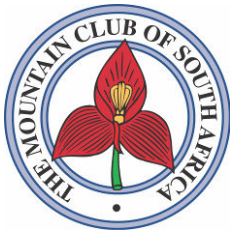


The Mountain Club of South Africa, under the auspices of the UIAA Youth Commission, presents an International Youth Meet:



TREKKING IN SOUTH AFRICA'S 'DRAGON MOUNTAINS' 11 – 18 July 2009



UIAA
Global Youth Summit 2009



The Mountain Club of South Africa (97 Hatfield Street, Cape Town 8001 SOUTH AFRICA; <http://mcsa.org.za>) invites member federations of the UIAA to participate in an international youth meet in South Africa: Trekking in the 'Dragon Mountains'.



*Over it all stands the Drakensberg itself, timeless, aloof, inscrutable, but with a wild beauty of its own that tugs at the heartstrings. It is a world of indescribable and ever-changing splendour, a world of basalt giants that stand as sentinels on the roof of South Africa; a world of unspoiled nature, where the cry of the martial eagle breaks the silence of distant peaks, where the thunder roars and winds shriek through lonely crags like dragons in torment; where giant yellowwoods dream away their age-long sleep in hidden valleys, and where man, in all this vast loneliness, can find himself (RO Pearse, *Barrier of Spears – Drama of the Drakensberg*, Art Publishers, 2006).*

Meet Administrator/Contact Person:

Jenny Paterson (email: jpaterson@iburst.co.za ; tel: 00-27-11-888 3693) fax: 00-27-11-782 1559.
Address: 17 Sylvia Lodge, Cecilia Street, Risidale 2195, Gauteng, South Africa.

Mountain Guide: Rob Thomas (Rock Climbing Instructor and Mountain Walking Instructor: Mountaineering and Training Development Trust; Rock Climbing and Mountain Walking Guide: South African National Qualifications; Mountain Guide: SA Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism).

TREKKING IN SOUTH AFRICA'S 'DRAGON MOUNTAINS'

Location/General

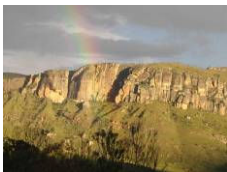


The 'Dragon Mountains' of South Africa is actually called the Drakensberg: 'Drake' means dragons and 'berg' means mountain - a mythical name recalling fire-breathing monsters high up in impenetrable crags. It is also called uKhahlamba by the local Zulu people living in the foothills of this spectacular mountain range and that means 'Barrier of Spears', referring to the pinnacles and towers.



The uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park constitutes 243 000 ha of wilderness with a mountain chain span of 150 kilometre at an average altitude of 3 000m (http://www.kznwildlife.com/mountains_dest.htm). It has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2000. Of particular significance is that it is one of only 23 such worldwide that fulfilled both criteria of cultural and natural properties. As such, the Drakensberg, the highest range south of Killimanjaro, offers superb outdoor opportunities ranging from trekking, bouldering, rock climbing, bird watching, mountain photographing to mountain biking, horse riding and fishing in the foothills, as well as just relaxing.

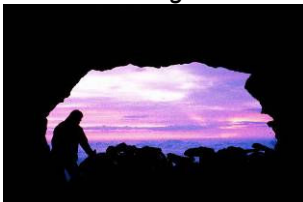
The Drakensberg mountain range rises from 1 400m from its base in the east on the KwaZulu-Natal midlands to the 'top'. However, there is no 'other side' when one reaches the summits around 3 000m: one finds oneself on an undulating escarpment plateau stretching westwards far into the 'mountain kingdom' of Lesotho; the cliffs that ones ascends having been formed by aeons of erosion. Breaching the escarpment with its cliffs of up to 500m are various gullies and cutbacks that allow walking access to the summit plateau.



While ascending to the escarpment the change in altitude is accompanied by a change in geology and vegetation from grassland and bushveld in the valleys, with their sheer sandstone cliffs (at around 2 000m) that are sheltering virgin forest pockets, to towering basalt towers and buttresses with sub-alpine vegetation at the top: a truly magnificent scenery and an education on the formation of the earth. As the subcontinent's most important water catchment area, crystal clear streams run down the mountain to join and form South Africa's major rivers.



