

Beit Bridge to Pietermaritzburg

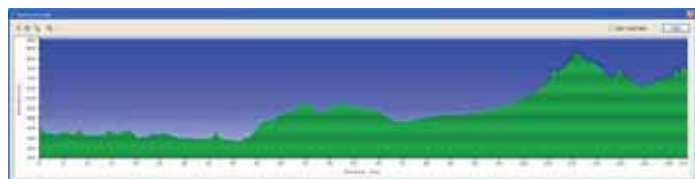
A short day-by-day description of the route.



01 Beit Bridge to Camp Mangwele

- Beit Bridge to Tsipize - 87 km
- Tsipize to Camp Mangwele – 46 km

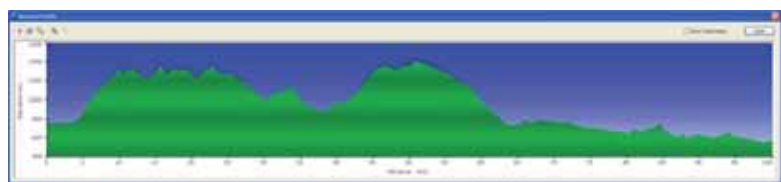
This section is dominated by the Giants of the north, the Baobab. Follow the Limpopo downstream on the old border patrol route south-east. Then the track swing south-west and follow gravel roads and jeep track through big game country until it emerge in the very rural Vendaland. The track then follow gravel roads of varying quality to a community run “camp” with very basic facilities.



02 Camp Mangwele to Madyisa Lodge

- Camp Mangwele to Kliphuis – 48 km
- Kliphuis tot Madyisa Lodge – 47 km

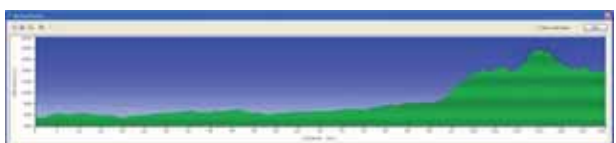
The Soutpansberg dominates the first half of this track and then it is the fertile valley of the Levuvhu river. It starts by climbing up and over the first ridge of the Soutpansberg through rural Vendaland and then drop down past the Sacred Lake Fendutsi. Suddenly the track enters Forestry area and it crosses the Mutshindudi River as it feeds into the Vondo Dam. It climbs steeply up the second ridge of the Soutpansberg and reaches an old forestry house called Kliphuis. It follows a good forestry road down the Soutpansberg and emerges in the farming area of Levubu. As the track crosses the Levuvhu River it again follows roads and jeep track through rural areas to end at the community run Lodge Madyisa.



03 Madyisa Lodge to Haenertsberg

- Madyisa Lodge to Moketsi – 73 km
- Moketsi to Haenertsburg – 55 km

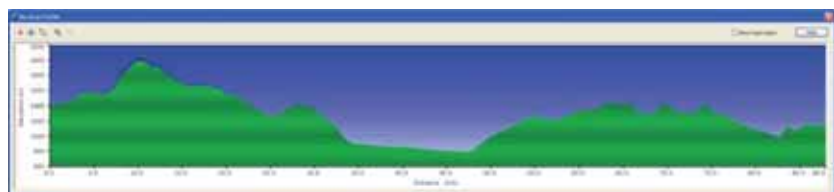
The route follows grave roads and jeep tracks through the rural area until the Tropic of Capricorn. Suddenly it is difficult to find gravel roads but the tar is kept to a minimum and the track zigzags through the farmlands of ZZ3, a well known tomato producer. From Moketsi the hard work for the day starts as the track climbs up to the Wolkberg foothills and the very historical mining town called Haenertsburg.



04 Haenertsburg to Kamp Mafef

- Haenertsburg to Wolkberg – 20 / 46 km
- Wolkberg to Camp Mafef – 65 km

Arguably the most spectacular day of mountain biking in the country, but certainly not the easiest 85 km. The track climbs up to the top of The Iron Crown (not to be confused with a pub in Haenertsburg with the same name). If carrying your bike up the mountain is not your cup of tea there is a Forestry road option. It then descends down a good forestry road to the Wolkberg office where a permit must be obtained for riding through the Wolkberg Wilderness Reserve. The track follows the Mohlapitse river and then up the Orrie Baragwanath pass and into the Lekgalameetse Nature Reserve. Shortly after exiting the Reserve the day's track ends at Camp Mafef, part of the African Ivory Route. Facilities here are very rustic and a thatch roof is the only guarantee.



