**SHORT WALKS**

 Starting from the main campground or the picnic site:

**I. Cascades and McKinlay's Pool:**

Take the campsite road to the casual car park.(Only vehicles of campsite residents are allowed beyond this point). Walk along the road past the campsite. Fifteen minutes' walk brings you to the Queen's Causeway and the Cascades. From there a good path leads to McKinlay's Pool at which point the Gudu stream meets the Mahai. (Round trip 5 km : 1 hour).  To make a round trip, though the going is very steep, a footpath leads up towards Dooley from the boulders near McKinlay's pool, joining the Tiger Falls/Gudu Bush path. Return via Tiger Falls or Gudu Bush. (Whole trip 8 km : 1 hour 45 minutes).

**2. Fairy Glen:**  
Start down the main road and cross the bridge opposite the Visitor Centre. Then take the path to the left leading through the bush to the Broome Hill stream. Cross and re-cross this, then follow up through the bush to the waterfall. This glen is well named and is a delightful picnic spot on a hot day. (1,6 km : 20 minutes).To make a round trip from Fairy Glen: continue along the bridle path, turning left back to the hotel at the fIrst crossroads, or left just beyond these crossroads, along a path which leads to the main campground. (Whole trip 4 km : 45 minutes).

**3. Otto's Walk:**  
This walk starts at the far side of the Visitor Centre car park. It is a self-guided trail of some three kilometres and takes about 45 minutes to complete. A booklet providing information on the walk is obtainable from the Visitor Centre. Many trees are identified and the walk is signposted all the way.

**4. Sunday Falls:**  
Cross the Mahai below the casual car park. Follow the path up and across the intersection (signposted) and so on to the Surprise Ridge path. At the turning leading down to the falls is a signpost. Cross above the falls and a track will be found leading down to the foot of the falls. (3 km : 1 hour).

**5. Bushman Paintings in Sigubudu Valley:**  
Take the main reserve entrance road and immediately after crossing the second bridge, turn up along a path on the left (signposted). Continue on, and the paintings will be found along a short stretch of west-facing rocks. (Whole trip 6 km : 1 hour 30 minutes).

**6. Forest Walk:**  
In the Rugged Glen area a short circular walk may be taken along a path from the visitors' car park, up the valley, turning right along a path leading through several attractive bush patches to the Karos Mont-Aux-Sources Hotel. From here the route along the boundary fence, and via the road back to the visitors' car park, is obvious. (Whole trip 4 km : 50 minutes).

**7. Camel's Hump:**  
From the visitors' carpark at Rugged Glen (signposted), follow the path up and then across the stream, turning left at the first junction, and so on up to the Camel's Hump, from which magnificent views across the reserve to the Drakensberg escarpment can be seen. From the Karos Mont-Aux-Sources Hotel take the Main path leading into the Park, and follow it until the Camel's Hump is reached. (Whole trip 5 km : 1 hour 10 minutes).

**LONGER WALKS**

**8. Tiger Falls:**  
From Thendele Camp, Tiger Falls is an easy walk of about 30 minutes along the path below Dooley. From the hotel area these falls can be reached from the Cascades (Walk No 1) or through the trees behind the hotel, along a path which begins behind the hotel stables, (between the stables and the main building). Do not take any left turns. The falls are reached at the first large stream and forest patch below Dooley. (3 km : 45 minutes). Return via the Gudu Bush by continuing along the path and across the Mahai, turning right when the bush is reached and so through the forest and down to the hotel or main campground. (Whole trip 7 km : 1 hour 45 minutes).

**9. Rugged Glen:**  
To this area from the hotel or main campground area, you take the reserve entrance road as far as the park entrance. Turn left along thc Mont-Aux-Sources Hotel road, and left again up the Rugged Glen track to the visitors' car park (signposted). (7 km : 2 hours).>br> From here it is possible to return to the hotel over the Camel's Hump (Walk No 7) and Surprise Ridge, wherc you meet the path from the hotel to the Cavern. As an alternative route, turn right and proceed to the Cannibal Caves (1,2 km) then return to the hotel by the Surprise Ridge path. (Round trip 23 km : 7 hours 30 minutes). From the intersection of the Rugged Glen and Surprise Ridge paths there is an alternative route back to the hotel, via the Grotto. This adds anothcr 2,4 km to the walk (see Walk No 16).

