

Limietberg Nature Reserve

Limietberg Nature Reserve is the best one-day hiking trail outside Cape Town.



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With rugged terrain stretching eastwards from Franschoek towards the Groot Drakenstein and in a northerly direction to the Voëlvlei Dam, the Limietberg Nature Reserve lies within the Du Toitskloof mountains near Paarl, offering a spectacular day-trip for visitors from Cape Town to enjoy.

The Breede and Berg rivers flow through the reserve feeding the Voëlvlei, Stettynskloof, Wemmershoek and Threewaterskloof dams, and the vegetation is primarily fynbos and indigenous forest.

There are a number of one-day hiking trail options in the reserve, and visitors may see klipspringers, baboons and dassies in the reserve, and possibly leopard and caracal, although these are rather elusive animals. Birdlife is plentiful and includes two species endemic to the area – the Cape sugarbird *Promerops cafer* and Protea canary *Serinus leucopterus* – as well as a number of raptor species such as the Black eagle, or Verreaux's Eagle (*Aquila verreauxii*). The

introduction of trout into the Berg and Breede river systems has resulted in this popular fish occurring in most of the rivers and streams, which are also home to three endemic fish species.

From a historical point of view there are a number of interesting features in the reserve, including an abandoned manganese mine, rock paintings and the original toll road between Villiersdorp and Franschhoek. There is also a cross which was erected by Italian prisoners of war captured in North Africa during World War II, and along the Bainskloof Pass there are graves of the convicts who worked on building the roadway.

One day hiking trails with Wellington as the nearest town include the Bobbejaans River Trail (9 kms); Rock Hopper Trail (8 kms); Happy Valley Trail (9 kms); and Elands River Trail (7 kms), with trails closest to Paarl being the Miaspoort Trail (8 kms) and Krom River Trail (7 kms). The two-day circular Limietberg Hiking Trail starts and ends at Tweede Tol on the Paarl side of the reserve with the first day covering 19 kms and day two covering a distance of 17 kms.

The Tweede Tol campsite and picnic spot are located off the R301 on the Bainskloof Pass, just over an hour or so from Cape Town. The picnic spot takes only 120 visitors a day on a first-come-first-served basis and is very popular. It has large grassy areas under plenty of trees, with braai spots and swimming permitted in the crystal clear waters and rock-pool of the Witte River. Campsites must be booked through Cape Nature.