

Leopard Hiking Trail in Baviaanskloof



Leopard Hiking Trail in Baviaanskloof

The Leopard Trail is a four day / three night camping slack packing hike. Logistically this is the easiest camping hike you you have ever been on! Not only will we carry all your goods for you, but we will also be providing you with everything else you need at the camp site – other than your tent, mattress and sleeping bag. So no need for cooking equipment, plates, cutlery or kettles. We've got that covered. This is a slack packing hike, with your bags and food being transported for you by vehicle from each overnight spot. The Leopard Trail is a moderately difficult hike 4 day hike, with the longest day being 17.5 km. The hike is designed for people of good hiking fitness.

Age Allowed and Fitness

- The Leopard Trail is a relatively difficult hike, with the longest day being 17.5km. The hike is designed for people of good hiking fitness. Unfit hikers should not do the hike.
- The recommended age range of 12 (minimum age) and 65 (maximum age) years are used as an indicative ages, due to the level of physical demands of the Leopard Trail. We will not stop hikers outside of these age ranges –

and encourage you to be responsible for your own ability and limits.

- There are relatively steep ascents and descents, so please be cautious with any previous injuries to ankles and knees.
- All young hikers below 12 years of age should be accompanied by their parents/guardians who will be legal signatories to Indemnity Forms to be submitted with copies of their identity document or passport at the Leopard Trail reception desk before undertaking the Leopard Trail.

When to Hike and the Weather

The Leopard Trail is a great hike at any time of year (of course we would say that) depending on your preferences. Summer is hot with the daily average in December, January and February at 26 degrees. Days can get up to the high 30's, so be prepared to walk in the early mornings and late afternoons, spending your midday hours at the lunchtime mountain pools. Autumn and Spring (March, April, May, September, October and November) can provide great fair weather hiking, with average temperatures in the early 20's. Closer to the winter months and an occasional cold front can blow through dropping temperatures considerably. Winter days in June, July and August are often perfect for a long days hiking if you don't like the heat, with temperatures averaging around 16 degrees. Nights drop to zero though, so make sure you have a great sleeping bag, hot water bottle and camping mattress. Rain in the Baviaanskloof is an unpredictable affair. Sometimes there is winter rain, sometimes summer rain, sometimes both and sometimes neither. Statistically all months of the year have around 4 days of rain, so your chances of dry weather is pretty good. Like all mountain areas, the Baviaanskloof can experience a range of weather conditions over any 4 day period. You are advised to be prepared for rain, wind, cold and heat.

Water

There are water tanks at each overnight campsite that provide water for drinking, cooking, washing dishes and cold water showers. This water is piped in from the nearest mountain streams, and is good to drink. Depending on the season and local rainfall, there may be numerous streams and springs throughout the length of the Leopard Trail while you are hiking that are suitable for drinking purposes. However, it may be wise to use purification tablets especially if you are not used to this water. Unless it has been very dry, there are pools along the way for swimming on the first 3 days.

Safety

The Leopard Trail goes through wild natural wilderness with all the associated risks of animals, snakes, insects, weather and walking accidents. There are no buffalo or rhino in this part of the reserve. Leopard spoor is often on the trail, and very occasionally you may catch a glimpse of them during the day. The area does have a variety of venomous snakes, including Puffadders and the Cape Cobra. Please be aware and alert for snakes at all times. We advise hikers to refresh their knowledge on how to handle incidents of snake, spider or scorpion bites. There is no cell phone reception, and for the majority of the trail there is no vehicle access, so it will be difficult for you to let us know of any emergencies in a hurry. This is a risk you accept when walking the Leopard Trail. In the event of an emergency, please ensure that the person / people affected have someone who remains with them while you send a party of at least two people to back to base camp or the nearest emergency exit. The route from each camp site to the nearest emergency exit is marked.