

# Drakensberg Mini Traverse Trekking Adventure

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



The Mini Traverse, also known as the Northern Traverse is regarded as one of South Africa's top hikes. The hike covers a distance of between 60-75km over a 4-6 day period depending on who you go with. We like to do the hike over the 6 day period as the route becomes more scenic. This also means that the distance will be slightly longer but a better experience overall.

## Best time to hike the Drakensberg Mini Traverse

There is no better time than the present! The hike can be done throughout the year but the best time to take it on would be the April-May period as it is just coming out of the rainy season but still warm enough as it is just before the winter period. With that being said the November to March period you can expect electrical and rain storms in the afternoons and evenings as well as thick mist during the day. From June to October would be the winter period which can be a bit chilly as well as shorter days as the sun sets earlier and rises later. Snow can also be experienced during this period.

## How fit do I need to be for this trek?

The definition of fitness can be interpreted in many different ways so to make it a bit easier we recommend that you should be comfortable with walking 12km+ per day on uneven terrain with a weighted backpack of around 16kgs.

## Tour Facts

Language:  
**English**

Duration:  
**7**

Tour Type:  
**continuous**

## Tour Itinerary

## Day 1 :

Our tours begin and end in Johannesburg (self-drive options also available)

# Drakensberg Mini Traverse Hike start to finish:

**Distance: 76km / 47miles in 6 days.**

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

This tour departs Johannesburg at 5am. We then take the 4:30 hour drive to Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge, stopping for breakfast on route. Once at the lodge our guides will conduct a hike briefing before moving onto Sentinel Car park which is where the trail begins.

The first section of the hike is known as the Zig Zag. We cover quite a large amount of elevation gain here within their first 2kms, 250 vertical meters to be exact. The remainder of the hike up until the chain ladders is quite gradual and easy going. Once at the top of the ladders well take the walk down to Tugela Falls which has recently been declared as the worlds longest waterfall and have lunch. After lunch we'll tackle an 80m hill before arriving at our camp at Bilanjil Falls for the evening.

### Climb Summary

End: Bilanjil Falls 2950m / 9,678 ft.

Elev gain: 700m / 2296 ft. Elev loss: 245m/ 800ft.

Time: 4 hours on average

Distance: About 7km, miles

## Day 2 :

Day 2 of the Drakensberg Mini Traverse starts off with an early breakfast before we pack up camp and start the trek to Fangs Pass, our second camp. Instead of following the traditional route that veers inland, we try and stick to the edge of the escarpment as much as possible.

Yes it does make the hiking a lot more challenging as we have to negotiate the man cutbacks and undulating terrain, but the scenery is mind-blowing and well worth the effort.

The camp site is aptly called 'Fangs Pass' as the spires of rock formations resemble the fangs of a Dragon. Even more so if you have had a dash of whiskey.

### Climb Summary

End: Fangs Pass 3037m / 9,963 ft.

Elev gain: 467m/1532ft. Elev Loss: 298m/977ft.

Time: 7 hours average

Distance: About 14km, 7.4 miles

## Day 3 :

Today is probably one the longer days in terms of **hiking**. The distance as the crow flies is only 8km but we need to navigate around what is known as the Mnweni Cut back.

This part of the trek will take us to the highest point of the tour where there are some spectacular views of the Hanging Valleys over Kwazulu Natal over 1000m below.

The final part of the hike will see us descending into our campsite for the night, Ledgers Cave with is situated in a beautiful valley close to the Rockeries. A really scenic camp site and is perfect spot to watch the sun set.

#### Climb Summary

End: Ledgers Cave 2987m / 9,799 ft.  
Elev gain: 367m/1204 ft. Elev Loss: 264m/866ft.  
Time: 7 hours average  
Distance: About 15 km, 9.3 miles

### **Day 4 :**

We carry on the trek hugging the escarpment wherever possible to afford you the last views of Lesotho and the incredible valleys below.

After about 5 hours hiking we will leave the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho and descend into the South Africa again. A steep descend will take us into our humble abode for the night, Twins cave.

#### Climb Summary

End: Twins Cave 2966m / 9,730 ft.  
Elev gain: 567m/1860 ft. Elev Loss: 598m/1961ft.  
Time: 7 hours average  
Distance: About 16 km, 9.9 miles

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Today we will tackle what is probably one the most spectacular and scenic parts of the **Drakensberg**. The route is known as the Bell Traverse and winds its way along narrow mountain paths through to the base of Cathedral Peak.

If you have the energy we can climb to the summit. The climb involves some pretty steep scrambling but shouldn't take more than an hour to summit. From the top you will get a perfect view of the entire **Northern Drakensberg** and will be able to see the starting point of the **Mini Traverse** hike over 60 km away.

Our camp for tonight is situated at the Base of Cathedral Peak. If groups are still feeling strong and daylight allows we'll then descend down to Shermans Cave for the evening.

#### Climb Summary

End: Base of Cathedral Peak 2450m / 4,747 ft.  
Elev gain: 229m/751 ft.  
Time: 6 hours average  
Distance: About 10 km

## Day 6 :

After breakfast we'll tackle the last stretch of the hike. Generally doesn't take more than 3 hours, so we'll arrive just in time for Celebratory beers at Cathedral Peak Hotel and possibly lunch. We should arrive back in JHB at around 6pm