



SCAN TO EXPLORE
THE DIGITAL
GUIDE

VISIT — DRAKENSBERG AND BEYOND

"A Gateway Destination"



CONTENTS

WELCOME MESSAGE.....	02
ABOUT THE HGDA.....	03
DESTINATION MAP.....	04
THE FEEL OF DRAKENSBERG AND BEYOND.....	05
NATURE & WILDERNESS.....	06
ADVENTURE.....	13
HERITAGE, CULTURE AND SPIRITUAL & MISSION TOURISM.....	20
FILM TOURISM.....	29
ARTS, CRAFTS & COMMUNITY TOURISM.....	30
FOOD & LOCAL FLAVOURS.....	37
TOURISM EVENTS.....	41
ACCOMMODATION & STAYS.....	50
EMERGENCY SERVICES CONTACTS	51



WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to the Harry Gwala District, home of the magnificent Drakensberg and Beyond destination, where breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage, thrilling adventures and warm hospitality come together to create unforgettable experiences.

With picturesque scenery, authentic heritage and film-ready support, Drakensberg and Beyond welcomes local and international production and film practitioners to explore, scout and shoot their next story.

From the iconic Sani Pass and the majestic Southern Drakensberg mountains to the pristine Ntsikeni Nature Reserve, visitors can enjoy hiking, mountain biking, birdwatching, fishing, horse riding and a variety of outdoor adventures amidst some of South Africa's most spectacular scenery.

Our region is equally renowned for its vibrant cultural experiences, local arts and crafts, heritage attractions and exciting events, including the prominent Splashy Fen Music Festival, renowned mountain biking events including Sani2c, Sani Stagger sporting event, trail running challenges, cultural festivals and community celebrations that showcase the vibrancy of our region.

Whether you seek luxury accommodation, hotels, lodges, cosy guesthouses, self-catering retreats, family resorts, backpacking or camping under the stars, Drakensberg and Beyond offers accommodation options to suit every traveller and budget.

We invite you to explore our natural wonders, experience our rich traditions and discover the unique spirit of our people.

HARRY GWALA DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



The Harry Gwala Development Agency exists to unlock the economic potential of the district by supporting business growth, attracting investment and creating opportunities that strengthen local communities.

This brochure is more than a guide to beautiful places. It is a platform for local tourism businesses, accommodation providers, restaurants, artists, guides, event organisers and community enterprises to be seen, visited and supported.

Through this publication, the Agency proudly showcases the natural beauty, cultural depth, adventure experiences, heritage sites and warm hospitality that make Drakensberg and Beyond a destination of true possibility.

Every mountain view, every local establishment and every experience featured here forms part of a bigger mission: to grow tourism as a driver of jobs, enterprise development and sustainable economic activity across the district.

DESTINATION MAP



THE FEEL OF DRAKENSBERG AND BEYOND

*A place where South Africa
still feels beautifully real*



Drakensberg and Beyond is a destination of texture: gravel roads and mountain passes, red-brick missions and stone buildings, trout rivers and wetlands.



Cafés with fresh bread and fireside stories. Music rising at local gatherings. Cattle moving through open fields.



Cyclists, hikers, paddlers and artists all finding their own rhythm.



The beauty of the region is that it has not been flattened into a single idea. It is refined and rustic, spiritual and adventurous, peaceful and alive.

**FOR THE TRAVELLER, THAT MEANS EVERY
DAY CAN BECOME A DIFFERENT KIND
OF EXPERIENCE.**



NATURE & WILDERNESS

*Mountains, wetlands, rivers
and skies without end*

Nature is the first language of Drakensberg and Beyond. Before the museums, cafés, events and lodges, there is the land itself: the sharp drama of the Drakensberg, the softness of Ixopo hills, the quiet power of Ntsikeni wetlands, the flow of the Umzimkhulu River and the stillness of hidden valleys.



MOUNTAINS



WETLANDS



RIVERS



VALLEYS



FLORA AND FAUNA



WILD PLACES
DON'T JUST
TAKE YOUR
BREATH AWAY.

They give it back



ICONIC SANI PASS

Sani Pass is not just a road; it is a rite of passage. The climb begins in the green foothills and rises through switchbacks, cliffs and open sky until the world feels wider than before. The route demands respect: steep gradients, changing weather and a sense of adventure that makes every kilometre unforgettable. At the summit, travellers stand between South Africa and Lesotho, rewarded with mountain silence, panoramic views and the feeling of having crossed into another altitude of life.



MALOTI- DRAKENSBERG PARK

A UNESCO World Heritage Site and transfrontier conservation area spanning the border between South Africa and Lesotho. Known locally as uKhahlamba ("Barrier of Spears"), it features dramatic basalt cliffs, sandstone ramparts, and high-altitude grasslands. The park is recognised for both outstanding natural beauty and its cultural significance, containing the largest concentration of San rock art in sub-Saharan Africa, with thousands of paintings dating back over 4,000 years. It is also an important water catchment area and habitat for rare wildlife including the Bearded Vulture and Cape Vulture.



NATURE RESERVE AND WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



Nestled along the scenic R56 between Ixopo and Richmond in the heart of the Harry Gwala District, Dlangala Wildlife Sanctuary offers visitors an authentic escape into nature. Surrounded by rolling hills, indigenous landscapes and free-roaming wildlife, the sanctuary combines the tranquility of the countryside with unforgettable outdoor experiences.

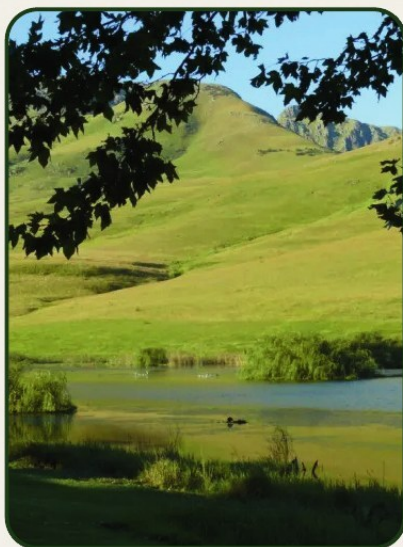
Whether exploring the reserve on a game drive, enjoying a camping getaway, relaxing at the lodge or attending one of the sanctuary's vibrant community events, Dlangala provides a memorable destination for families, adventurers and nature lovers alike. With breathtaking scenery, wildlife encounters, hiking opportunities and warm country hospitality, every visit becomes part of the landscape's story.



