



4 DAY THABANA NTLENYANA HIKE KIT LIST AND INFORMATION DOCUMENT

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.

WHAT TO BRING:

ITEMS IN BLACK ARE ESSENTIAL, THOSE IN RED ARE OPTIONAL.

Comfortable good quality rucksack (at least 55 - 65 litres capacity)

Good quality sleeping bag (down or equivalent) **(wrap in garbage bag to keep it dry)**

Closed cell sleeping mat (or equivalent)

Light plastic ground sheet (Opened up black rubbish bags work fine!)

Tent (see itinerary below for options)

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!)

Fleece top or down jacket (or jersey depending on season)

Sun hat – Note that the sun at high altitude is very powerful and this is an essential item together with sunscreen.

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)

Accessories

Light waterproof sandals (such as Crocs)

Torch and spare batteries (preferably head torch)

Water bottle

Camera

Small towel

Matches or lighter

Toilet paper (**In plastic bag to keep dry!**)

Digging tool for ablutions

Candle

Trekking poles or hiking stick

Cellphone

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.

General Tour Information:

Climb the highest point south of Kilimanjaro as it should be climbed, from the Lesotho side!! The trip combines an exhilarating hike with the cultural experience of Molumong and the unique overnight stay in or by a Shepherd's dwelling ("*motebo*"). A local guide accompanies the group and provides pack donkeys to carry luggage. Our guide also accompanies the group.

Day 1: 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. Traditional Basotho lunch with 'Me Vitelelna. 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. Travel on and into the typical highland village country on to our riding base at Molumong Lodge where we stay the night. **NOTE: Accommodation is in a rondavel There is no electricity or running water. A basin of water will be provided for bathing. The toilet is a "long drop" (pit latrine). All bedding is provided including warm duvets and hot water bottles.**

Days 2, 3 and half of day 4, hike to the highest peak in Southern Africa, Thabana Ntlenyana at 3482m.

DAY 4: After lunch at Molumong, drive back to Sani Lodge.

HIKING DISTANCES AND ALTITUDE VARIATIONS

The route followed is flexible and thus variable and depends on a number of factors such as time of the year, weather conditions, strength of the group etc. The summit of Thabana Ntlenyana is at 3482m. As a rough guide, the days could look like this:

Day 1: no hiking, we travel up the Sani Pass and into Lesotho to the base camp at Molumong

Day 2: is around 20km and 1000m altitude gain

Day 3 is around 6km hike to the summit with an altitude gain of around 250m, then a further 12km descent of around 500m

Day 4 is around 14km with a further altitude drop of around 700m back to the road

Accommodation in a motebo or if you prefer, in your own tent. Motebo are often quite dusty and sleeping space can be cramped and uneven, so those with allergies may prefer their own tent. We can provide a limited number of tents for hire at R100 each for clients requiring them. We also have roll mats to hire at R20 each.

EXTREME CONDITIONS: *Thabana Ntlenyana is very high, meaning that conditions at any time of the year can be extreme. You need to be prepared for this, both mentally and in terms of your equipment and especially warm and wet weather gear and sub-zero quality sleeping bags.*

(NOTE THAT THE HIGHEST PUB IN AFRICA AT SANI MOUNTAIN ESCAPE HAS A POLICY WHICH MEANS THAT OUR CLIENTS CAN NO LONGER ACCESS THE PUB. WE WILL OFFER CLIENTS AN ALTERNATIVE EXPERIENCE AT THE BAR AT THE NEARBY MASOBASOBA LODGE. UNFORTUNATELY THIS IS BEYOND OUR CONTROL – THE OWNERS OF THE HIGHEST PUB ARE ENTITLED TO SET THEIR OWN RULES)

Toilet stops: Flush toilets at the SA border post, and the Highest Pub (on the way back), pit latrine (long drop) at Molumong, *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 following days 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 tour. In the rare event of the road being closed due to snow, ice or a heavy storm damaging the road and we know this is the case, the tour will have to be cancelled. In this case, we would aim to offer you a day 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. Any delay in departure to accommodate re-opening of the road would be entertained assuming guides remain available and accommodation along the way can be changed. If we set off without knowing about a road closure, we would follow the same procedure. Any refund payable will take account of expenses incurred by guides, Drakensberg Adventures and our Basotho partners in the tours. **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.