



THE STAGES GUIDE of the FORGOTTEN HIGHWAY ROUTE

In the olden days, people travelled by ox-wagon, and later by horse-drawn stage-coaches.

Like the old ox-wagons, which traveled in “stages”, so can you -
Exploring the Forgotten Highway Route,
one adventure at a time ...



Images: SA Railways & Harbours Publicity &
Travel Department & Mountain Passes SA
Facebook page





Each section of the route was a “stage”. We offer some “stages” on your Forgotten Highway Route journey! (South to North ... but of course you can travel in the reverse direction too!)

There are many accommodation options along the way - in the towns, on working farms, and on game reserves. We recommend www.travelground.co.za (or www.lekkeslaap.co.za in Afrikaans), as well as Afristay, Safarinow, Bookings.com, Airbnb, Rooms for Africa, Wheretostay, and Viya.

If you would like to have your heritage attraction or tourism enterprise listed on the Stages, please contact doreen@karoofoundation.co.za.



Each Stage can be done in a day (depending on your driving speed and how many stops you indulge in).

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Image: Michiel van Dam



Stage 1: Nuwekloof Pass - Tulbagh - Michell's Pass - Ceres

DIRECT ROUTE: Distance from Tulbagh to Ceres: 26 km on tar (R46)

- From the little town of Gouda, drive along the R46, along the Nuwekloof Pass.
- Guest Farm: De Oude Tol, at the eastern side of the pass. This is exactly where the old toll was situated.
- Do a detour into the town of Tulbagh - and visit the beautiful museum complex.
- Many wine estates in this vicinity; and many guest farms offer accommodation.
- Continue with the R46 to the magnificent Michell's Pass to Ceres.
- Visit the Togryer (Transport Rider) Museum in Ceres - about travelers in by-gone times!

Stage 2: Ceres to Sutherland

Stage 2 via Karooport

DIRECT ROUTE: Distance from Ceres to Sutherland via Karooport (R356 and R354): 198km, mostly on dirt road

- From Ceres, travel via the gentle and scenic Theron's pass. The Matroosberg will be on your right.
- You can stay over at the Forgotten Highway Guest Farm, which shares the same name as our route!
- You then leave the tar road, and reach the historic Karooport farm. It is a narrow pass. No accommodation here.
- You can stay over at the historic Inverdoorn Game Reserve, with Big Five and Cheetah Rescue; or the equally historic Bizansgat Guest Farm
- Near Sutherland, turn left onto the R354 (tar road) towards Sutherland
- Visit Verlatenkloof Guest Farm, with cottages and road stall (padstal)
- Visit Tjol se Tol mountain-side bar
- Roggecloof Guest Farm has beautiful cottages, scenery and wildlife
- Visit Rooikloof Farm, a working farm with traditional Karoo cottages
- SALT (South African Large Telescope) offers guided tours
- Sterland offers excellent star-gazing sessions, accommodation and a botanical route
- Sutherland has a planetarium for day-time and night-time astro displays
- There are several restaurants and guest houses in Sutherland.



Stage 2 via Touws River

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE: Distance from Ceres to Sutherland via Touws River (R46, N1 and R354):

250 km, all on tar

- Pleasant Karoo and mountain scenery, especially on the R354.
- Coffee shops and facilities at Touws River
- Excellent Matjiesfontein Hotel, museum, coffee shop and vintage car/train museum at historic Matjiesfontein, featuring interesting historical characters such as Olive Schreiner
- Visit Verlatenkloof Guest Farm, with cottages and road stall (padstal)
- Visit Tjol se Tol mountain-side bar
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Stage 3: Sutherland to Fraserburg

Stage 3 Direct road

DIRECT ROUTE: Distance from Sutherland to Fraserburg: 108 km on good dirt road (R356)

- Travel past remote farms, with occasional stone ruins and kraals
- The Karee River was the northern boundary of the Cape Colony in 1801
- Fraserburg is a pleasant Karoo town
- The historic “peperbus” (pepperpot) structure on the town square
- Several attractive accommodation options, and little restaurant
- North of Fraserburg were two historic mission stations, established around 1795, but they are not open for visitors.