**10. Thendele Camp:**  
The hutted camp established at the back of Dooley, high up on the side of the mountain, commands a wonderful view of the Amphitheatre with the Policeman's Helmet and Vemvaan Valley in the foreground. There is a road to the camp but only residents may take their cars beyond the signposted Gorge parking area. This makes a nice morning's walk from the hotel area, travelling along the motor road. (5 km : 1 hour 30 minutes). Proceed back to the hotel or camping area along the path which starts on the Thendele road below the Lodge and passes below the camp extension to the eastern end of the natural forest and on to meet the hotel/Tiger Falls path. (Whole trip 10 kIn : 2 hours 30 minutes).

**11. Gudu Falls:**  
From Thendele take the path past Tiger Falls to the Gudu Bush. Soon after the stream is crossed a path to the left will be seen which leads to these magnificent falls. From the hotel, cross the Mahai below the casual car park and proceed up the hill to the four-way junction, turning left.

 Here the path for those starting from the main campground will be met. Continue on past the turn to the Mudslide and into the forest. Turn right at the signpost and follow the steep path above and out of sight of the stream for about I 600 metres, when the Gudu Falls will be reached. (4 km : 2 hours). (Whole trip 9 km : 3 hours 30 minutes).

**12. Doolev Waters and the Mahai Valley:**  
Proceed to the upper end of the Gudu Bush (see Walks Nos 8 and 11). Continue up the valley on the main bridle path overlooking the Mahai stream for about 2,5 km. Cross the Mahai stream, a very attractive picnic spot, and continue up the north-facing slope until a path junction is reached. Turn left up the Dooley Waters path, or alternatively right to continue further up the Mahai valley to Basuto Gate.

 {Campsite via Cascades path junction "7 km : 2 hours, 30 minutes). NOTE: The Nek and the path from the Nek to the Basuto Gate path are closed. The Dooley Waters path is therefore a cul-de-sac.

**13. Mahai Falls and Basuto Gate:**  
At the Dooley Waters/Basuto Gate path junction (see Walk No 12) turn right to continue further up the Mahai Valley to the Mahai Falls. This is a popular picnic spot with an inspiring view down the valley. From this point the path up to Basuto GateIWitsieshoek Mountain Resort is obvious. On reaching Basuto Gate/Witsieshoek Mountain Resort it is a short walk over the ridge (the boundary of Qwa Qwa) where one gets magnificent views of the Malutis, often snowclad in the winter months. The word 'Mahai' is Sesuto for 'rocky krantz'. (11 km : 3 hours 45 minutes). To make the round trip, from Basuto Gate continue along the path on the near side of the fence for about three kilometres, crossing the source of the Gudu Stream on the way. Then continue to the Crack (Walk No 14) or to the top of Gudu Falls, and then back via the Mudslide. (Whole trip 24 km : 6 hours 30 minutes).

**14. The Crack and the Mudlslide:**  
From Gudu Bush (Walks Nos 8 and 11) continue up the valley for another 1 200 metres where a path will be seen leading towards the Crack. The climb is very steep but a short chain ladder helps one over the only difficult section. On reaching the top, bear right onto the high ground overlooking the Mahai valley and make straight for the top of the Gudu Falls, where an easy crossing of the Gudu stream can be made about 50 metres up. This is a favourite place for a swim, and a good picnic spot. Directions are hardly needed for scaling Plowman's Kop, from which point a magnificent view is obtained. Return down the Mudslide. This starts beyond the far corner of Plowman's Kop. The decent is very steep and loose and, after rain, slippery .The short chain ladder at the start is helpful. At the foot of the cleft, follow the main path round to the right until it joins up with the hotel path and turn left for home. (Whole trip 11 km : 4 hours 40 minutes). NOTE: The Mudslide is not suitable for young children or those suffering from fear of heights.

**15 . Surprise Ridge and Cannibal Cave:**  
From the hotel/main campground area head for Sunday Falls (Walk No 4) but keep along the main path which crosses the Sunday Falls stream and later the Sigubudu stream. From the latter point it is only a short distance to the ridge and the park boundary.

