

## Pietermaritzburg Tours

[Umphiti Backpackers, Pietermaritzburg](#)

### **Karkloof conpy tours**

The tour begins with a detailed safety briefing followed by a 'kitting up' session where full body harness, pulleys and climbing equipment is put on and safety-checked. A short scenic drive to the top of the Karkloof valley and it is time to monkey around!

From the start on the launch platform a new world unfolds as one gently glides on a steel cable to the first platform. All groups are escorted through the forest canopy by a lead guide and a follow guide to ensure your safety as you slide from tree to tree. The platforms are built high up in the forest canopy and all offer different views of the surrounding forest, a magnificent 20m waterfall, clear sparkling forest stream and across the expansive Karkloof valley far below.

Spend a couple of minutes relaxing on the platforms while your guides enthusiastically explain the ecology of the forest - pointing out different trees and the magnificent giant ferns way below. The bird life is incredible. This includes the opportunity of spotting Emerald Cuckoos, Knysna Loeries, a wide variety of raptors and if you are lucky, the elusive Narina Trogon or endangered Cape Parrots. The forest is also home to a variety of mammals, but it is the loud calls and fearsome tree swinging of the Samago monkeys that you will remember best. The Karkloof Canopy Tour® consists of seven platforms and eight 'foefi' slides, the longest of which is over 170m! A tour lasts approximately three hours, is suitable for most people between the ages of seven and seventy and includes a delicious Midlands meal served once your group is safely back on ground.

Price: R500pp

includes: lunch and transport

### **San Rock Art & KZN Midlands Day Trip**

After breakfast we depart from Umphiti adventure tours at 07:00am arriving at kamberg where at 9:00AM we will watch a DVD presentation of San Rock Art before going on a 3 hour guided walk to see the rock paintings. After the tour we will be stopping in at the Nottingham Road Brewery for lunch then we make our way through the midlands before returning to Umphiti.

Tour cost: R500

### **San rock art-Kamburg**

The uKhahlamba Drakensberg region of KwaZulu-Natal is rich in rock art left behind by the San people. These exquisite paintings tell stories of yesteryear and teach us more about the mythology, ritual, and beliefs of the San.

Paintings were made using mostly black, white, red and orange pigments gathered from the surrounding natural environment.

Long thought to be merely pictorial journals of hunting trips and everyday life, researchers have now uncovered some of the deeper meaning of the art. The most frequently depicted animal is the eland, the largest antelope of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg and vital to the well being of the San, providing meat, fat and skins.

The eland became an important symbol to the San and was viewed as an animal of power, with supernatural potency and great religious significance. Some paintings show mysterious figures with combined antelope and human features that relate to the San spirit realm.

More recent paintings depict friendly interaction between the San and African and European migrant groups, as well as scenes of conflict. Today the descendants of these artists live among and have integrated with local African communities. Although they have changed their hunter-gatherer lifestyle, they still strongly associate with the rock

art of their ancestors.

The densely painted uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, a World Heritage Site, contains some 550 known sites amounting for over 40 000 recorded individual images.

The paintings in KwaZulu-Natal are estimated to be between 120 and 3000 years old.

Some sites may be visited in the company of a custodian and interpretive displays at some of the reserves provide unique multimedia insights into the history and significance of the paintings and painters. They serve as a monument to the ancient people who roamed freely between the mountains and the coast of KwaZulu-Natal for thousands of years.

Pathways to the art sites take visitors on the same routes once taken by the San up to their rock shelters. Visitors are asked to respect this outstanding legacy by observing the well-known wilderness motto - of taking only photographs and leaving only footprints. Touching the pictures not only hastens their decay, but contaminates them, affecting dating procedures and chemical analysis; even stirring up the dust around them causes harm. Touching these paintings would also be regarded by many, who revere them and the shelters for their spiritual significance, as interfering with the inherent power or spirit they contain. Any damage to these paintings should be reported immediately, as they are protected by law

price: R500

includes: lunch and transport

### **Valley of a 1000 hills**

The Valley of 1000 Hills Route is one of KwaZulu Natal's best kept secrets. The Valley of a 1000 Hills forms around the majestic valley created by the Mgeni River and its tributaries. Many artists and crafters have been attracted to the beauty and tranquility of this area which is dotted with cozy guest lodges, friendly pubs and tea gardens with sweeping views over the hills and dams.

The main attractions on the 1000 Hills Experience are the dramatic landscape and Zulu culture which is well interpreted at three cultural villages

This scenic drive descends to the floor of the valley of a thousand hills the deeply eroded and most majestic valley of the river known as the Mgeni. Isithumba village embraces visitors, who want to experience a living cultural village. Visitors will be guided and introduced to the villagers and will be allowed opportunity to have a rare glimpse into their culture and lifestyle.

Cultural day tour:

price: R500

includes: lunch and transport

### **Howick Falls**

Howick lies in the Natal Midlands on the Midlands Meander and its main attraction is the Howick Falls. The Howick falls are easily accessible for everyone. The falls fall some 90 m and the view from the top is definitely impressive. For those of you a bit more energetic Howick offers some worthwhile short trails. The town offers a good selection of antiques, arts and crafts.