Ntsikeni Nature Reserve is one of the district's great quiet treasures. Set high above sea level, it offers expansive wetlands, rolling grasslands, waterfalls, birding routes and a feeling of distance from the everyday world. The journey itself becomes part of the experience, particularly for visitors travelling in 4x4 vehicles through rugged rural landscapes and mountain passes. Once there, the reserve rewards patience: birds moving across open skies, still waters reflecting drifting clouds, and walking trails that feel far removed from busy tourist routes.

Recognised as one of South Africa's largest intact high-altitude wetlands and a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, Ntsikeni has earned a reputation as one of the country's premier birding destinations. Its pristine marshes and grasslands provide critical habitat for an exceptional diversity of birdlife, including the iconic Blue Crane, South Africa's national bird, the elegant Grey Crowned Crane, and one of the country's most important breeding populations of the highly threatened Wattled Crane. For birdwatchers, photographers and nature enthusiasts, the opportunity to witness these magnificent cranes in their natural habitat is a rare privilege that firmly establishes Harry Gwala District as a must-visit destination for world-class birding. This is eco-tourism at its most authentic—wild, peaceful and deeply connected to the natural rhythms of the Southern Drakensberg landscape.





Mount Currie Nature Reserve is one of Greater Kokstad's defining natural spaces - a place where open grassland, rocky slopes, wildlife, birdlife and wide views come together close to town. The reserve offers visitors a peaceful outdoor stop with opportunities for hiking, birdwatching, photography, fishing and quiet time in nature.

For travellers moving through Kokstad, Mount Currie provides an accessible introduction to the district's wilderness character. Scenic without feeling remote, calm without feeling empty, it is a natural landmark, picnic stop, soft-adventure space and gateway into Greater Kokstad's outdoor offering.

UMZIMKHULU VULTURE HIDE



For birders and wildlife photographers, the UMzimkhulu Vulture Hide is one of the Southern Drakensberg's premier wildlife experiences. Set in the scenic Mzimkhulu River valley near Underberg, the hide offers a rare opportunity to observe the endangered Cape Vulture and the elusive Bearded Vulture at close range while supporting ongoing conservation efforts. It is a must-visit destination for those seeking exceptional birdwatching, photography and unforgettable encounters with some of Africa's most iconic raptors.

Beyond the hide, the mountains, grasslands and wetlands make Drakensberg & Beyond one of South Africa's outstanding birding destinations. These diverse habitats are home to flagship species including the graceful Blue Crane and the highly threatened Wattled Crane, alongside a remarkable variety of endemic and high-altitude birds. Here, conservation, adventure and discovery come together, offering visitors extraordinary wildlife experiences in landscapes of exceptional natural beauty.

ADVENTURE

*For travellers who want
more than a view*

Drakensberg and Beyond is not a destination to watch from a distance. It invites movement.



CLIMB THE PASS.



PADDLE THE RIVER.



RUN THE TRAIL.



RIDE THE HORSE.



FOLLOW THE SINGLETRACK.

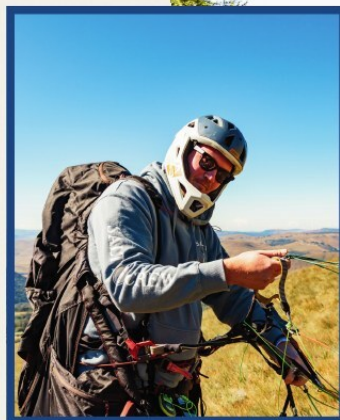


LIFT INTO THE AIR ABOVE BULWER.

Adventure here is not artificial; it comes from the land itself.

The destination's strongest activity offering sits in this truth: real terrain, real weather, real stories and experiences that feel earned.

MOVE. EXPLORE. CONNECT.



BULWER PARAGLIDING WILD SKY

Adventure above the mountains

Bulwer has become one of the region's signature adventure experiences. With Wild Sky, visitors can experience tandem flights and paragliding training in a landscape shaped for flight: open foothills, mountain backdrops and clean rising air.

The magic is in the contrast. One moment you are standing on the earth; the next, the land falls away and the Southern Drakensberg opens beneath you.

It is thrilling, but also strangely peaceful - the kind of experience that stays in the body long after landing.

SIGNATURE ADVENTURE EXPERIENCES



TANDEM FLIGHTS

Feel the thrill of flight with an experienced pilot. Take off from mountain launch sites and soar over breathtaking Drakensberg landscapes with professional guidance, a safety briefing and comfort throughout the experience. Perfect for first-time flyers and adrenaline seekers alike.



PARAGLIDING TRAINING

Learn to fly with professional instructors and internationally recognised training. From beginner ground handling to advanced solo flights, the courses are designed to build skills, confidence and a lifelong love for the sky.



SUNSET FLIGHTS

The sky puts on a show you will never forget. Glide into the golden hour and experience the Drakensberg bathed in unforgettable light - a peaceful, magical way to end the day elevated above the world.

SANI PASS GUIDED TOURS

*A mountain journey best taken
 with local knowledge*

The journey. The stories. The summit.

A guided Sani Pass tour turns a famous road into a layered travel experience. Local guides bring context to the cliffs, valleys, weather, border crossing and communities beyond the summit.

The journey is dramatic, but it is also human: stories along the route, pauses for photographs, highland views and the feeling that every bend has a memory.

For international travellers, this is one of the district's clearest bucket-list products. For South Africans, it is a reminder that adventure can be found close to home.



SIGNATURE ADVENTURE EXPERIENCES



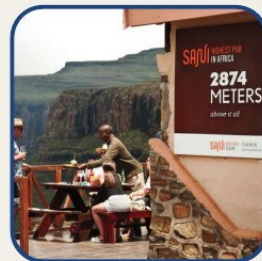
SCENIC 4X4 JOURNEY

Travel the legendary Sani Pass with experienced local guides in comfortable 4x4 vehicles. Steep climbs, dramatic switchbacks and breathtaking views at every turn make this an unforgettable adventure.



