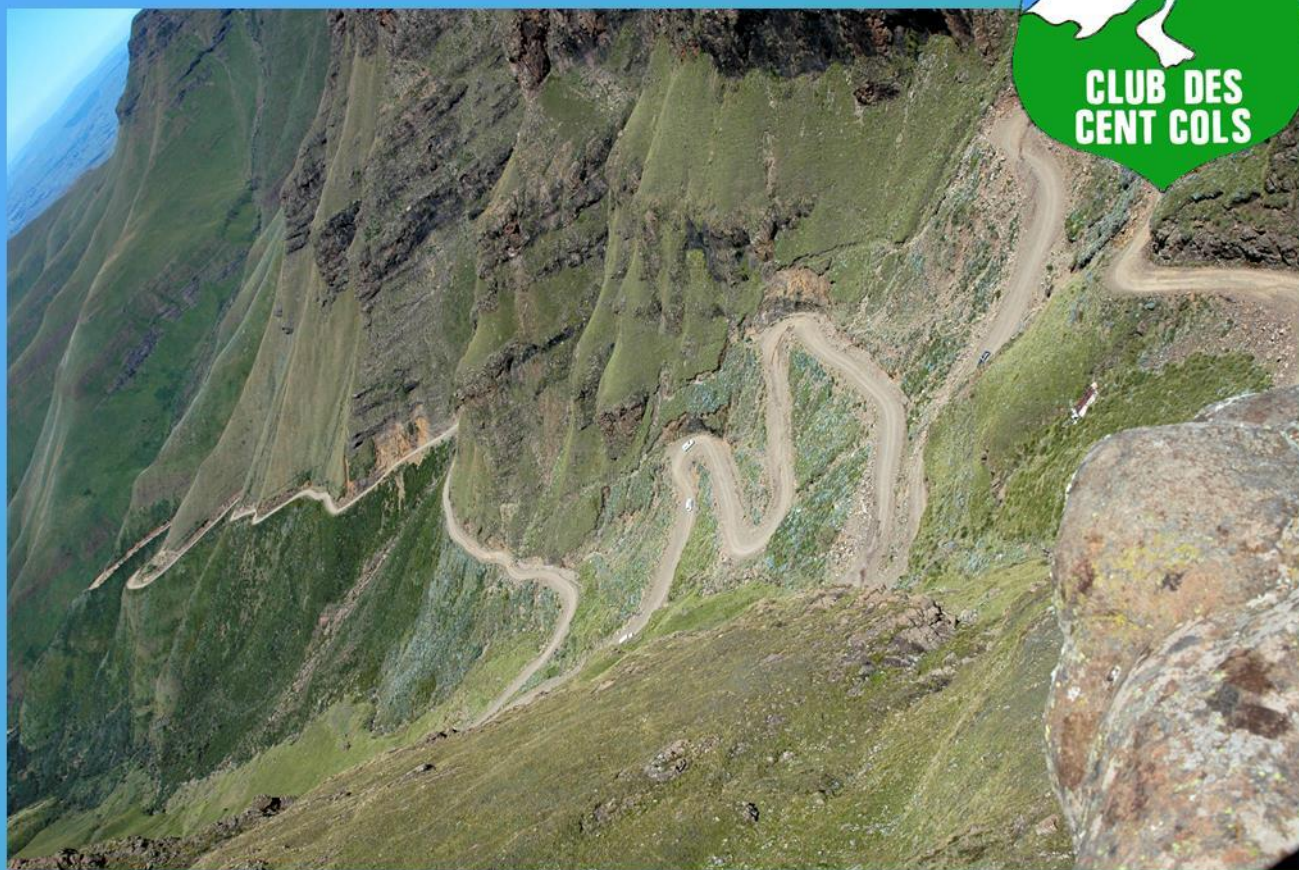


# Catalogue of the Passes of South Africa and Lesotho

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Éditions des Cent Cols

## 1. This Catalogue

This catalogue covers the passes listed on the maps of South Africa and Lesotho - a separate independent country that lies entirely within South Africa.

The catalogue includes 434 passes for South Africa and 127 for Lesotho. 69 passes on both lists border the two countries.

