

What To Do in Dihlabeng Local Municipality

Bethlehem

The greater Bethlehem area forms part of the Highland Route and is located 80 km from QwaQwa and 60 km from the Golden Gate National Park.

Loch Athlone Dam



Collecting the waters of the Jordan River, which flows through Bethlehem, the Loch Athlone Dam is an important water source for the surrounding area, while offering local residents and visitors the chance to relax and take part in a variety of recreational activities. Loch Athlone is a well-equipped leisure resort, which hosts regular regattas and offers boating and angling. The charming Athlone Castir restaurant at the Loch Athlone Dam recalls the atmosphere of the Union Castle liner, with many original items and furnishings. A variety of water sports can be enjoyed on any one of the four dams situated in the vicinity of Bethlehem.

Wolhuterskop Game and Nature Reserve



An abundance of wildlife, including herds of zebras, rooihartebees, eland, springbok, impala, black wildebeest and many other antelope species, graze wide-open spaces of the rolling hills in the Wolhuterskop Game and Nature Reserve outside Bethlehem, on the way to Fouriesburg. The game and natural beauty can be appreciated from the comfort of a car, or on foot. The scenic hiking trail through the reserve offers a very close encounter with the veld and the game, and a stay in an overnight hut lets hikers drink in the peace of the Free State evenings. Game viewing on horseback is an added attraction. Hunting packages are available during the hunting season.

LIONSROCK Sanctuary and Wildlife Park

LIONSROCK is situated in the beautiful Eastern Free State Province of South Africa. Being home to a diverse range of wildlife and predators makes it an ideal destination for wildlife enthusiasts. Home to several pride of lions, two leopards, a Bengal tiger and other wild cats, LIONSROCK is a shining example of the sorely needed sanctuaries in South Africa. Since the resident Big Cats were born and raised in captivity, they are being kept in family groups in spacious and enriched environments.



A fascinating range of fauna and flora can be found in the park. Safe from their natural enemies, wildebeests, zebras, waterbuck and a range of antelope species populate the area. Many plant species and birdlife, which comes in iridescent diversity including rare species, have found a home at LIONSROCK, offering splendid opportunities for bird watching!

Fouriesburg

Bushmans Cave Hiking Trail



This experience includes Bushman rock art, splendid views over Lesotho, an unfinished castle atop a sheer cliff, an old fort, and prolific birdlife. Set among typical eastern Free State mountain scenery, this trail lives up to its name and leads hikers past a large number of Bushman paintings, some of which are well preserved. Its attractive location and the range of activities offered make this trail a popular venue with church groups; the natural amphitheatre above base camp has been set up as a 'church' with some seating and a pulpit.

There are three different hiking trails, from 3 to 16 km in length:

- 1) The Hoenderkop Hiking Trail leads across a plateau, through gulleys and along ridges to the castle. The dream of a certain Mr. Hill, this Normandy-style castle of sandstone and cement stands on top of a sheer cliff. Construction was halted in 1976 due to lack of funds and this incomplete shell is now a prominent landmark. From here there are uninterrupted views of Lesotho. The path then winds back to base camp past a windmill and the Hoenderkop.

- 2) The Old Fort Hiking Trail is shorter and follows an easy route to a cave with Bushman paintings. After a short climb up to the ridge, the path stays with this contour for some time until it reaches the ruins of an old fort, which dates back to the Anglo-Boer War. The walk to base camp is through some lovely forested areas and passes a lookout spot and more Bushman art.
- 3) The Bird Trail is a short walk to a valley near the overnight camp. Birdlife is abundant here with 103 species having been identified, including the relatively rare bald ibis.

Clarens

Clarens Valley, situated in the Eastern Free State Highlands, is known for its spectacular sandstone mountains and wonderful climate, and is one of the most picturesque spots in South Africa. The village has become known as the “Jewel of the Free State” - rich in beauty, with an aura of peace and tranquility.



