineyards. For cheese enthusiasts, the Drakensberg Dairy offers a range of artisanal cheeses made from locally sourced milk. With its diverse culinary offerings and scenic surroundings, eating and drinking in the Drakensberg promise a memorable gastronomic experience for all.

Recommended:

-  [Drakensberg restaurants \(wanderlog.com\)](#)
-  [Foodie stuff \(trekstriptrails.co.za\)](#)
-  [Drakensberg Brewery \(drakbrew.co.za\)](#)
-  [Cathedral Peak Wine Estate \(Youtube\)](#)



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BIKE OR HIKE?

Exploring the rugged terrain and breathtaking vistas of the Drakensberg mountains is an adventure best experienced on two wheels, making motorcycling a popular choice among outdoor enthusiasts. With its network of scenic routes and challenging trails, the Drakensberg offers motorcyclists the opportunity to embark on thrilling rides through mountain passes, alongside cascading waterfalls, and across pristine wilderness. Whether cruising along winding roads or tackling rugged off-road tracks, bikers can immerse themselves in the stunning natural beauty of the Drakensberg while enjoying the freedom and exhilaration that motorcycling provides. For those seeking even more adrenaline, quad biking also offers an exciting way to explore the mountains, with guided tours leading riders through rugged terrain and picturesque landscapes. Whether on two wheels or four, the Drakensberg promises unforgettable adventures for bikers and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

Recommended:

-  **Drakensberg adventure biking** (dirtyboots.co.za)
-  **Motor- and quadbiking** (fourriversadventures.co.za)
-  **Drakensberg motorcycle tour** ([Youtube](https://www.youtube.com))



CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Traditional African cultural experiences in the Drakensberg offer visitors a captivating glimpse into the diverse heritage and customs of the continent. From immersive encounters with local communities to interactive performances showcasing traditional music, dance, and storytelling of the Zulu people, travelers can embark on a journey of cultural discovery amidst the stunning landscapes of the Drakensberg. Admire and purchase handmade artifacts such as woven baskets, wooden carvings, and intricately beaded jewelry. For those seeking a deeper connection to Africa's rich history and spirituality, guided hikes to ancient San rock art sites reveal the spiritual beliefs and artistic expressions of the continent's earliest inhabitants. With its wealth of cultural experiences, the Drakensberg invites visitors to embrace the diversity and vibrancy of traditional African heritage while exploring its breathtaking natural beauty.

Recommended:

-  **Aha Zulu Cultural Village** (southafrica.net)
-  **Wowzulu Community Experiences** (zulu.org.za)
-  **Emazizini Village video** ([Facebook](https://www.facebook.com))



ACTIVITIES & TOURS

Tours in the Drakensberg offer visitors a diverse range of experiences, catering to various interests and preferences. From guided hikes to iconic landmarks such as the Amphitheatre and Tugela Falls to cultural tours exploring traditional Zulu villages and ancient rock art sites, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Adventure enthusiasts can embark on thrilling activities like 4x4 safaris, mountain biking excursions, and zip-lining adventures, while those seeking relaxation can indulge in spa retreats or scenic drives through the mountains. Wildlife enthusiasts can join game drives in nearby reserves, while foodies can savor the flavors of the region on culinary tours showcasing local cuisine and wineries. With its abundance of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and outdoor adventures, tours in the Drakensberg promise unforgettable experiences for travelers of all ages and interests.

Recommended:

-  **Horsesriding** (khotso.co.za)
-  **Battlefields** (drakensbergexperience.com)
-  **4x4** (majoradventures.com)
-  **Canopy Tours** (canopytour.co.za)
-  **Lesotho Tours** ([Africa Untouched](http://AfricaUntouched.com))
-  **Raptor encounters** ([Falcon Ridge](http://FalconRidge.com))
-  **Helicopter Tours** (bergflying.co.za)
-  **All Out Adventures** ([variety of activities](http://varietyofactivities.com))
-  **Drakensberg Hikes** ([Africa Untouched](http://AfricaUntouched.com))
-  **Dragon Rock** ([reptile centre](http://reptilecentre.com))
-  **Drakensberg Boys Choir** ([concerts](http://concerts.com))
-  **Splashy Fen** ([music festival](http://musicfestival.com))
-  **Smoking Dragon** ([music festival](http://musicfestival.com))
-  **Winterton Museum** (openafrica.org)
-  **Thokozisa Lifestyle Centre** ([shops](http://shops.com))



