



## Experience the history of the Battlefields

On windswept plains of KwaZulu Natal the land is littered with the remains of stone forts and graveyards bearing witness to the Anglo-Zulu war battlefields of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift as well as the Boer war battlefields of northern Kwa Zulu Natal.

## Historical Battlefield Tours

### The Battle of Isandlwana

At the start of the Anglo / Zulu war in January 1879, the British invaded the independent Monarchy of Zululand with five columns. The 3rd and main column set up a camp at a Sphinx shaped mountain called Isandlwana. On 22nd January, the 25 000 strong main Zulu army under its brilliant commander Tshingwayo, attacked the camp and in only a few hours defeated the British forces, killing over 1 300 souls. It remains today as the greatest colonial military defeat suffered by the British Empire. The few survivors who were able to flee for their lives were chased by thousands of Zulus to the Buffalo River and the safety of the Colony of Natal.

Today the battlefield is kept in pristine condition by the local Zulu people and tourist operators in the area. The abundance of white cairns (each of which is home to between 20 and 60 bodies) give the battlefield a serene and spiritual feeling. The tour which is 3 hours long, covers three areas of the battle and requires no walking.



### The Battle of Rorke's Drift

The tiny mission station at Rorke's Drift lies on the Natal side of the Buffalo River, just upstream from Fugitive's Drift. On the day of the Battle of Isandlwana it was garrisoned by 135 British troops (mainly of the 24th Regiment of Foot) and 300 members of the Natal Native Contingent. The post served as a hospital and store for Lord Chelmsford's column. The 3 500 strong Zulu Undi Corp under Prince Dabulamanzi chose to defy the King's orders not to cross into Natal and attacked the post in the afternoon of 22nd January, 1879. After the early desertion of the Natal Native Contingent, the 135 British troops defended the hastily fortified post for over 12 hours against overwhelming numbers. Follow the legendary defence of Rorke's Drift and hear how 11 Victoria Crosses were won as the defenders, who were 'pinned in like rats in a hole', fought desperately to save their lives. Note, there is no walking on this tour.



### The Battle of Spioenkop

On 24th January, 1900, during the Anglo/Boer war, the British and Colonial forces under General Sir Redvers Buller VC made their second attempt to cross the Tugela River at the hill of Spioenkop in an attempt to relieve the besieged town of Ladysmith.

In the violent battle that ensued, the British lost over 1 300 casualties and retired from the hill during the evening, bizarrely when the Boers had already retired. The British had won the battle and by doing so had the key to Ladysmith.

The Boers simply retook the hill unopposed in the morning and the battle became a Boer victory. Walk the four main areas of the battlefield (less than 1 km) with Garth and hear the fascinating tales of the battle, its blunders, the characters and the slaughter.



## Guided Hikes

### The Fugitive's Trail Hike

As the Battle of Isandlwana reached its final moments, a number of survivors managed to escape through a small gap in the Zulu encirclement. The trail of these fugitives, as they became known, takes us over the 8 km from Isandlwana to the Fugitives Drift on the Buffalo River. Chased by thousands of Zulus, their flight is symbolised by the many cairns marking the mass graves of the not-so lucky. Those that reached the Buffalo and the safety of Natal found the river in flood and faced the awful choice of being killed by Zulus or the raging flood waters of the river. The Fugitive's Trail hike is regarded as one of the top historical hikes in the world, is 10 km long and rated as moderate.

Enjoy the spectacular views, the fascinating stories of those who survived and the legendary dash of Victoria Cross winner, Lt Melvill with the Queens Colour, only to be killed on the Natal side of the river.

### The Tugela Gorge Hike

The Tugela Gorge Hike forms part of the National Park's Royal Natal Reserve and lies within the World Heritage Site in the Drakensberg mountains. Our hike starts in the car park just below the Thendele Camp and is a distance of 14 kms long and rated as moderate. Regarded as one of the top hikes in the world, the route takes the hiker up the pristine Tugela Gorge with magnificent views of the Amphitheatre and Sentinal peaks.

It concludes at the base of the Tugela Falls which, with it's drop of 411 metres, is accepted as the second highest falls in world behind Venezuela's Angel Falls. However, the 5 free falling drops down the face of the Amphitheatre give a combined total of 948 metres and make this the highest waterfall in the world.

## Cycle the Battlefields

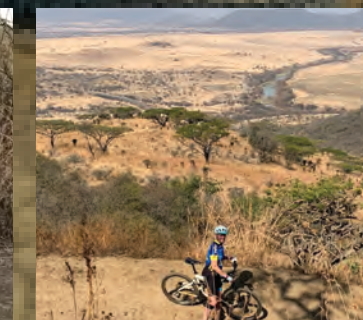
Experience the Kwa-Zulu Natal battlefields from a new perspective on your mountain bike. Please note that is not technical mountain biking, but entirely on district roads and straight forward single track. We are also introducing in 2020, the hire of E-bikes for those that seek a more leisurely trip through the veld. All our cycles have a sweep car with a trailer to pick up any riders who feel that they have had enough or have damaged bicycles.

DAY 1: Leave the Tugela river Lodge, cycle on single track and district road around the south westerly side of Spioenkop. We will follow the track up the side of the Twin Peaks and then descend the beautiful 'Longdrop'. Once back in the valley, a pretty meander along the Tugela River takes us back to our Lodge. The cycle is approximately 22 km, but for those enthusiastic types who want to play, there are plentiful other single track routes available.

DAY 2: We drive from our Lodge at Rorke's Drift to Isandlwane Battlefield and get ready for our cycle on the Nyoni heights. The route follows that of Lieutenant

Raw as he scoured the Nqutu heights for the elusive Zulu Impi, up the Mabasa hill and onto the cliffs overlooking the Ngwebeni valley, the hidden camp of almost 40 000 Zulu warriors and their camp followers. From Mabasa Hill, the group meanders down the Quabe valley and heads out to Mangeni falls, site of Lord Chelmsford's designated next camp, for lunch. After lunch the route takes us back to Isandlwane battlefield for the story of the battle and it's aftermath. The cycle is approximately 32 km long and mostly on district roads.

DAY 3: After an early breakfast, the more intrepid cyclists head out from our Lodge up the Nostropa pass towards Helpmekaar. The less brave get a lift with their bikes onto the escarpment. This ride along the plateau is one of the most scenic rides in our country. From Helpmekaar, we tackle the 7 km descent down to Elandsdraal and then the beautiful undulating 16 km road passed the Isibindi game reserve to the Rorke's Drift. Garth recounts the fascinating tale of this battle over a packed lunch and then we return to the Lodge for a rest and dinner. The cycle is either 46 or 62 km.



Contact us via email or mobile for information and quotations relating historical tours, hikes and cycle tours.



Email : [Garth@isiqalobattlefieldtours.co.za](mailto:Garth@isiqalobattlefieldtours.co.za)  
Mobile : Garth van Rensburg : 082 600 5194  
Web : [www.isiqalobattlefieldtours.co.za](http://www.isiqalobattlefieldtours.co.za)