BORDER CROSSING EXPERIENCE

Cross into Lesotho at the summit and take in the unique culture, highland landscapes and warm hospitality of our mountain neighbours.



THE HIGHEST PUB IN AFRICA

Celebrate your Sani Pass adventure at the Highest Pub in Africa. At 2,874m, enjoy stunning views, hearty meals, and a refreshing drink in this iconic mountain top destination.

HORSE RIDING AND HIKING

Slow travel with a mountain heartbeat

HORSE RIDING

Horse riding in Drakensberg & beyond offers visitors a slower, more intimate way to experience the district's landscapes. Trails move through farm country, river valleys, grasslands and mountain foothills, giving riders the feeling of travelling with the land rather than simply passing through it. Around the Southern Drakensberg, guided horse experiences can range from relaxed scenic rides to longer mountain routes, with the rhythm of hooves, open views and rural silence creating an experience that is both adventurous and deeply grounding.



HIKING

Hiking is one of the strongest natural experiences, connecting visitors to waterfalls, wetlands, forest edges, mountain passes, mission routes, rural viewpoints and protected landscapes. From high-altitude trails in Ntsikeni and the Southern Drakensberg to guided community hikes and quieter local routes, Harry Gwala rewards those who travel on foot. The experience is not only about reaching a viewpoint; it is about moving through changing terrain, listening to the landscape and discovering the destination at human pace.



UMZIMKHULU RIVER

Adventure along the waterline

The Umzimkhulu River is one of Harry Gwala's most exciting outdoor corridors—a place where the landscape is not only admired, but experienced. Flowing through spectacular valleys and mountain scenery, the river offers opportunities for tubing, canoeing, fishing, riverside walks, swimming, picnicking and photography. Whether drifting with the current or exploring its tranquil banks, visitors can build memorable days around fresh air, open water and the region's natural beauty.

In the Southern Drakensberg, the Umzimkhulu River winds through a landscape rich in biodiversity, connecting scenic viewpoints, rural communities and outdoor recreation areas. From peaceful fishing spots and riverside trails to gentle paddling adventures and relaxing picnic sites, the river offers experiences for every pace of travel. It invites visitors to embrace the slower rhythms of nature while discovering one of Harry Gwala's most scenic and refreshing natural assets.



CYCLING & MTB COUNTRY

*From farm tracks to
world-famous routes*

The destination has earned a serious cycling reputation. Gravel roads, farm tracks, singletrack and mountain backdrops make it a natural playground for riders. Events such as Sani2c, Underberg Gran Fondo, Drak Descent and Sani-pass time trail amplify this identity, but the appeal extends beyond race day. Visitors come for training weekends, social rides, scenic gravel and the joy of moving through landscapes that constantly change under the wheels. Cycling gives the destination a modern adventure edge while still being rooted in rural terrain.

“ The landscape changes
with every turn of the wheel



CANOEING, TUBING & RIVER PLAY

Cool water, slow days and shared adventure

Harry Gwala's rivers and dams give visitors refreshing ways to experience the outdoors. Canoeing, tubing, swimming, riverside picnics and gentle water-based recreation add a playful layer to the district's adventure identity. These experiences are ideal for families, groups, backpackers and travellers who want active days without losing the relaxed rhythm of the countryside.

The beauty of river play in Harry Gwala is that it connects easily with other experiences: horse riding, hiking, camping, mountain biking, birding, farm stays and slow meals after a day outside. Whether the water is calm, lively or simply a scenic backdrop, it invites visitors to cool down, gather together and enjoy the district from a different angle.



HERITAGE, CULTURE, SPIRITUAL & MISSION TOURISM

Every place has a memory



Heritage is layered: San rock art, mission stations, Crique history, rural museums, old town buildings, artists, spiritual journeys and community memory.

These are not simply old objects or isolated places; they are living stories carried through faith, architecture, language, craft, music, food and the dignity of everyday life.

*"History here is not displayed.
 It is lived"*



Ancient stories etched in stone, connecting us to the first people.



Faith, education and community shaped our towns and values.



Places that keep memories alive for future generations.



Voices of our people — sharing experiences, struggles and triumphs.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY & HISTORY

Many stories. One district.

Harry Gwala District is a meeting place of cultures, histories and living traditions. Its identity has been shaped by San heritage, Griqua leadership, Bhaca and Zulu communities, Basotho highland influence, mission stations, rural farming life, artists, museums, spiritual routes and community memory. This is a district where heritage is not locked away in buildings; it is carried through language, music, faith, craft, food, architecture, family stories and the everyday dignity of its people.

Kokstad and East Griqualand hold an important place in this history. The legacy of Adam Kok III and the Griqua people remains part of the district's heritage landscape, reminding visitors that this region was shaped by migration, leadership, resilience and the search for belonging. Local monuments, museums and historical interpretation help connect these stories to the towns, landscapes and communities visitors encounter today.

Across the district, museums, mission stations, galleries, craft spaces and community attractions invite visitors to engage with heritage respectfully. From East Griqualand Museum and the Old Town Hall to Reichenau, Centocow, Kevelaer, Lourdes and Emaus, the district offers a layered cultural journey — one that connects architecture, spirituality, art, struggle, creativity and community pride.

GRIQUA HERITAGE



Leadership, migration and memory.

MISSION ROUTES



Faith, education and rural service.

LIVING CULTURE



Language, food, music, craft and community.

MUSEUMS & MONUMENTS



Places that preserve the district's story.



EAST GRIQUALAND MUSEUM

*A cultural anchor in
Kokstad*



DISCOVER INSIDE

HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

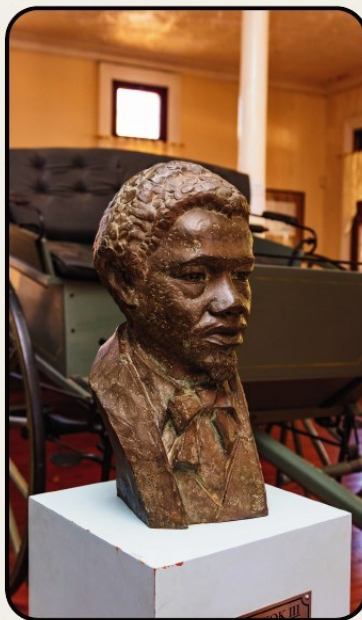
Documents and records that preserve the paper trail of our past.