STUNNING STARGAZING OPPORTUNITIES

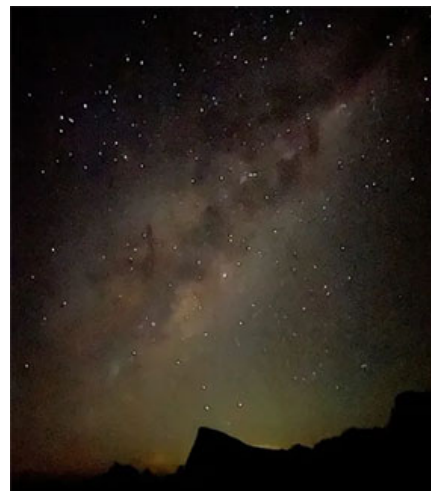
The Drakensberg Mountains offer exceptional night skies to hikers, due to their remote location and minimal light pollution. Here are some constellations and celestial objects you can observe in the Drakensberg:

The Southern Cross is a famous asterism, or shape formed by stars. It consists of the Crux constellation's brightest stars. In astronomical terms, it is an extremely important formation, as it points the way to the South Pole and has been used as a navigational aid for tens of thousands of years.

The Jewel Box: Also in the Crux constellation, this is a young star cluster. It can be seen with the naked eye as a bright, misty object, but when viewed through binoculars, it looks like a collection of blue diamonds.

Recommended:

-  **Drakensberg stargazing** (karmalodge.co.za)
-  **Southern Celestial Hemisphere** (skyandtelescope.org)
-  **Timelapse** (pod5.com)



HIKING IN THE DRAKENSBERG

The Drakensberg region in South Africa boasts a wealth of hiking opportunities, attracting outdoor enthusiasts from around the world with its stunning landscapes and diverse terrain.

Spanning over 200 kilometers, the Drakensberg Grand Traverse is as one of the most challenging and iconic multi-day hikes in the world. This epic trek traverses the length of the Drakensberg Mountains from Sentinel Peak in the north to Bushman's Nek in the south, taking hikers on a journey through breathtaking vistas, rugged cliffs, and pristine wilderness. The Drakensberg Grand Traverse typically takes 10 to 16 days to complete, presenting hikers with a formidable challenge as they navigate steep ascents, treacherous descents, and unpredictable weather conditions.

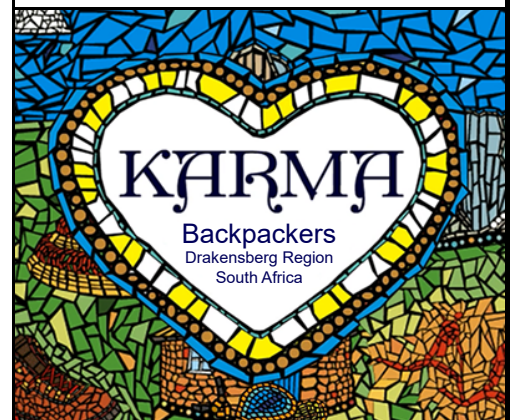
For those seeking a shorter but still challenging multi-day hike, the Mini Traverse offers a condensed version of the Drakensberg Grand Traverse. Covering approximately 100 kilometers over 5 to 7 days, the Mini Traverse provides hikers with a taste of the grandeur and beauty of the Drakensberg Mountains, while still offering a rewarding and memorable hiking experience.