 Just before the ridge is reached a junction with paths leading to the Grotto (westwards) and the Camel's Hump and Rugged Glen to the east should be noted. (10 km : 3 hours 45 minutes). From Thendele proceed via Tiger Falls and down through Gudu Bush to the junction of the Mudslide path and the main Mahai path, and turn left up towards the Mudslide. Continue past the foot of the Mudslide towards the Grotto. Turn right to Camel's Hump/Castle Rocks. Proceed around Castle Rocks and the Diamond until the junction referred to above is reached, then turn left to the Ridge. (14 km : 5 hours).

 From Rugged Glen proceed on past the Camel's Hump (Walk No 7) to the junction and turn right to the Ridge. (5 km : 1 hour 45 minutes).

 This Ridge is well named as there are surprisingly fine views in all directions. On a clear day the distant peak of the Berg, including Cathkin, Champagne Castle and Cathedral Peak can be picked out, while down below nestles the Cavern Berg Resort and beyond this one can see the heights of Northern Natal. To Cannibal Cave, take the track to the left along the ridge. This path, after crossing two small streams below the Diamond on the Cavern side of the ridge, leads to the immense cave, once reputedly a cannibal lair. There are some Bushman paintings on the inner side of a large slab of rock in the middle of the cave. The walk can be extended to the ridge above the cave if time permits and it is an easy scramble to the top from which a magnificent view is obtained (30 minutes). One can return along the path and down to Rugged Glen (Walk No 7 or 9). The most interesting round trip from the hotel/main campground area is to return via the Grotto by turning right (west) at the junction below the Ridge. Altogether the trip from the hotel area to Surprise Ridge and the Cannibal Caves and back via the Grotto is a trip no one should miss. The views are excellent and there are several varieties of Protea to be seen.

 Mountain reedbuck frequent the area between Camel's Hump and Castle Rocks. (Round trip 22,5 km : 6 hours 30 minutes).

**16. The Grotto:**  
The route from Thendele is described in Walk No 15. From Rugged Glen proceed past the Camel, Surprise Ridge (Walks Nos 7 and 15) and on to the Grotto. From the hotel/main campground area proceed as for Sunday Falls (Walk No 4), but soon after passing the four-way junction and just short of the Fairy Glen Stream, turn left up the Broome Hill valley. Continue climbing steadily until the Grotto forest is reached. Eventually, the path comes to a dead end, but some ten metres before this a faint path can be seen leading upwards to the left, and a ten minute walk brings you to the Grotto.

 The Grotto is in two parts, consisting of two huge gorges cut through the sandstone, and both are worthy of exploration. (5 km : 2 hours). (Whole trip 10 km : 3 hours 30 minutes).

**17. Castle Rocks:**  
Follow the Grotto route (Walk No 16), but before entering the main forest, turn right to Camel's Hump/The Diamond. Shortly after crossing the stream turn left up towards the sandstone cliffs. On entering the trees below the krantz turn left and follow the sandstone. A signpost points to a hole in the krantz which takes you through the rock face; thence up the steep grassy slope to the top. The view overlooking the surrounding valleys is outstanding. Although the area is well worth exploring, it is advisable to return by the same route. (6,5 km : 2 hours 20 minutes). (Whole trip 13 km : 4 hours).

**18. Broome Hill:**  
Proceed up the Crack (Walk No 14) to the top of Gudu Falls. Continue up the slope, keeping the top of the sandstone cliffs on your right. On reaching the Basuto Gate/Broome Hill path turn right. The summit of Broome Hill can be reached in just over an hour from Gudu Falls, and magnificent views can be obtained in all directions. Return via the Mudslide or Basuto Gate.

**19. The Cavern:**  
Though beyond the park boundary, this is an interesting walk. From Surprise Ridge (Walk No 15) take the path leading straight down.

 Bear left along and across a stream. A signpost directs walkers along the path , over another stream, then turn right and proceed down through the wattles. (Add half an hour to the Surprise Ridge time).

