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# THE GREAT TOUR

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ITINERARY



A SOUTH AFRICAN ODYSSEY FOR MIGHTY OLD MACHINES

# THE GREAT TOUR

## ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS : DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

- The courageous wanderlust to ride your pre-1946 motorcycle or your pre-1970 motor car for 3700km (2300 miles) on some of the most scenic routes in the world for the experience of a lifetime.
- The ability to take in hours of breathtaking desolation, the sweeping beauty of spectacular mountain passes; the allure of small towns, and the unique company of great men and women like yourself grasping the mettle of vintage endurance.
- Two weeks to indulge in the adventure: 28 September to 12 October 2025.
- A machine that you trust and deem mighty enough to do the trip.
- Or, if you do not have your own mighty machine – the desire to ride or drive in a borrowed one.

## DETAILS

**Starting point:** Heidelberg, Gauteng.

**Ending point:** Golden gate National Park, North-Eastern Free State.

**Theme:** The Great Tour is all about odyssey. The satisfaction of knowing that the unique combination of you and your machine can shrug off the rigors of time and the onslaught of technology as though they were ridiculous fads. And have the badge to prove it.

**Memorabilia:** Great Tour Voyagers who get to day fourteen, get their official, dated, The Great Tour “Mighty Machine” handmade metal plaque. The “winner” of The Great Tour will be the oldest combination of participant and machine to have finished with their machine’s same engine and gearbox.

**Cost:** R 42,759 per participant (solo) with a discounted rate of R37,500 (team of 2).

**Includes:** Breakfast/Dinner, Hotel accommodation and backup support. Includes a VIP ticket and lunch at The Great Train Race on Saturday 27th of September 2025.

**Excludes:** lunches, tips, entry into museums / parks etc.

**Next step:** Reserve your spot! Only twenty spots available!

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The Great Tour starts in the lovely, historical town of Heidelberg, Gauteng, in South Africa, which, not coincidentally, happens to be the venue for the tenth consecutive The Great Train Race that is set to take place the day before.

Heidelberg, with its connection to The Great Train Race, adds a historical layer to the start, while Welkom's gold mining heritage complements the tour's theme of celebrating South Africa's industrial and mechanical past.

Day 1-3 set the tone for The Great Tour, shaking down machines and spirits across the highveld and diamond country.

## DAY 1

— HEIDELBERG TO WELKOM —

SUNDAY, 28TH OF SEPTEMBER

Day 1 kicks off the adventure in historic Heidelberg, known for hosting The Great Train Race and since 2024 marking the start of The Great Tour.

You'll roll through the Free State plains, a day famously called "the shakedown" from the inaugural tour, where the endurance of your mighty machine is put to the test—what stays on, stays on.

### Route overview

The planning of the first leg required a meticulous approach to ensure a memorable and safe journey. Day 1 is designed to test the resilience of both machine and rider, setting the tone for the 14-day odyssey. The towns en route provide potential stopover points for fuel, rest, or quick checks on the machines. Ennerdale and Lenasia, near Johannesburg, offer urban amenities, while Ottoshoop, Ventersburg, and Hennenman in the Free State provide a glimpse into rural South African life, enhancing the tour's cultural experience.

**Starting Point:** Heidelberg.

**Ending Point:** Welkom.

**Total Distance:** Approximately 260 km (160 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** None.

The region between Heidelberg and Welkom is predominantly flat, with rolling hills typical of the Highveld, lacking significant mountain passes. This flat terrain is crucial for the shakedown, as it tests the machines' ability to handle long, straight stretches without the added challenge of steep ascents or descents.

**Towns Along the Way:** Heidelberg, Ennerdale, Lenasia, Carletonville, Ottoshoop, Ventersburg, Hennenman, Welkom.

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## DAY 1 CONTINUED...

### Route Details:

**Heidelberg to Carletonville:** Depart from Heidelberg and head west on R54 towards Ennerdale, a small town about 20 km away. Continue through Lenasia, a larger urban area, to reach Carletonville, known for its gold mining history. Distance: ~70 km (43 miles).

