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Green Or Blue? Up To You

Two sensational slackpacking routes in a most beautiful stretch of the Elgin Valley. Not only do you get natural beauty and great comraderie...but superb wine tastings, hospitality, and great overnight stays

Edited: **Anne Schaffer**

Photographs: **Cluver Family, Bryni Balt, Jackie Dhaeyere, Kevin Gleeson, Michelle Hodgkinson**



Slackpacking, the best of all worlds! Green Mountain, the company, offers two really exquisite slackpacking trails, you only carry a day pack. It's a wonderful experience, a fantastic way to meet others, enjoy a coffee with breathtaking views as far as the eye can see, laugh a lot, and make memories. The two trails are: The Green Mountain Trail, a moderate walking trail around the Groenlandberg in the Overberg region of the Western Cape, with distances varying between 11kms and 18kms each day. And the Blue Mountain Trail, founded in 2015 on the back of the Green Trail's success, is a three-day moderate hike covering a 50km route through the UNESCO-declared Biosphere offering sweeping views of the Overberg coastline.

The Green Mountain Trail

This trail was listed in The Daily Telegraph's South Africa's Top 20, and described as "Explore the Cape Floral Kingdom by day, then sample the fine wines produced by its terroir at night...a guided hike, with a walking stick carved from alien species. The four-day, 38-mile (60km) Green Mountain Trail option takes you through the Groenlandberg Conservancy, the world's first biodiversity wine route. Art-filled Wildekrans Country House, a destination in its own right, is an agreeable place to stay." Green Mountain was awarded Trip Advisor's 2020 Travellers Choice award.

The Green Mountain route runs within the Kogelberg Biosphere, a 100,000 hectare area of Fynbos, a world Hot Spot for plant diversity,

listed as an UNESCO World Heritage Site. It traverses a tapestry of fynbos and fruit farms, replete with four star accommodation and wholesome meals. There's a maximum of 10 people per group in fresh countryside air, and the current route covers a mixture of public and private land – you'll be hiking through fruit farms, fynbos and vines, with bountiful birds and animals, and a knowledgeable, accredited and passionate guide.

The effort level of this slackpacking trail - as gauged by Slackpacker S.A. - is set at 3.5 with 5 being the most difficult (so, moderate level of fitness required).

You won't go hungry, that's for sure. The diversity of the area is also appreciated by the palate where food and wines reflect the differences in soils and rainfall. Feedback from hikers describes the food as: 'a veritable feast' and 'it's as much a gourmet experience as it is a hike'. The cuisine is seasonal and fresh, produced on many of the participant farms.

For birders, there have been over 200 species sighted in the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, so expect to be rewarded with the endemic Orange Breasted Sunbird and Cape Sugarbird. Nesting Verreaux's eagles are another special sighting for the area, and on the farmlands below, Blue Cranes are often seen striding through the fields.

On the higher reaches of the trail, hikers may catch sight of klipspringers - duiker and grysbok may be seen on the lower mountain slopes while Mountain Leopard and Caracal slip by unseen or by night, leaving their tracks along the trail.



The main difference between white gold and yellow gold is the colour. White gold is mixed with white metals like nickel, while yellow gold is mixed with yellow metals like copper. ... The cost of white gold and yellow gold is relatively the same.



En route, wine tastings are enjoyed at Elgin and Bot River. All the farms visited are family owned and each has its own story:

- Beaumont is a family owned and managed farm situated in the heart of the town of Bot River (“Botter Rivier”) and is the final stop on the Green Mountain Trail, where lunch and wine-tasting is enjoyed. The farm, home to the region’s oldest wine cellar, was originally established in the 1700’s by the Dutch East India Company.
- Oak Valley is one of the largest in the area known for its fruit, cut flowers, beef cattle and for its high quality, cool climate, wines. It also produces acorn-fed, free range pork; that source their food from the 4,000 plus oak trees that give the farm its name.
- Paul Cluver covers an area of over 2,000 hectares; is the largest farm in the Green Mountain Trail family. While half of the estate has been set aside for conservation into perpetuity, wine production and the farming of apples and pears is

combined with Hereford stud farming as well as ecotourism activities, which include outdoor concerts in the summer.

- Wildekrans Country House is a historic 1811 homestead with a rambling country garden. Home to a private collection of South African contemporary art and antique furniture, the atmosphere is relaxed, quirky and ancient, all rolled into one.

The Blue Mountain Trail

This slackpacking, three day hike covers a 50km route through the UNESCO-declared Biosphere, offering sweeping views of the Overberg coastline, and close-up access to a unique plant life that literally gives the mountain its blue tinge. The Blue Mountain Trail starts with check in on a Monday afternoon at 15h00 and check out on a Thursday after lunch. As this is a working farm experience, the trail takes place on week days so that hikers get the full experience. Wide open spaces, daily wine tasting, knowledgeable guides and overnights at Wildekrans Country House make this another bucket list experience in the Green Mountain collection. ❖

To book or find out more, email info@greenmountaintrail.co.za