05 Camp Mafef to Burgersfort

- Camp Mafef to Burgersfort – 112 km

The track follows a jeep track down to the Olifants River and crossing the Olifants has it's own challenges. Then the track cuts through rural villages until the second river needs to be crossed. After crossing the Steelpoort River the track follows a railway service jeep track until it reaches the luxury of Hannah Lodge.



06 Burgersfort to Pilgrim's Rest

- Burgersfort to Pilgrim's Rest – 78 km

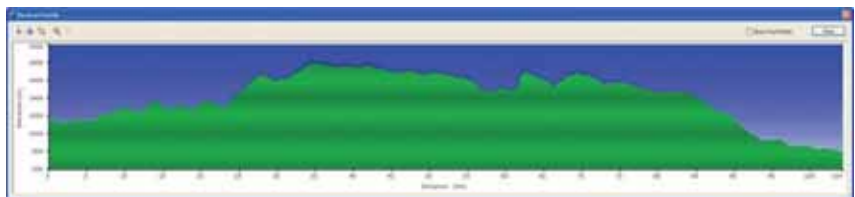
The track continues along the scenic railway line to Ohrigstad. Then a gravel road over Kasper's Neck leads to the historic mining town called Pilgrim's Rest where the Royal Hotel provides scrumptious meals and luxury accommodation.



07 Pilgrim's Rest to Mankele

- Pilgrim's Rest to Misty Mountain – 60 km
- Misty Mountain to Mankele – 45 km

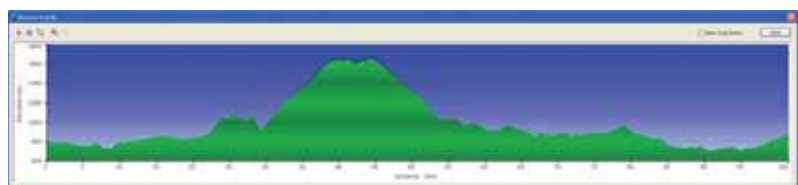
A day typified by forestry tracks. The highlight of the day must surely be the ride on the Harbeesvlakte along the eastern escarpment. If time permits a quick visit to the Sudwala Cave System will be well worth it.



08 Mankele to Barberton

- Mankele to Kaapsche Hoop – 44 km
- Kaapsche Hoop to Barberton – 62 km

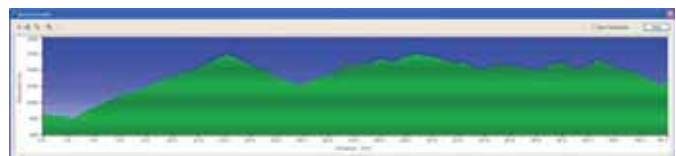
How much history can there be in one day's riding? Again the service track of the railway line is used to bypass the very busy N4 route to Nelspruit. Then the very secluded Starvation Creek entertains the rider until Kaapsche Hoop historic mining town is the ideal place for lunch. A steep drop down the escarpment to Barberton is followed by a ride through forestry areas and eventually Barberton awaits. Here it would be easy to spend a whole day to take in all the history.



09 Barberton to Bulembu

- Barberton to Bulembu – 49 km

An early departure from Barberton is advisable so as to find the Pitbull Terriers still asleep. After some lovely forestry riding an unavoidable quiet tar section ends at the very quiet border post close to Bulembu, an abandoned mining town inside Swaziland. A passport is a must for this section. Bulembu is now being renovated and used for housing AIDS orphans.



10 Bulembu to Mbabane

- Bulembu to Mbabane – 77 km

There is something mystical about riding your mountain bike in “other” countries, and Swaziland is no different. A day of magical forestry tracks, footpaths, cattle tracks, river crossings and much more. Accommodation is available on the outskirts of Mbabane so no need to negotiate any city traffic.