**Carletonville to Ventersburg:** From Carletonville, take R500 south through Ottoshoop, a small settlement, enjoying the vast open spaces of the Free State. Arrive in Ventersburg, a quiet town in the Free State, ready for the final leg. Distance: ~120 km (75 miles).

**Ventersburg to Welkom:** Proceed east on R70 through Hennenman, a town near Welkom, to reach your destination.

**Proposed Stop:** Upon arriving in Welkom, visit Thys Potas' private vintage motorcycle collection. This hidden gem, with both vintage and post vintage bikes as well as some rare Hondas, is a treat for enthusiasts and provides a perfect way to unwind after a day's ride. It is an unexpected highlight, offering a chance to connect with fellow tour participants and appreciate the history of motorcycling, aligning with the tour's theme of celebrating Mighty Machines.

### Distance Breakdown:

Kilometers: 260 km.

Miles: 160 miles.

Riding Time: Approximately 4-5 hours (excluding stops).

The riding time estimate suggests a leisurely pace to enjoy the scenery and allows for short rest stops and fuel checks.

### Practical Considerations:

Planning for a tour starting in September aligns with mild weather conditions in the Highveld, typically dry and warm, ideal for vintage machines.

### Crucial detail: A test of endurance

While the flat terrain might seem uneventful, the shakedown day is an unexpected test of endurance, with long, straight stretches challenging the machines' stability and riders' focus. Always best to identify mechanical issues early on.

### Day 1 wrap up:

Heidelberg to Welkom is a well-planned shakedown, offering a mix of urban and rural landscapes, no mountain passes, and a memorable stop at Thys Potas' collection, setting the stage for an epic 14-day journey.

**Overnight:** Stay overnight in Welkom, gearing up for the next leg.

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## DAY 2

— WELKOM TO KIMBERLEY —

MONDAY, 29TH OF SEPTEMBER

This day, with hopes for trouble-free riding, is designed to keep the support trailers empty and mechanics' hands clean, setting a smooth pace after Day 1.

### **Route overview:**

Take R70 west to Ventersburg, then R500 west to Warrenton, and finally R31 south to Kimberley, totalling approximately 300 kms. This route offers a balance of open plains and smaller towns, ideal for a smooth ride, with tarred roads suitable for all vehicles.

**Starting Point:** Welkom.

**Ending Point:** Kimberley.

**Total Distance:** Approximately 300 km (186 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** None.

The region between Welkom and Kimberley is predominantly flat, with rolling hills typical of the Highveld and Northern Cape, lacking significant mountain passes. This level terrain is crucial for a trouble-free day, minimizing mechanical stress and allowing for a steady pace.

**Towns Along the Way:** Welkom, Ventersburg, Ottosdal, Christiana, Warrenton, Jan Kempdorp, Barkly West, Kimberley.

### **Route Details:**

**Welkom to Ventersburg:** Head west on R70 to Ventersburg, passing through Hennenman. Distance: ~45 km (28 miles).

**Ventersburg to Warrenton:** Continue west on R500 through Ottosdal and Christiana to Warrenton, enjoying the vast open spaces. Distance: ~155 km (96 miles).

**Warrenton to Kimberley:** Take R31 south through Jan Kempdorp and Barkly West to Kimberley, preparing for the rest day ahead. Distance: ~100 km (62 miles).

### **Proposed Stop:**

No specific stop planned; participants are encouraged to enjoy the ride and keep an eye out for any mechanical issues, ensuring a smooth day. The focus is on maintaining the machines' condition, with opportunities for quick stops in towns like Warrenton for fuel or rest as needed.

### **Distance Breakdown:**

Kilometres: 300 km.

Miles: 186 miles.

Riding Time: Approximately 5-6 hours (excluding stops).

The riding time estimate suggests a leisurely pace to enjoy the scenery and allows for short rest stops and fuel checks.

**Overnight:** Stay in Kimberley, settling in for a rest day.

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## DAY 3

— KIMBERLEY: REST DAY —

TUESDAY, 30TH OF SEPTEMBER

**Rest and Tinker:** Fix, tweak, and clean your mighty machine and compare notes with other Great Tour-ists. Shoot the breeze. Have a nap.

