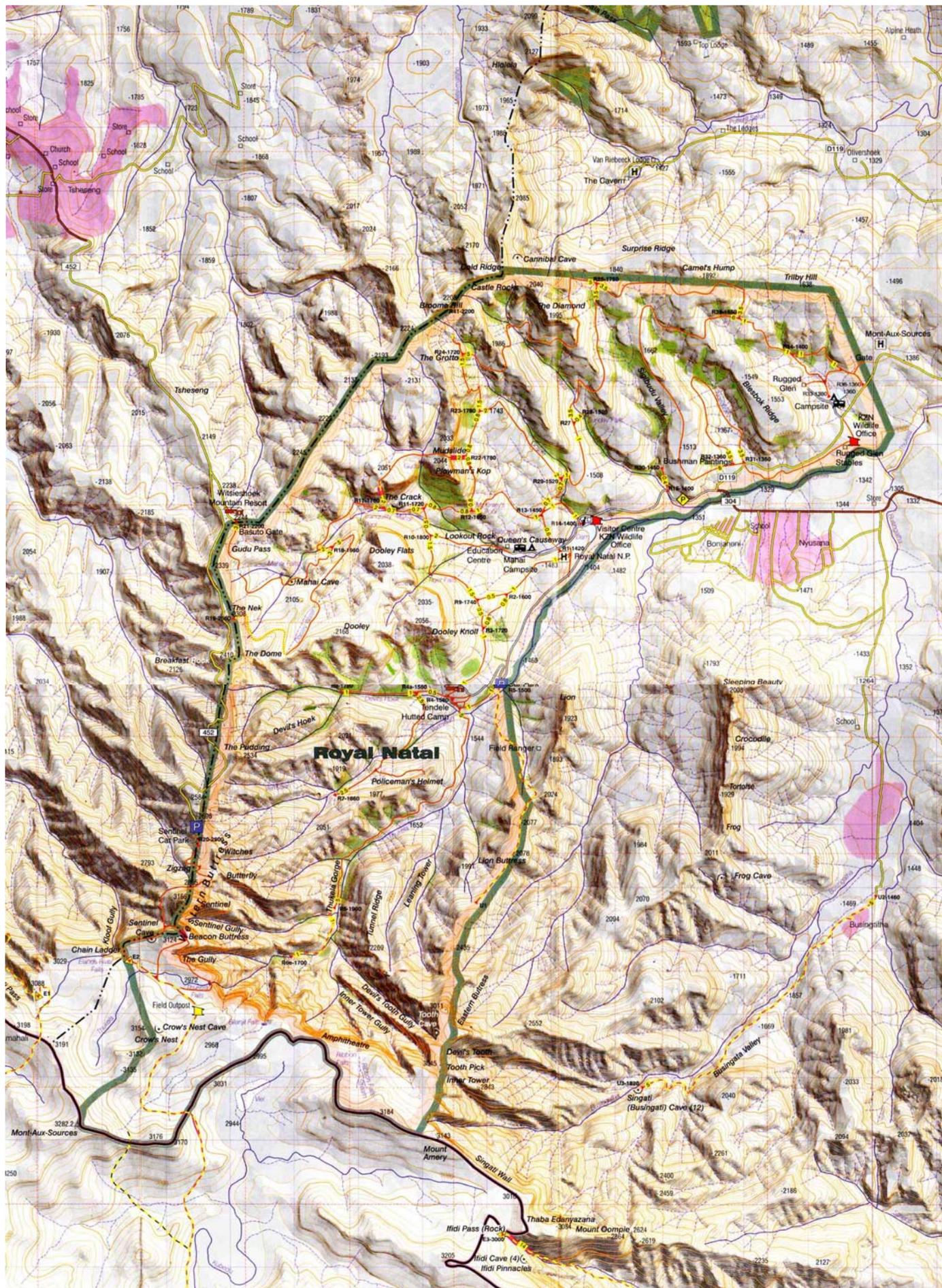


*Hiking in the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park:
Maps and Visitors Guide to Royal Natal National Park
and Giant's Castle Game Reserve*