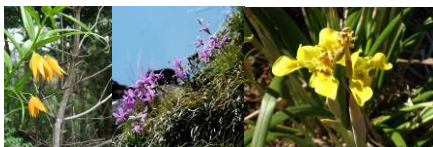
Cultural heritage: The San (Bushmen) inhabited the Drakensberg from the late Stone Age times until the late nineteenth century. They had very few material possessions and did not build permanent shelters, but lived either under sandstone overhangs or temporary grass shelters. They left some of the finest and richest examples of rock art in the world: 30 000 individually painted images in 520 different rock shelters have been recorded in the park. The most common types of paintings are animal figures with many eland, a buck that they considered sacred, and human figures depicting their way of life. It is truly an awe inspiring experience to view this rock art.



Fauna and flora: Because of the difference in altitude, there is great diversity of plant and animal life. Though not offering the Big Five, for which Africa is really famous, there are mountain reedbuck, grey rhebuck, grey duiker, eland, klipspringer, bushbuck and oribi. The main predators in the Drakensberg are leopard (found in very small numbers), black-backed jackal, caracal, serval, clawless and spotted neck otter, various species of mongoose and genet. Troops



of chacma baboons, porcupines and colonies of rock hyrax are also found throughout this mountain park. The Drakensberg is home to over 300 species of birds of which 32 are endemic to Southern Africa. Some of the specials that can be found are wattled crane, cape vulture, bearded vulture, orange breasted rockjumper and yellow breasted pipit. The Drakensberg is also home to 25 species of amphibians, 18 species of lizard (six of which are endemic) and 21 species of snake.



Especially from spring to autumn a huge variety of beautiful flowers can be found eg proteas, red-hot pokers, erica, everlastings.



Climate of and conditions in the Drakensberg in July:

July is winter in South Africa: it is dry and cold with a possibility of snow fall. Nevertheless day time temperatures can be a mild 20 degrees Celsius. Night temperatures can be down to -4 (or even -12) degrees Celsius. More on South African weather can be found on: <http://saweather.co.za>

The Mountain Club of South Africa and it's July Camp

The Mountain Club of South Africa is one of the oldest in the world having been founded in 1891 (for more info see <http://www.mcsa.org.za>). It consists of 14 Sections which are geographically based. The KwaZulu-Natal Section is nearest to the Drakensberg and has its centre in Durban, a coastal city on the shores of the Indian Ocean.



Since 1920, the KwaZulu-Natal Section has in July offered a meet/camp in the Drakensberg where, from a Base Camp, mountaineering and climbing parties set off to trek and rock-climb. The Base Camp is annually located in a different part of the mountain range and this is announced early each year. Base Camp is typically set up in the Lower Berg (~2 400m) from where day walks and multi-day treks up to the escarpment (~3 000m) take place.



The UIAA Youth Meet will use the infrastructure of the July Camp where meals are cooked on fire and much singing and story-telling takes place around a camp fire along a clear, running stream.

Mountain Search and Rescue: Mountain Search and Rescue services are included in entrance fees for visitors to the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park. The MCSA has a proud tradition in offering a free Mountain Search and Rescue service in conjunction with the South African Air Force.

Programme overview

Aims/Focus: The Meet's main focus will be on mountaineering, but exposure to cultural and social aspects (indigenous people, international exchange), history (including rock art) and environment (fauna and flora) of the area will take place.

Participants:

Age 16–25. Eight minimum to twelve maximum participants (If necessary, participants per federation will be limited so as to get a good international mix). Members of UIAA member federations. The minimum age has been dropped as different federations have a different definition for 'Youth'. For this reason the number of 16 year old participants will be limited to a maximum of 8 in total, and they need to be accompanied by a Youth Leader over the age of 18. The ratio should be no more than 3 x 16 year olds to 1 Youth Leader. (Youth Leaders over the age of 25, accompanying participants, may also be considered).