CULTURAL ARTIFACTS

Objects that tell the story of daily life, trade, craft and tradition.

LOCAL STORIES

Voices and memories passed down through generations.



The East Griqualand Museum is one of Kokstad's key cultural anchors.

It preserves the histories, objects and memories of a region shaped by movement, identity, trade, settlement and rural life.

For visitors, it offers context before they continue into the wider district.

For locals, it affirms that the stories of this place deserve to be kept, studied and shared.

Adam Kok III, leader of the Griqua people, played a pivotal role in shaping the Harry Gwala region through the establishment of East Griqualand and the founding of Kokstad. His legacy remains an important part of the area's rich cultural and historical heritage.

*"Every object carries the
memory of a place."*



HIMEVILLE MUSEUM

A small museum with a big memory

Himeville Museum is housed in a historic stone fort and former prison, giving it a sense of atmosphere before a visitor even steps inside. Its exhibits stretch across San artefacts, Anglo-Boer War history, settler life, farming equipment and natural history. It is one of those rare local museums that feels intimate but full. For travellers moving toward Sani Pass, it offers the perfect heritage pause: a grounding moment before the mountain road.





GERARD BHENGU ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

*A South African story told
in line, colour and dignity*

The Gerard Bhengu Art Gallery is one of Harry Gwala's most important cultural offerings. Bhengu's work captures people, place and identity with tenderness, precision and observational power. His paintings and drawings do more than decorate a wall; they preserve ways of seeing, remembering and honouring everyday life.

For visitors, the gallery offers a quiet, refined encounter with the cultural life of the region - an experience rooted in artistry, dignity and South African memory.





OLD TOWN HALL

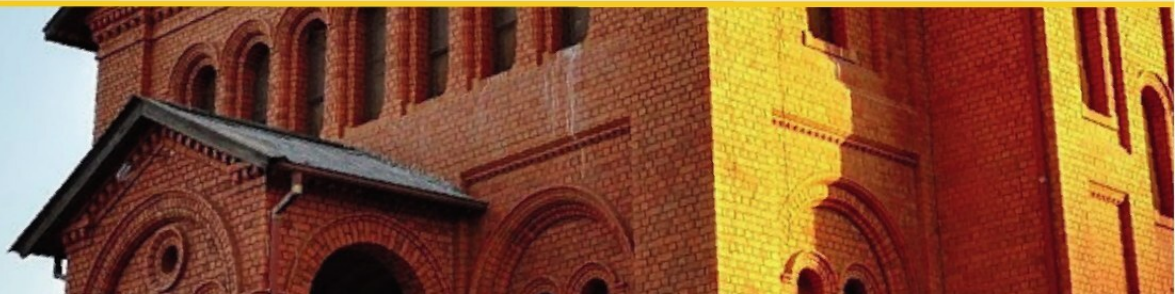
*A building that
remembers the town*

The Old Town Hall is one of Kokstad's most recognisable historic structures, carrying the presence of another era through its scale, age and architectural character. More than a landmark, it is a public memory in stone, timber and civic space.

Visitors are invited to pause, look up and imagine the town across generations - from the formal gatherings of the past to the living community that continues around it today.



“Architecture is
history made visible.”

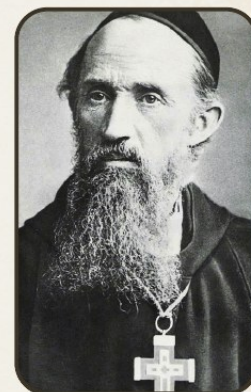


SPIRITUAL & MISSION TOURISM

Faith, farming and the sound of water

In 1882, Abbot Francis Pfanner arrived in Durban from Austria with 30 Trappist monks and established the Mariannhill Mission. Their goal was to spread Christianity while improving the lives of local communities through education, farming, healthcare, and skills development. Mariannhill became a self-sufficient mission with schools, workshops, a bakery, dairy, printing works, and other facilities.

Although many people embraced Catholicism, the missions also brought cultural tensions as traditional African beliefs and customs came into conflict with missionary teachings.



*Some places speak softly,
but stay with you longest.*

MISSION HERITAGE



SPIRITUAL HERITAGE

Faith that shaped communities and continues to inspire.



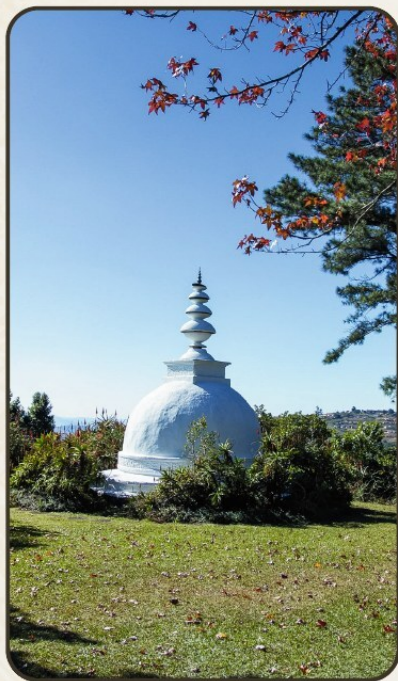
ABBOT PFANNER TRAPPIST TRAIL

Paths of devotion, reflection and meaning.

As the mission grew, several missions were established, including Reichenau, Centocow, Kevelaer, Mariathal, Lourdes and Emaus. These missions expanded access to education, medical care, and Christian ministry across rural KwaZulu-Natal. Emaus became Pfanner's final home, where he spent the last 15 years of his life before his death in 1909. Today, Emaus Mission continues to serve surrounding communities through its school, conference centre, and accommodation facilities, while remaining an important site of historical, cultural, and religious significance.



