

Detailed Itinerary

Trip Name: [8 days] Karoo Crossing Cycle Tour

GENERAL

Dates: Variable. Bookable from March to May.

Contact Yügen Earthside for your preferred start date.

Explore the beauty of the South African Karoo under your own steam. Join a 8 day self-guided cycle tour from Knysna to Calitzdorp, where you will be taken through dramatic changing landscapes from the Garden Route, via the Great and Little Karoo all the way to Route 62. Explore a unique history, culture and natural beauty all in one, while staying fit. The trip can be tailored according to your fitness level, and if you prefer to camp under the stars or have a bit more luxury, this package can be altered according to your needs.

Main Stops:

Knysna – De Vlucht – Buffelsdrift – De Rust – Prince Albert – Matjiesrivier – Calitzdorp

About the Tour Operator:

We are a small team of adventurer spirits that focus on offering responsible tourism products in a COVID-19 world. Our South African tours embrace culture, history and adventure; and we source small, eco-friendly lodges where possible. Our team has many years of combined experience in the safari and adventure tourism industry and we believe in a highly personalized approach. Don't hesitate to contact us if you want to modify this itinerary.

We believe that travel as we know it will change and, as such, take a more people-centric approach. We believe in travel that is sustainable and healthy, embraces the local culture, and conserves the natural environment. Therefore, we focus on grassroots tours, where our clients can meet and interact with locals, explore local cuisine and leave a positive impact on the community as well as the environment.

We aim to offer travel that understands. We have been given the gift of stewardess of this planet and need to be more conscious of how we interact with her.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day 1: Road transfer from Cape Town to Knysna

- Afternoon at leisure to explore Knysna
- Visit Rastafarian community upon request

- Meet for dinner

You will be greeted at the meeting point in Cape Town Central Business District (CBD) in the morning and transferred in an air-conditioned vehicle to Knysna. Your support driver and bicycles will be waiting for you at The Russel Hotel upon arrival.

You have the afternoon to spend at your own leisure and will meet for dinner. If you want to meet at a different point in the Western Cape, then it can be arranged upon request.

Accommodation: Guesthouse

Meals: Dinner

Day 2: Knysna to De Vlught (cycle 59km | 36.7 miles) - Escape to nature

- Early morning breakfast
- Cycle via Diepwalle and Prince Albert Pass
- Stop at "Farmstall" for traditional snacks
- Upon arrival at the "working farm accommodation," guests are welcome to explore the farm on foot, or learn more about the responsible, sustainable growing and how the farm generates their own electricity with hydro and solar power.

Your day starts with an early departure after breakfast, where we head for De Vlught. After you reach Gouna, the rest of the route until you reach your destination will be a gravel road as you pass through Kom Se Pad pass, Diepwalle, and Prince Alfred's Pass.

You will arrive at Outeniqua Trout Lodge where you will spend the night in a teepee tent. Outeniqua Mountain Lodge is a delightful refuge for those who love to escape from the world - the perfect place to catch your breath. The lodge is situated on the scenic Prince Alfred's pass that was built in 1860 along the route used for millennia by elephants.

Three spacious Indian (tipi) tents makeup the wonderful Camp Gwaai, nestled under pecan nut trees. The camp facilities are communal, and the tents are situated some distance away from the entertainment area and are well spaced for maximum privacy.

Road conditions: Gravel road & Gravel mountain pass

Accommodation: Outeniqua Mountain Lodge, a fully self-sustainable working farm

Meals: Breakfast, & Dinner

Day 3: De Vlught to Buffelsdrift (cycle 69km | 42.9 miles) - The wonder of water

- Very early breakfast
- Gravel road cycling
- Dinner at the lodge

After an early rise and breakfast, brace yourself for a 13km climb at the start of the route as we head to Uniondale and then on to Kamanassie road towards Buffelsdrif road and off the grid.

Eagle Falls Country Lodge is a green oasis shaded by willow trees in the Kammanassie Valley. The Meul river runs by this well-appointed site and it's within walking distance of plunging gorges and thundering waterfalls.

Road condition: Gravel road

Accommodation: Eagle Falls Lodge (2020 Afristay Award)

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Day 4: Buffelsdrift to De Rust (cycle 71km | 44.1 miles) - True farm feel in the heart of Meiringspoort

- Early Breakfast
- Cycle through a working farm in Dysselsdorp
- Homestyle cooked dinner

Today we head west on the Kamanassie road and pass through a working farm to Dysselsdorp. We will be passing some busy roads and gravel roads and also cross the Olifants River heading for De Rust. After reaching De Rust, we will head onto the N12 for the final stretch to get to Meijer's Rust where we spend the night. Meijer's Rust is 4km outside of De Rust, in Meiringspoort.

