

THE FOUR-DAY ROUTE

The route stays the same every year. Times may therefore differ from year to year, but the days and the activities remain the same.

It is important that you have an idea of the route we take. It will help you mentally prepare to cover the long distances we cover each day.

DAY 1: CAPE AGULHAS LIGHTHOUSE TO BRANDFONTEIN FARMSTEAD

DEPARTURE:	6am on Thursday from Hermanus
STARTING POINT:	8am at Cape Agulhas Lighthouse
DISTANCE:	±18 kms
GPS CO-ORDINATES:	Cape Agulhas Lighthouse - S34°82'94" E20°00'90" Brandfontein Farmstead - S34°76'67" E19°86'67"

DESCRIPTION

We set off in the morning on day one from Cape Agulhas Lighthouse along the boardwalk towards the shore. From there we pass a stone cairn, which represents the southernmost point of Africa.

This is the official divide between the Indian and Atlantic Ocean, but it is not always the official divide between the Agulhas and Benguela currents. This divide varies between the Agulhas point and Cape Point. The significance of standing at the meeting place of two oceans is not lost, however.

The name 'Agulhas' comes from the Portuguese navigators during the 16th century. Their compass needles would always point north as they sailed past this point (magnetic north coincides with true north), hence "Cabo d'Agulhas" meaning 'Cape of Needles'.

We then walk along a coastal footpath through Agulhas National Park. The wreck of the Meisho Maru, a Japanese fishing vessel that lost its battle with a fierce storm on 16 November 1982, is testament to the Cape of Storm's reputation.

Approximately 2km further from the wreck, a boardwalk turns left towards Rasperpunt hiking trail. Look for stone walls in the shallow gullies which served as Stone Age fish traps for the local inhabitants. The route continues on to the small fishing hamlet of Suiderstrand.



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After this we reach the beach, strewn with pebbles and shingle (small, unevenly shaped stones) which can be challenging, but a break is then called on the beach in front of the Park's thatched chalet camp, where there is a chance to swim.

Within the Agulhas National Park, we continue along the coastline in front of high dunes known as "Die Walle", which are mentioned in South African writer Daleen Matthee's last novel, *Driftwood*.

The last long stretch is a beautiful, white open beach before Brandfontein farmstead, an old farm on the shore, where transport will be waiting to take us to the accommodation at Die Dam Holiday Resort.

Everyone has time to enjoy coffee & cake, settle into their allocated chalets, unpack, rest, relax, swim and enjoy each other's company before dinner.

A BIT OF HISTORY

Cape Agulhas Lighthouse is steeped in history. The lighthouse is the second oldest in South Africa as well as the oldest working lighthouse in the country (it became use on 1 March 1849). The notorious Cape winter storms and high waves have caused many a ship to wreck along this stretch of coast, which led to this lighthouse's construction. 71 steps take you to the top of the lighthouse and a museum is housed in the main building.

SOURCES: *The Historical Overberg* by C. Schoeman.



DAY 2: BRANDFONTEIN FARMSTEAD TO DIE DAM HOLIDAY RESORT

DEPARTURE:	7am on Friday from Die Dam by bus
STARTING POINT:	8am from Brandfontein Farmstead
DISTANCE:	±19km
GPS CO-ORDINATES:	Brandfontein Farmstead S34°76'67" E19°86'67" Die Dam Holiday Resort S34°76'25" E19°68'85"

DESCRIPTION

Rise and shine for the second leg of the four-day walk! We enjoy an early breakfast followed by a bus ride back to Brandfontein Farmstead to pick up where we left off the day before. We pass the Brandfontein family cemetery along the Agulhas National Park's fynbos trail. The route skirts the boundary wall of another historic old farmstead, Aasfontein, which was declared a national monument and dating back to the 1800s.

A long jeep track takes us back to the beach and we walk around a long bend of sand until we reach the mouth of the Ratel River, also mentioned in Daleen Matthee's novel *Driftwood*. In the nineteenth century, a ship called *The Doncaster* was wrecked at the mouth of the Ratel River, on passage from Mauritius to England. No one survived the wreck and local farmers recalled the burial of more than 50 bodies.

After a lunch break the route continues along a vast stretch of beach that leads right up to Die Dam Holiday Resort where we relax until dinner.

For A BIT OF HISTORY on some of the more notable shipwrecks between Cape Agulhas and Danger Point visit www.beachcomberguide.co.za/blog/shipwrecks-of-the-cape-whale-coast/.

SOURCES: Beach Comber Guide; *The Historical Overberg* by C. Schoeman.



DAY 3: DIE DAM HOLIDAY RESORT TO PEARLY BEACH

DEPARTURE:	7am / on foot from Die Dam
FINISH POINT:	Pearly Beach
DISTANCE:	±27km
GPS CO-ORDINATES:	Die Dam Holiday Resort S34°76'25" E19°68'85" Pearly Beach S34°65'80" E19°48'84"

DESCRIPTION

Day three's walk starts from Die Dam on foot along the rocky coastline during low tide. The route takes us south pass Ratel River and around Quoin Point, a historical area where many ships floundered over past centuries.

