

Wartrail Skywalk 2017



Southern Drakensberg – Eastern Cape

3 Day Hike



"One of the best holidays ever! Great exercise in an exquisite squeaky clean environment! Being made to feel incredibly welcome by wonderful people (and their dogs)! Lovely fires, fantastic food, luxurious baths, collapsing into warm comfortable beds... I could go on raving but I think you get the message...." Perri Crossley

Hike through the spectacular Southern Drakensberg, reaching altitudes of 2700m. Home to the Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture), Black Eagle, alpine wildflowers and various small wildlife, this hike leaves you with breathtaking memories. Overnight at B&Bs along the way. Take with you only day packs while your backpacks are transported to your next destination. Experience true Eastern Cape hospitality and the natural splendor of the Southern Drakensberg.

A trip to remember - more luxury for the older hiker who enjoys their comforts. Terrain is montane grassland and altitudes range from 1800m to 2700m above sea-level that afford the hiker spectacular views of the Southern Drakensberg & Maluti mountains of Lesotho. Hikes are tailored to the groups needs i.e. strong hikers will be able to walk up to the peaks of the Southern Drakensberg whereas more moderate hikes are available for those wanting a more sedate walk. Hikes are unmarked and therefore guided. Dinner will consist of a 3-



course meal and breakfast is a farm style affair. Bring along your own snacks for lunch, and your own drinks.

Wildlife: The hike traverses well-managed farmland. Smaller wildlife can be spotted e.g. Mountain Reedbuck, Grysbokkie, black-backed jackal, lynx, dassies, porcupines as well as 282 species of bird including black eagle, cape vulture, crested crane and bearded vulture or Lammergeier.

Climate: A typical highland climate with moderate summers and cold winters. The area has summer rainfall with afternoon thunderstorms. It is suggested that you start your trails early in the morning so that you have descended the mountain soon after lunchtime. The days are warm (28° - 30°C) and the nights cool (a sweater will be needed).

Medical conditions: When you book you must notify us of any medical conditions, medical history, or medications that you are on. In particular asthma, diabetes, heart conditions and allergies (especially to wasp/bee stings & any food allergies). Please advise us if you have a history of knee or ankle problems.

What to bring: Our mountainous areas can experience extremely cold weather, even in summer. Warm clothes are essential. We insist you have the essential items below and reserve the right to make you purchase / hire them before the hike.

Essential items:

Hiking boots	Day pack
Waterproof raincoat	Warm fleece / wool jersey (not cotton)
A good all-weather jacket with hood	Gloves / mittens
Shorts & tops	Polypro thermals – top & long-johns
Socks	Warm hat or balaclava
Sunscreen & sunglasses	Water bottle (1L)
Spare shoes or sandals	Flashlight / head lamp
Insect repellent	Basic medical kit including space blanket
Toiletries	Swimming towel

Optional extras:

Camera	Gaiters
Binoculars	Walking poles



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Arrival:

Faskally accommodates 4 pax (double and 2 singles), all the over flow stays at Pitlochrie which is just across the way.

Day 1:

Faskally - Balloch +/- 15 kilometres : Dinner, Bed and Breakfast

We start our day with a long climb up a mountain which is an off shoot from the Witteberge Mountain Range. At the top of the ridge we leave behind New England and we enter the Wartrail District. Later we descend into the Balloch Valley, which must be one of the grandest valleys in the Eastern Cape. Here we are welcomed by Graham and Margie Frost, Accommodation is in a sandstone cottage. The meals here have the reputation of being delicious.

NB if you would like to take an extra day to explore Balloch and walk a loop of the valley or even have a rest day it can be arranged, However, please arrange this when you book.

Day 2:

Balloch – Reedsdell 5 kilometres : Dinner, Bed and Breakfast

The morning starts off with a tour of the bushman paintings (probably some of the best on the planet). Then we set off over the famous "Wall". It is not a long walk but what it lacks in length it certainly makes up for with its height and technical demands. The Wall is on the Skyrun route. Up upon the Wall there we see amazing vistas of the District ranging from Lundins Nek to the Drakensberg Escarpment.

We descend down to Reedsdell Farm were we will be welcomed by Chris and Kath Isted. Accommodation is in the Reedsdell Sandstone Stable, which is one of the oldest buildings in the area. Dinner is always a fine affair here NB Once again if you would like to take an extra day to explore Reedsdell or even a have a rest day it can be arranged, however once again, this should be arranged when you book.

Day 3:

Reedsdell - Bidstone 20 kilometres : Dinner, Bed and Breakfast

This is a big day, with a relatively long hike and some serious altitude assent and decent. The route takes us along the beautiful Edgehill valley were we follow a meandering river until we get to a rock art site with some interesting figures, from here we push on over the back of Halstone Krans, we spend the majority of the time on the Basalt formation that was



created millions of years ago by a lava flow. Crystals abound and you are welcome to take some as souvenirs. From up here you can see into Mystical Lesotho. We walk down the Bidstone / Volunteershoek Pass down to the Bidstone Cottages, Allan and Juleta are your hosts for the night. Wood fired pizza is normally the gourmet trade mark for this establishment. Accomodation is in cosy separate sandstone cottages overlooking trout dams.

Day 4: OPTIONAL EXTRA – please see pricing

Bidstone – Bidstone : Optional 20 kilometres

The highlight of this walk is we get to see Waterfalls and Bearded Vultures. We leave the Cottages, meander along the river. We pass by the famous Crystal Pools where water gushes out between a rock into a pool, if one is brave enough a little dip is most refreshing. We ascend quickly up the "Gang Way" an old disused stock path, that is rocky and rough . At the top we walk the Eddystone Basin until we get to a breath-taking gorge which sports a Waterfall and nests three bearded vultures.

After this we walk till we join up with the Tiffindell / Bidstone road which we follow home once again walking down the Bidstone / Volunteers Hoek road. At Bidstone we are once again welcomed with good food and a warm bed. There is also a Pub on Bidstone, if the need arises to celebrate the long recent pilgrimage this is the place

Day 5: OPTIONAL EXTRA – please see pricing

Shuttle back to your Car at Faskally

NOTES:

1. We pride ourselves on providing a flexible service and all trails can be tailored to your requirements.
2. Additional activities that can be incorporated include: mountain biking, horse riding, hiking, Rock Art tour, fly-fishing, & for those with their own vehicles - 4x4 & quad/motorbike trails. Bring along your own equipment for these activities.
3. WARTRAIL SKYWALK ORGANISERS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE ITINERARY AT ANY TIME TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF OUR GUESTS.