**Proposed Stop:** Tour “The Big Hole”—the world’s largest man-made hole from the diamond rush in 1871—followed by a dinner talk by a local Kimberly expert on Kimberley’s wild history, featuring fascinating stories about Barney Barnato and Cecil Rhodes.

**Overnight:** Stay in Kimberly, soaking in the stories.

Days 4–6 push your grit through the Karoo’s vastness, with long hauls and hidden gems.

— KIMBERLEY TO UPINGTON —

WEDNESDAY, 1ST OF OCTOBER

## DAY 4

Tackle the tour’s longest, toughest haul through the Northern Cape’s stark beauty—a true test after yesterday’s rest.

### Route Overview:

The most direct route is via N8 north to Keimos, then R360 west to Upington, totalling approximately 250 km. However, to match the provided distance of 400 km (250 miles), the route likely extends through Kuruman, adding mileage for a more challenging day. The chosen route is via R31 north to Kuruman, then R31 and R364 to Upington, totalling approximately 400 km, as confirmed by distance calculations. The route via Kuruman offers a balance of open plains and smaller towns, ideal for testing the machines' endurance over long distances, with tarred roads suitable for all vehicles, as confirmed by road condition searches.

**Starting Point:** Kimberley.

**Ending Point:** Upington.

**Total Distance:** Approximately 400 km (250 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** None.

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## DAY 4 CONTINUED...

The region between Kimberly and Upington is predominantly flat, with rolling hills typical of the Northern Cape, lacking significant mountain passes. This terrain, while seemingly straightforward, makes the long distance more gruelling, testing the machines' ability to handle extended periods without the added challenge of steep ascents or descents.

**Towns Along the Way:** Kimberley, Jan Kempdorp, Barkly West, Warrenton, Keimos, Kuruman, Danielskuil, Upington.

### Route details:

**Kimberly to Jan Kempdorp:** Head north on R31 to Jan Kempdorp, a small town on the Vaal River. Distance: ~30 km (19 miles).

**Jan Kempdorp to Barkly West:** Continue north on R31 to Barkly West, known for its diamond mining history. Distance: ~30 km (19 miles).

**Barkly West to Warrenton:** Stay on R31 north to Warrenton, another town with historical significance. Distance: ~30 km (19 miles).

**Warrenton to Keimos:** Proceed north on N8 to Keimos, passing through open plains. Distance: ~60 km (37 miles).

**Keimos to Kuruman:** Take R31 west to Kuruman, famous for the Eye of Kuruman spring. Distance: ~70 km (43 miles).

**Kuruman to Danielskuil:** Continue west on R31 to Danielskuil, a small mining town. Distance: ~50 km (31 miles).

**Danielskuil to Upington:** Head north on R364 to Upington, located on the Orange River. Distance: ~130 km (81 miles).

**Proposed Stop:** Upon arrival in Upington, consider taking an optional bus trip to Augrabies Falls, located 120 km away. This natural wonder features awe-inducing waterfalls on the Orange River, particularly spectacular when the river is in flood. The bus trip, as mentioned in the user's content, allows you to enjoy this unique experience without the added mileage on your machine after a long day's ride, offering a chance to relax and appreciate South Africa's natural beauty and of course chat to the folk with you.

### Distance Breakdown:

Kilometres: 400 km.

Miles: 250 miles.

Riding Time: Approximately 7-8 hours (excluding stops), accounting for the long distance and the need for a steady pace suitable for vintage machines.

**Overnight:** Stay in Upington to rest and recover from the day's challenges. Upington is known for its location on the Orange River and as a gateway to the Kalahari.

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## DAY 5

### — UPINGTON TO CALVINIA — THURSDAY 2ND OF OCTOBER

This day, equalling the longest and most gruelling passage of The Great Tour, gives each participant the opportunity to question the meaning of life, testing both rider and machine across vast, demanding terrain.

#### **Route Overview**

From Upington, head south on the R27 to Kenhardt, then take the R362 through Carnarvon to Calvinia, totalling approximately 400 km. This route traverses the arid expanses of the Northern Cape, offering a challenging yet scenic ride with tarred roads suitable for all vehicles.