Clarens is endowed with more trees than most other Free State towns - the fresh, light green willows and colorful blossoms of the many fruit trees are an unforgettable sight in spring time; whilst the magnificent autumn shades of the Lombard poplars attract artists, photographers and nature lovers.



Clarens has an array of accommodation retreats for travelers making their way into Lesotho or embarking on a journey through the beautiful sandstone mountains of the Goldengate Nature Reserve.



The center of the town has many restaurants and trading stores for whatever our patronage might lead you to, be it antique collectables, fine art, clothing, gemstones, woodwork or metal fabrications, to name a few.



The choice of daily activities is spread over a wide spectrum ranging from river rafting to horseback trailing, mountaineering and abseiling, hiking, trout fishing, canoeing and even picnicking in the company of baboons in front of a majestic weather-carved sandstone wall of mountain that's notoriously rich-gold of color.



Clarens is part of the scenic Highlands Route and is surrounded by mountainous splendor. The Rooiberge is the range encompassing the village, whilst further on towards the southeast, the mighty Maluti's stand proud in shades of purple and blue. All around are the sandstone cliffs with their multi-coloured layers - this horizontal strata is a unique geological feature of the area, and is known as the Clarens formation.

Fly Fishing



Clarens has been acclaimed as having the best Trout Fishing waters in S.A. Surrounded by some of the most spectacular scenery on the planet, every avid angler should definitely add this to their list of must see places to visit. Most of the fishing is controlled and managed by the River Rangers, who are available as guides on the various waters. Rivers and dams offer three species of trout; golden, brown and rainbow, and you will have the chance to try your luck with bass and yellowfish in certain locations. The catch and release rules differ from place to place so check with your guide or lodge staff.

Wild Rides Quad Biking



Wild Rides Quad Biking offer quad biking experiences in the Maluti mountains, only 10 km from Clarens. Quad Biking trips range in length from one-and-a-half to two hours depending on the participants' skills level. Choose between a technical ride, a game-viewing outside or just a leisurely sundowner trip. We cater for novice to experienced quad bikers.

Hot Air Ballooning SA



The Clarens Mountain Odyssey adventure flight is the most scenic, romantic and exhilarating ballooning adventure in South Africa! We fly from Clarens on request, with a minimum of 4 passengers per flight (bookings may come from any source). Make your own way to Clarens to one of our selected lodges, where you will overnight. In the morning you will be transported to the launch site for pre-flight briefing over hot drinks, watch the balloon rigging and hot inflation, and enjoy the adventure of a lifetime.

Paul Roux

The Dinosaur Tracks on Uniondale, Paul Roux District

On the farm Uniondale in the Paul Roux district, a large block of Clarens Formation Sandstone has come loose from a high cliff on the mountain, just underneath the lavas on top, and rolled down to lie on the flat land below. This block contains parts of the fossilised trackways of at least two fairly large meat-eating dinosaurs of a kind which roamed this area of the Free State during the early Jurassic Period, about 185 million years ago. We don't know exactly which dinosaur left these footprints, because no bones of the animal have yet been found, but we do know that it was a two-legged meat eater. It was probably very much like an animal of similar size known from rocks of similar age in the southwestern United States of America -- the medium-sized theropod dinosaur, *Dilophosaurus wetherilli* (a distant and more primitive relative of the later giant meat-eaters like the famous *Tyrannosaurus rex*).

The main trackway shows five successive footprints (Left-Right-Left-Right-Left) of an animal walking from the lower right to the upper left of the sandstone block. The 'stride' of the animal (from one right footprint to the next right footprint) is nearly 3 metres, indicating that it was an animal with long back legs. The fact that there are no front foot prints shows that the animal walked upright on its two back legs, leaving only the three-toed, bird-like prints of its hind feet.

These animals lived in the desert which covered large parts of Gondwana during late Karoo times. Soon after these rocks were laid down the surface of this part of the earth erupted with great outpourings of volcanic lava as Gondwana began to break up 180 million years ago.