BUDDHIST RETREAT CENTRE



Nestled in the rolling hills of Ixopo, the Buddhist Retreat Centre is a place of tranquillity, reflection, and natural beauty. Surrounded by indigenous forests, peaceful gardens, and sweeping countryside views, it offers visitors a chance to slow down and reconnect with nature.

Whether enjoying a meditation retreat, exploring scenic walking trails, or simply embracing the calm atmosphere, the centre provides a unique escape from everyday life.



FILM TOURISM



The Harry Gwala District is establishing a comprehensive Film Tourism Strategy to position itself as a premier film-friendly destination in South Africa.

From 2026 onward, we warmly welcome local and international production houses to harness the district's rich, untapped heritage and breathtaking scenic landscapes as natural backdrops for storytelling.

The filmmaking industry presents significant economic opportunities, particularly in behind-the-scenes roles. Through targeted skills development programmes, the district supports both academic professionals and aspiring creatives to gain the technical and artistic expertise needed to thrive in this dynamic sector.

Harry Gwala District is ready to serve as the vibrant stage for your next production.

We invite producers and production teams from across South Africa and around the world to bring their creative visions to life in our extraordinary region.





ARTS, CRAFTS & COMMUNITY TOURISM

The human texture of the district

- ◆ The district's creative life is found in studios, workshops, markets, homesteads and social spaces.
- ◆ It is in wool moved across looms, clay painted by hand, beads threaded with patience, food cooked over fire and conversations that turn visitors into guests.



CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Studios, artisans and makers who bring ideas to life.



SKILLED TRADITIONS

Crafts and skills passed down and perfected through generations.



LOCAL MARKETS

Vibrant spaces where creativity, culture and community connect.



FOOD & HOSPITALITY

Flavours and stories shared around warm tables.

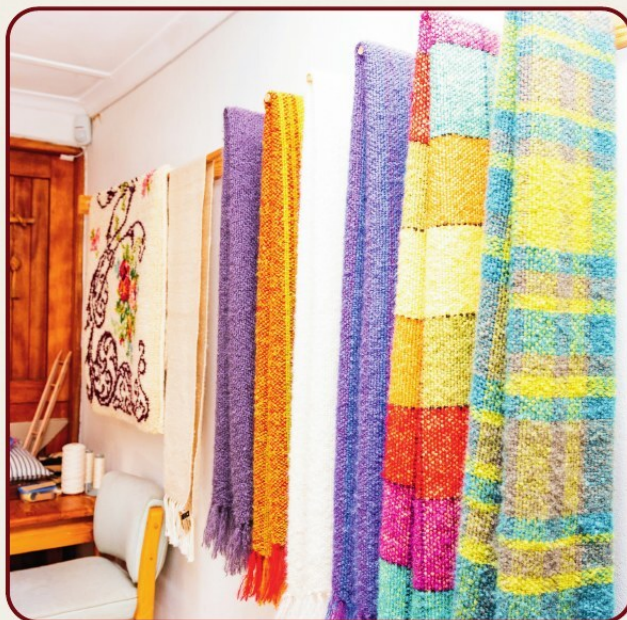
JUST ART STUDIO

The mountains, painted through local eyes

Just Art Studio gives visitors a creative window into the Southern Drakensberg. The studio reflects the surrounding landscape through art: Nguni cattle, mountain scenes, wildlife, rural textures and the colour of place.

Travellers can take home more than a souvenir - they can take home a piece shaped by local interpretation, memory and feeling. Intimate, visual and rooted in place, the studio is a refined cultural stop for anyone drawn to the landscapes and stories of the region.





BERG WEAVING

Where wool, patience and pattern become memory

Berg Weaving is the kind of place that slows a visitor down.

Here, traditional looms turn natural fibres into rugs, tapestries and woven pieces that carry warmth, skill and time.

Watching the process is part of the experience: hands working steadily, threads crossing, patterns emerging.

It reminds travellers that craft is not only an object to buy; it is knowledge, livelihood and beauty made visible.

“
 Craft is not only
 an object to buy.
 It is a story to carry



CRAFT HIGHLIGHTS



TRADITIONAL LOOMS

Tools of heritage.
 Hands of mastery.



NATURAL FIBRES

Wool and fibre
 from the land.

STONEHOUSE COLLECTABLES

Treasures inside one of Himeville's oldest walls

Stonehouse Collectables feels like stepping into a small archive of charm. Housed in a historic stone building, it offers antique glassware, silver, mirrors, paintings and carefully selected vintage pieces. The appeal is not only in what is for sale, but in the atmosphere: old walls, restored character and the thrill of finding something with a past. For visitors, it adds a gentle, stylish stop between cafés, museums and mountain drives.

“Some treasures don't shine because they're new, but because they've lived”

TIMELESS FINDS

- ◆ **HISTORIC SETTING**
A beautiful old building with stories in its walls.
- ◆ **CAREFULLY CURATED**
Antiques, vintage and collectables chosen with care.
- ◆ **TREASURES WITH A PAST**
Each piece carries character, history and meaning.
- ◆ **A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE**
More than shopping — it's a journey through time and memory.
- ◆ **A PERFECT PIT STOP**
A stylish pause on your way to more mountain adventures.



RURAL HOMESTAYS

Stay with the people who call this landscape home

A community-based tourism initiative that offers visitors an authentic rural experience. Guests stay in traditional-style rondavels or family homes and engage in daily village life, including cultural activities such as storytelling, craft demonstrations, and guided walks. The homestays are locally owned and support sustainable tourism while preserving cultural heritage, with guided hikes to lesser-known viewpoints and horse riding. There are various homestays within the Drakensberg and Beyond such as, Kilmon Homestays (Underberg) and Mj Moon Homestays (Umhlabashane, Ixopo).





UBUNTU BEADWORK & LOCAL CRAFT

Young hands carrying culture forward

Ubuntu beadwork represents the future-facing side of cultural craft: young creatives using traditional skill to build beauty, income and confidence. Their beaded accessories are more than colourful objects; they carry patience, identity and the pride of making something by hand.