Meijer's Rust is a working farm offering accommodation within the heart of Meiringspoort. You will spend the night in the beautiful self-catering chalets and your dinner will be delivered from town or alternatively, a homestyle dinner will be cooked.

Road conditions: Gravel roads and busy roads

Accommodation: Meijer's Rust, self-catering chalets on a working farm (Awards - best farm stay accommodation)

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Day 5: De Rust to Prince Albert (cycle 80km | 49.7 miles) - Meiringspoort and massages

- Early breakfast
- Cycle through Meiringspoort and take a swim in the waterfalls
- Full body massage upon arrival in Prince Albert
- Dinner

Today we head North on the N12 through Meiringspoort, which is a beautiful highlight for cyclists. Stop at the parking and do a short hike to the waterfalls to dip into the cold water before we continue with our trip. We then turn off and take the Middelwater gravel

road for about 20 km, before we turn onto the tar road and ride about another 40km towards Prince Albert where we will stay in Church street at De Bergkant Lodge.

Upon arrival we will be welcomed for a well-deserved full body massage at the lodge.

The 'De Bergkant Lodge' is a beautiful Cape Dutch homestead in the enchanting town of Prince Albert – home to the majestic and world-renowned Swartberg Pass. Set in the tranquil ambiance of the Karoo, 'De Bergkant Lodge' offers guests a relaxing and luxurious traveling experience.

Road conditions: Gravel road and tar road

Accommodation: De Bergkant Lodge, a National Monument and Manor House from 1858 (Trip Advisor awards & contactless stay certified)

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Day 6: Prince Albert to Matjiesrivier (cycle 31km | 19.3 miles) - The Swartberg Experience

- Cycle over Swartberg pass (UNESCO World Heritage Site)
- Upon arrival in Matjiesrivier, enjoy the beautiful sunset at your farm-style cottage
- Dinner - Traditional Karoo braai (barbeque)

Today is only 31 kilometers of cycling, but you will be crossing over the Swartberg pass to Matjiesriver. Caution: steep descent.

You will spend the night at the Swartberg Cottages which are nestled at the foot of the Swartberg Pass. Enjoy a traditional braai (BBQ) at Kobus Se Gat restaurant for dinner.

Road conditions: Gravel mountain pass

Accommodation: Kobus Se Gat Cottages

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Day 7: Matjiesrivier to Calitzdorp (cycle 58km | 36 miles) - History on the R62

- Cycle to the Calitzdorp (Route 62)
- Wine tasting upon arrival in Calitzdorp
- Dinner

This morning will be our final day and we are heading west to our final destination, Calitzdorp. After about 5 km, the tar road will become gravel for the rest of the route until we reach Calitzdorp.

Port Wine Guesthouse is a lovely historic Guest house in Calitzdorp on the famous Route 62. This stylish 1830 homestead is centrally situated in the heart of the port capital of South Africa, Calitzdorp, overlooking port vineyards and within walking distance of all the wineries, galleries, shops, and the museum in town.

The thatch roof homestead in Karoo and Victorian architecture has large vine-covered patios, where you can enjoy the Karoo sunsets, and scrumptious dinners and breakfasts.

Relax in the lush garden, including a fragrant rose garden, or by the sparkling pool.

Road conditions: Mostly gravel

Accommodation: Port Wine Guesthouse

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Day 8: Transfer - Calitzdorp to Cape Town (Drop off in Cape Town Central Business District or the airport)

- This morning we quickly visit an organic farm before we head back to Cape Town (a 4-hour drive)

Meals: Breakfast

INCLUSIONS

- **Accommodation:**
 - 7 x nights' accommodation in 3- and 4-star establishments (guesthouses, lodges, cottages)
- **Meals:**
 - 7 breakfasts & 7 dinners
 - Water, snacks, and energy bars throughout the trips
- **Transportation:**
 - All transfers: Cape Town to Knysna (Start point) and Calitzdorp (End point) to Cape Town)
 - Backup/support vehicle on the entire route that will carry your luggage
 - Mountain bike for full duration (can be upgraded to an E-bike for an additional cost)
- **Other:**
 - 1 full body massage

EXCLUSIONS

- **Meals:**
 - Lunches
 - All drinks
- **Transportation:**
 - Flights to/from Cape Town

- **Other:**
 - All items of a personal nature
 - Travel insurance
 - Visa fees