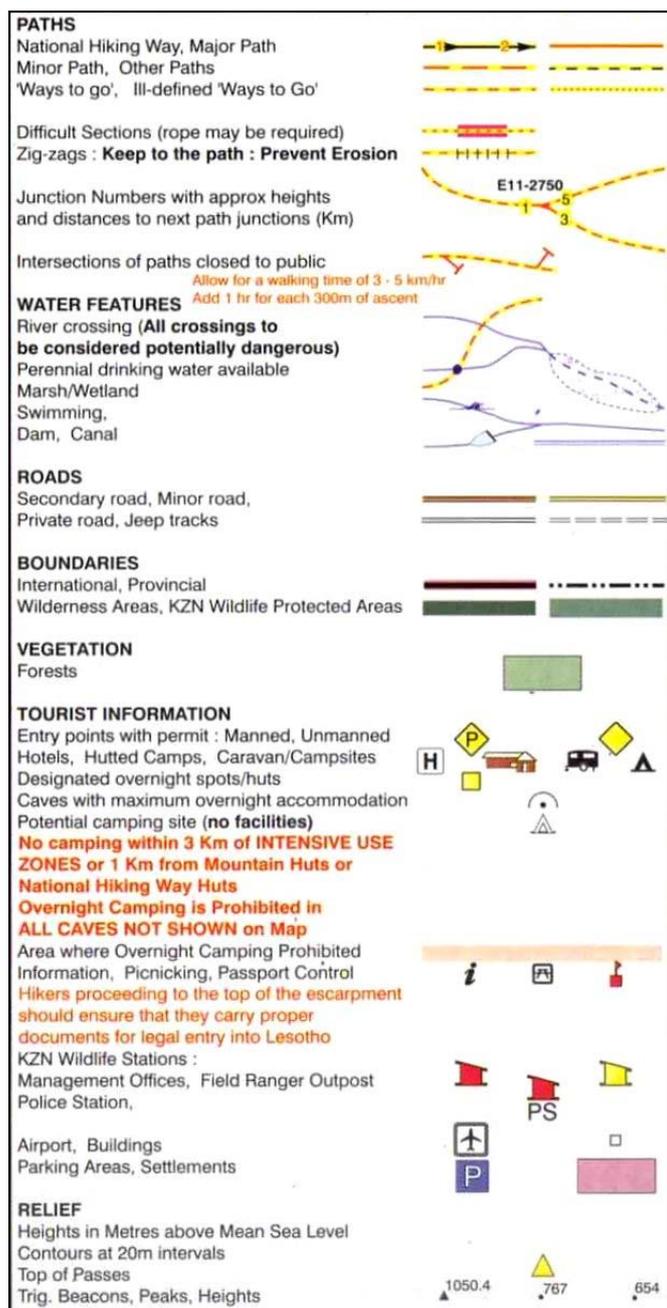


Hikers taking a rest on the top of the escarpment above Thugela Falls (Royal Natal National Park)

*Information from KZNWildlife's official 'Hiking Map' for Royal Natal, and the Giant's Castle 'Day Walks Map',
compiled with supplementary photos for www.AfricanWorldHeritageSites.org*



Map of Royal Natal National Park showing hiking trails and visitor facilities (for legend see box below)



Legend for the map of Royal Natal National Park

WHY CONSERVE THE KWAZULU-NATAL DRAKENSBERG?

Water Production

By international standards, South Africa is a semi-arid country. Water is one of our most precious natural resources. The high Drakensberg and the surrounding foothills form the major water source of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, as virtually all of our major rivers have their source in this mountain terrain. The KZN Wildlife is responsible for the protection of the porous soils and indigenous vegetation of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park. This ensures that rain which falls in the park is delivered as clean water in good quantities to the rivers and streams of our province. This is done through a programme of judicious veld burning and various other veld management actions such as erosion and alien plant control.

Protection of an Ecologically Unique Area

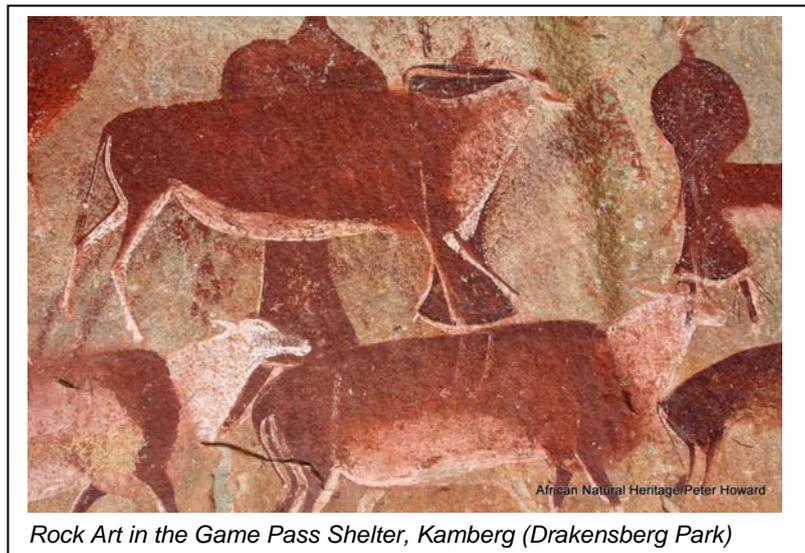
The Drakensberg is home to an extraordinary variety of plants and animals. Many of these occur nowhere else in the world. Of the 1,800 known plant species in the Drakensberg, over 350 are endemic to the region. Ten vertebrate species are unique to the Drakensberg, while the Berg is also the habitat of many a threatened and endangered species. Within Southern Africa, the Afro-alpine and Afro-montane ecosystems are almost entirely restricted to the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg and the small areas of Southern Tall Grassveld in the lowlands of Cathedral Peak and Monk's Cowl represent most of the conserved area of this ecotype in South Africa. These resources can only be protected if the Drakensberg is managed for nature conservation.

Tourism

The Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park which is over 250 000 ha in extent, is one of South Africa's prime eco-tourist destinations. In this park you can savour the ultimate freedom of great open spaces in a world of gigantic peaks and buttresses, of towering sandstone cliffs and hidden valleys, virgin forests and crystal clear rivers, of rolling hills and far-reaching plains. A wealth of recreational opportunities matches the scenic splendour around you; from a gentle amble along a self-guided trail or peaceful fishing in a river or dam, these extend to the rigours of mountaineering, or mountain biking for those with a taste for the high adventures of life. A host of other pastimes includes camping, hiking, bird watching, swimming, riding, photography, painting or simply revelling in the clear mountain air while you take in the breathtaking vistas around you.