Fresh, youthful and deeply rooted in culture, this craft reminds visitors that local creativity is alive, evolving and worth supporting





SHISANYAMA & LOCAL LIFESTYLE

Where the district relaxes after sunset

To understand the district's social energy, follow the fire. Shisanyama and lifestyle spaces such as Marley's Shisanyama and Bar, Mchana's Lifestyle and Shisanyama, Billy's Shisanyama and Chill, Mphemba's Lounge and Restaurant, Unity Social Lounge and Sho't Left Shisanyama bring together food, music, conversation and local personality.

These are places where visitors can feel the modern life of rural towns: relaxed, expressive, generous and unmistakably South African.



FOOD & LOCAL FLAVOURS

From mountain cafés to fireside meals

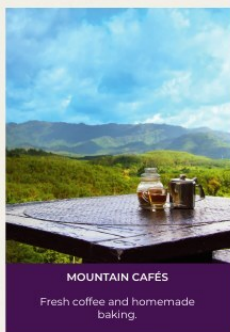
Food in Drakensberg and Beyond is strongest when it is connected to place: trout near the rivers, farm-style breakfasts in the mountains, baked goods in Himeville cafés, artisanal preserves, cheese, local braai culture and restaurants that know their communities by name.

This is not a destination of overproduced dining.

It is a destination of honest flavour, fresh air and meals that feel like part of the journey.

“

The best meals are remembered not only for their flavour, but for where they were shared.



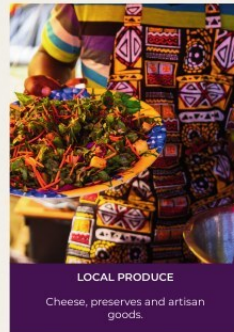
MOUNTAIN CAFÉS

Fresh coffee and homemade baking.



FARM BREAKFASTS

Slow mornings and local ingredients.



LOCAL PRODUCE

Cheese, preserves and artisan goods.



FIRESIDE DINING

Warm meals and memorable evenings.



FRESH INGREDIENTS

Picked with care and cooked with pride.



LOCAL SUPPLIERS

Supporting local farmers and producers.



CAFÉS & COFFEE CULTURE

Small stops with big memory

Cafés in the Drakensberg and Beyond are small stops with big memory. They are the places where travelers slow down between mountain drives, museum visits, craft browsing and outdoor adventures. A good cup of coffee becomes part of the route; a slice of cake, a farm breakfast or a fireside lunch becomes part of the story.

From Himeville and Underberg to country roads and riverside settings, the district's café culture is warm, unpretentious and rooted in place. Visitors can expect fresh coffee, homemade baking, local produce, garden tables, mountain views and the kind of hospitality that makes a quick stop feel like a return visit.

In a gateway destination, cafés are not only places to eat. They are pauses in the journey - spaces where the landscape, the people and the flavour of the district meet.



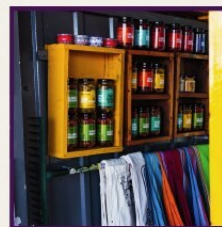
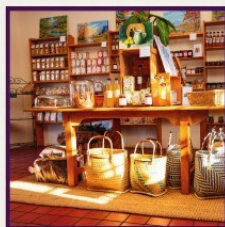
THE CAFÉ ROUTE

A flavour journey through the district

The district's café route is not about rushing from one place to another. It is about building a day around small stops with big memories. A traveller may begin with coffee in Himeville, browse craft and collectables, continue toward Underberg for brunch, pause on a farm road for homemade preserves, or end a mountain outing with a warm meal beside a river.

Each café adds a different texture to the journey. The Whistling Goat brings village warmth and a relaxed Himeville atmosphere. The Lemon Tree offers garden hospitality in Underberg. Giant's Cup Café and Crafts connects food with local products near the Sani Pass route. Protea Pantry brings farm-style dining and Drakensberg views. The Grind offers a lively town meeting point, while The Old Hatchery and The Olde Duck add riverside, farm and family-friendly character.

Together, these places show that coffee culture in the Drakensberg and Beyond is not only about what is served. It is about where it is shared — under mountain skies, beside old stone buildings, along country roads and in spaces where visitors are made to feel like guests rather than customers.



“
In Harry Gwala,
even a cup of
coffee can
become part of
the journey



“Some meals become memories long before dessert arrives.”

REFINED DINING & SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Some meals become memories long before dessert arrives

For visitors seeking a more refined dining experience, the Southern Drakensberg offers restaurants where country elegance meets local produce and careful service.

Moorcroft Manor brings boutique hotel dining with mountain views and a sense of occasion.

Speirs Brasserie offers an intimate, chef-led approach in Himeville, grounded in quality ingredients and personal attention.

These are experiences for slow evenings, celebrations and travellers who want comfort without losing the feeling of place.



MOORCROFT MANOR

Boutique dining with mountain views.



SPEIRS BRASSERIE

Chef-led dining and local ingredients.

TOURISM EVENTS

Where landscapes become gatherings

Drakensberg and Beyond is not only a place to visit — it is a place where people come together.

Throughout the year, the district hosts sporting events, music experiences, cultural celebrations, trail races, cycling weekends, local markets and seasonal gatherings that bring energy to towns, mountains and communities.

Some events are large and nationally recognised. Others are intimate, local and deeply personal.

Together, they create a tourism rhythm that changes with the seasons and gives visitors new reasons to return.



MUSIC & CULTURE

Live experiences rooted in place.



TRAIL & SPORT

Movement through extraordinary landscapes.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Celebrations that bring towns together.



SPLASHY FEN

Where the Drakensberg Comes Alive

SPLASHY
FEN

EVENT OVERVIEW

Set against the magnificent backdrop of the Southern Drakensberg, Splashy Fen is more than a music festival — it is one of Harry Gwala District's most powerful cultural experiences. Hosted on the iconic Splashy Fen Farm near Underberg, this legendary gathering has earned its place as South Africa's longest-running music festival, drawing travellers, artists, families, adventurers and free spirits into the heart of the mountains for a celebration of music, nature, creativity and human connection.

Each year, the quiet beauty of the district transforms into a vibrant village of sound, colour and community. Festivalgoers arrive not only for the performances, but for the feeling — misty mornings over the hills, golden afternoons beside the river, open-air stages beneath the Drakensberg sky, and evenings where music carries across the valley. Known affectionately as "South Africa's Friendliest Festival," Splashy Fen reflects the warmth and hospitality that make the Harry Gwala region unforgettable.

