

# Hiking and Trailing

**The network of hiking, mountain bike and 4x4 trails at and near Thabaphaswa offers a great variety and many choices for trail runners, hikers and 4X4 enthusiasts.**

## THE NETWORK OF HIKING TRAILS

The network of hiking trails provide a wide choice to hikers and their dogs in terms of length, difficulty, and time required.

The trails are well signposted, each marked with a different -colored boot print.

The farm is in a natural basin high up in the mountains and therefore it is hard to get lost.

The map will be handed to you when you book in at reception. One can also download the trail map.

It is a good idea to arrange to meet the owner, Deon, to discuss the options that all the different trails provide.

Combing certain trails provide fairly long distances up to 15 kilometers. Do not underestimate these trails since the landscape is rugged.

The following hikes are available to hikers wanting to do longer hikes:

## THE BLACK EAGLE/ TSHESANE LOOP – 15KM

**This loop offers the opportunity to circumvent the basin or valley.**

Most hiking groups overnight at the Dome Rock Camp after arrival. The next day the trailhead is started for the climb up to the Peak of the Mhahlare Mountain and then down to the Kanniedood Mountain Hut. This represents a distance of 7.3 km starting with quite a steep climb in the beginning. Most hiking groups stay the second night at this hut.

The Loop is then completed the next day via the Tshesane trail, back to the Dome Rock Camp – a distance of 7,8 km.

The Mhahlare Trail climbs steeply out of the Dome Rock Camp. One passes the turn off of the Klipspringer trail and then tracking up the mountain via a number of switchbacks with some narrow, exposed ledges. There is a 12-meter chain to aid you through the steepest part.

One reaches the turn off to the left on the Black Eagle Trail after 1,3 km from the Camp. There is a good chance to see the Black Eagles soaring from their nest below and to the left. It is not possible to see the nest from the trail.

The trail then continues up till one passes the summit and the beacon. The trail goes around the southern part of the mountain before the descent starts. Lovely views are to be enjoyed in all directions.

The vegetation on the southern side of the mountain is totally different because of the lower temperature and moisture.

The trail goes down on the drier northwestern slope of the mountain where it joins the Mhahlare trail again and then reaches the Kanniedood 4×4 Mountain Hut. The hut is surrounded by spectacular Paperbark Comophira trees. These trees are not often seen and represent some of the largest specimens in South Africa.

Hikers who want to stay over in the hut can arrange that their rucksacks, food, and drinks be transported to the camp.

The Tshesane Trail branches off to the left, just below the lapa. It crosses a 4×4 road below and the Koppie Alleen hill. It reaches a gate just below the Homestead and then turns left. One then hikes past the Pump House, cattle kraal and follows the road to the Drunken Parrot Camp next to the mountain stream. The trail crosses the wall of Christoff's dam and then ascends the hills on the northeastern side of the valley. Carry on to the highest point at Ndebele Neck where views can be had of the whole basin below.

The trail then descends, crosses the road coming from the main entrance gate, and links up with the Mokholokwane Trail at the mountain stream, 500-meters from the Dome Rock Camp.

## **THE LOOKOUT POINT – 14KM**

This trail is on a neighbouring farm North of the Thabaphaswa Farm. The jeep tracks on this farm are enjoyed by mountain bikers and drivers of off-road vehicles. Hikers wanting to do a longer day hike also enjoy a visit to the Lookout Point.

The trail starts at a silver gate in the fence right to the North of the Thabaphaswa Camping Area. Once through the gate follow the 4×4 signs to the Lookout Point. The jeep track crosses two streams just above where the two converge. The catchment area for these streams is the Witvinger Nature Reserve.

Head North through three gates.

After the third gate, the landscape changes from bushveld to highveld. This is grassland with sour grass, proteas, and Boekenhout trees. This is at a much higher altitude of nearly 1500 meters, the veld type is classified as the "Pietersburg Highveld."

After the third gate, the road circles back South until it reaches the escarpment.

The Look Out is a flat rock with a wonderful view across the valley to the South and the Thabaphaswa Mountain's North face. In the far distance, the Waterberg can be seen.

Then take the steep footpath to the right of Lookout Point to Teffo's dam down below in the mountain stream.

From the dam follow the jeep track next to the stream. At the T-junction with another jeep track continue with a footpath next to the stream past some small dams until one again reaches the point where the two streams converge. Then walk back to the silver gate.

**The other trails are briefly as follows:**

## **THABAPHASWA SUMMIT TRAIL – 1 km**

This trail starts at the Mountain Fig Camp and provides a steep climb to the summit of Thabaphaswa Mountain. From the summit, 1 763m high, there is a 360-degree view covering a very large area.

## **MAHLARE TRAIL**

This trail contours from the Dome Rock Camp to the Kanniedood Mountain Hut. It is less strenuous than the Black Eagle trail on the same mountain.

## **KLIPSPRINGER TRAIL**

This trail starts at the Dome Rock Camp, and follows the foothills of the Mhahlare Mountain, and then links up with the Tshesane trail near the Farm homestead.

## **THE BOBBEJAAN TRAIL**

This trail provides a short cut from the Mhahlare trail to the Farm Homestead down below. It follows a kloof until it reaches a 4x4 road, 500-meters above the homestead. You then take the road down to the homestead.

## **TRAIL RUNNING**

More and more trail runners enjoy the network of hiking trails and jeep track that provide many options for running.