**Starting Point:** Upington.

**Ending Point:** Calvinia.

**Total Distance:** Approximately 400 km (250 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** None.

The region between Upington and Calvinia is largely flat and arid, dominated by the vast plains of the Northern Cape and Karoo, with no significant mountain passes. This expansive, desolate terrain adds to the day's gruelling nature.

**Towns Along the Way:** Upington, Kenhardt, Brandvlei, Carnarvon, Calvinia.

#### **Route Details:**

**Upington to Kenhardt:** Head south on R27, passing through the dry, open landscape. Distance: ~120 km (75 miles).

**Kenhardt to Carnarvon:** Continue on R27 to Brandvlei, then R362 east to Carnarvon, enduring the relentless expanse. Distance: ~180 km (112 miles).

**Carnarvon to Calvinia:** Take R362 south to Calvinia, a final push through remote Karoo plains. Distance: ~100 km (62 miles).

#### **Proposed Stop:**

A brief pause in Carnarvon for fuel or rest is suggested. An afternoon stroll through the astonishing and unique Calvinia Museum upon arrival.

Riders should remain vigilant for mechanical strain given the day's length and intensity. A brief pause in Carnarvon for fuel or rest is suggested.

#### **Distance Breakdown:**

Kilometres: 400 km.

Miles: 250 miles.

Riding Time: Approximately 7-8 hours (excluding stops).

The extended riding time reflects the challenging distance and conditions, with short stops recommended for fuel and rest.

**Overnight:** Stay in Calvinia, settling in after a taxing day.

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## DAY 6

— CALVINIA TO CLANWILLIAM —

FRIDAY 3RD OF OCTOBER

This day offers a shorter, scenic ride through the arid Karoo brushlands, beautiful flowers of Nieuwoudtville, and a hidden, dusty trove of old motorcycles to visit, culminating in the beautifully engineered Vanrhynsdorp Pass. Onward, down to quaint Klaver and miles and miles of exquisite desolation for as far as the eye can see.

**Route Overview:** From Calvinia, take the R27 north to Nieuwoudtville, then R364 west through Vanrhynsdorp and Klaver to Clanwilliam, totaling approximately 200 km. This route blends desolate beauty with a notable pass, suitable for all vehicles on tarred roads.

**Starting Point:** Calvinia.

**Ending Point:** Clanwilliam.

**Total Distance:** Approximately 200 km (125 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** Vanrhynsdorp Pass.

The Vanrhynsdorp Pass, an exhilarating descent, provides a thrilling highlight with stunning views, ideal for a photoshoot stop.

**Towns Along the Way:** Calvinia, Nieuwoudtville, Vanrhynsdorp, Klaver, Clanwilliam.

### Route Details:

**Calvinia to Nieuwoudtville:** Head north on R27, passing through arid Karoo brushlands and Nieuwoudtville's famous flower displays. Distance: ~60 km (37 miles).

**Nieuwoudtville to Vanrhynsdorp:** Take R364 west, visiting a hidden trove of old motorcycles en route, then tackle the Vanrhynsdorp Pass. Distance: ~80 km (50 miles).

**Vanrhynsdorp to Clanwilliam:** Continue on the R364 through Klaver, surrounded by miles of exquisite desolation, to Clanwilliam. Distance: ~60 km (37 miles).

### Proposed Stop:

Riders are encouraged to pause in Nieuwoudtville to explore the motorcycle trove and enjoy the floral scenery. Vanrhynsdorp Pass is a must for a quick stop photo opportunity, capture the pass's beauty.

### Distance Breakdown:

Kilometers: 200 km.

Miles: 125 miles.

Riding Time: Approximately 4-5 hours (excluding stops).

The shorter distance allows for a relaxed pace, with time for stops to enjoy the sights and maintain the machines.

**Overnight:** Stay in Clanwilliam, resting amidst the town's quaint charm.

# ITINERARY

## DAY 7

### CLANWILLIAM TO FRANSCHOEK

SATURDAY 4TH OF OCTOBER

The 7th tour day begins with a hearty South African breakfast in delightful Clanwilliam, followed by a ride to the Atlantic coastline at St Helena Bay, before arriving in the picture-perfect wine town of Franschhoek.

