

MIDLANDS HIKING CLUB – HIKING REPORT JULY 2025

SUNGUBALA ECO CAMP, Cavern Valley, Northern Berg



The escarpment behind Sungubala Eco Camp, on the left is Sugarloaf and on the right is Sungubala mountain



L-R: Phil, Rhona, Tinks, Christine, John, Nonhlanhla, Sthabiso and Brian ready to tackle the climb to Echo Cave.



Destination – Echo Cave. The vertical black and white stripes, caused by water seepage from cracks in the rock, are a unique feature.



Hike Leader
Brian Henwood

Introduction: The Sungubala Eco Camp is positioned on a grassy sandstone ridge within the Cavern Valley, north of the historical Royal Natal National Park. The backdrop to this popular 'Camp in the Berg' is a section of the Drakensberg escarpment featuring Sugarloaf, Battleship, Hlolela and the Sungubala mountain.

This 'off the grid' establishment for nature lovers is powered by generator, wind and solar. Gas is used for cooking and water-heating to ensure reliability.

The camp can accommodate 40 persons in a variety of options, such as chalets, rondavels, thatched A-Frame huts, with or without en-suite, and a mountain bungalow with 6 beds.

Season: Winter, Fri 18 to Tues 22 July 2025

Hiking Group: 8 hikers comprising Brian, Rhona, Phil, Nonhlanla, Sthabiso, Tinks, Christine and John

Hiking Programme:

Friday pm – Drizzle delayed the start of the stroll to the Cavern Berg Resort.

1 hr; Leader's heart rate 48 to 102

Saturday – After a delayed start due to low cloud, we walked along the contour path to the hotel. As the cloud started lifting, we proceeded to climb through the ancient Fern Forest, known for its massive indigenous trees. We rested at Mays Falls while filling our bottles, then proceeded with the steep ascent to Echo Cave.

7,1 km; 16 000 steps; Leader's heart rate 50 to 115

Sunday – A brisk walk to the Grotto via Natural Pool and return via the hotel.

6 km; Leader's heart rate 52 to 113

Monday – Climb to Bishops Inkaba and the waterfall; and return via a suspended ladder and the Silent Woman engraving.

5,4 km; Leader's heart rate 52 to 114



Although known as Echo Cave, it is a 100m high striped sandstone rock face topped with an overhang that creates the waterfall.



With the sight of Sugarloaf on the horizon, Rhona and Tinks take a break for a photograph.



Mays Falls is a good place to refill bottles



In the background is Bishop's Mitre (A pointed cleft cap with bands either side) and below is Bishop's Inkaba, (recess in the rock depicting a belly button)



The sighting of Eland on the slopes above Sungubala is a common feature.