



KIT LIST AND INFORMATION DOCUMENT FOR LESOTHO VILLAGE HIKING TRIPS (SLACKPACKING)

2 day, 3 day, 4 day and 5 day village hiking trips

A VALID PASSPORT IS ESSENTIAL TO ENTER LESOTHO.

LESOTHO VISA REQUIREMENTS:

Certain nationalities require visas for Lesotho. You will find a link to the list on any of our tour pages on our website at www.sanilodge.co.za . Alternatively, visit the following Lesotho government website:

<http://evisalesotho.com/visa-exemptions/>

If you do require a visa, you have a big problem! It is currently only possible to get a visa in Maseru itself. We are sorry about this – we have spent years engaging with Lesotho Tourism on this matter, and whilst promises of change have been made, no action has yet followed. It is crazy that a country keen to grow its tourism has obstacles against certain nationalities entering their country, obstacles which currently are almost impossible to overcome. Crazy!

LESOTHO TOURIST LEVY

The Lesotho government has introduced a Tourist Levy of R100 per person entering the country as from 1 April 2024. They have set up the system such that clients pay the levy to the tour operator who then makes monthly returns and payments to the Lesotho Government Levy Fund. In our case, the levy will thus be added on to the tour price quoted by Drakensberg Adventures for payment up front.

BRING ALONG:

NB Please note that on all the supported hiking trips, your personal kit is carried by yourself in your own small backpack or large day pack on your back. Kit should be therefore kept to a minimum.

WHAT TO BRING:

Comfortable good quality backpack or large day pack.
Your favourite worn in hiking boots
Good quality windproof and / or waterproof jacket (or equivalent)
Good quality rain gear (preferably a rain suit top and pants
Personal medication and toiletries
Sun screen lotion
Rubbish bags to bring your rubbish out with you!

Clothing

NB All clothes not being worn should be wrapped in garbage bags to keep them dry (there is no such thing as a waterproof rucksack!) number of items depends on number of days of the hike

Fleece top or down jacket (or jersey depending on season)
Sun hat
1 pair short pants
2 x T shirts or equivalent (preferably wic dri)

Long pants such as tracksuit bottoms
2 x hiking socks
Beanie or balaclava and gloves
Swimming costume (optional depending on season)
Light waterproof sandals (such as Crocs)
Torch and spare batteries (preferably head torch)
Water bottle
Camera
Small towel

MEALS:

All meals are provided on all village hiking trips.

Day 1 on all tours: packed lunch, dinner

Middle days of all tours: breakfast, sit down lunch, dinner

Last day of all tours: breakfast, sit down lunch.

In-between snacks are NOT included and you can bring along your own (they may be purchased at Sani Lodge if required.)

DRAKENSBERG ADVENTURES MINIMUM IMPACT REFUSE POLICY

All your own refuse must be carried out with you. No toilet paper or tissue paper is to be buried, placed under a tree or rock, or strewn about above ground. Please bring your own refuse bag to discard any litter you generate on the tour ; ie plastic bottle, tissues, used toilet paper, plastic bags.

BASIC TOUR INFO:

Departure: From Sani Lodge backpackers at 9am on Day 1

Return: To Sani Lodge Backpackers around 5 - 5.30pm on last day

NOTE: The routes used on these hikes are variable and can be altered by the Basotho hiking guide according to weather conditions, fitness/pace of the hiking group and emergency conditions. The distances given here are to be used as a guide and follow an “average” route.

2 Day Itinerary:

DAY 1: The tour starts from Sani Lodge at 9am. Travel up Sani Pass in our 4x4. Lots of stops along the way for birds, animals and flowers of interest. Stops for information on the history of Sani Pass, the geology, natural history and good yarns from days gone by. Superb views – ask your guide to stop for a photo anywhere you like. Cross into Lesotho. Travel along the Sani Flats. Visit the shearing shed to see shearing in action (sheep from October to end of January, goats in May). Travel to the top of the next pass beyond Sani, Black Mountain at 3240m. Interact during the day with shepherds. Travel over the Pass and down the other side, following the Sehonghong River valley. Lunch by the river, travel on and into the typical highland village country on to our starting at Molumong village. Meet the guide and set off on the hike to Libibing village. The afternoon’s hike is around 6km and has an altitude gain of around 250m to the village where we stay the night in traditional rondavel accommodation.

DAY 2: After breakfast, hike back via a different route to Molumong. After lunch start the return journey stopping for a drink at Sani Top Chalet, reputed to be the highest pub in Africa. Return to Sani Lodge by around 5- 5.30 pm.