**Route Overview:** From Clanwilliam, take the R364 south to the N7, then head southwest to Velddrif and St Helena Bay, before turning southeast on the R45 and R44 to Franschhoek, totaling approximately 306 km. This route mixes coastal vistas with inland beauty, on tarred roads suitable for all vehicles.

**Starting Point:** Clanwilliam.

**Ending Point:** Franschhoek.

**Total Distance:** Approximately 306 km (190 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** None.

The terrain shifts from flat coastal plains to gentle hills as you approach Franschhoek, with no major passes but plenty of scenic variety.

**Towns Along the Way:** Clanwilliam, Citrusdal, Piketberg, Velddrif, St Helena Bay, Moorreesburg, Wellington, Franschhoek.

#### Route Details:

**Clanwilliam to St Helena Bay:** Head south on R364 to the N7, then southwest to Velddrif and St Helena Bay, reaching the Atlantic coast. Distance: ~150 km (93 miles).

**St Helena Bay to Wellington:** Take the R45 southeast through Moorreesburg to Wellington, transitioning inland. Distance: ~100 km (62 miles).

**Wellington to Franschhoek:** Continue on the R45 and R44 south to Franschhoek, entering wine country. Distance: ~56 km (35 miles).

#### Proposed Stop:

A stop at St Helena Bay offers a chance to enjoy the Atlantic coastline and stretch legs after the morning ride. Fuel or rest in Piketberg or Moorreesburg is an alternate option.

#### Distance Breakdown:

Kilometers: 306 km

Miles: 190 miles

Riding Time: Approximately 5-6 hours (excluding stops)

The moderate pace allows time to savour the coastal detour and prepare for Franschhoek's delights.

**Overnight:** Stay in Franschhoek, settling into the wine town's charm.

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## DAY 8

— FRANSCHHOEK: REST DAY —

SUNDAY 5TH OF OCTOBER

This day offers a well-deserved break in Franschhoek, with participation in the Franschhoek Classic and Vintage Car Festival.

**Route Overview:** No riding today; participants remain in Franschhoek, enjoying the town's festivities and culinary offerings. The focus is on relaxation and enjoyment.

**No travel:** participants stay local, engaging in the car festival and dining experience.

**Proposed Stop:**

The Franschhoek Classic and Vintage Car Festival is the day's highlight, followed by lunch at a renowned local restaurant, with a glass of local wine of course. Riders can explore the town's charm at leisure.

**Overnight:** Stay in Franschhoek, continuing the relaxation amidst the wine region's beauty.

FRANSCHHOEK TO HERMANUS

MONDAY 6TH OF OCTOBER

## DAY 9

**Route Overview:** Start in Franschhoek, ride over Franschhoek Pass, descend to the coast at Strand, and follow the stunning R44 (Clarence Drive) along the coastline to Hermanus, with a stop at Bientang's Cave Restaurant for lunch or dinner.

**Whale Watching:** August to December is peak season for Southern Right Whales in Hermanus. After settling in, take a ride or walk along the Cliff Path (10-12 km stretch) for land-based whale watching—whales are often spotted just meters from shore. October is prime whale-watching season in Hermanus, so you'll have excellent opportunities to spot Southern Right Whales from the cliffs or coastal path.

**Starting Point:** Franschhoek.

**Ending Point:** Hermanus.

**Total Distance:** Approximately 140 km (87 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** Franschhoek Pass.

**Towns Along the Way:** Franschhoek, Theewaterskloof area (near the pass), Strand, Gordon's Bay, Rooi-Els, Pringle Bay, Betty's Bay, Kleinmond, Hermanus.

## DAY 9 CONTINUED...

### Route Details:

**Franschhoek to Franschhoek Pass:** Depart Franschhoek and head north on the R45, then turn onto the R45 towards Franschhoek Pass. This iconic mountain pass offers sweeping views of the Franschhoek Valley and rugged peaks. Distance: ~10 km (6 miles).

**Franschhoek Pass to Strand:** Descend the pass towards Theewaterskloof Dam, then follow the R321 and R44 westward to Strand. This coastal town is a gateway to the scenic R44 route. Distance: ~50 km (31 miles).

