



FEEL AFRIC MI CASA SU CASA

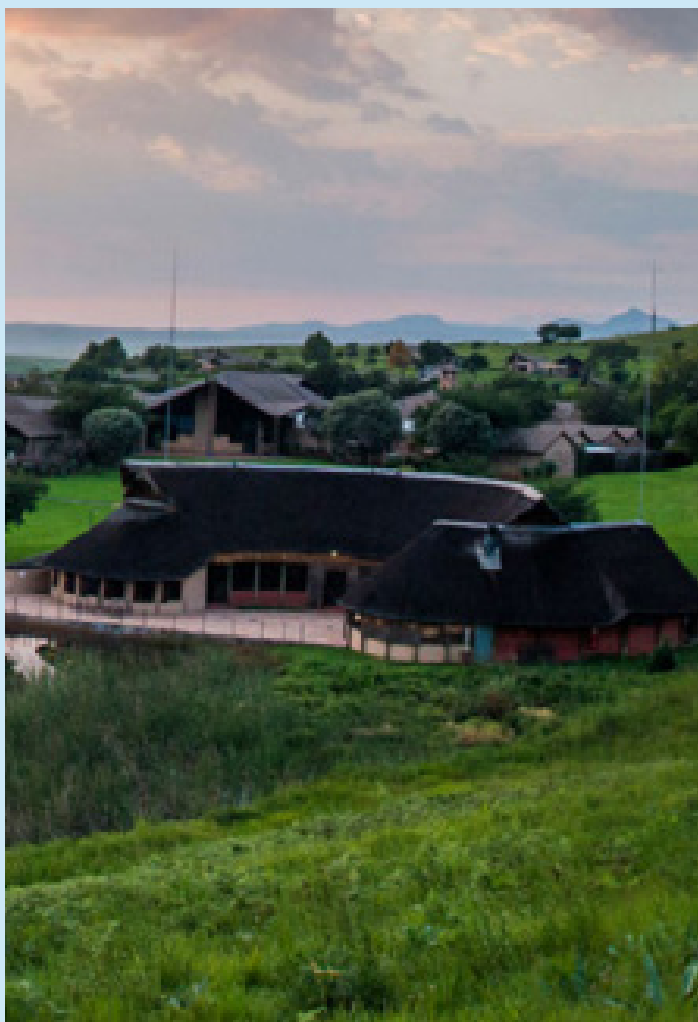


Initially, we'd based ourselves at the Glengarry at the top end of the Kamberg Valley, and decided to head out to Kamberg Rock Art Centre. Although the weather never played its part, I would humbly suggest that the Drakensberg should be at the top of the list – bucket list, that is – of every South African. It's at the Kamberg Rock Art centre where you can access the soul of southern African rock art. We stopped to photograph the two sandstone-boulder columns welcoming us to the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Park World Heritage Site.

Waterfall Shelter, now on a guided walk from the Centre, is seen as the 'Rosetta Stone' of southern African rock in Scientific America for the first time in 1915, and it was the documenting of this find that moved archaeologists to theorise that the paintings were symbolic in nature. 'At first thought to be reproductions of everyday life and hunting... many of the mystical images are now seen as 'therianthropic,' or images seen by shamans or healers while in a dance-induced trance*. There are more than 550 sites, containing some 40 000 San Bushman rock art drawings, in the Drakensberg. Fortunately, the UKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park has been declared a World Heritage Site. But the berg doesn't just offer great rock art opportunities; there's fishing, too.



There are 7 designated camping sites and an ablution block with hot and cold water. Visitors can also overnight in Aasvoël and Caracal Cave if they want to. Our comfy Jurgens 'cave' was swishing along quietly behind as we left Glengarry, heading back on the tar road to Rosetta. About a kilometre away, we took the gravel road back to the Kamberg Rock Art Centre. As we crossed over the Mooi River, we headed left; straight on would have led us past the small settlement of Thendele and on to the Rock Art Centre. But the berg doesn't just offer great rock art opportunities; there's fishing, too. I now have two mantras that I end up muttering on every trip: 'I will never travel without ultra-light



We also didn't get up to Mahai camp at the Royal Natal National Park.

I have had the privilege of hiking across the Drakensberg – the so-called Grand Traverse; and the first time we started in the south at Bushmansnek, ending at the Amphitheatre with the Mont-aux-Sources Peak holding court above the five-kilometre-long Amphitheatre wall with its near 500-metre drop to the valley below.

I had read a quote on the Kamberg Rock Art Centre website, which went like this: “No more do we Bushmen hunt in these hills.

The fire is cold.

Our songs are quiet.

But listen carefully.

You will hear us in the water.

Look carefully; you will see us in the rocks.”

I searched everywhere to find the author of these words. Perhaps all the unknown author asks of one is to arrive, be still, look and listen. Then, you too, will once again hear their song.

We had taken the advice of a very experienced couple we'd met in the Midlands, to take this route skirting the foothills of the 'Berg and on to the camp at Loteni.

From here, we would go on to Himeville, Underberg and on to the Drakensberg Gardens Resort. Later, we realised that our 'route planners' travel in a 4x4 bakkie with a rooftop tent, which is a very different kettle of fish from towing a caravan designed for tar. Hindsight is an exact science!

On that first part of the journey, we saw only the occasional farmhouse, and one bakkie, all the way to the Loteni turn off. The road winds sinuously up hill and down dale in the foothills of the Drakensberg. We had one of those perfect Berg days – warm

sun, blue skies, and that velvet green grassland rolling away like a giant billiard table.

Carmen came up with the idea of starting a Slow Travel Movement, similar to the Slow Food Movement.

Now committed STM'ers, we trundled along to Himeville. A mandatory stop at the magnificent Himeville Museum was called for, before moseying on to nearby Bergville, a mere five-and-a-half kilometres away. The Grind Café next to the Senqu outdoor clothing shop was the right place for a pizza and a great cappuccino.

It's a beautiful drive down to the Drakensberg Gardens Golf and Spa Resort from the hamlet of Underberg. The Caravan Park is on the right before you enter the resort.