For visitors planning their next Southern Drakensberg escape, Splashy Fen remains one of the most compelling reasons to experience Harry Gwala District - a place where music meets mountains, strangers become friends, and the landscape itself becomes part of the performance.



HARRY GWALA DISTRICT MARATHON



EVENT OVERVIEW

Held annually in March, the Harry Gwala District Marathon is the district's premier road running event, attracting elite athletes, recreational runners, and fitness enthusiasts from across South Africa and beyond. The race starts in Highflats and finishes in Umzimkhulu, offering participants a challenging yet scenic route through the picturesque landscapes of the Harry Gwala District.

More than a sporting event, the marathon is a catalyst for sports tourism and local economic development, drawing visitors who support local accommodation, restaurants, tourism attractions, and small businesses. The event celebrates community spirit, healthy living, and the natural beauty of the district while positioning Harry Gwala as a leading destination for sporting events in KwaZulu-Natal.

Whether competing for a podium finish or enjoying the experience, runners are treated to an unforgettable journey through the heart of the district, where breathtaking scenery, warm hospitality, and vibrant local culture combine to create a truly memorable marathon experience.



WHAT MAKES IT SPECIAL



SCENIC ROUTES

Run through the heart of Harry Gwala's towns, valleys and rolling landscapes.



COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Experience unmatched support and energy from local communities along the route.



ALL WELCOME

From elite athletes to first-time runners, there's a distance for everyone.

HOST TOWN
UMZIMKHULU

SANI STAGGER



Presented by RRIB / Lighthouse Group

THE RACE THAT BRINGS THE MOUNTAINS TO LIFE



EVENT OVERVIEW

Sani Stagger presented by **RRIB/Lighthouse Group** is a true festival of running, featuring:



42.2km
Marathon



21.1km
Half
Marathon



38km
Trail
Event



21km
Trail
Event



16km
Gravel
Run



All events take place within the southern reaches of the internationally renowned **Maloti-Drakensberg World Heritage Site**.

Based at **Premier Resort Sani Pass**, the event has become one of South Africa's most sought-after running weekends.



1,600 PLUS
ENTRANTS



SOLD OUT



24 HOURS



3 MINUTES

WITHIN
1 MONTH

TRAIL EVENTS
FULL

PREMIER RESORT
ACCOMMODATION
SOLD OUT

For the 2026 edition, the 21km Down Run sold out in less than an hour, the Stagger Trail events filled within 24 hours, and all remaining distances sold out within a month, attracting more than 1,600 entrants.

The demand extends well beyond the race entries themselves. Accommodation at Premier Resort Sani Pass sold out in under three minutes, while nearby Glencairn Farm was fully booked within 24 hours — a testament to both the popularity of the event and the enduring appeal of the Sani Pass region.



RIDE THE TRAILS.
EMBRACE THE ADVENTURE.
EXPERIENCE SANI2C



EVENT OVERVIEW

Stretching from the foothills of the Southern Drakensberg to the KwaZulu-Natal coast, sani2c is one of South Africa's most celebrated mountain biking events. Traversing the breathtaking landscapes of the Harry Gwala District, riders journey through forests, farmlands, river valleys and purpose-built trails that showcase the region's natural beauty and adventurous spirit.

More than just a race, sani2c is an unforgettable experience that combines world-class riding, warm hospitality and spectacular scenery. Whether competing, supporting or simply soaking up the atmosphere, visitors become part of a journey that has inspired thousands of cyclists from around the world.



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



263KM
TOTAL DISTANCE
FROM DRAKENSBURG
TO THE COAST



4,950M+
TOTAL ASCENT
ACROSS EPIC
TERRAIN



3 DAYS
OF
UNFORGETTABLE
RIDING



**VARIED
TERRAIN**
TRAILS, FARMS,
FORESTS & RIVERS



**WILD COAST
FINISH**
SCENIC FINISH ON
THE COAST

THE GIANT'S CUP



RUN. HIKE. EXPLORE.
 THE TRAIL. THE STORIES. THE CONNECTION.



EVENT OVERVIEW

*A boutique trail running
 and hiking experience*

A boutique trail running and hiking experience set on the acclaimed 5-day Giant's Cup Hiking Trail in the heart of the Maloti-Drakensberg World Heritage Site.

Hosted each May at Premier Resort Sani Pass, the event combines spectacular mountain scenery, comfortable accommodation, and a relaxed social atmosphere, making it the perfect escape with friends, family, or a partner.

Spend your days exploring one of South Africa's most iconic trails, and your evenings sharing stories around the fireplace. Having recently celebrated its 12th edition with record participation, The Giant's Cup continues to offer trail running and hiking exactly as it should be experienced — challenging, memorable, and done in style.

SANI PASS TT / SPTT



A MOUNTAIN IS CALLING,
 Answer with everything you've got.



EVENT OVERVIEW

The Sani Pass TT is a pure mountain biking time trial in the traditional sense, but unlike any other race on the calendar.

Hosted annually in October from Premier Resort Sani Pass, riders tackle a relentless 21km climb from the foot of the pass at 1,544m above sea level to the Lesotho Border Post at 2,877m, gaining more than 1,300 vertical metres along the way.

The route begins with 13km of tar before transitioning onto the iconic 8km gravel jeep track, where steep gradients, thinning air, and the legendary switchbacks of Sani Pass test riders all the way to the summit.

Set within the spectacular Maloti-Drakensberg World Heritage Site, the event offers unrivalled views, a unique finish, and an atmosphere that celebrates both achievement and adventure.

Once the clock stops at the summit, riders enjoy a safe, untimed return to the resort, with plenty of opportunities to take in the scenery and cheer on those still making their way towards the top.



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



21KM
TOTAL CLIMB



1,300M+
VERTICAL GAIN



13KM
TAR ROAD



8KM
GRAVEL JEEP
TRACK



2,877M
SUMMIT FINISH
Lesotho Border
Post

MORE EVENTS



Underberg Gran Fondo



The Underberg Gran Fondo is a premier gravel cycling event that showcases the spectacular scenery of the Southern Drakensberg. Riders tackle challenging routes through rolling farmlands, mountain passes and pristine countryside, combining endurance, adventure and breathtaking landscapes in one unforgettable cycling experience.

