



KIT LIST FOR VILLAGE EXPERIENCE 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:

Kit should be kept to a minimum – a small day pack should be quite sufficient

Warm windproof and preferably waterproof jacket/raincoat or rain suit or poncho.
Fleece jacket or top (or equivalent).
One change of clothes securely wrapped in a plastic bag to keep them dry; trousers, tracksuit, jersey for winter.
Sun hat.
Sun bloc cream.
Suitable footwear for riding and walking.
Swimming costume (summer)
Small towel.
Beanie or balaclava and gloves (winter).
Long pants suitable for riding if you plan to ride (tracksuit pants work well).
500ml water bottle.
Torch or flashlight (a head torch is ideal).
Camera.
Personal medications and toiletries.
Refuse bag for your own rubbish

MEALS:

All meals are provided on the 2 and 3 day village experience trips.
2 day tour: Day 1: packed lunch, dinner Day 2: breakfast and sit down lunch.
3 day tour: Day 1: packed lunch, dinner Day 2: breakfast, sit down lunch, dinner day 3: 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 day 2 (or day 3 on a 3 day tour)

Tour itinerary: 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 April and 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. Stop at Bobatsi village, home of Ntate Retumetsi and his family. Settle in, then go for a walk into the village. See how people live. Visit the traditional healer (have a personal consultation if you like – small extra cost). Evening traditional dancing and singing. Delicious traditional Basotho food prepared by the host family. Sleep the night at Bobatsi.

NOTE: Accommodation is in a traditionally built thatched rondavels. 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.

Day 2 has a variety of options. If schools are open, we visit the nearby school where Retumetsi teaches. Another optional activity is horse-riding which is not included in the tour price. A walk into the beautiful mountains and valleys is another option. After lunch on day 2, return descending Sani Pass to Sani Lodge.

(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)

3 day tour: Having an extra day means that the activities can all be done at a more leisurely pace! **TOTAL IMMERSION** - Spend an extra day with the Retumetsi and have the time to really get a feel of the rhythm of life in the highlands. Climb a nearby peak, spend longer on horseback, help with the agricultural or cooking chores and become a part of the community!! There is also time to visit the highlands town of Mokhotlong.

3 day Combination Tour: Combine the 2 day Village Experience with the 2 day Pony Trek – a popular choice giving you the best of both tours!

Toilet stops: Flush toilets at the SA border post and the Pub, pit latrine (long drop) at the Lesotho border post and at Bobatsi, *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.



All the various groups who provide services to our groups while at Bobatsi are also paid on a per head basis. This is discussed at regular meetings with all role-players.

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.