



KIT LIST AND INFORMATION DOCUMENT FOR 4 DAY THABANA NTLENYANA PONY TREK

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 pony trekking trips, your personal kit is carried by yourself in your own day pack on your back, not in saddle bags on the ponies. Kit should be therefore kept to a minimum.

Very good quality sleeping bag (rated at least -5C) (wrap in plastic bag to keep it dry)

Very good quality rain suit (jacket and pants)

Very good quality warm and windproof clothing suitable for high altitude (On the top of the Drakensberg and Maluti Mountains in Lesotho there is a possibility of snow and / or freezing conditions at any time of the year)

Long pants suitable for riding (tracksuit pants work well).

One or more change of clothes (depending on length of trip) wrapped in a plastic bag to keep them dry.

Sun hat.

Sun bloc cream.

Suitable footwear for riding and walking.

Swimming costume (summer)

Small towel.

Beanie or balaclava and gloves (winter).

500ml water bottle.

Torch or flashlight (a head torch is ideal).

Camera.

Personal medications and toiletries.

Refuse bag for your own rubbish

Plastic ground sheet (these two items will be carried on the pack ponies).

Roll of toilet paper and matches or lighter (to burn used toilet paper) securely contained in a zip lock plastic bag.

Tent – recommended although you can also sleep in the *motebo*

Roll mat to sleep on

MEALS:

All meals are provided on all pony trekking trips.

Day 1: Traditional Basotho lunch, dinner

Days 2 and 3: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 4: breakfast, 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, i.e., 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 4

Tour itinerary:

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. Enjoy a traditional Basotho lunch with ‘Me Vitelena in Sekiring village. 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. Travel over the Pass and down the other side, following the Sehonghong River valley on into the typical highland village country on to our riding base camp at Molumong. Enjoy the afternoon in Molumong village where we stay the night and enjoy dinner.

DAY 2: Meet the horse guide and the horses, saddle up set off on a full day’s riding. Initially we will ride through villages before starting the long ascent. We stop for the night next to a *motebo* where we pitch camp.

DAY 3: An early start sees us reach the summit!! Having enjoyed being right on the top of the world, we start the journey back, stopping for the night next to a different *motebo*.

DAY 4: Ride back to base camp at Mpolumong in time for a hearty lunch before starting the return journey in the Landrover. We aim to be back at Sani Lodge by 5.00 – 5.30pm.

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.

(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, pit latrine (long drop) at the Lesotho border post and in Molumong village, *au natural* elsewhere on the tour.

RIDING HELMETS: Note that Basotho people do not ride wearing helmets, and the operators in Lesotho do NOT provide helmets for riders. If you wish to wear a helmet, you either need to bring your own, or else you can hire them from us. We have a number of helmets with variable head sizes available to hire at R50 per trip, with a deposit of R100 to be left behind and returned to you once the helmet is returned in good order. You will be asked about this on your indemnity form to be filled in prior to departure and must hire the helmet from the Lodge office prior to departure if you want one.

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.

If you would like to read a personal account of one of our Pony Treks, please go to the following link:
<https://bestregardsfromfar.com/2018/01/23/horseback-riding-lesotho/>