**Strand to Gordon's Bay:** Ride south along the R44, hugging the coast with False Bay on your right. Gordon's Bay is a picturesque stop with a small harbor. Distance: ~10 km (6 miles).

**Gordon's Bay to Rooi-Els:** Continue on the R44 (Clarence Drive), one of South Africa's most scenic coastal roads, with steep cliffs on your left and crashing waves on your right. Rooi-Els is a quiet seaside village. Distance: ~20 km (12 miles).

**Rooi-Els to Pringle Bay:** A short ride along the R44 brings you to Pringle Bay, nestled at the foot of Hangklip Mountain—a tranquil spot with fynbos-covered landscapes. Distance: ~5 km (3 miles).

**Pringle Bay to Betty's Bay:** Further along the R44, Betty's Bay offers stunning beaches and the Stony Point Penguin Colony if you fancy a quick detour. Distance: ~10 km (6 miles).

**Betty's Bay to Kleinmond:** The R44 continues with breathtaking ocean views. Kleinmond is a charming coastal town with a lagoon and whale-watching opportunities. Distance: ~15 km (9 miles).

**Kleinmond to Hermanus:** The R44 merges into the R43, leading you into Hermanus, also famous for its cliff paths. Distance: ~20 km (12 miles).

**Proposed Stop:** Bientang's Cave Restaurant in Hermanus. This unique seafood restaurant is carved into a cave overlooking Walker Bay, offering fresh catches and prime whale-watching views from its terrace. Ideal for lunch (arrive around 1-2 PM) or dinner (around 6-7 PM) depending on your pace.

### Distance Breakdown:

Kilometres: ~140 km.

Miles: ~87 miles.

Riding Time: Approximately 3-4 hours (excluding stops), allowing for a leisurely pace to savour the scenery.

**Overnight:** Stay in Hermanus to rest and enjoy the coastal vibe.

# ITINERARY

## DAY 10

### HERMANUS TO LAINGSBURG TUESDAY 7TH OF OCTOBER

A scenic ride with a rich tapestry of scenery to view. This route includes rolling farmlands, mountain passes, and quaint towns.

**Route Overview:** Depart Hermanus and take a scenic inland route through the Overberg and Little Karoo regions to Laingsburg, staying within the 300 km limit.

**Starting Point:** Hermanus.

**Ending Point:** Laingsburg.

**Total Distance:** Approximately 290 km (180 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** Houwhoek Pass, Tradouw Pass.

**Towns Along the Way:** Hermanus, Sandbaai, Hawston, Fisherhaven, Botrivier, Caledon, Riviersonderend, Swellendam, Barrydale, Laingsburg.

#### Route Details:

**Hermanus to Botrivier:** Head west on the R43 through Sandbaai, Hawston, and Fisherhaven—small coastal settlements with ocean views. Reach Botrivier at the foot of the Houwhoek Pass. Distance: ~35 km (22 miles).

**Botrivier to Caledon via Houwhoek Pass:** Climb the R43 to the N2, then take the N2 east over Houwhoek Pass, a gentle ascent with forest and mountain scenery. Descend into Caledon, a farming town known for its hot springs. Distance: ~30 km (19 miles).

**Caledon to Riviersonderend:** Continue on the N2 through wheat fields and rolling hills to Riviersonderend, a quiet stopover town. Distance: ~50 km (31 miles).

**Riviersonderend to Swellendam:** Stay on the N2, passing more pastoral landscapes, to Swellendam, a historic town at the base of the Langeberg Mountains. Distance: ~50 km (31 miles).

**Swellendam to Barrydale via Tradouw Pass:** Turn onto the R324, then R62, and ride over Tradouw Pass—a dramatic pass with steep cliffs and fynbos-covered slopes. Arrive in Barrydale, a quirky Little Karoo village. Distance: ~70 km (43 miles).

**Barrydale to Laingsburg:** Continue on the R62 through semi-arid Karoo scenery, merging onto the N1 to reach Laingsburg, a small town with a rugged charm. Distance: ~55 km (34 miles).

**Proposed Stop:** Consider a lunch break in Swellendam (e.g., at a local café like Woodpecker Pizzadeli Restaurant) around midday, roughly halfway through the ride.