Stage 3 via the “Rantepad” (Ridge Road)

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE: Distance from Sutherland to Fraserburg: 128 km on good dirt road

- Beautiful mountain scenery, with views from the Escarpment
- Several attractive guest farms
- Cyclists often use this road.



Stage 4: Fraserburg to Loxton

DIRECT ROUTE: Distance from Fraserburg to Loxton: 100 km on good dirt road

- Travel past remote farms, with occasion stone ruins and kraals
- South of Loxton, on the R381, is the well-known Jakhalsdans Guest Farm
- Visit Annelise Vorster Meyer's Art Gallery
- Several eateries, including Loxton Lekker
- Several guest houses, including Karos Guest House, and Biesiespoort Guest Farm just north of Loxton
- Beautiful tree-lined streets and rustic ambience.

Stage 5: Loxton to Carnarvon

Loxton to Carnarvon

DIRECT ROUTE: Distance from Loxton to Carnarvon: 66km along the R63 (tar road)

- Karoo guest farms, including Osfontein Guest Farm, with old stone buildings and a glamping tree house
- Carnarvon Museum contains local artefacts
- Guest farms with corbelled houses in the vicinity
- Carnarvon is located on the edge of the Square Kilometer Array astronomy site, but access to the telescope is not possible.
- Drive east to Pampoenpoort - a remote farm with a Karoo cemetery.

Loxton to Carnarvon via Pampoenpoort

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE: 106 km on dirt road

- Some guest farms along the way
- Pampoenpoort is a Karoosheep farm with a typical farm cemetery
- Karoo mountains with dramatic scenery.

Or do a westerly detour: Fraserburg to Williston to Carnarvon

DETOUR: Distance from Fraserburg to Williston: 93 km, largely tarred, , R353 and R63

- Remote and attractive Karoo town
- Karoo guest farms *en route*
- Several accommodation options, including Williston Mall with quirky artifacts
- Beautiful sandstone church and Rhenish church
- Anglo-Boer War fort and nearby museum
- Well-stocked Manna Restaurant and Gift Shop
- The Tombstone Route in the vicinity
- Corbelled houses *en route* to Carnarvon.



Or do an easterly detour: Loxton to Victoria West, Vosburg and Carnarvon

DETOUR: 200km; Tar from Loxton to Victoria West, dirt road to Vosburg, then tar to Carnarvon

- Visit the beautiful Melton Wold Guest Farm
- Victoria West has lovely Karoo architecture
- Many guest houses and restaurants, including Merino Junction Hotel, Merino Restaurant, Kingwill's Coffee Shop and Moonlight Manor
- See the art deco Apollo Theatre in Victoria West
- Vosburg is a serene and charming little village, with pleasant accommodation

Stage 6: Carnarvon to Prieska

Carnarvon to Prieska

DIRECT ROUTE: 166 km on a dirt road

- Remote and historic farms, including Karelsgraf, Buffelsbout and Jonkerwater
- Prieska hosts the impressive bridge across the Orange River - the original "drift" of the Route
- Several accommodation options, including some along the river, such as the Riverview Guest House and Restaurant
- Dramatic Anglo-Boer War blockhouse on a hill overlooking the town.

Carnarvon to Vanwyksvlei and Prieska

INDIRECT ROUTE: 150 km on a dirt road

- Remote Karoo farms
- Vanwyksvlei is a very isolated settlement, with one or two little shops - a true taste of the upper Karoo in its original desolation
- The town dam is noteworthy as an early irrigation project.

Stage 7: Prieska to Griquatown

DIRECT ROUTE: 130 km on a dirt road, via Niekerkshoop, R386

- Pass the remote little village of Niekerkshoop
- North of Niekerkshoop is Rietfontein (not accessible to tourists), but this was the first mission station north of the Orange River (1800)
- The road ascends the Ghaap Escarpment - an ancient geological structure from about 3 billion years ago, with rich iron, manganese and lime deposits
- This road is very historic because the missionaries travelled to Griquatown (then called "Klaarwater").
- Visit the important Mary Moffat Museum in Griquatown - built around 1815
- Several accommodation options, including the nearby Koekais Guest Farm
- The Proviand Restaurant is a pleasant eatery in tranquil garden. ("Proviand" means "provisions").