**20. Sigubudu Ridge:**  
Take the reserve entrance road to the Sigubudu Bushman paintings path (Walk No 5). A short distance before the krantz is reached, a path strikes out to the right, leading to the plateau above the Bushman paintings. Walk up this plateau, finding your own way. A path will be found which climbs up the centre of the ridge between the Sigubudu and Forgotten valleys. Stay on this path through the proteas until you reach a path which traverses the head of these valleys. Turn left to return via the upper Sigubudu Valley and Sunday Falls, or right to reach Rugged Glen or the Camel's Hump.

 This is one of the best walks to see game, especially if an early start is made. The round trip from the hotel or the campground takes about two hours but allow a good deal more for game spotting.

**21. The Gorge:**  
From Thendele, proceed down to the Tugela river, where the main Gorge path will be reached. From here the route is obvious.

 From the hotel/campground area it is possible to save a three-kilometre walk by driving to the foot of the Thendele hill, where parking will be found and the Gorge path proper starts. If walking, a more interesting route, enabling one to avoid the road, is to go via Thendele camp (Walk No 10). There is no more popular nor picturesque walk than the Gorge walk; it should not be missed, and to enable you to make the most of the trip, take a full day over it. For the first 6,5 kilometres beyond the foot of Thendele hill there is a very good path and no steep climb. No special directions are really needed. The path winds along, above and parallel with the Tugela river . Not long after crossing the intersection stream from Devil's Hoek, look out for the Policeman's Helmet on the high ground to the right overlooking Vemvaan Valley. The last 1 600 metres through the Gorge entails three crossings of the river (simple enough unless in flood). Many visitors to the Gorge turn back at the first crossing. This is a pity, as the most picturesque scenery at Royal Natal lies at the far end, and walking the additional 600 metres is rewarding.Cross the stream and re-cross, keeping to the path which is on the right-hand side of the Gorge, and keep on until you reach the chain ladder on the cliff on the right-hand side. The chain ladder is at the mouth of the tunnel. This tunnel is approximately 55 -65 metres long. Use the chain ladder to skirt the tunnel or scramble through the tunnel, though a ducking is likely, and so get into the Amphitheatre. Boulder-hop up the Tugela for about 800 metres, where each few metres gives you a complete change of scenery. A steep path up the left-hand bank of the Eastern Buttress Gully leads to the Tunnel Cave. If you stand with your back to the chain ladder, this path will be directly in front of you. From the cave there is a wonderful view of the Amphitheatre wall, with the Sentinel on your right, and you will be able to look over the Tunnel. If you proceed around the cave you will obtain an excellent view down the valley towards the hotel. Warning: keep a lookout for thunderstorms, as a heavy storm may bring down the river and delay your return trip by a few hours. The best spot to picnic is at the end of the path, (11 km : 3 hours). (Whole trip 22,5 km : 5 hours 30 minutes).

**22. Devil's Hoek Valley:**  
Start as for the Gorge Walk (No 21).

 Shortly after leaving the forest (10 minutes) a signpost points the way up the valley. Some ten minutes' walk from here, on the right, you will notice a large rock on which there are some Bushman paintings. Continue through a large patch of forest, uphill across an open section and into a second area of forest.

 At this point the path ends, and any further progress is hard going. (Whole trip from the Gorge car park 6 km : 2 hours). From Thendele camp Devil's Hoek Valley is within a thirty-minute walk.

**23. Vemvaan Valley:**  
Proceed as for Devil's Hoek Valley (Walk No 22). About 1 600 metres on from the Gorge car park, a path branches to the left, crosses a stream and continues into Vemvaan Valley. Various [extensions](http://www.ijoomla.com/) from the head of the valley can be made by the energetic, onto the higher ground. An example is along the Policeman's Helmet ridge (which can be scaled from further back). This gives remarkable views in all directions. (Whole trip from the Gorge car park 9 km : 3 hours). From Thendele camp Vemvaan Valley is within an hour's walk.

**24. The Lion:**  
This walk is outside of the park and is not sign posted. The ridge undoubtedly affords some of the most spectacular views in the area, and is especially good for remarkable views of the Amphitheatre, Tugela Falls and the Sentinel. Starting from the Gorge car park, cross the Tugela river and join the path going around to the right of the ridge. This path zigzags through the proteas until reaching a field ranger outpost. Continue up the fence line until you reach the sandstone cliffs. Cross the fence, and you will note a large cave. To the left of the cave is a steep, grassy gully, which brings you onto the ridge.