3 Day Itinerary

DAY 1: The tour starts from Sani Lodge at 9am. Travel up Sani Pass in our 4x4. Lots of stops along the way for birds, animals and flowers of interest. Stops for information on the history of Sani Pass, the geology, natural history and good yarns from days gone by. Superb views – ask your guide to stop for a photo anywhere you like. Cross into Lesotho. Travel along the Sani Flats. Visit the shearing shed to see shearing in action (sheep from October to end of January, goats in May). Travel to the top of the next pass beyond Sani, Black Mountain at 3240m. Interact during the day with shepherds. Travel over the Pass and down the other side, following the Sehonghong River valley. Lunch by the river, travel on and into the typical highland village country on to our starting at Molumong village. Meet the guide and set off on the hike to Libibing. The afternoon’s hike is around 6km and has an altitude gain of around 250m to the village of Libibing where we stay the night in traditional rondavel accommodation.

DAY 2: After breakfast we set off on a full day of hiking. The day starts off following the Libibing river valley downstream towards the main river of the Lesotho highlands, the Senqu. From the low point of the hike, the path then heads westwards to our

overnight stop in Malubelube village. Enjoy valleys, soaring peaks and views of the Senqu Valley. Distance : around 12km, altitude gain: descend around 500m from Libibing to the low point of the day, then climb another 550m to Malubelube village where we stay the night in traditional rondavel accommodation.

DAY 3: After an early breakfast, we set off following a shorter return route to Molumong. Distance: around 9km, altitude drop of 300m. Arriving around noon, we have lunch before setting off on the journey home. Time permitting, we stop off for a drink at Sani Top Chalet, reputed to be the highest pub in Africa. Return to Sani Lodge by around 5- 5.30 pm

4 Day Itinerary

DAY 1: The tour starts from Sani Lodge at 9am. Travel up Sani Pass in our 4x4. Lots of stops along the way for birds, animals and flowers of interest. Stops for information on the history of Sani Pass, the geology, natural history and good yarns from days gone by. Superb views – ask your guide to stop for a photo anywhere you like. Cross into Lesotho. Travel along the Sani Flats. Visit the shearing shed to see shearing in action (sheep from October to end of January, goats in May). Travel to the top of the next pass beyond Sani, Black Mountain at 3240m. Interact during the day with shepherds. Travel over the Pass and down the other side, following the Sehonghong River valley. Lunch by the river, travel on and into the typical highland village country on to our starting at Molumong village. Meet the guide and set off on the hike to Libibing. The afternoon's hike is around 6km and has an altitude gain of around 250m to the village of Libibing where we stay the night in traditional rondavel accommodation.

DAY 2: After breakfast we set off on a full day of hiking. The day starts off following the Libibing river valley downstream towards the main river of the Lesotho highlands, the Senqu. From the low point of the hike, the path then heads westwards to our overnight stop in Malubelube village. Enjoy valleys, soaring peaks and views of the Senqu Valley. Distance : around 12km, altitude gain: descend around 500m from Libibing to the low point of the day, then climb another 550m to Malubelube village where we stay the night in traditional rondavel accommodation.

DAY 3: After breakfast, we set off on another full day of hiking. Today is a very special day as our route takes us over a high ridge and into the remote Bobatsi river valley. Our paths goes through villages which are far from any road and seldom visited. We follow the bobatsi valley upstream, staying the night in traditional rondavel accommodation in Bobatsi village. Distance: around 15km. Altitude Gain: ups and downs during the day, overall ending around 50m lower.

DAY 4: After breakfast, we hike back to Molumong. Distance: around 8km, altitude gain: gain of 100m, drop of 300m. Lunch and then set off on the return journey via a stop at the highest pub for a drink. Return to Sani lodge around 5- 5.30pm.

4 Day Itinerary

DAY 1: The tour starts from Sani Lodge at 9am. Travel up Sani Pass in our 4x4. Lots of stops along the way for birds, animals and flowers of interest. Stops for information on the history of Sani Pass, the geology, natural history and good yarns from days gone by. Superb views – ask your guide to stop for a photo anywhere you like. Cross into Lesotho. Travel along the Sani Flats. Visit the shearing shed to see shearing in action (sheep from October to end of January, goats in May). Travel to the top of the next pass beyond Sani, Black Mountain at 3240m. Interact during the day with shepherds. Travel over the Pass and down the other side, following the Sehonghong River valley. Lunch by the river, travel on and into the typical highland village country on to our starting at Molumong village. Meet the guide and set off on the hike to Libibing. The afternoon's hike is around 6km and has an altitude gain of around 250m to the village of Libibing where we stay the night in traditional rondavel accommodation.