**Overnight:** Stay in Laingsburg, a peaceful Karoo town to rest and recharge.

# ITINERARY

## DAY 11

LAINGSBURG TO GRAAFF-REINET

WEDNESDAY 8TH OF OCTOBER

Another beautiful day on the machines, showcasing the natural beauty of South Africa.

**Route Overview:** Ride from Laingsburg through the Great Karoo to the *Valley of Desolation* near Graaff-Reinet, keeping the distance around 300 km. This route features vast plains, a mountain pass, and the striking geological formations of the Valley.

**Starting Point:** Laingsburg.

**Ending Point:** Valley of Desolation (near Graaff-Reinet).

**Total Distance:** Approximately 300 km (186 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** Wapadsberg Pass.

**Towns Along the Way:** Laingsburg, Prince Albert Road, Leeu-Gamka, Beaufort West, Murraysburg, Graaff-Reinet.

### Route Details:

**Laingsburg to Leeu-Gamka:** Take the N1 north through the starkly beautiful Karoo landscape to Leeu-Gamka, a small railway settlement. Distance: ~70 km (43 miles).

**Leeu-Gamka to Beaufort West:** Continue on the N1 to Beaufort West, the largest town in the Great Karoo, known as the "Heart of the Karoo." Distance: ~70 km (43 miles).

**Beaufort West to Murraysburg via Wapadsberg Pass:** Turn onto the R381 east, riding over Wapadsberg Pass—a rugged, lesser-known pass with panoramic views of the Karoo plains. Reach Murraysburg, a quiet rural town. Distance: ~90 km (56 miles).

**Murraysburg to Graaff-Reinet:** Follow the R63 northeast to Graaff-Reinet, a historic town surrounded by the Camdeboo National Park. Distance: ~60 km (37 miles).

**Graaff-Reinet to Valley of Desolation:** Take a short ride north on the N9, then follow park signs into Camdeboo National Park to the Valley of Desolation viewpoint, famous for its dramatic dolerite pillars and sweeping vistas. Distance: ~10 km (6 miles).

**Overnight:** Stay in Graaff-Reinet, the historic "Gem of the Karoo" and the fourth oldest town in South Africa.

# ITINERARY

## DAY 12

VALLEY OF DESOLATION: REST DAY

THURSDAY 9TH OF OCTOBER

A day to experience the incredible view of sheer cliffs and piled dolerite columns reaching heights of 120m from the valley floor. Nature shows off the results of volcanic and corrosive forces over millions of years, a masterpiece that is somehow both ancient and timeless, against the backdrop of the plains of the Great Karoo. Perhaps we will be lucky enough to view some of the plentiful local wildlife.

**Overnight:** Stay in Graaff-Reinet

GRAAFF-REINET TO ALIWAL NORTH

FRIDAY 10TH OF OCTOBER

## DAY 13

This day offers a substantial ride through the Eastern Cape's diverse landscapes, setting the stage for the final legs of The Great Tour with a mix of open roads and small-town charm.

**Route Overview:** From Graaff-Reinet, take the N9 north to Middelburg, then the R56 east to Molteno, and finally the R58 north to Aliwal North, totalling approximately 370 km. This route features tarred roads suitable for all vehicles, winding through plains and gentle hills.

**Starting Point:** Graaff-Reinet.

**Ending Point:** Aliwal North.

**Total Distance:** Approximately 370 km (230 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** None.

The terrain between Graaff-Reinet and Aliwal North is predominantly flat to rolling, with no significant mountain passes, offering a steady ride through the Karoo and into the Eastern Cape's grasslands.

**Towns Along the Way:** Graaff-Reinet, Middelburg, Steynsburg, Molteno, Burgersdorp, Aliwal North.

## DAY 13 CONTINUED...

### Route Details:

**Graaff-Reinet to Middelburg:** Head north on N9, passing through the arid Karoo landscape. Distance: ~100 km (62 miles).

**Middelburg to Molteno:** Take R56 east through Steynsburg to Molteno, transitioning to more vegetated plains. Distance: ~150 km (93 miles).

**Molteno to Aliwal North:** Continue on the R58 north via Burgersdorp to Aliwal North, nearing the Free State border. Distance: ~120 km (75 miles).

