

# ADVENTURE CHALLENGE 01

SOUTH AFRICA'S RAW, BEAUTIFUL AND HUMBLING ENVIRONMENT BEGS TO BE CONQUERED AND THE COUNTRY IS AN ADVENTURE ADDICT'S UTOPIA.

Hike along soaring coastal cliffs, navigate mountainous passes, kayak, surf and swim the spirited Atlantic Coast and simmer in the Indian Ocean's reefs. Whatever your fitness level there is a trek, ride, wave or cave with your name on it and more tour operators than you can point a paddle at, waiting to test your mettle.



### Hiking

South Africa offers some of the most breathtaking hikes in the world. Famed trails include the **Otter Trail**, a five-day trek across spectacular coastline in the Eastern Cape's Tsitsikamma National Park, and its inverted version, the **Tsitsikamma Trail**. In the Western Cape you can navigate beach, cliffs, lakes and mountains while spotting whales offshore and zebra round the corner on the five-day **Whale Hiking Trail** in De Hoop Nature Reserve. Then there's Cape Town's magnificent Table Mountain, explored on foot via the **Hoerikwaggo Hiking Trails**.

The Free State's glorious Golden Gate Highlands National Park is home to the 33km **Rhebok Trail**, which tests experienced hikers and rewards them with panoramic views and antelope encounters. More troughs and summits can be traversed on the five-day **Giants Cup Trail** in KwaZulu-Natal's southern Drakensberg.

In Mpumalanga there are treks lasting from two-hour **guided walks** to **wilderness trails** lasting several days in Kruger National Park. Close by is the 30km-long Blyde River Canyon where you can wander for two to three days on the **Blyde River Canyon Hiking Trail**.

If escaping civilisation, crowds and any reminder of your former life takes your fancy, head to Augrabies Falls National Park and spend three days skirting the banks of the Senqu (Orange) River on the remote **Klipspringer Hiking Trail**.



“South Africa offers some of the most breathtaking hikes in the world.”

#### SPOILT FOR CHOICE

There are so many hikes in South Africa that you could pull a brain muscle trying to narrow down what's best for you. Fortunately help is at hand in the form of **Hiking South Africa** (083-535 4538; [www.hiking-south-africa.info](http://www.hiking-south-africa.info)), which can put you in contact with local hiking clubs and is a wealth of local knowledge.



“South Africa’s most famous breaks play host to competitions in July and August and partying and hangovers every month of the year.”

### Surfing

Any surfer worth their wax will utter expletives at the mention of **Jeffrey’s Bay** (‘J-Bay’ for those in the know). South Africa’s most famous breaks play host to the Billabong Pro in July, the Pro Junior competition in August and Pro partying and hangovers every month of the year.

Elsewhere in the Eastern Cape, surfers congregate at **Port Elizabeth**, before heading to **Port Alfred** for right-handers and then onto **East London** for world-class

breaks off **Nahoon Reef**. The spectacularly skilled and spectacularly reckless also brave the spectacularly dangerous coastline of the **Wild Coast**.

Along the southern coastline surfers challenge the breaks at **Still Point Bay**, the **Mossel Bay Peninsula**, **Herold’s Bay** and **Victoria Bay**.

Helping you stay one step ahead of the breaks, fads, fashions and fiestas is **Zig Zag** ([www.zigzag.co.za](http://www.zigzag.co.za)), South Africa’s premier surf magazine.

### Horse Riding

South Africa offers plenty of opportunities to make like frontier folk, with horse rides ranging from an ambling few hours to a hearty few days.

Take a cue from the Eastern Cape’s locals with **Wild Coast Trails** (039-305 6455; [www.wildcoast.org.za](http://www.wildcoast.org.za)), which runs horse-riding tours in the region led by guides from the traditional communities.

In and around Cape Town you can ride along empty beaches and mountainous

highlands with **Sleepy Hollow Horse Riding** (021-789 2341; Noordhoek).

