

Exploring Umgeni Valley

Dates: 27th April 2025

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Hike Leader: Keith Ashton

Photographers: Various

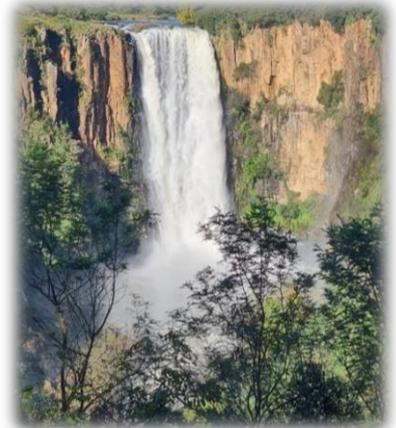
Location: Howick

Distance: 14 kms



Basking in the glory of a sunny day, a dozen adventurous souls, eager for a dose of nature's finest vitamin D, set off to uncover the hidden treasures of Umgeni Valley.

Our first marvel was heralded by a low rumbling, like the continuous sound of the ocean, growing louder until we reached the Howick Falls viewing spot. The falls were in spectacular form, with sprays leaping out as if trying to reach us, creating rainbows in the sunlight.



The trail then led us to Shelter Falls, not for the faint of heart, as the viewing is from the top of the falls. We continued up along the meandering river to Cascade Falls. These falls were magnificent, with the water at the top glinting in the sunlight.



After a short photo session at Cascade Falls, our intrepid leader guided us along the Sunset Trail towards the Black Eagle picnic site. We had a quick tea break at the picnic site before starting the infamous Black Eagle Trail. This trail has many ups and downs, and with all the recent rain, some sections were somewhat overgrown. (Pro-tip, ladies: do not, under any circumstances, wear leggings—they're magnets for blackjacks and burrs.) One section forced us to crawl through low-growing trees that couldn't be moved aside.



Having survived the obstacles along the trail and the hairy sections where the path narrowed alarmingly, we arrived at our lunch site near an abandoned cottage. In the shade nearby, there were several benches around an old firepit where we stopped for a bite to eat.

After lunch, we headed for the main road to take us back to our vehicles. The road had a few parting obstacles that we had to navigate carefully to avoid slipping into the mud.



The hike ended with a water crossing near the entrance. Most hikers chose to balance on the rocks at the edge of the road, while others took the opportunity to remove their boots and treat their hard-working feet to the deliciously cool water. A fitting end to another wonderful day exploring the beautiful countryside and relishing the sunshine.