ROCK ART

South Africa has many cultural treasures. The rock paintings by San hunter-gatherers are among 1 these treasures. Many of these paintings are found in rock shelters in the foothills of the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg Park This is one of the richest rock painting areas in the world. Over 30 000 rock paintings have already been recorded in rock shelters in the Drakensberg. These paintings are national and cultural treasures. Please do not interfere with them in any way.



Facts and Figures

Many enthusiasts and experts have searched for paintings in the Drakensberg during the last 40 years. During this time more than 30,000 individually painted images have been discovered and recorded. There are areas that still need to be properly explored for paintings as we are sure that many more will be found. The rock paintings that are on record come from 520 different rock shelters. Some of these rock shelters have more than a thousand paintings in them. The paintings are mainly of people, their tools and of animals. Many different types of animals were painted, mainly antelope. Most of the antelope painted were eland and rhebok other species that appear are hartebeest, common reedbuck wildebeest, bushbuck oribi, mountain reedbuck and roan antelope. Domestic animals, such as horses, cattle and sheep, were also painted. Other animals seen in the paintings are lions, leopards, dassies, baboons, hyaenas, bees, elephants, warthogs, bushpigs, antbears, snakes, fish, birds, jackals, dogs, rhinoceros and even a lizard and a moth. Paintings of

wagons have been found in the Southern Drakensberg (it is thought that a painted scene with a wagon represents a trip that Captain Gardiner undertook into the area in 1835).

How were the Paintings Made?

The red, orange, and yellow colours are derived from iron oxides found in ochre stones. Black was made from burnt wood. White was extracted from white clay. The colours were ground into powder and mixed with a binding medium such as blood, fat or water. Brushes (made from animal hair or feathers) or small sticks and pieces of bone were used to apply the paint. People probably also used their hands to paint.

How Old are the Paintings?

The age of the paintings remains largely unknown. San hunter-gatherers lived in the Drakensberg from about 8,000 years ago to the late 1800s. Some of the paintings, such as those of wagons and horses must have been made during the colonial period in the 1800s. Scientific dating techniques are improving all the time and it is hoped that they will give some answers soon.

What do the Paintings Mean?

About 100 years ago Lucy Lloyd and Wilhelm Bleek interviewed northern Cape San prisoners in Cape Town. They recorded approximately 12 000 pages of notes about different aspects of San life. At roughly the same time James Omen recorded information about the San in the region now known as Lesotho. During the last 40 years, the Kalahari San have been interviewed by researchers who have learnt much about their lives.

The information these people have collected has given us many clues to understanding the San paintings. They have helped archaeologists such as David Lewis-Williams to argue that by and large the paintings are of a religious nature. While the paintings are indeed beautiful and many of them display fine detail and are exquisitely shaded, they have many hidden meanings too.

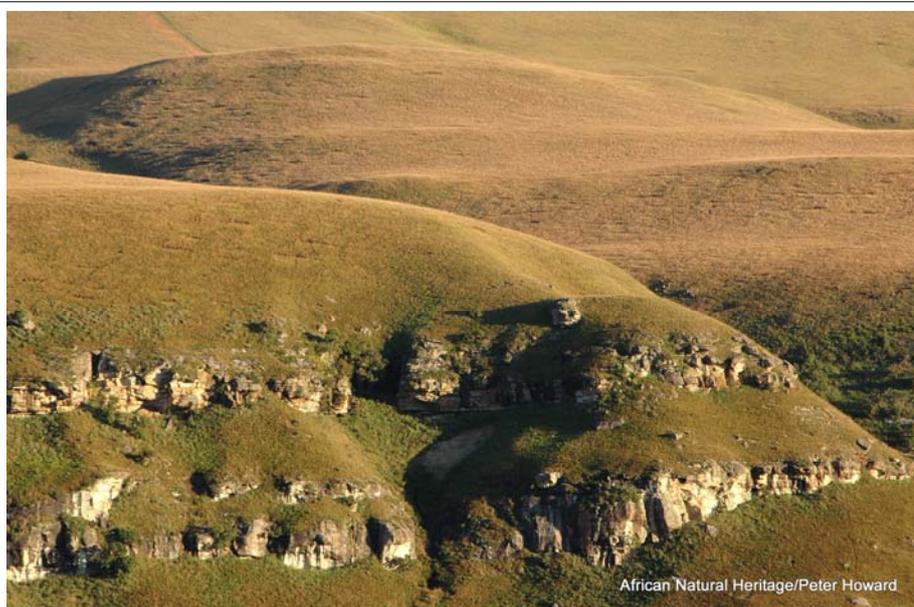
A central ritual in San religion was a dance during which some people went into a trance and asked God for power. We call these people shamans. The San thought that shamans in trance assumed special powers which they acquired from fusing with animals (the eland in particular). The shamans believed that with these powers they could influence the 'spirit world' to bring rain, cure disease, ensure successful hunting and contact people far away. Many paintings show aspects of these religious beliefs. The shamans painted what they had seen and felt while in trance. To link these ideas to the paintings, let us look at a scene from the Game Pass rock shelter. It shows a dying eland with some Shaman figures. The San believed that the state of trance was like a form of death. They saw similarities between the behaviour of a shaman in the 'death trance' and a dying eland, especially an eland suffering from the effects of a poisoned arrow. A poisoned, dying eland falls about, sweats, trembles, bleeds from the nose and lowers its head. A shaman going into a trance does these very same things. Paintings such as these linked shamans to strong but dying animals. Other interesting types of paintings you might see in the Drakensberg are of human figures that have animal features such as hooves and animal faces, ears and horns. You may also see animal figures with human features. Again, these paintings represent the merging of shamans in trance with strong animals such as eland, which they see as the source of their power.

