



Fagala Voet (Pty) Ltd  
Bookings & Marketing Agents for Hiking Trails in South Africa  
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## Silver Sands Hiking Trail Trail Ethics

To hike the Namaqua Silver Sands™ Trail is a rare privilege that affords hikers the unique opportunity to overnight along the Namaqua West Coast.

### For your own enjoyment and that of your fellow hikers please note the following:

- **Hiking ethos:** Good hiking practices of “leaving only footprints and taking only photographs will be promoted. Picking flowers is considered to be poaching and is strictly prohibited.
- **Paths:** The paths have been constructed to protect the delicate *Namaqua Flower* ecosystem. Please do not walk off the paths.
- **Animals:** There are many vertebrates and invertebrates in the Park, please do not feed or interfere with any animals.
- **Guiding:** Critical for safety, good conduct of hikers, enforcing permitted access where required and ensuring appropriate use of facilities; and interpretation of cultural and natural treasures. Hikers are obliged to accept the guidance and advice of the Silver Sands™ Trail Guides. All trail guides will be in radio contact with Basecamp at all times.
- **Security:** All overnight facilities will have a permanent on-site management and security presence
- **Touch the earth lightly:** This means that all facilities and infrastructure will be designed with minimum environmental impact. No new building will be constructed and renovations will keep to the footprint of existing structures. Tented camps will be erected in such a way that they can be removed without a trace.
- **Energy efficient:** Where possible we have used alternative energy sources and eco-loos.
- **Fire:** Only allowed in designated fire areas under the supervision of a trained and accredited guide. The outdoor fires will only be lit on green (low fire-risk) days.

### Behaving In The Wilderness So We Can All Enjoy It

- When I go out into the wilderness for a hike, I do so in part because I want to get in touch with nature and experience the world in its natural state altered as little by man as possible. I find hiking the wilderness to be a peaceful, relaxing, and stress reducing experience most of the time even when it is challenging. I assume it is much the same for most other hikers.
- Since there are so many of us and there is so little wilderness we must share. The world has been for the most part explored. There is not much virgin wilderness left.

Even the frozen wastes of the arctic poles have been trodden upon. In this new millennium almost everywhere we will choose to go we won't be the first ones there. Others will have passed the same way before us, and still others will pass by after we have gone.

- The key to behaving well in the wilderness is to behave in same way that you would wish those that came before you had behaved. If you have ever hiked into a beautiful area only to find that some thoughtless soul left all his trash behind, you know what a blight that can be on your own experience. Or if you have ever drank from contaminated water and gotten sick, you know how miserable that can make you feel. The basic rule is if you don't want someone to do it to you, don't do it yourself.
- And even if we were not to think of anyone but ourselves, if we found a particularly beautiful place, we might want to come back again another time. To do thoughtless deeds could spoil a spot not only for others, but also for us.
- If you have been hiking for long, you have probably heard the adage, "Take only pictures, leave only footprints." That's a good start, but hiking responsibly involves more than just that. It includes not building another fire ring and blackening more stones when one already exists. It means not digging trenches or building stone walls or cutting down plants or killing animals or in some other way altering the wilderness unless your very survival depends on it. It includes protecting water supplies by not placing your waste so close to them that they can become contaminated. The same goes for pack animals. If you are using pack animals you are responsible for their actions as well as your own. More than one campsite and water source has been ruined for use by others through the careless handling of pack stock.
- Behaving well applies doubly so for group leaders. The members of your group are just as likely to learn your bad behavior as your good behavior. That behavior then, good or bad, propagates and multiplies as some of your group go on to become group leaders on other hikes. Set an example such that if you were someone outside the group that had to coexist with your group in the wilderness you would have nothing to complain about.
- It seems like some people feel that when they get out into the wilderness they can do whatever they please. It is as though the wilderness had no laws and it is only through external, artificial restraints that they have any respect for others. They act as self-centered and selfishly as they want because they feel now there is no one around to stop them. They don't care if they litter or desecrate. They're leaving. It's not their problem any more. And so it is that their true character is revealed. Why would anyone choose such a person to be his or her friend or companion? Certainly, you could not expect much from your friendship with such a one as this. Their truly self-centered nature has been revealed for you to see in their thoughtless deeds. Do you think you will be treated any better by them when it does not serve them to do so? Hiking, you see, reveals not only the secrets of the nature and of yourself, but also of those around you. False fronts generally don't last long in the backcountry.

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- Don't let your actions mark your character unfairly. Think about what you are doing and how it might impact others and their wilderness experience. Sometimes when our actions will negatively impact others it is not immediately obvious. For not only are there thoughtless deeds that leave a lasting mark on the wilderness, but there are also thoughtless deeds that spoil the wildness of the wilderness for a moment. They may seem innocent enough at the time because they seemingly leave no scars, but spoil things they can never the less. And if enough of us hiking in back country behave this way often enough, then none of us will have the chance to fully realize the experience we came to find.
- For example if you are hiking with a group, work out a plan to stay in touch with each other that doesn't require regularly yelling back and forth or blowing a whistle or making some other loud noise. Other people in the area may be interested in observing wildlife or simply being lulled to sleep for an afternoon nap by the sound of a stream or the whisper of the wind. You could easily spoil that afternoon for them. And don't assume just because you don't see anyone else that no one else is in the area. They may be just less obvious and possibly less obnoxious about their presence than you are.
- Remember that if we all do our part to respect the rights of others to have a wonderful wilderness hiking experience our chances of having the hiking experiences we want are greater as well. Enjoy!