

Hiking trails at Deelfontein from the guest houses and campsite.

The Deelfontein Campsite is one of 4 camps forming part of a 60 km-network of hiking trails, the Vredefort Meteorite Hiking Trails. Without hiking the main route, there is still a large selection of day hikes that may be done from either the campsite or the guest houses.

Route between guest houses and campsite. *Distance: 1 km.* From the guest houses to the campsite there are two routes: Follow the donga up to the signpost (27). Then turn left on the trail leading halfway up the northern ridge Derdeberg, and at the next signpost (28), turn right to remain on the contour reaching the campsite after 300 m. Alternatively, walk along the farm road to the campsite.

The Derdeberg summit route. *Starting point: Campsite. Distance: 2 km.* The trail climbs the high ridge to the north of the guest houses and behind the campsite. From the summit, there are beautiful views in all directions. On the southern flank of the ridge, the trail scales steep rocks until a signpost (28) is reached. Turning left, one returns to the campsite. Turning right, it leads to the valley and the guest houses.

The short valley route. *Starting point: Campsite. Distance: 4 km.* The trail starts at the campsite gate. Follow the sign to Baskop, but after 30m, turn left to Deelfontein Valley. Proceed along the southern flank of the ridge, and at the signpost (28), continue on straight to the valley. In the donga. At the next signpost (27), keep on straight and cross the road. The trail gradually climbs the southern ridge up to the next signpost (13). Turn left here on to the main route, leading over the knoll with a beautiful view over the northern Dome. Continue through a densely vegetated valley to the campsite.

The long valley route. *Starting point: Campsite. Distance: 4,5 km.* Start as for the previous route, but after 30m from the gate, continue straight on to the summit of Derdeberg. Just below the summit, turn left at signpost 16 to Deelfontein Valley. From signpost (28) halfway down the southern flank, follow the same route as for the short valley route.

The short knoll route. *Starting point: Campsite. Distance: 2 km.* Take the main route in the direction of Baskop and Thwane, starting at the campsite. Follow the signs to Thwane (south). The trail leads through dense thorn bush and then climbs the knoll behind the farmhouse. At the summit, there are beautiful views to the north and west, and remains of fortifications dating from the Boer War may be seen. The trail descends the eastern flank of the knoll. At the signpost (12), turn left, and after 20 m again, to the campsite.

The knoll route. *Starting point: Campsite. Distance: 3 km.* Take the main route in the direction of Baskop and Thwane, starting at the campsite. Follow the signs to Thwane (south). The trail leads through dense thorn bush and then climbs the knoll behind the farmhouse. At the summit, there are beautiful views to the north and west, and remains of fortifications dating from the Boer War may be seen. The trail descends the eastern flank of the knoll and keeps to the contour along the southern ridge. At the signpost (12), turn right and continue up to the next signpost (13). Turn right to the valley and walk up to the signpost in the donga (27), continuing to the southern flank of the northern ridge. At the next signpost (28), there is a choice: Either

take the direct route back to the campsite, or the somewhat longer summit route over the northern ridge.

The Witrant summit route. *Starting point: Guest houses. Distance: 4 km.* Start at the signpost (18) under Oom Hannes' farmhouse. Walk along the donga up to the next signpost (27), turning right to the southern ridge, and at the next signpost (13) right again. The trail leads gradually up the side of the ridge until the summit is reached. From here, there are impressive views in all directions, also in the southern direction over the plains to Vredefort. At the western end of the ridge, the trail descends sharply with switchbacks to the kloof below. At the signpost (14), turn right to Deelfontein valley, following the farm road to Oom Hannes' farmhouse. This route may be extended by 2 km by turning left in the donga at signpost 27 initially instead of right. This leads one past the campsite, over the knoll and to the signpost 13 on the side of the southern ridge, where it joins the above description.

The two ridges route. *Starting point: Campsite or guest houses. Distance: 6 km.* The description starts at the campsite. Follow the Derdeberg ridge route over the crest. At the signpost (28) halfway down the southern flank, turn right to the valley. Follow the donga up to the signpost (18) at the guest houses. Here, turn left to Mooihoek. The trail follows the farm road until just before the gate at the main road. Before the gate, turn left. At the next signpost (14), turn left up the steep end of the southern ridge. The trail climbs up the ridge with numerous switchbacks and reaches the summit, from where there are beautiful views in all directions, also in the southern direction towards Vredefort. The trail follows the crest of the ridge up to the first dip, where it slowly descends to the valley. At the next signpost (13) there is a choice: Either continuing on straight to the campsite over the knoll, or turning left to walk along the valley back to the guest houses. (It may be easier doing this route in the opposite direction!)

The Thwane route. *Starting point: Campsite. Distance: 11 km.* (Permission necessary). Follow the signposts for Thwane (south). The trail gradually climbs up the flank of the southern ridge, crosses the boundary to the neighbouring farm Steencampsberg, and leads through interesting stone age enclosures. It crosses a donga with high blue gum trees and then starts a gradual ascent of the highest peak in the southern Dome, Dwarsberg. Here also, one encounters the stone age enclosures. On the flanks of Dwarsberg the largest stand in the Free State of *Protea caffra* occurs, one of the many relicts of fynbos in the Dome. From here, the trail follows the crest of the northern ridge back to the campsite.

The Mooihoek route. *Starting point: Guest houses. Distance: 12 km.* (Permission and keys necessary). Start at Oom Hannes' farmhouse. Follows the signposts to Mooihoek. The trail follows the farm road until just before the gate at the main road. Before the gate, turn left. At the next signpost (14), continue straight on to Mooihoek. The trail crosses the main road and then climbs up the ridge, skirting impressive quartzite cliffs along the way. On the other side, one has a beautiful view of the secluded valleys of Mooiplaas. Descending a side valley, one walks through a dense forest, past signpost 17, and makes a gentle arch in the wide valley of Mooiplaas. Climbing the opposite ridge, one reaches signpost 20. Here, turn right in the direction of Sweet Home. The trail runs along the valley, and crosses the spruit where it breaks through the ridge. Here, at signpost 5, turn left and enter Witklipfontein through the locked gate. Turn right at signpost 29 and return to Deelfontein. The path runs past the ruin of the old Sweet

Home farmstead just before it crosses the main road again. At Mike's damwall, it skirts the dam. Walk through the forest, to arrive at Oom Hannes' farmhouse or continue on to the bush camp.

The Mooihoek route (Alternative). *Starting point: Campsite. Distance: 10 km.* (Permission and keys necessary). Follow the signposts from the campsite to Mooihoek and Baskop. Follow the trail over the knoll to the crest of the southern ridge, over the main road to Mooihoek. At signpost 17 in the forest, turn right past the rock painting. At signpost 5, turn right and then follow the same route over Sweet Home as above.

The Baskop circle route *Starting point: Campsite. Distance: 18 km.* (Permission and keys necessary). Follow the signposts from the campsite to Mooihoek and Baskop. At the Baskop camp house on the bank of the Vaal river, continue onwards back to Deelfontein via Witklipfontein and Sweet Home. This trail is very strenuous and only recommended for very fit hikers who want to put in at least 8 hours of hiking.