A question commonly asked is, why are humans often elongated in the paintings? An answer to this can be found in the San belief that during a trance dance, a force which starts in the shaman's stomach travels up the spine until it 'explodes' in their heads. During this event, the shamans felt as though their limbs and bodies were being stretched.

In addition to the trance explanations of the paintings Anne Solomon has argued that there are images which deal with issues central to women. She maintains that some of the Drakensberg paintings represent birth and initiation scenes and that paintings such as these relate to the tensions between men and women in San society. These ideas are still being investigated.

GEOLOGY AND ECOLOGY

The Drakensberg scenery is spectacular and rugged, but the underlying geology is simple. At lower altitudes are a series of near horizontal sedimentary sandstones, mudstones and shales, these are topped by deep basalt flows up to 1 km thick forming the main escarpment. Outcrops of dolerite, which have pushed through faults in molten form, are common and often occur as straight dykes across the landscape.



Typical sandstone cliffs of the Little Berg in the Giants Castle area.

The sandstone zone, often referred to as the Little Berg, forms cliffs of multicoloured rock ranging from almost black and grey, blue and red shales and mudstones, to cream, yellow, brown and pink sandstones. It is here that erosion and weathering has formed most of the caves once inhabited by the San people. Above the sandstone is a zone of relatively rolling country leading to the scree slopes and buttresses and sheer walls of the main escarpment. At the summit the topography is incised and broken, with rugged cut-backs and steep passes.

Distribution of the main vegetation types is closely associated with these landforms and with aspect. On the summit is the Alpine Belt, characterised by low heath-type vegetation dominated by *Erica* and *Helichrysum* species. Cover is sparse and there are no trees. Because of the harsh conditions animal life is also sparse and it is unlikely that more than the occasional grey rheebuck, ice rat, bearded vulture or

small troop of baboons will be seen. Domestic sheep and goats belonging to Basotho people are often encountered.

Between the escarpment and the Little Berg, in the Sub-alpine Belt the country is covered by grassland. The grasslands vary with altitude and aspect, temperate evergreen grassland characterised by the spiky *Festuca costata* on the moist south-facing slopes and on the scree slopes, and shorter highland sourveld grassland, with *Themeda triandra* which goes red in winter, covering large areas. Woody vegetation is largely confined to sheltered slopes and valleys and consists mainly of *Leucosidea sericea* ('umTshitshi') scrub or sub-alpine fynbos. The Drakensberg cycad (*Encephalartos ghellinckii*) is found in this belt and is more common in the northern Drakensberg than in the south. In some places there are large colonies of dwarf proteas (*Protea dracomontana*), which survive fire by having most of their growth underground in the form of large rootstocks. Closer to the sandstone, taller Protea species (*Protea caffra*) form attractive open woodland communities. Animal life is more prolific here, with eland and baboons most numerous. Oribi and grey rheebuck will be seen in the grasslands and klipspringer may be sighted on the basalt slopes. Large birds to be seen include the bearded vulture, Cape vulture, black eagle and secretary bird.

Below the sandstone, in the Montane Belt, there is a greater variety of plant communities and animal life. On the scree slopes, where boulders which have fallen from the cliffs afford some protection from fire, small patches of woody plants, including the attractive tree fuschia and the sagewood, are found. Tree ferns grow in wet places and bracken ferns form dense cover in suitable sites. On south-facing slopes beautiful montane forests, with tall yellowwood trees, are found. Protea woodlands grow on the drier north-facing slopes.

Rock dassies live in the piles of fallen boulders under sandstone cliffs, and baboon troops are bigger in size and more numerous in this relatively hospitable zone. Eland move here in winter to browse on the woody plants rather than grazing the dry grass of the higher areas, and bushbuck and common duiker can be seen in the forest edges. Mountain reedbuck favour the valleys of the montane belt and grey rheebuck distribution extends here too. Bird life is more prolific, with jackal buzzards and rock kestrels being common raptors.



Drakensberg Cycad (*Encephalartos ghellinckii*) in the sub-alpine zone of RNNP

HOW TO ENJOY THE DRAKENSBERG

Your behaviour in the Drakensberg can help maintain the beauty, ecology and the water production ability of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park

Cairns: The Berg is littered with cairns, most of them meaningless or misleading except to the original builders. Do not spoil the wilderness experience of others by building cairns or even worse, by defacing rocks and overhangs. Learn to read the map and if you must mark the way for stragglers in the party; use the simple boy scout trick of one stone on top of another and ensure that the last person in the party knocks the markers down.