Drak Descent



The Drak Descent is one of South Africa's most iconic river races, attracting paddlers from across the country to the waters of the Umzimkhulu River. Spanning two days, the event blends thrilling rapids with magnificent scenery, making it a highlight on the national paddling calendar and a celebration of adventure in the Southern Drakensberg.

Berg & Bush



Berg & Bush is one of South Africa's premier mountain biking stage races, taking riders through the breathtaking landscapes of the Southern Drakensberg. Traversing scenic trails, rolling farmlands and picturesque valleys, the event combines challenging riding with warm country hospitality, attracting cyclists and spectators from across the country for an unforgettable outdoor experience.

HARRY GWALA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The Harry Gwala International Film Festival is a premier film and creative arts event dedicated to developing and promoting the local film industry. The festival provides a platform for emerging and established filmmakers to showcase their work, participate in industry masterclasses and workshops, build professional networks, and connect with investors, distributors and other film professionals. It also aims to expand access to cinema through community and rural screenings, creating opportunities for storytelling, skills development and economic participation within the creative sector while celebrating African stories and talent on both local and international stages.



ACCOMMODATION & STAYS



Whether you prefer a luxury mountain lodge, a boutique country hotel, a family-friendly resort, a self-catering cottage or a peaceful farm stay, Drakensberg and Beyond offers accommodation experiences that place visitors at the heart of the landscape.

From the foothills of the Southern Drakensberg to the rolling hills of Ixopo and the welcoming towns throughout the district, every stay offers its own sense of comfort, character and connection to place.

Whether you're visiting for adventure, heritage, food, events or simple relaxation, there is a perfect place to call home during your journey.

EXPLORE OUR ACCOMMODATION GUIDE

SCAN THE QR CODE TO DISCOVER:

- ✓ HOTELS & RESORTS
- ✓ GUEST HOUSES
- ✓ BOUTIQUE LODGES
- ✓ SELF-CATERING OPTIONS
- ✓ FARM STAYS
- ✓ GROUP ACCOMMODATION
- ✓ CAMPING & OUTDOOR STAYS

Scan to view the full
accommodation directory
Accommodation Guide &
Booking Information



EMERGENCY SERVICES

CONTACTS

GREATER KOKSTAD

Emergency Service Contact Number

Greater Kokstad Municipality Tourism Office: **039 797 6730**
SAPS: **039 797 1123**
Prestige Security Services: **039 727 4510**
Radar Armed Response: **076 073 1043**
East Griqualand & Usher Memorial Hospital: **039 797 8100**
Resqmed Ambulance Services: **039 727 4589**
Disaster Management: **039 797 6659**

SOUTHERN DRAKENSBERG

Emergency Service Contact Details

Dr NDZ LM Tourism Information Office: **033 702 3095 / 083 399 8550**
SAPS (Himeville): **033 702 1332**
SAPS (Bulwer): **039 832 0007**
SAPS (Creighton): **039 833 1005**
SAPS (Donnybrook): **039 831 0000**
NUD & Himeville Community Watch: **033 702 1117**
Underberg Emergency Medical Services (Private): **079 976 9056 / 081 857 0553**
Government Ambulance: **10177 / 911**
Underberg Clinic: **033 701 1086**
Lost in the Mountains (Cobham Nature Reserve): **033 702 0831 / 082 559 9493**
NUD Towing & Recovery: **072 942 9480 / 074 296 7726**
Tyron Wood (Mechanic): **033 701 1091 / 082 782 8408**
Norman Caywood (Mechanic): **082 620 6634**
UTE Towing, Recovery & Mechanical: **033 701 1278 / 082 851 1380**
Dr NDZ LM Fire Fighters: **066 469 8893**
Dr NDZ LM Disaster Management: **039 833 1038 / 079 310 6888 / 078 655 4741**
Dr NDZ LM Animal Pound: **039 833 1038 / 082 777 8071 / 071 687 0105**

IXOPO

Emergency Service Contact Number

Ixopo Municipality Tourism Office: **039 201 0859**
Fire & Disaster: **039 834 2211 / 082 532 4558**
SAPS: **039 834 1013**
Ambulance: **039 834 8500**
Traffic: **039 834 1450**
Dr. Parak and Dr. Silus: **039 834 2371**
Poison Center: **021 931 6129**

UMZIMKHULU

Emergency Service Contact Number

uMzikhulu Municipality Tourism Office: **039 259 5210**
Ambulance: **086 001 0177**
Hospital (Clydesdale): **039 259 9222**
Fire Fighter: **079 929 4732**
Police Station: **039 259 5022**
Eskom: **086 003 7566**
Water Department: **039 259 0500**
Customer Care: **039 259 5017**
Disaster Management: **039 259 5022**



VISIT — DRAKENSBURG AND BEYOND

"A Gateway Destination"

Some places are remembered for what they have.
Others are remembered for how they make you feel.

Drakensberg and Beyond is a destination of mountain horizons, winding passes, quiet heritage, creative communities, honest hospitality and experiences that reveal themselves slowly.

From the cliffs of the Southern Drakensberg to the warmth of local cafés, from trail adventures to moments of stillness, every journey through the district becomes a collection of stories worth carrying home.

This booklet is only an introduction.
The real experience begins when the road unfolds ahead of you.

We invite you to return, explore further, stay longer and discover more of what makes Drakensberg and Beyond one of South Africa's most remarkable destinations.

CONTACT DETAILS

Harry Gwala Development Agency:

Email: led@hgda.co.za

Website: www.hgda.co.za

Umkhazamkhulu Tourism

Tel: 039 259 5210

Ixopo Tourism

Tel: 038 201 0858

Facebook: [Ubuhlebezwe Tourism Experience](https://www.facebook.com/UbuhlebezweTourismExperience)

Southern Drakensberg Tourism

Tel: 033 702 3095

Website: www.drakensberg.org

Kokstad Tourism

Tel: 039 797 6643

Website: www.kokstadtourism.co.za



www.hgda.co.za