Hikes and Trails in Howick

Gorge Walk Start this interesting walk through the thick undergrowth on the stone steps from the Gorge Walk sign at the bottom of Harvard Street and wind your way down to the pool, at the bottom of the Falls. You will meet up with the trickling Karkloof Spruit and see it meet the Umgeni River on your way to the base of the Falls. The walk there and back takes a leisurely hour or two, returning along the same path to the start. Trail guides can be arranged! Umgeni River Trail Try this one out in dry weather only - it starts at the Scout Hall (off Plane Crescent - in the Greendale Park area of Howick) and winds

along the Umgeni River past the Mills Falls area, to just beyond the Umgeni Gardens Flats in Oakleigh Drive where the trail ends. This one will take you roughly an hour.

**Beacon Hill Trail** This walk starts from the clearing at the end of Lakeview Road (near the Curry's Post road turn-off) and turns right, past the reservoir, going up Beacon Hill - and over the top. Thereafter it follows the timber-line to the left, around the perimeter of the hill returning to the clearing at the start. The walk will take you about an hour - but pausing to take in the great view might draw things out a bit!

The greater part of the Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve lies in the spectacular gorge below the Howick Falls, while the upper part is the fringe of a rolling plateau which has an average altitude of about 1 000m. The land falls away abruptly at the edge of the plateau for about 60m to form rock faces in places. The Umgeni Valley sides below 860m altitude slope away gently towards the Umgeni River, 7km of which falls within the reserve. The lowest point is 737m above sea level. The reserve is home to giraffe, zebra and a variety of antelope. There is an indigenous tree trail surrounding the Education Centre and self-guided walks mingling with the game animals in the beautiful Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve. A bird watchers paradise, with over 200 bird species to view throughout the year - see if you can spot the elusive Nerina Trogon or the crowned eagle. Butterflies abound in the reserve.

The gorge and its branches were formed by the headward erosion of the Umgeni River through the Middle Ecca shales and sandstones and Karroo dolerite. The Howick Falls, situated 0.6 km above the reserve boundary, have partially eroded through a large dolerite sill. The average annual rainfall varies between about 835mm in the upper parts to about 750mm in the valley. The valley is several degrees warmer than the plateau but the temperature range in the valley is greater. The two main categories of soils in the reserve reflect the degree of weathering. Highly leached soils, represented by Balmoral, Clovelly, Griffin and Mispah series occur in the upper, cooler and moister parts of the reserve. They are acid and have a low nutrient status. The slightly less leached soils below the escarpment are less weathered and include the Arniston, Glengazi and Mispah series. They are usually associated with rockiness. The Arniston series is most common in the lower parts of the Umgeni Valley Nature Reserve

Price: R400

includes: lunch and transport

### **Sani Pass Day Trip to Lesotho**

The Sani Pass was originally developed as a bridal path in 1913. This steep zigzagging pass climbs the face of the Drakensberg escarpment to an altitude of 2874m. The first vehicle negotiated the path in 1948 when it was no more wide boulder littered donkey track. It is now used for the most part by 4x4 vehicles and has become a highlight for tourists visiting the Southern Drakensberg.

The Sani Pass is the only access from KwaZulu Natal to the harsh environment of the Lesotho Highlands, the domain of the endangered Bearded Vulture, Basotho shepherds and their animals. The Route, aptly called the "roof of Africa", boasts to be the highest road in Africa and third highest in the world and peaks at a heady height of 3200m above sea level! Close to the Sani Pass summit, within a couple of kilometres, is the highest peak in Southern Africa, Thabane Ntlenyana, 3482m high.

Price: R500

### **Lesotho Overland Tour: 2 nights / 3 days**

**Day 1:** Lunch & Dinner

Departure at 07:00am from Umphiti Adventure Tourism. Stop at the Good Hope Trading Store, originated in 1917 by John White-Smith. Ascending the legendary Sani Pass with its hair-pin bends offering unparalleled vistas of the Sani Valley and Drakensberg

Escarpment situated within the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park, one of our World Heritage Sites. Proteas along the road, proceed to viewing of 12 Apostles. These geological structures are one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world. Our Guide is taking care of the border formalities. At the summit at 2.874m we stop for refreshment at the Sani Top Chalet, the Highest Pub in Africa. Thereafter we proceed to the village and the Basotho culture will be explained. Ascending the Black Mountain Pass up to 3.280m, following the Senqu River. Nearby the highest mountain in Southern Africa, Thabana Ntlenyana with 3.482m, meaning "the little mountain which is a little nice". Picnic lunch on route. Our guide will explain about the Letseng Diamond Mine while passing, It is the highest mine in the world (3.250m). Our journey takes us on tar road onto the summit of the highest road in Africa, the Tlaeeng Pass (3.255m) - The Roof of Africa. Slightly lower is the Pass of Guns with 3.240m, pass the Mahlasela Ski Slope to Oxbow within a Ski Resort. All mountains are covered in snow in winter. Dinner at the lodge.