Graffiti: Don't be tempted to leave your name, messages or arrows on any rocks or trees; please rather leave them in the visitors' book!

Litter: Please keep your litter with you until you reach an entry point or home. Don't throw away items, even if they break down quickly. Don't throw away your cigarette ends. Help us by picking up the litter that you encounter.

Toilets: Please consider the other users of the Drakensberg. Preferably defecate in the grasslands, at least five minutes walk from streams, caves, paths and forests.

Fires: Unscheduled fires are devastating to animals and plants. To reduce the risk of accidents, no fires are allowed. This applies to all caves too. Only the use of camping stoves is allowed.

Rock Art: The Drakensberg is one of the richest sites of rock art in the world. This is a precious resource of international archaeological value. Do not touch, wet trace or interfere with rock art in any way. Report anybody who you see doing such actions to the nearest KZN Wildlife office.

Paths: Stick to the paths constructed for your use. Leaving them will cause unnecessary erosion: please don't take short cuts.

Flowers: Do not pick the flowers - enable everyone to enjoy them and allow them to produce seeds

Noise: Most people visit the Drakensberg to enjoy the peace it offers. Shouting, whistling and loud music shatter this peace. Spare a thought for others.

Rocks: Take extreme care not to dislodge rocks as they endanger the lives of others, damage vegetation and even start erosion.

General:

- Remember to tell someone who knows you where you are going. Fill in the day-walk register where one is available.
- Watch the weather as it can change quickly.
- Always carry water and warm waterproof clothing with you.
- Don't feed any wild animals as this makes them problem animals which may have to be destroyed.
- Don't kill snakes. They play an important role in the ecology of the park
- Report all emergencies to the nearest KZN Wildlife office.
- Report any mis-behaviour and offences to a KZN Wildlife officer.

HIKING SAFETY AND 'CODE OF CONDUCT' IN THE DRAKENSBERG

The Drakensberg offers superb hiking, backpacking and climbing, but it also has many dangers. Here are some guidelines which should be observed in the interests of your own safety.

Mountain Register:

- Always take the time to complete the mountain register correctly and in detail.
- It is very often the only information the rescue team has to go on if you have an accident or get lost. Your life may depend on this information.
- Registers are kept at all entry points to the park and at the camp offices.

Remember to:

- Avoid an unnecessary search by recording your return or by contacting the KZN Wildlife office from which you departed.
- Stick to your planned route.
- Tell a close friend or family member when you expect to arrive back home.

Border Procedures: Remember that in certain areas you are entering Lesotho. If you intend hiking on the summit carry a passport and your official KZN Wildlife receipt. Avoid crossing the border, if possible by remaining close to the escarpment

Security: Never leave any equipment unattended, and place all your belongings inside your tent at night. Hiking parties should consist of a minimum of four people. It is recommended that care be taken at night when camping on the escarpment. Ask the local KZN ranger about the local security situation.

Equipment:

- Do not rely on summit caves being vacant - always carry a tent that is designed for mountainous conditions, especially high winds
- Temperatures at night are often well below zero. A good sleeping bag is therefore important even in summer.
- Take extra food as it will save your life if the weather turns bad and you have to stay longer than intended.
- Sturdy, comfortable and waterproof hiking boots are essential. Running shoes offer no protection against rough ground or wet snow.
- Take enough spare warm clothing, including a water- and windproof jacket and over-trousers. A jersey is useless in cold, windy conditions unless worn under a jacket.
- Remember that it can snow in any month of the year in the Drakensberg.
- An accurate map is essential and knowing how to use it is vital. In the wilderness areas, paths are not marked or identified. Detailed maps are available from all KZN Wildlife Drakensberg offices.
- Always carry a whistle to use for signalling in emergencies.

WHISTLE SIGNALS:

Help: Series of six long blasts in quick succession with one-minute intervals between each series.

Reply to help call: Series of three long blasts in quick succession with one-minute intervals between series.

Recall searchers: Many short blasts in quick succession continuously.

- A torch with spare batteries and dry matches or a lighter are essential. Keep them in a waterproof container.
- A comfortable rucksack to carry all your equipment. Put all your essential items in plastic bags. As additional insurance, a waterproof pack cover is suggested.
- Carry a trowel to bury your faeces. Don't bury your rubbish, please carry it out (the pack it in, pack it out principle).
- Remember that you must be self-reliant - there is no-one up there to help you.

Ethics:

- Respect other hikers' privacy and behave responsibly.
- Never roll rocks down hills or off cliffs - one day you may be the unfortunate person below.
- Leave caves and campsites as you would like to find them, and always bring your litter back down with you.
- Don't pick the wild flowers - some species are extremely rare and you could contribute to their extinction.
- Fires are prohibited, including in caves.
- Don't leave candle wax behind in caves.
- Don't use soap in streams. Wash your dishes and yourself well away from streams.
- Defecate well away, at least five minutes walk away from streams, caves, paths and forests, preferably in the grasslands.