NORTHERN DRAKENSBERG HIKES

The Northern Drakensberg region offers a plethora of hiking opportunities, showcasing some of the most iconic landscapes and natural wonders in South Africa. Among the prominent hikes in this area is the Tugela Falls hike, also known as the Amphitheatre or Sentinel Peak hike, a challenging yet immensely rewarding trek that leads hikers to the top of the Tugela Falls, the highest waterfall in the world. This day hike typically takes around 6 to 8 hours to complete the round trip and offers breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains and valleys from the top of the Amphitheatre. Another notable hike is the Tugela Gorge hike, which offers stunning panoramic views at the base of the Amphitheatre, one of the most recognizable landmarks in the Drakensberg. Additionally, the Northern Drakensberg is home to a variety of other day hikes and scenic trails, each offering unique perspectives of the majestic landscapes and rich biodiversity of the region. Whether embarking on a challenging ascent to the summit of a towering peak or meandering along tranquil paths through pristine wilderness, hiking in the Northern Drakensberg promises adventure, discovery, and unforgettable memories.

CENTRAL DRAKENSBERG HIKES

The Central Drakensberg region offers a diverse array of hiking trails, each showcasing the breathtaking beauty and natural splendor of this iconic mountain range. One of the most popular hikes in this area is Cathedral Peak, which takes adventurers to the summit of Cathedral Peak, one of the most recognizable peaks in the Drakensberg. This challenging yet rewarding hike offers stunning panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and valleys, making it a favorite among outdoor enthusiasts. Another notable hike is Champagne Castle, which boasts majestic views of the Champagne Valley and surrounding peaks. Monk's Cowl is another popular destination, known for its pristine mountain streams, lush forests, and abundant birdlife. Additionally, the Central Drakensberg is home to a variety of shorter day hikes and scenic trails, providing opportunities for hikers of all levels to explore the unique flora, fauna, and geological formations of the region. Whether embarking on a challenging ascent to a towering peak or enjoying a leisurely stroll through picturesque valleys, hiking in the Central Drakensberg promises adventure, discovery, and unforgettable experiences amidst some of South Africa's most stunning landscapes.



Home is where the heart is

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www.karmalodge.co.za

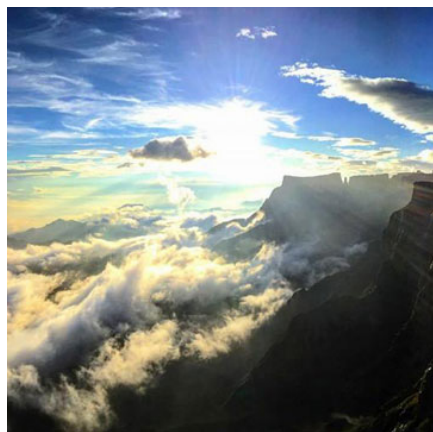
HIKING IN THE DRAKENSBERG

SOUTHERN DRAKENSBERG HIKES

The Southern Drakensberg region offers a captivating array of hiking trails, each showcasing the pristine wilderness and rugged beauty of this iconic mountain range. One of the most renowned hikes in this area is the Giant's Cup Trail, a 5-day trek that winds through lush forests, grassy plains, and rocky outcrops. Along the way, hikers are treated to panoramic views of the surrounding landscapes and opportunities to spot wildlife such as eland, mountain reedbuck, and various bird species. Another notable hike is the Cobham Wilderness Trail, a 3-day trek that traverses the scenic Mzimkhulwana River valley. This hike offers breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains and valleys, as well as opportunities to explore the rich biodiversity of the region. Additionally, the Southern Drakensberg is home to a variety of shorter day hikes and scenic trails, including trails to scenic viewpoints, waterfalls, and historical sites. Whether embarking on a multi-day trek through remote wilderness or enjoying a leisurely hike through picturesque landscapes, hiking in the Southern Drakensberg promises adventure, discovery, and unforgettable experiences amidst some of South Africa's most stunning natural scenery.

Recommended:
















-  Amphitheatre day hikes
-  Tugela Falls hike
-  Multi-day Drakensberg hikes
-  Alltrails hiking trails (alltrails.com)
-  Recommended hiking guide (karmalodge.co.za)
-  Tugela Falls hike video ([Youtube](https://www.youtube.com))
-  Drakensberg Mini Traverse video ([Youtube](https://www.youtube.com))
-  Giant's Cup Hike video ([Youtube](https://www.youtube.com))
-  Central Drakensberg day hike video ([Youtube](https://www.youtube.com))
-  Mafadi summit hike video ([Youtube](https://www.youtube.com))


















DRAKENSBERG ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation options ranging from budget to luxury.


