An automatic lighthouse was constructed at this point in 1956 to warn seafaring vessels of the dangerous reef around Quoin Point. One such luckless ship, the British vessel *Jessie* gave the long stretch of beach west of the point its name: *Jessie's Bay*. We then cross through the old fisherman community of Buffeljagsrivier, where we visit the Seesterretjies Crechè (which L2L helped to fund) and take a well-deserved break and replenish our water supplies.

Then it is another 15km of beautiful coastline to Pearly Beach where we enjoy an ice before heading back to Die Dam.

A BIT OF HISTORY

At **Quoin Point**, a steel, lattice tower with an AGA 500mm acetylene gas lantern, open flame gas flasher and sun valve has stood since November 1946. Around it is a series of little cottages, owned by families who live in nearby in Elim - the Schippers and the Octobers. The steel tower was replaced with aluminium in October 1990.

Quoin Point is perhaps best known for the shipwrecks on the rocks below. Seven of these have been documented and include *Johanna* (1682), *Nicobar* (1783), *Jessie* (1829) *Doncaster* (1836), *Teuton* (1881), *Avala* (1946) and the *Esso Wheeling* (1948) (read more about them here www.beachcomberguide.co.za/blog/shipwrecks-of-the-cape-whale-coast/).

The makers of maps that show the shipwrecks along the South African coast must have struggled to deal with the coast of the Southern Overberg. Between Danger Point to the west and Cape Infanta, the outer



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eastern point of De Hoop Nature Reserve, about 140 shipwrecks are mapped. Most of these shipwrecks are concentrated around Cape Agulhas, Arniston and Quoin Point.

Originally, Quoin Point was named *Ponta de sao Brandoa* by Bartolomeu Diaz when he rounded Quoin Point in 1488 on the nameday of the Irish monk St. Brendanus. Later the name changed to Quoin Point, but the locals call it *Jessie se Punt* (Jessie's Point).

Bantamsklip is situated on the Groot Hagelkraal farm. The farm is a registered private nature reserve and a South African Nature Foundation Natural Heritage Site. Its immediate neighbours are the SANParks (South African National Parks) at Waterford, Pearly Beach Nature Reserve and the Soetfontein Nature Reserve.

Red Data listings show 75% of threatened plant species in South Africa occur only in the Southwestern Cape. There are 1600 listed Red Data species within 100km of Bantamsklip and 22 Red Data listed species on the Bantamsklip property itself, of which 6 are entirely restricted to the farm.

The property represents the foremost conservation priority in the Cape Floristic Region and is regarded as the world's "hottest" of biological diversity hot spots.

SOURCES: Beach Comber Guide; Xplorio; sa-venues.com; *The Historical Overberg* by C. Schoeman.



DAY 4: PEARLY BEACH TO DANGER POINT LIGHTHOUSE

DEPARTURE:	7am / from Die Dam
STARTING POINT:	Pearly Beach
FINISHING POINT:	Danger Point Lighthouse Welcoming reception followed by transport by bus from Danger Point to Hermanus for the final few hundred metres of the walk on Grotto Beach.
DISTANCE:	±26km
GPS CO-ORDINATES:	Pearly Beach S34°65'80" E19°48'84" Danger Point Lighthouse S34°37'49" E19°18'08"

DESCRIPTION:

On the final morning, we pack up camp and say goodbye to Die Dam before we get onto the buses which take us back to Pearly Beach for the last and longest day's walk.

The route meanders along the coastal path in front of beach houses towards Uilenkraalsmond. A steep jeep track of washed-up pebbles can cause a challenge, but a tea break replenishes everyone's energy.

We walk along the beach to Uilenkraalsmond, an old camping ground for almost 200 years, where we take off our shoes to cross the lagoon at the outlet. At the beach parking lot we dry off our feet, readjust plasters and add some talcum/baby powder before continuing on our walk.

The well-maintained coastal path takes us along Franskraal's beachfront road. A small, white building with a salvaged ship canon on the left is the quaint Strandveld Museum, with artefacts and folklore from the area.

The coastal trail continues from Franskraal into the Kleinbaai, the hub of white shark cage diving and conservation in the Southern Cape. Dyer Island, out to sea south of Kleinbaai, is the main attraction for great white sharks in the area. Kleinbaai is also host to the African Penguin and Seabird Sanctuary.

The walkers take another well-deserved rest before the last few kilometres to the iconic Danger Point Lighthouse, near the seaside village of Gansbaai. This last stretch follows fynbos trails and then a tar road takes us right up to the gate of this lighthouse which was built in 1895.

At the lighthouse's gates, we all form a welcoming tunnel, congratulate each other and recognise each woman's personal effort in completing this incredible journey. We are greeted by the main charity, sponsors and other important members of the community. Lighthouse 2 Lighthouse Ladies Walk medals are handed out, photos are taken and ice-creams are devoured before the buses transport us to Grotto Beach, where we are welcomed back by family, friends and the community of Hermanus.



A BIT OF HISTORY:

Danger Point Lighthouse

The lighthouse is a beacon along the rocky and treacherous coastline of the southern Cape. It is a 20m octagonal stone tower with a light range of over 30km. The most famous ship to founder near this outcrop of land was the *HMS Birkenhead* in 1852, when more than 440 souls lost their lives. A plate commemorating the Birkenhead tragedy was attached to the base of the lighthouse in 1936.

SOURCES: southafrica.net; *The Historical Overberg* by C. Schoeman.