Stage 8: Griquatown to Danielskuil via Campbell and Lime Acres

DIRECT ROUTE: 130 km: N8 to Campbell on tar, R385 to Lime Acres on dirt, and R31 to Danielskuil on tar

- Wide Ghaap landscapes *en route* to the historic village of Campbell, dating back to 1813
- Visit the Bartlett Church
- The road to Lime Acres passes Papkuil, and the Papkuil Safari Game Farm
- Lime Acres is a pleasant village, with well-tended gardens
- Danielskuil has a Boer War blockhouse on a hill overlooking the town
- There are several pleasant guest houses, and the Mynhuis Restaurant.

Griquatown to Witsand and Postmasburg

INDIRECT ROUTE: 180 km to Witsand and Postmasburg, starting on tar (N8), and then largely on dirt roads

- The Bergenaar's Pass leads to Witsand - this was an old hide-out of Bergenaar rebels in the 19th Century
- Witsand Nature is a beautiful Kalahari Nature Reserve, with chalets and camping, and white dunes to climb
- The direct dirt road to Postmasburg may be a bit rough, and a better alternative may be the dirt road via Olifantshoek, and then south to Postmasburg along the N14 (tarred) and R325
- Olifantshoek is situated within the Langberg Mountain range, with a few pleasant accommodation options, and the quirky Rooikar Padstal (road stall)
- The road to Olifantshoek would also lead you to the desert town of Upington, along the N14
- Postmasburg is a bustling mining town. Its only heritage attraction at present is the statue of Rev Dirk Postma, the founder of the Gereformeerde Kerk, after whom Postmasburg is named.

Stage 9: Danielskuil to Kuruman

DIRECT ROUTE: 80 km along the R31, tarred

- The R61 passes the historic Wonderwerk Cave, with evidence of very early human occupation, including the oldest recorded human use of fire in the world
- Kuruman is a busy regional retail centre with many guest houses
- The Moffat Mission is an important historic site - the last point of Western culture before travellers headed northwards into Africa
- The Eye of Kuruman is a remarkable fountain, but keep alert for possible security issues at the site.



INDIRECT ROUTE: Postmasburg to Kathu and Kuruman: About 130 km, R325 and N14, all tarred

- This route is full of mining activity
- Kathu is the main mining hub, with many accommodation options
- The Sishen golf course at Kathu is a pleasant Kalahari site
- Red Sands Guest Farm offers excellent accommodation and dining
- At Kuruman, visit Moffat Mission, and the Eye of Kuruman, if security considerations permit.

Stage 10: North of Kuruman and Kathu: Deben, Hotazel and Vanzylsrus

DIRECT ROUTE to Botswana along the R31: Mostly tarred road

- This northerly region is tangential to the Forgotten Highway route, and recalls many explorers who ventured into the Kalahari
- Deben village is north of Kathu, and the delightful Kalahari Doringdraad Venue offers great meals and events
- Winton Guest Farm, north-west of Deben is a remote and atmospheric Kalahari farm
- Hotazel is a bustling mining town
- At the attractive village of Vanzylsrus, visit the Hotel for pleasant accommodation and meals.

Stage 11: From Danielskuil or Campbell to Kimberley ... and beyond ...

DIRECT ROUTES along the N8 (from Campbell) or the R31 (from Danielskuil)

- Barkly West is a rough and ready village, which used to be a major alluvial diamond mining centre along the Vaal River
- Visit the Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre near Kimberley, along the R31
- At Kimberley, the McGregor Museum is a very important intellectual resource, and served as a sanatorium during the Anglo-Boer War - where Cecil John Rhodes had rooms
- The Kimberley Club offers lovely accommodation, fine meals and a great historical ambience
- The Kimberley Diamond Mine (“Big Hole”) offers interesting mining history, meals, and accommodation
- South of Kimberley, on or near the N12, are important Anglo-Boer War sites, such as Magersfontein and Modder River (including its blockhouse)
- From Kimberley, you can continue your rural explorations, to the southern Free State - Jacobsdal is a busy agricultural village; Koffiefontein and Jagersfontein, old mining towns; and charming historic Fauresmith and Philippolis.



Image: Michiel van Dam