Other horse-riding treats include the **Drakensberg Mountains** and **Greater St Lucia Wetlands Park** in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo’s **Waterberg range**, the Eastern Cape’s **Addo Elephant National Park**, and the Free State’s **Golden Gate Highlands National Park**.

“It sounds like a bodily emission, but ‘kloofing’ is in fact South Africa’s version of canyoning.”

### Canoeing, Kayaking & Rafting

When the local name for a series of falls translates to ‘place of great noise’ you know you’re in for some spectacular water features, and **Augrabies Falls National Park** rises to its moniker. Crashing from heights of 75m, the Senqu (Orange) River courses through a 500-million-year-old ravine and provides grade two and three rapids. The **Kalahari Adventure Centre** (054-451 0177; www.kalahari.co.za) runs canoeing and rafting trips in the park with highly skilled and knowledgeable guides. In Mpumalanga you can combine abseiling and bungee jumping with your rafting around the **Sabie** and **Blyde Rivers**.

Out of the rivers and into the ocean – there are excellent sea kayaking opportunities in the Western Cape. Snake your way around southern-right whales in Hermanus with **Walker Bay Adventures** (028-314 0925; Prawn Flats) or navigate Cape Town’s curves with **Real Cape Adventures** (021-790 5611; www.seakayak.co.za).

If all that pushes the envelope a little too much, opt for serene canoeing within the **Greater St Lucia Wetlands Park**.

### Kloofing & Rock Climbing

It sounds like a bodily emission, but ‘kloofing’ is in fact South Africa’s version of canyoning. Spinning a heart-stopping mix of climbing, hiking, swimming and leaping off rocks into a day’s activity, it challenges SAS wannabes in exhilarating fashion. Of course you can narrow your activity down to rock climbing – with so many mountains, cliffs, hills and gorges, South Africa isn’t short of a rock face.

Hot spots for both activities include Cape Town’s **Table Mountain**, and Mpumalanga’s **Drakensberg Escarpment**, KwaZulu-Natal’s section of the **Drakensberg** and the Eastern Cape’s **Amathole Mountains**. To begin get in contact with any number of commercial outfits, including **Adventure World** (www.adventurevillage.co.za), **Day Trippers** (www.daytrippers.co.za) and **Abseil Africa** (www.abseilafrica.co.za).



“South Africa is laced with mountain-bike trails to oblige.”

### Mountain Biking

South Africans love speeding on two wheels almost as much as they do on four, and the country is laced with mountain-bike trails to oblige.

Start with a ride to the top of **Swartberg Pass** and into **Oudtshoorn** in the Western Cape, a journey that promises to leave the hammies smarting. If that's your version of an easy cruise try any number of the trails around **Citrusdal**. Turn it up a notch and navigate the **Sani Pass** on the South Africa–Lesotho border or the trails surrounding **Knysna**. There are also excellent trails around hilly **Sabie** in Mpumalanga, and **Cape Town** offers a multitude of ways to work the pins.

### Bungee Jumping

For adventure seekers, South Africa boasts the world's highest bungee jump, at 216m. **Bloukrans River Bridge** (042-281 1458; www.faceadrenalin.com), 21km west of Storms River directly under the N2, has jumps seven days a week. If you're not sure if you have the gumption, you can walk out to the jumping-off point under the bridge.

There are several other popular jumps as well, including one at Gouritz Bridge, near Mossel Bay Peninsula.



### CYCLING

If you're really serious about straining the muscles you can compete with South Africa's finest in any number of sporting events on the annual calendar. Among the best is the **Cape Argus Cycle Tour**, the world's largest bicycle race attracting 30,000-plus participants attempting to conquer the Cape Peninsula during March. One month later, equally fanatical fitness freaks traverse a similar route on foot in the **Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon**, one of the world's most beautiful runs.

Moving up a notch to just plain scary is the June **Comrades Marathon**, an 89km road race between Durban and Pietermaritzburg that quickly separates the amateurs from the experts.