NORTHERN DRAKENSBERG - lekkeslaap.co.za

-  Karma Backpackers
-  Drakensberg Mountain Retreat
-  Hlalanathi Drakensberg Resort
-  Mont Aux Sources Hotel
-  AHA Alpine Heath Resort
-  Berghouse & Cottages
-  Kezlyn Farm Cottages
-  Spionkop Lodge
-  Qambathi Mountain Lodge
-  Montusi Mountain Lodge
-  Little Switzerland
-  Tower of Pizza
-  Sungubala Eco Camp
-  Tugela Falls Self-catering Guest House
-  Dumbe Cottages

CENTRAL DRAKENSBERG - sa-venes.com

-  Gooderson Drakensberg Gardens
-  Drakensberg Bush Lodge
-  Dragon Peaks Mountain Resort
-  Drakensberg Sun Resort
-  Berg Guest Farm
-  Berg Treat
-  Drakensberg Creek Cottage
-  Graceland Self-catering Cottages
-  Slievre Game Farm
-  Bell Park Self Catering
-  Cathkin Haven
-  Shepherd Farm
-  Drakenzicht Mountain Cottage
-  Winterton Country Lodge @ Rose Cottage
-  Pumuleni Wegbreek

SOUTHERN DRAKENSBERG - wheretostay.co.za

-  Sani Mountain Lodge
-  Sani Lodge
-  Otters Rest
-  Mkomazana Mountain Cottages
-  Fairways Drakensberg Resort
-  Sani Valley Nature Lodges
-  Sani Stone Lodge
-  Rattray's Roost
-  Cleopatra Mountain Farmhouse
-  The Cottage on the Corner
-  Stoneyhall Farm
-  Amazian Mountain River Lodge
-  Rhodes Hotel
-  Giants Cup Wilderness Reserve
-  Berghaven Log Cabin
-  Tin Can Glamping Caravan
-  Cicada Cottage

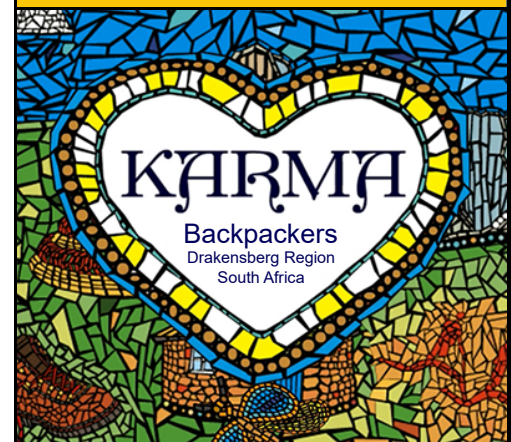
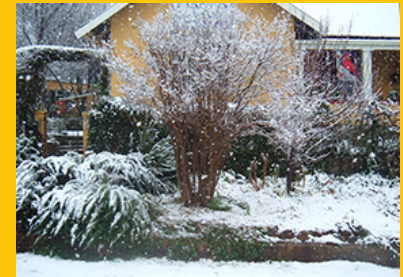
This guide is brought to you by Karma Backpackers

Home is where the heart is

A warm welcome awaits you at Karma Backpackers in Kestell, midway between Durban and Johannesburg and on the doorstep of the Drakensberg Mountains. We're the closest backpackers hostel to the start of the Tugela Falls hike, and are also within easy reach of Golden Gate Highlands National Park.

We provide comfortable self-catering accommodation that's a cut above the average backpackers. Added to this, excellent value for money and a reputation for a generous, friendly atmosphere make us the ideal base for both backpackers and hiking groups to explore both the Drakensberg and Golden Gate.

Visit our website for more info on our accommodation, specials for hiking groups and to read rave reviews from our guests.



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