Planning:

- Plan your route carefully and obtain a weather forecast before setting out on your hike.
- Plan your hike with the weakest member of your party in mind.
- Remember that there is considerably less daylight in winter than in summer.
- Ensure that all participants take any medication they require with them.
- If you intend to stay overnight in a cave, please book it at the station in which area it falls.

Locating Your Campsite:

- Do not camp near streams as you could get washed away in a sudden storm.
- Camping is not allowed in intensive use zones which are demarcated on this map.
- Tenting is permitted anywhere in the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park with the exception of intensive use zones, and Royal Natal.

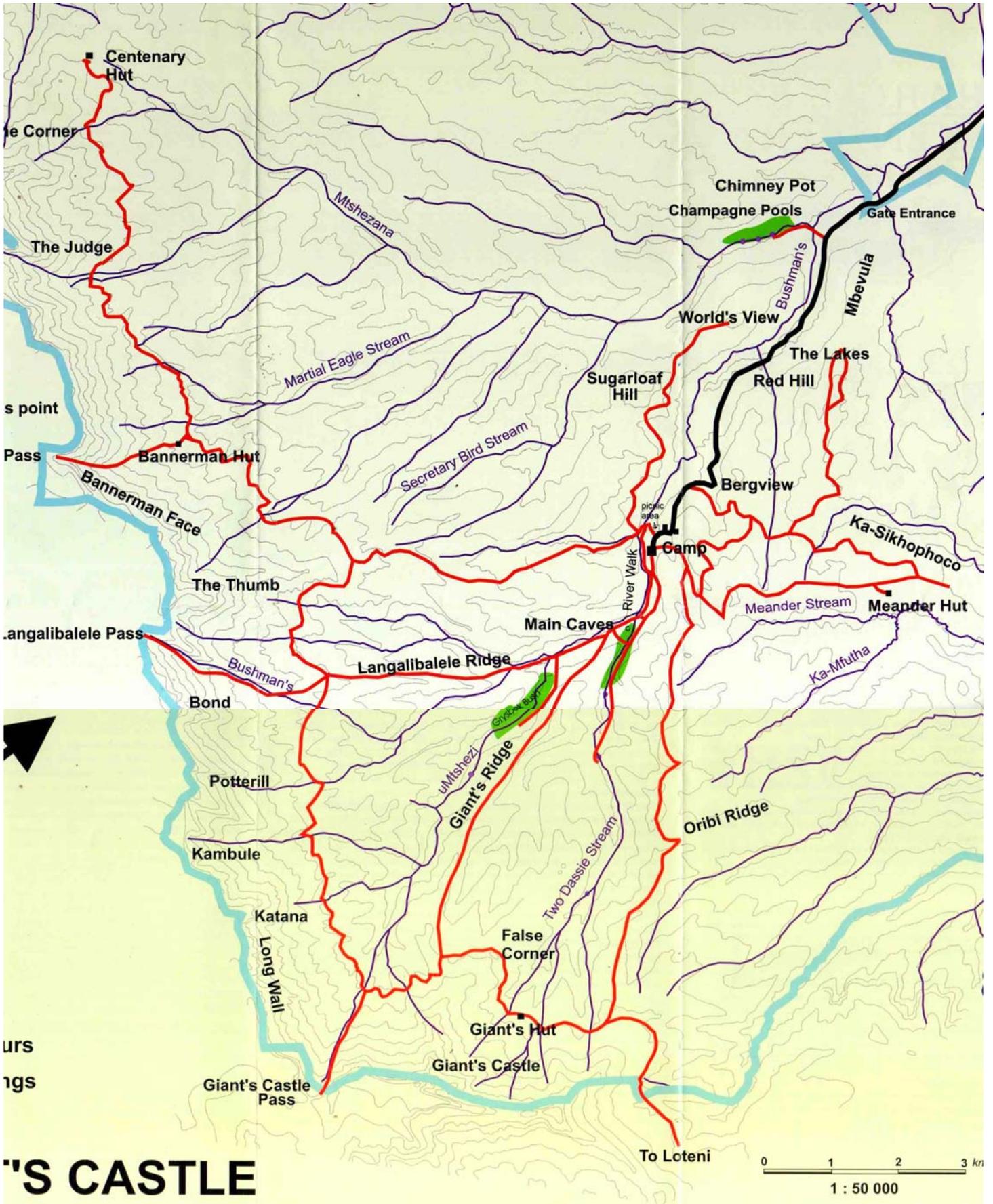
Bad Weather Situations: (NB. Monitor the media for weather warnings)

- Bad weather: Weather conditions can change very rapidly. Always keep together and ensure that no-one falls behind.
- Mist: Misty conditions are frequent on the summit. Seek shelter and do not move until the mist has lifted.
- Rain: Try to reach shelter before it rains; a combination of wet and cold conditions can be fatal. Extra caution should be exercised when crossing rivers in flood. If you are in doubt as to your safety, do not cross.
- Snow: Seek shelter and move off the summit at the earliest opportunity. Conditions may deteriorate and you don't want to be trapped.
- Lightning: Avoid prominent positions. Isolated trees or rocky outcrops.
- Hail: protect your head by putting your pack on your head.