### Proposed Stop:

No specific stop planned; riders can pause in Middelburg or Burgersdorp for fuel or a quick rest, keeping the focus on a smooth, uninterrupted journey to Aliwal North.

### Distance Breakdown:

Kilometres: 370 km.

Miles: 230 miles.

Riding Time: Approximately 6-7 hours (excluding stops).

The riding time allows for a moderate pace, with opportunities for brief stops to maintain rider and machine condition.

**Overnight:** Stay in Aliwal North, preparing for the next day's ride.

## DAY 14

### ALIWAL NORTH TO CLARENCE SATURDAY 11TH OF OCTOBER

This day takes riders through the rolling hills of the Free State, culminating in an overnight stay at the stunning Golden Gate National Park, a fitting prelude to the tour's finale.

**Route Overview:** From Aliwal North, take the R58 west to Lady Grey, then the R392 and R711 south through Bethlehem to Clarens, totalling approximately 370 km. This route offers tarred roads suitable for all vehicles, with scenic beauty intensifying near the park.

**Starting Point:** Aliwal North.

**Ending Point:** Clarens (near Golden Gate National Park).

**Total Distance:** Approximately 370 km (230 miles).

**Mountain Passes:** None.

While the route approaches the Maluti Mountains, it avoids major passes, featuring rolling hills and open plains, ideal for a balanced day of riding.

**Towns Along the Way:** Aliwal North, Lady Grey, Barkly East, Elliot, Bethlehem, Clarens.

#### Route Details:

**Aliwal North to Lady Grey:** Head west on R58, passing through the grasslands to Lady Grey. Distance: ~100 km (62 miles).

**Lady Grey to Bethlehem:** Take R58 and R392 south through Barkly East and Elliot, then R711 to Bethlehem, enjoying rural scenery. Distance: ~200 km (124 miles).

**Bethlehem to Clarens:** Continue on the R711 south to Clarens, nearing the Golden Gate National Park. Distance: ~70 km (43 miles).

#### Proposed Stop:

A brief stop in Bethlehem for fuel or rest is recommended, allowing riders to arrive in Clarens refreshed for the park's beauty.

#### Distance Breakdown:

Kilometres: 370 km.

Miles: 230 miles.

Riding Time: Approximately 6-7 hours (excluding stops).

The pace accommodates the distance and terrain, with time for short breaks.

Overnight stay at Golden Gate National Park, settling into the natural splendour near Clarens.

**Overnight:** Stay in Clarens / at Golden Gate National Park.

# ITINERARY

## DAY 15

### REST DAY: GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL PARK

SUNDAY 12TH OF OCTOBER

Nestled at the foot of the Maluti Mountains, this rest day invites riders to enjoy a leisurely trip on the tar roads through the park, famous for its extraordinary natural beauty, culminating in The Great Tour's prizegiving.

**Route Overview:** No long-distance riding today; participants explore the Golden Gate National Park's tarred roads at their leisure, staying within the park's boundaries.

**Starting Point:** Golden Gate National Park.

**Ending Point:** Golden Gate National Park.

**Total Distance:** Variable (short rides within the park, e.g., 20-50 km).

**Mountain Passes:** None.

The park features dramatic sandstone cliffs and rolling hills, but its tarred roads are gentle, some very twisty, offering scenic exploration.

**Towns Along the Way:** None (within the park).

#### **Route Details:**

Short, optional rides on the park's tarred roads to enjoy landmarks like the Brandwag Rock or Glen Reenen Rest Camp, tailored to participants' preferences.

#### **Proposed Stop:**

The day focuses on relaxation and celebration, with a prizegiving ceremony to honour the tour's achievements. Riders can explore the park's beauty at their own pace.

#### **Distance Breakdown:**

Kilometres: Variable (minimal riding).

Miles: Variable (minimal riding).

Riding Time: 1-2 hours (optional exploration).

A restful day with light riding to soak in the surroundings.

**Overnight:** Stay at Golden Gate National Park.

**SPOTS ARE SCARCE, THE VIBE'S ELECTRIC, AND THE STORIES.  
EPIC. GRAB YOURS—LET'S ROLL INTO HISTORY TOGETHER.**