Overnight: Oxbow Lodge within a Ski Resort, Oxbow

**Day 2: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner**

At 07:00 breakfast at the lodge. Departing at 08:00 for the twisting tar road to the summit of the Moteng Pass, with 2.840m one of the highest roads attained by normal two-wheel drive vehicles in Southern Africa. This is the basalt roof of Southern Africa, a world of winter snows, frozen waterfalls, crisp clear air and crystal streams with fat trout. Descending into the Holola Valley (River of the Blue Crane), pass spectacular sandstone overhangs and rugged countryside to Butha-Buthe. This little town was named after King Moshoeshoe's old mountain stronghold, Butha-Buthe, the Gatherer. On our way to Hlotse strange, richly colored rock shapes may be seen on all sides, creating the effect of a vast assembly of weird, petrified figures. Pass few missions and several rock shelters, the main road passes the Leribe Farmers Training Center to the town of Hlotse. It is the administration center of the Leribe district and originated in 1876 when a Mission outpost was established here. Picnic lunch on route. Continue on the Nelson Mandela Road, crossing the Malibatso River (River of dark Pools) where the great Katse Dam has been constructed from 1991 1997. Our Guide is taking care of the security checkpoint. The Katse Dam is the one of the largest dams in the world and supplies water to Witwatersrand (Gauteng, Soweto), Farming, Mining in South Africa and irrigates the lowlands in Lesotho. Guided tour into the dam wall. Dinner at the lodge.

Overnight: Katse Dam Lodge, Katse Dam

**Day 3: Breakfast & Lunch**

After breakfast at the lodge, departure on dirt road towards Thaba Tseka. Watch the majestic Cape Vultures in flight and beautiful butterflies in summer time. Thaba Tseka, meaning "the mountain with a blaze", houses a stud farm for breeding Basotho Ponies and a tree nursery. Cross the Koma-Koma Bridge, which is flooded when the sluice gates of Katse Dam are opened. Refreshment stop at the shabeen (pub) at Taung village. We pass an old Trading Store, today the Molomong Guesthouse and the St. James Mission. Rocky mountains and hills with patches of maize fields where Basotho's work on their land with loving care. Cairns within the mountains for the shepherds to protect their sheep and cattle from wild animals. Steep gorges and valleys, dotted with little Basotho huts. Picnic lunch on route. Ascend the Black Mountain Pass up to 3.280m, follow the dirt road to our next destination. Awesome view of the Hodgon's Peaks and the Giants Cup. Our Guide will take care of the border formalities. Descending the Sani Pass beneath towering cliffs, buttresses, past waterfalls and unique flora and bird life. Following the Mkomazi River back to Underberg. Arrival time back to Underberg is approximately 15h30.

Valid passports essential !!

**Rate: R2300-00 per person (minimum 4 people).**

Included:

Accommodation & meals as indicated

Excluded:

Beverages & Alcohol

Mineral water

Personal expenses

Transport in 4x4 vehicles

Personal Insurances

Driver/guide fees

Entry Fees

Optional Activities:

(All activities are guided and are not inclusive to above mentioned rate)

- Hiking
- Pony trekking
- Mountain Biking

### **Skydive KZN**

About the dropzone:

PPC was the first DZ in the Commonwealth and in South Africa. We operated from Pietermaritzburg from 1953 until november 2004.

PPC was the scene of the first sport parachute descent where, as legend has it, two guys decided that they wanted to jump out of a perfectly good aircraft just for the fun of it.

That initial leap into the unknown, not knowing what the outcome would be, built the foundation of skydiving in South Africa as we know it today.

We now operate from Cato Ridge airfield as its a recreational airfield. Cato Ridge is roughly half way between Pietermaritzburg and Durban.

We now boast wonderful sites of the valley of 1000 hills and enjoy a more family orientated dropzone.

PPC recently celebrated its 50th year of operation in 2004, which makes us the oldest permanent sport parachute club in the world.

Learn to skydive at one of the oldest dropzones in the world. Our instructors are trained professionals and will assist you to make your own jump or accompany you on a tandem skydive. Aircraft:

The club operates a Cessna 210T with door and occasionally a Kudu.

Landing Area: Large and open grassy area

Packing Area: The club has a large covered packing area. Packers are available.

Lecture Room: A classroom for the ground school.

Snacks: There are cooldrinks and snacks available at the dropzone.

Price: R1650 incl. DVD

R1250 without DVD

### **Tandem paragliding**

Bulwer is a world-renowned flying site. Hans Fokkens, a Springbok pilot and qualified instructor, has an excellent reputation and record. Endorsed by SAHPA (SA Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association), Safety course & Cross country course - aimed at helping pilots improve their knowledge and flying skills.. Locality : Situated at the foot of the Amahaqwa mountain in Bulwer, Natal - a world renowned Paragliding site and one of the best student sites in the country.

price: R650

includes:lunch transport