

4 Day Drakensberg Mafadi Hike

📍 Drakensberg, Okhahlamba Ward 10, Okhahlamba Local Municipality, Uthukela District Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa



4 Day Drakensberg Mafadi Hike – Highest Mountain in South Africa!

Are you up for a challenging trek in the **Drakensberg**? Then maybe you should consider joining our **4 day guided hike** to summit of the highest mountain in South Africa, also known as **Mafadi**. The hike covers about 52 kilometers over 4 days with an altitude gain of over 2,500m. So as you can imagine, your fitness levels required for this trek must be above average. The terrain in this part of the **Drakensberg** is on 'single track' paths and involves not only some challenging ascents up Judges Pass but also involves some pretty steep descents as well.

This **hike** is not recommended for novice hikers and it is highly recommended that you have some sort of hiking experience before taking on the challenge of conquering the highest mountain in South Africa. Having said that, there are no technical or 'climbing' activities involved in the trek. To put things in perspective, you will need to be able to handle, on average 7 hours of hiking per day. On the second day we gain over 1200m over 13 kilometers. Yes a long day, but in some of the most remote and scenic parts of the Drakensberg.

<https://youtu.be/Hm0rsSQNqAQ?si=mwwX6zlUCQiQqQzG>

What does the 4 Day Drakensberg Mafadi Hike involve?

We spend 4 days and 3 nights in one of the most incredible and remote areas of the Drakensberg. We have the whole mountain to ourselves. Rarely do we see any other people except for the Basotho shepherds on the escarpment. Our accommodation is in tents and includes a night in the Upper Injasuthi Summit cave. Our source of water is from the many mountain streams and rivers that flow abundantly in the area.

The **Mafadi hike** is regarded as a more 'purist' form of hiking and although porters are available to hire, hikers are expected to carry their own backpacks and gear. We supply the tents, meals, cooking and eating utensils, guide. Our guides have intimate knowledge of the area and have led over 200 hikes into the **Drakensberg**. We also like to keep the **hiking** experience pretty interactive. Our guides will teach skills to survive in the mountains from navigation, to setting up camp, and surviving the elements involved in trekking to the *highest mountain in South Africa*.

What are the Conditions like on Mafadi?

Once we have climbed up Judges Pass on day 2 of the Mafadi hike and topped out on what is known as the escarpment of the **Drakensberg**, conditions can get pretty bleak. We plan for the worst case scenarios on this hike. In winter temperatures can drop to -15 degrees Celsius with hectic wind. In summer expect rain, thunderstorms and hectic wind. Again, it all adds to the experience of the hike. The sense of accomplishment would not be the same if it were easy. And of course, we are going to be equipped to handle the conditions (rain and cold weather clothing for example)

Tour Facts

Language:

Engilsh

Duration:

4

Tour Type:

continuous

Tour Itinerary

Day 1 :

Drakensberg Mafadi Hike from start to finish:

Distance: 52km / 32 miles in 5 days.

Elevation Gain: 2,456m / 8,057ft. Elevation Loss: 3,678m / 12,066 ft.

We leave from Johannesburg at 4:30am. We then take the 5 hour drive through to Injasuthi, the starting point for the Mafadi hike. Breakfast on route at about 7:30am in Harrismith. Once we get to Injasuthi we check offload the vehicle and take about 30 minutes to get ready for the **hike**.

The first part of the **hike** is pretty flat and after 4 kilometers (2 hours) we stop for a break at an ancient Bushman painting cave. The next part of the hike takes us through a relatively flat area for about 1 kilometer before we head up what we like to call 'the burns'. This is a challenging uphill that covers only about 3 kilometers but with an altitude gain of nearly 600m. We set up camp at the old ranger hut known as the Centenary Hut. The views of Monks Cowl, The Injasuthi Triplets and the imposing Trojan Wall make for an incredible spot to camp.

A long steep slog up to our campsite for the night: Centenary Hut. A pretty long day today especially the last 2 hours, but once at the camp a hot cup of coffee and the incredible view will soon lift your spirits.

Drakensberg Mafadi Climb Summary

End: Centenary Hut 2100m / 6,889 ft.

Elev gain: 820m / 2690ft.

Time: 7 hours on average

Distance: About 11km, 6.8 miles

Day 2 :

oday is a challenging and long day of **hiking**-13 kilometers taking about 8 hours with an elevation gain of nearly 1100m. Coffee and breakfast is served at 6am. We aim to start the trek by 7:30am. The first 2 hours of the **hike** covers about 4km and involves some contouring around the massive basalt cliffs that make up the **Drakensberg** on single track paths. Our first waypoint is the base of Judges Pass.

After a brief rest we climb up the Pass which is pretty steep and the effects of the altitude will most

likely be felt. The average time to summit the pass is about 2.5 hours. Once on the top we have quite a long rest to recover for the final part of the **Mafadi hike**. The final stretch is pretty flat for about an hour before the route steepens.

Another hour or so up the slope until we reach our humble abode for the night, the Upper Injasuthi Cave situated at 3300m/ 10826, the highest cave in the Drakensberg. There are some incredible views of the Injasuthi Triplets below. Then it's a hearty mountain dinner, a spot of whiskey for medicinal purposes and bedtime with your favourite teddy bear. Mafadi is now a mere 1.5km away from here.

Drakensberg Mafadi Climb Summary

End: Upper Injasuthi Cave 3300m / 10,826 ft.

Elev gain: 1100m/3608ft.

Time: 8 hours average

Distance: About 18 km, 8miles

Day 3 :

Summit Day!! We wake up early, fuel up on hot coffee and a quick bite to eat and then we head west towards the summit. The **hike** from the cave takes about an hour and is not too steep although it will leave you breathless.-Most likely from the effects of the altitude or the incredible views. We try and reach the summit of Mafadi to take in the first rays of a South African sunrise. We spend about half an hour on the summit before making our way to Leslies Pass before deciding to Marble Baths Cave after a successful summit of Mafadi.

Climb Summary

End: Marble Baths cave 1600m

Elev Loss:

Time: 10 hours average

Distance: About 16km, 9.3 miles

Day 4 :

After breakfast we start our hike back to the cars which takes roughly 3 hours

Then we pile in the car and take the 5 hour drive through the *Northern Drakensberg* and back to Johannesburg.

Drakensberg Mafai Climb Summary

End: Injasuthi Camp Site 1400m / 4,593 ft.

Elev Loss: 300m

Time: 3 hours average

Distance: About 7km