Requirements for participants: Good fitness is required as well as preparedness for camping/bivouacking in temperatures from typically below zero degrees Celsius at night to 20 degrees Celsius at midday, carrying a three- to five-day backpack with food, sharing camping stoves and tents. Fairly long (up to 15km) steep (ascents/descents of 700m) hikes.

Meeting point:

Participants will be met at O.R. Tambo International Airport near Johannesburg in Gauteng Province. Participants will have to arrive by **Friday night, 10 July**. Accommodation in Johannesburg/Pretoria will be provided with members of the MCSA.

Programme:

Saturday 11 July (7:00): Motorised transport to the Drakensberg Mountains in KwaZulu-Natal; approximately a five-hour drive. One to two-hour walk-in with pack to the Base Camp.

Sun 12 – Fri 17 July: Day-walks in the valleys and a choice of multi-day subcamping/bivouac trips either to the escarpment (~3 000m) or trekking in the foothills, called the Little Berg. Detailed plans will be adjusted to the group's ability and experience, as well as weather conditions.

Saturday 18 July: Walk-out and transport back to Johannesburg

A detailed programme will be supplied to successful applicants.

Accommodation: Tents bivouacs at approximately 2 400m (Base Camp) and 3 000m (escarpment/summit). Lightweight tents will be provided and are to be shared.

Meals: Food will be provided, at Base Camp and supplies for on the trek. Participants to bring: Special dietary requirements, own treats.

Basic equipment list: Backpack, sleeping bag (up to -12 degrees Celsius at least), warm clothes (thermal underwear, fleece jacket, down jacket if possible, gloves, cap), water and windproof gear, hiking clothes, underwear, mountain boots and socks, water-bottle(s) 1,5 litres, biodegradable toiletries, small towel, sun protection (hat, sunglasses, sun screen), personal first aid kit and medication, flashlight, personal items such as cameras. Walking poles if used to them. Extra clothes for travel. A full list will be provided to applicants. Other: Alpine Association membership card, proof of insurance, copy of passport.

If participants have a favourite lightweight tent that is suitable for high altitude that they wish to use and would like to bring with, and they can do so within their airline baggage allowance, they may do so. However, participants must not forget that they have to carry all their own equipment and supplies for the duration of the trek - there are no porters!

Price: Euro 230 per person payable on arrival. Included in this amount is transport from the airport, accommodation with members prior to the event if required, full board during the camp and transport back to the airport, management and leadership.

ENTRY VISAS

- If your representatives need to obtain Entry Visas to South Africa please confirm their names to the MCSA as early as possible as Visa processing is a very lengthy process, for a letter of support/invitation to be issued by the MCSA.
- If the MCSA do not receive the names by **15 May 2009** it may mean non-attendance for your representatives

Deadline for registration: Please supply your application forms via your Federation **15 May 2009** to the Mountain Club of South Africa: Jenny Paterson (Email: jpaterson@iburst.co.za; Fax: 00-27-11-782 1559). It is advisable to register early so as to save on airfares. Federations and applicants are advised to review the programme content, prepare their applicants for the event and contact the organiser with any questions. All further enquiries can be made to Jenny Paterson. Please note that the UIAA does not take responsibility for events organised by member associations.

Further reading:

Journals of the Mountain Club of South Africa (1894-2006): full sets available at the MCSA, SA national libraries and libraries of many European alpine federations.

- (1993): *Rock climbs of the Drakensberg*, MCSA (Natal Section), Durban.

Bristow, David (1995): *Drakensberg Walks*, 2nd ed., Struik, Cape Town

Hone, John (2008): *Encounters with the Dragon* – a photographer's passion for the Drakensberg, Art Publishers, Durban.

Irwin, Dave and Pat (1992): *A field guide to the Natal Drakensberg*, 2nd ed, Rhodes University, Grahamstown

Pearse, RO (2006): *Barrier of Spears* – Drama of the Drakensberg, Art Publishers, Durban.

Souchon, Duncan (2005): *Serpent Spires* – South African climbers profile the Drakensberg's finest peaks, Jonathan Ball, Jeppes town.