View of the Amphitheatre at Royal Natal National Park, from the Thukela River

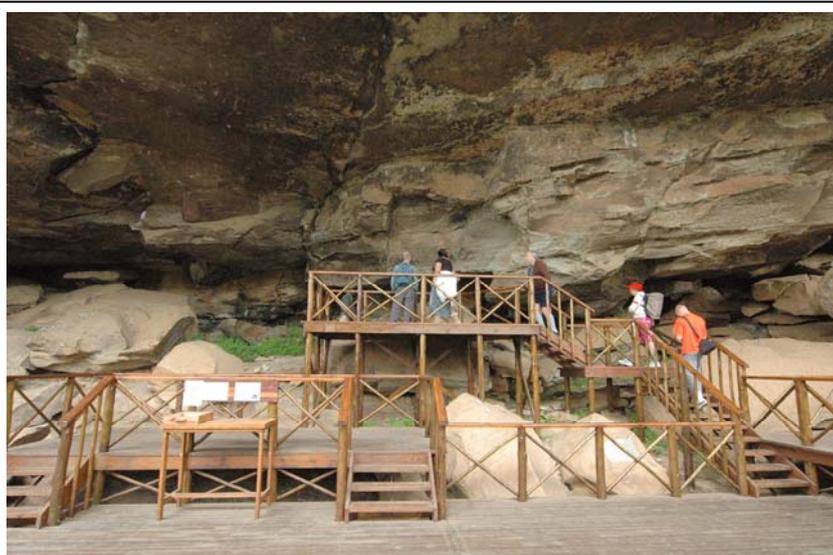
Map of Hiking trails at Giants Castle Game Reserve



WALKS AT GIANT'S CASTLE GAME RESERVE

Please note that, from time to time, for a variety of reasons, foot paths may be closed to the public. Your co-operation in only using the walks which are available would be appreciated.

SHORT WALKS



Platforms enable visitors to get a close-up view of the rock art at Main Caves

Main Caves

From the hutted camp follow the sign-posted path to the Main Caves. Approximately 1.5km from the hutted camp the path enters a beautiful forest below the cave sandstone overhangs. Continue with this path until you come to the entrance gate to Main Caves. The guide on duty opens the entrance **gate** every hour on the hour from 09:00 to 15:00. An entrance fee is levied. Upon exiting Main Caves the recommended return route to the hutted camp is via 'Rock75' and the River Walk (1). (Roundtrip 3.5km, 3 hours)

Col. Durnford's Camp and "Rock75"

Take the signposted path to the Main Caves. After approximately 1 km the path winds down the hillside to some large boulders. At this point a sign reading "Rock 75" indicates the site of Col. Durnford's camp. It was here that members of the 75th Regiment camped in 1874 during the Langalibalele rebellion; the troopers here were

under the command of Col. Durnford R.E. It is believed that during their stay (June-September 1874) the regimental cook carved into this rock the figures "75" indicating that the 75th had occupied the spot.

GrysbuckBush

Follow the signposted path past "Rock 75" and continue following the path towards Langalibalele Pass. Approximately 1 km further on the path forks again. Do not cross the rustic bridge ahead of you (Langalibalele Pass) but continue along the path sign-posted "Grysbuck Bush" (left fork). From here on you enter a fairly swampy grassland (during summer months), however the path is cemented to cope with the wet patches. On entering the woody area you will come to a rustic bridge. Cross the bridge and continue for another 10 minutes. The path now brings you to a series of beautiful pools'. Swimming is possible but be careful of whirlpools after heavy rains. Retrace the same route back to the hutted camp. (8km, 3.5 hours).

River Walk (1)

Follow the signposted path past "Rock 75". The river walk is signposted just before the rustic bridge. The path follows the east bank of the Bushman's River through low-lying grassveld and later on through light bush. Shortly after entering the bush the path forks. Take the path that reads "Hutted Camp". The path crosses the wall of a small dam and climbs up to the Hutted Camp. (Round-trip 3km, 1.5 hours).

River Walk (2)

Follow the directions for River Walk (1) as far as the signpost that reads "Hutted Camp" - "Bannerman's Bridge" - "Picnic Site". Now take the left arm "Bannerman's Bridge" - "Picnic Site". The path continues through thick bush (Eland are often encountered here during winter months). On reaching "Bannerman's Bridge" rest for a while next to the magnificent pool. When you have rested and are ready to carry on, take the path that reads 'Picnic site' (a fairly steep climb) and on reaching the picnic site join the main road to the hutted camp. (Roundtrip 4.5km, 2 hours).



Trails are well sign-posted in Giant's Castle

Champagne Pools

Travel from the main camp towards the entrance gate along the tar road for 7km. On the left hand side you will find a sign which reads "Champagne Pools" and a parking area. Proceed down the hill and cross the bridge over the Bushmans river. Continue along this path for approximately 500m. The path brings you to a series of beautiful pools with indigenous forests on the northern banks. This area is ideal for swimming. (Round trip 3km, 1 hour).