 From here it is a steady climb upwards to the foot of the Eastern Buttress where further progress is not recommended. (From the Gorge car park to the sandstone cliffs: 1 hour).

**25. Mont-Aux-Sources:**  
This is an outstanding trip, but requires at least two days, with a night being spent at the summit of the Amphitheatre.

 Numbers of visitors to the summit are restricted to 50 overnighters and 50 day visitors. Booking for overnight camping can be made through the Qwa-Qwa Tourist Officer , telephone (058) 7134415 Before setting out it is important that you complete the necessary details in the Mountain Register which is kept at the Visitor Centre. This formality is for your own safety. Take the route to Basuto Gate via the Mahai Falls (Walk No 13). Note that the Nek is closed.

 At Basuto Gate/Witsieshoek Mountain Resort the motor road coming from Witsieshoek is reached, and it is necessary to walk along the road (10 kilometres) to its end at the Sentinel car park. From the Sentinel car park, the path zigzags uphill and takes you past the Witches, from where a grand view of the Devil's Tooth is obtained. Continue past the foot of the Sentinel (3 165 metres) and on to the base of Beacon Buttress. A steep rocky gully leads to the summit from this point, and in the old days, this was the usual way to the top. Nowadays it is customary, and far easier, to continue along the path to its end. Two chain ladders (100 rungs) take you to the summit. From the top of the ladder it is about 1 600 metres to a mountain hut, manned by KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service field rangers on weekends and public holidays. If only remaining one night on the top, it is essential to be up with the sun. There should be time after an early breakfast to walk, crossing the Bilanjil and Ribbon Falls streams on the way, to Mount Amery (3 143 metres) overlooking the Singati Valley. From either of these vantage points a fine view is obtained of the distant Berg peaks. (Whole trip: 14,5 km).

 If you spend a second night at the top, there is ample time to visit the highest point, Mont- Aux-Sources (3 282 metres) some 4 km away.

 From here you can see the sources of the Tugela, Elands and the Western Khubedu (Upper Orange) rivers. The danger of being lost in the mist, or having to spend a night unexpectedly on top of the mountain, must be stressed. Keep a good lookout for changes in the weather as mists and storms come up rapidly. Always allow for ample time to set up camp, and avoid leaving equipment unguarded, as there have been a number of instances of possessions being stolen.

To return:

 The return journey takes no longer to go down via the Gully, climbing to the top of Beacon Buttress (3 121 metres) on the way. This walk should not be attempted if misty. (22,5 km : 9 hours). (Whole trip 45 km : 17 hours).

**By Car:**

 Travelling by car, it is possible to visit the summit in a day by driving around to the Sentinel car park at the end of the road, purchasing a permit en route.

 This trip is an extremely popular day's expedition. Again, it must be stressed that the weather at this altitude is extremely unpredictable, and can change with alarming rapidity. Protective clothing is therefore essential, even if you are only going for the day. Directions starting from the park are as follows:

 Follow the main Bergville road, turning left onto the Oliviershoek Pass/Harrismith road. Continue over the pass and into the Free State. On reaching the Harrismith/Qwa Qwa road, turn left. Continue on this road, turning left again at the Qwa Qwa turnoff. Follow this road to its end. A number of signs point the way to Witsieshoek Mountain Resort. Eventually a Y junction is reached, and on the left the mountain resort can be seen. Continue on the right-hand fork to the car park at the base of the Sentinel. Allow two hours' walk from the Sentinel car park to the chain ladders, a number of hours for exploring the summit, and two hours for the return journey to the car park. (Distance by car, one way -approximately 130 km : 2 hours 15 minutes).

[Didima Camp](http://www.didima.info/) | [Giants Castle](http://www.giantscastle.info/) | [Hluhluwe Accommodation](http://www.hluhluwe.info/) | [Ithala Game Reserve](http://www.ithala.info/) | [Thendele Royal Natal](http://www.royalnatal.info/) | [Amatikulu Tours](https://www.amatikulu.com/)

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