11 Mbabane to Amsterdam

- Mbabane to Amsterdam – 107 km

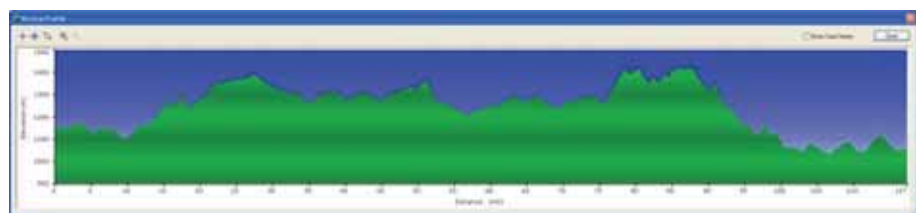
Still the magic continues as the track follows remote paths and disused railway lines through rural Swaziland. An early start is important as the border post comes towards the end of the day.



12 Amsterdam to Lunenburg

- Amsterdam to Lunenburg – 119 km

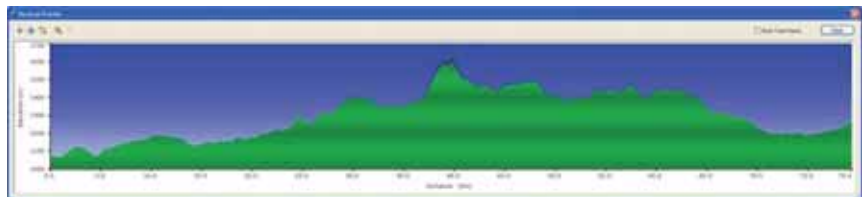
The track meanders and undulates through the eastern Highveld. In winter the typical beauty of the yellow grassland is broken by the patches of green forestry plantations. Even in winter there is a chance to ride into a thunder storm. Lunenburg is a German community that is rich in history and interesting people



13 Lunenburg to Bloedrivierpoort

- Lunenburg to Bloedrivierpoort – 80 km

Heading south from Lunenburg the track meanders through typical Highveld farm land and first crosses the Pongola River that feeds the Pongolopoort Dam, previously known as the Jozini Dam in Northern KZN. It then crosses the Bivane River that feeds into the Pongolo river just before the Pongolopoort Dam. Towards the end of the day the track enters the historic Blood River Valley where not only Boer fought Zulu, but also had some skirmishes with the British.



14 Bloedrivierpoort to Rorke's Drift

- Bloedrivierpoort to Rorke's Drift – 95 km

The track follows the Southern flow of the Blood River. As the track crosses the Blood River it passes two museums, each on its own side of this historical river and each telling its own side of the same tragic story. From here it leaves the farm land behind and enters typical isiZulu and seSotho homesteads and roads. The track passes Saint Augustine's Church, that is certainly worth a visit, before arriving at the traditional Zulu village at Rorke's Drift. The Blood River flows into the Buffels River and it in turn flows into the mighty Tugela.



15 Rorke's Drift to Ntingwe Tea

- Rorke's Drift to Ntingwe Tea – 83 km

Leaving the battle fields via Isandluwan the track enters the very hilly KZN Midlands. Thinking of KwaZulu-Natal does not usually bring images of world-class tea production to mind. However, Nkandla, in the rural heartland of the province, is home to a world-renowned tea producer that is changing the lives of a community. The 25-hectare Ntingwe Tea Estate was created by the Ithala Development Finance Corporation in 1988 and later funded jointly by KwaZulu-Natal's agriculture and environmental affairs department. <http://www.southafrica.info/business/success/ntingwe-210508.htm>



16 Ntingwe Tea to Kranskop

- Ntingwe Tea to Kranskop – 83 km

The roller coaster ride into the Tugela Valley will soon be forgotten after crossing the mighty Tugela River at Jameson's Drift. The climb out of the valley from 300m above sea level to Spekfontein at 1280m is not for the faint hearted.



17 Kranskop to Dalton

- Kranskop to Christa's (Dalton) – 93 km

A day that is a mix of cultivated sugar cane farms and the very hilly Valley of a Thousand Hills. The day starts amongst the sugar canes of Kranskop. Then the track crosses 2 rivers in the rural valleys. First is the Hlimbitwa River and then the Mvoti Rver. Shortly after this the track is back amongst the sugar canes. Staying over at Christa's is another highlight.



18 Dalton to Pietermaritzburg

- Christa's (Dalton) to Aintree Lodge – 75 km

The track continues in the pattern of the previous day and meanders through the very neat sugar can fields until it enters the rural valley of a thousand hills. The track crosses the Umgeni River just below the Nagle Dam. Reaching Table Mountain the track then drops down in to the Msunduze River before entering Pietermaritzburg.