Bergview walk

Take the main road out of the hutted camp to just beyond the camp gate, you will see a sign reading "BergviewWalkU-"Meander Hut". Take this path which is clearly defined and continue up a steep slope. On completing the steep climb a sign reading "Bergview Walk - "Meander Hut" - "Giant's Hut" clearly indicates the route you must follow. Swing left at this point (Bergview Walk) and continue for a while until reaching a stream. Now cross the stream and continue for

a few metres where yet another sign reading "Bergview Walk - "Meander Hut" is to be found. A left-hand turn brings you onto the Bergview Walk. From now on this section of the walk affords one the most magnificent views of the Drakensberg to be found in Giant's Castle Game Reserve. Continue along this route until reaching a Jeep track. At this point turn left and continue down the track until reaching the main road. From here on a left turn along the road brings you back to the hutted camp. (Round-trip 5km, 2 hours).

LONGER WALKS

Giant's Hut via Giant's Ridge

Take the signposted path to the Giant's Ridge path past "Rock 75. On reaching the "Giant's Ridge" sign turn left, a steep climb brings you above the sandstone cliffs; the path then continues up the side of the ridge overlooking the streams below and forested valley walks. The second and third rises are short but steep, while the intervening areas rise gently. The path now follows the spine of the ridge. At a rocky outcrop the path veers left, across a stream, onto another part of the ridge. Further on a large cairn marks the contour path. At this point turn left and proceed along the contour path to Giant's Hut, situated above a small pan. (Round trip 19km. 7.5hours).

Langalibalele Pass

Take the signposted path past "Rock 75" to Langalibalele Pass. The path follows the left bank of the Bushman's River after passing "Rock 75". Continue along this route until reaching and crossing a rustic bridge. The path now crosses two streams and then ascends a steep ridge travelling along the spine to the contour path. Continue up from the contour path negotiating the steep incline to a stone cairn. Thereafter another three inclines are made which are short but steep. The path then continues up the ridge to the final stone cairn, then veers slightly to the left along level ground and gradually descends to the river crossing. You are now at the base of Langalibalele Pass. Cross the river and proceed up the left-hand bank. The path is clearly defined right up to the summit, however this last section to the summit is very steep in places and regular short breaks should be taken. When reaching the top of the pass look up to your left where the Carbineers grave is situated. To reach the grave (marked by a large stone cairn and a aluminium cross) veer to your left and continue up the rocky ridge, a further 3/4 of an hour walking. Return back to the camp via the same route. (Roundtrip 26.8km, 8 hours). N.B. The common grave contains the remains of troopers Erskine, Bond and Potterill together with two local Africans, Kambula and Katana. These five men fell during the engagement at the top of the pass during the Langalibalele Rebellion of 1873: 1874.

World's View

From the hutted camp follow the road to the picnic site. Take the path down to Bannerman's Bridge. After crossing the bridge take the path to the right at the sign reading "World's View". Climb a short hill and cross a small stream, from here on the footpath follows a long plateau, crossing another stream very close to a large boulder on your right and a landslide on your left. The path splits at yet another huge rock; take the lower path which leads to World's View. Ahead is seen the sugar Loaf Hill. To the west the main Drakensberg escarpment with The Thumb projecting above, to the south of it is Langalibalele Pass and to the north of it Bannerman's Pass. Follow the path along the base of Sugar Loaf Hill to the top of World's View. The view from the top is really worthwhile. The view of the whole escarpment from Giant's Castle to Champagne Castle is uninterrupted. Below you are the Umtshezana and Bushman's rivers. The Chimney Pot, very aptly named; is directly ahead. Follow the same route back to the hutted camp. (14km, 4.5 hours).

Meander Hut via Beacon Ridge

Follow the same route as for "Bergview Walk. After crossing the stream carry on up the path marked by a sign reading "Meander Hut" do not turn left at the Bergview sign. This track follows along the spine of ridges making two steep ascents. At the top of the second is a trig beacon marking the altitude at 2020 metres. The track descends to Meander Hut which is beautifully situated above the cliffs overlooking Meander stream. On leaving the hut, climb the steep short hill behind the hut and on reaching the top follow the footpath below the beacon (do not climb the steep track back to the beacon) but continue along the path until it links up with a jeep track. Follow the jeep track until it reaches the main road. Turn left along the main road and return to the rest camp. (Round trip 14km, 5 hours).

The Lakes

Follow the same route as "Bergview Walk. Upon reaching the Jeep Track, turn right and follow the track for 500m until it forks. The left-hand fork reads "The Lakes". Proceed along this track which again climbs very steeply with concrete strips in places. After a while an old disused quarry is reached, continue along the old jeep track until a huge basalt shelf is reached with a series of large water-filled pot-holes. Now walk to the edge from where a magnificent view of the Drakensberg range unfolds before you. Continue along the track which forms a wide circle. Completing the circle brings you back onto the original jeep track. Return home by the same route, back down the jeep track to the hutted camp. (Round trip 14km, 5 hours).

Bannerman's Path - Contour Path - Langalibalele Path

Take the route to Bannerman's Hut. On reaching the contour path turn left and continue crossing several streams. To your right and towering above you is The Thumb. At the Langalibalele path (marked by two stone cairns) turn left and proceed down the spine until eventually entering the Bushman's valley below. After crossing two streams (and a rustic bridge) the path continues back to the hutted camp below the main caves. (Round trip 15.6km, 5.5 hours).



The escarpment at Giant's Castle