DAY 2: After breakfast we set off on a full day of hiking. The day starts off following the Libibing river valley downstream towards the main river of the Lesotho highlands, the Senqu. From the low point of the hike, the path then heads westwards to our overnight stop in Malubelube village. Enjoy valleys, soaring peaks and views of the Senqu Valley. Distance : around 12km, altitude gain: descend around 500m from Libibing to the low point of the day, then climb another 550m to Malubelube village where we stay the night in traditional rondavel accommodation.

DAY 3: After breakfast, we set off on another full day of hiking. Today is a very special day as our route takes us over a high ridge and into the remote reaches of the Senqu river valley. The Senqu is known as the Orange River once it enters South Africa. Our paths goes through villages which are far from any road and seldom visited. We follow the Senqui valley downstream, staying the night in traditional rondavel accommodation in the extremely remote Ha Moeketsane village, far from any roads or tourist routes. Distance: around 15km. Altitude Gain: many big ups and downs during the day, overall ending around 50m lower.

DAY 4: After breakfast, we head off on another full day of hiking through more remote mountain villages and breath-taking scenery. Ha Moeketsane is the furthest south point on the hike, we now start heading back northwards in a large sweeping circular return route. Overnight is at Tsoenene or Bobatsi villages. The hosts provide traditional rondavel accommodation and meals. Around 15km with many ups and downs.

DAY 5: After breakfast, we hike back to Molumong. Distance: around 8km, altitude gain: gain of 100m, drop of 300m. Lunch and then set off on the return journey via a stop at the highest pub for a drink. Return to Sani lodge around 5- 5.30pm.

Combination Option: It is possible to do some days of hiking and some days of horse-riding – in other words a combination of the Molomong pony Trek tour and the Molomong Village hiking tour. Contact us in this regard.

NOTE: All accommodation is in traditional rondavels. There is no electricity or running water in any of the villages. A basin of water will be provided for bathing. The toilets are “long drops” (pit latrines). Warm bedding is provided everywhere and sleeping bags are NOT required.

Toilet stops: Flush toilets at the SA border post, Molomong Lodge and the Pub, pit latrine (long drop) at the Lesotho border post and in all villages, *au natural* elsewhere on the tour.

COMMUNITY INTERACTION IN LESOTHO:

Drakensberg Adventures has pioneered the system of paying all community service providers for services rendered to our tours. This includes the lady of the house we visit in Skiring village, ‘Me Vitelena, the shearing shed and the shepherds. ‘Me Vitelena is paid R60 per visitor for providing lunch and her time and space. When she is unable to offer our group lunch, we pay her R30 per visitor for giving her time and space, and for having local bread and beer to taste. The shearing shed receives R50 per vehicle for allowing us to visit, interact and take photos. The proceeds go into a fund for a project of their choice. In 2024, we produced overalls for everyone working at the shearing shed.



The shepherds also agreed to be part of our tour, and we allocate R50 per vehicle to the “shepherds fund”. The proceeds of the fund are used to buy new blankets for the shepherds. We collect the names of the shepherds we interact with over the season, and then in February we have a big event where the blankets are handed over.



Our pioneering way of doing things has been recognized by the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC). LTDC held a series of meetings in the Underberg area during 2016, the aim of which was to ensure that all the local tour operators who visit the Sani Top area use the same model of “payments for services rendered” as we do. Each operator was required to sign a written agreement with their service provider in Skiring village. We signed our agreement with ‘Me Vitelena in a ceremony presided over by LTDC at Sani Lodge backpackers in September 2016. It formalized the verbal agreement which had operated for many years between us. We are thrilled that LTDC has recognized our way of doing things as “Best Practice”. We were also Silver Award winners at the 2016 African Responsible Tourism Awards.



CANCELLATION POLICY: We run our tours no matter what the weather or weather forecast. This is because a) at 9am it is impossible to say what the weather will be like for the whole day and b) the weather once you get above the escarpment and into Lesotho is often different and better than below the escarpment in KZN. Weather forecasting is at best an imprecise science, and especially so in the mountains. Whatever the weather, our guides will do their best to ensure you have an interesting and enjoyable day. In the unlikely event of the road being closed due to snow, ice or a heavy storm damaging the road, our policy is to still run the tour, driving as far as is practical and safe, and walking from wherever we park to the top of Sani Pass and crossing into Lesotho on foot. **Please note** that we confirm our guides the night before the tour, and so any cancellation of a tour on the actual day of the tour will entail a cancellation fee being charge to cover the guide's expenses and any expenses Drakensberg Adventures and our Basotho partners have incurred.