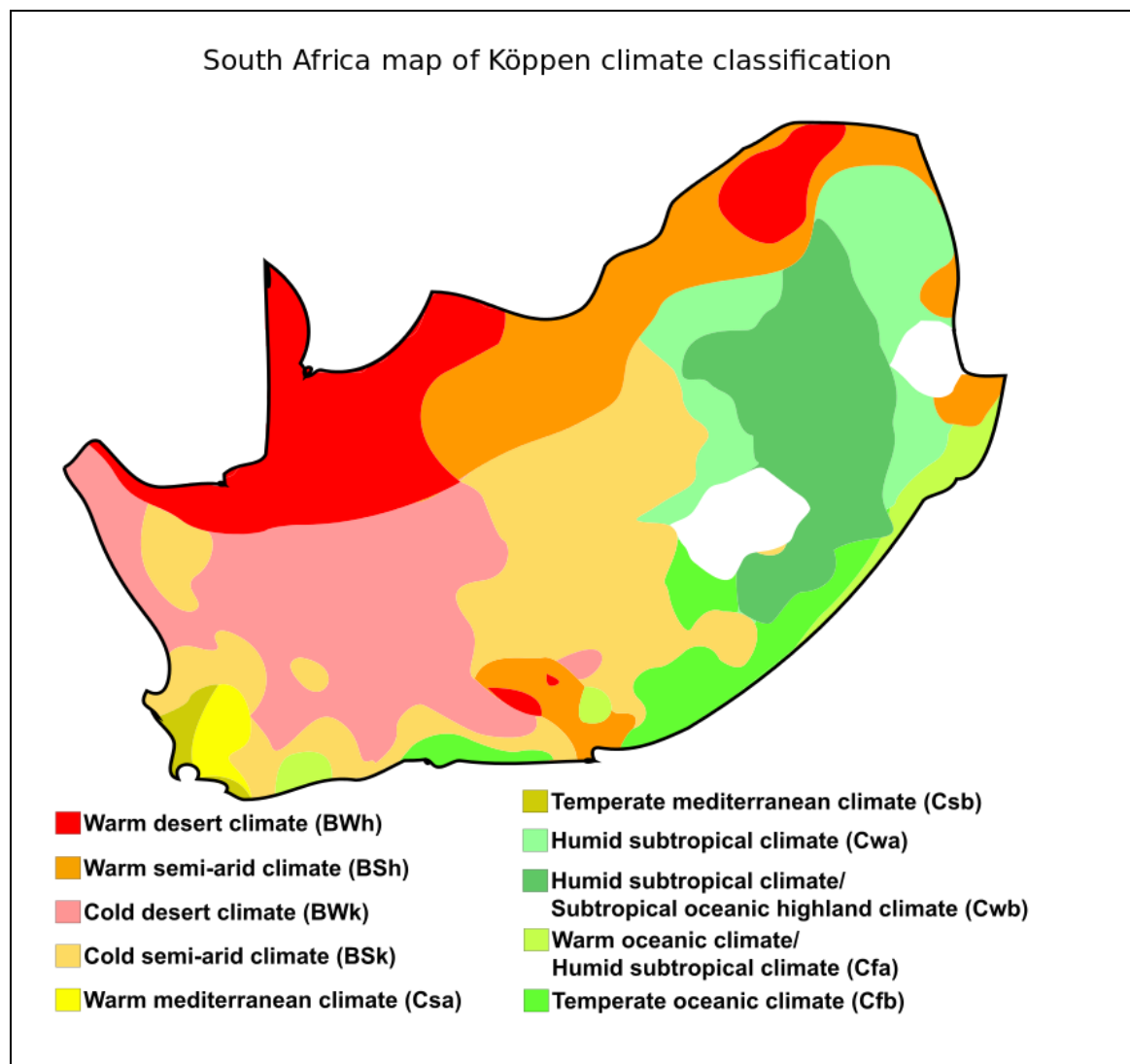
## 2. Geographic presentation of South Africa

The territory is made up of 9 « provinces » spread over a total area of 1,2m km<sup>2</sup> with 62 million inhabitants. :



The country's geography is highly unusual in that the entire interior consists of an immense plateau ranging in altitude from 3,000m in the E (the Drakensberg massif) to 1,000m in the W. The approach roads to this plateau - which climb the escarpment from sea level - are not passes in our sense of the word, so you would have to look for the direction of the flow of the rivers to find real passes. The routes that cross the jagged ridge of the Drakensberg are much more like the mule passes you would see in the mountains of Europe.

There are several secondary mountain ranges between the "Great Escarpment" and the coast. South Africa is the 25th largest country in the world and has a wide variety of climatic zones - from sub-tropical in the NE to desert in the NW.



### 3. History

Africa being the cradle of the human race, the history of the peoples of South Africa is obviously very long. The lives of the indigenous ethnic groups (mainly the Bantu, Xhosa and Zulu) were turned upside down by the arrival of the European colonial powers. Initially (in the 15th and 16th centuries) the Portuguese were pre-eminent, followed by British and Dutch traders.

During the 19th century, the rise in power of the Zulu people and the discovery of large mineral reserves (gold, diamonds, etc.) led to a succession of wars: in 1879 between the British and the Zulus and at the end of the century between the British and the Boers (settlers of Dutch extraction). Finally, in 1910 the country was granted nominal independence and in 1931 full sovereignty. In any case, the freedom and economic power of the indigenous peoples remained very limited. This segregation was institutionalised from 1948 with the policy of "Apartheid".

Despite political and racial tensions, the transition to democracy was achieved in 1994 without civil war, with universal elections and Nelson Mandela's accession to the Presidency. This marked the creation of the "rainbow nation".

Nevertheless, inequalities remain very high (Gini coefficient of 0.63) and security is one of the main concerns of the population. The racial breakdown (79% black, 9% white, 9% mixed race, 3% Asian) is far from reflecting the distribution of wealth.

#### **4. The Administrative Sub-Divisions of South Africa**

We have followed the structure of ISO 3166-2 in attributing the first part of the code to the country (ZA) and the second part to the province :

ZA-EC	Eastern Cape
ZA-FS	Free State
ZA-GT	Gauteng
ZA-NL	KwaZulu-Natal
ZA-LP	Limpopo
ZA-MP	Mpumalanga
ZA-NC	Northern Cape
ZA-NW	North West
ZA-WC	Western Cape

#### **5. Languages**

Having regard to the rich history of the country there are no less than 11 official languages :

- (en): English
- (af): Afrikaans
- (nr): Ndebele
- (st): Sotho
- (ss): Swazi
- (ts): Tsonga
- (tn): Tswana
- (ve): Venda
- (xh): Xhosa
- (zu): Zulu



Afrikaans and English are by far the most common languages on the maps. There are often aliases in both languages. African names are also sometimes present, as are Dutch place names (not strictly Afrikaans).

Increasingly, the South African Geographical Names Council is restoring indigenous names (e.g. "iNtabazwe" for "Harrismith").

## 6. Definition of a "col" (Pass)

The Cent Cols Club Rules of the Game have been scrupulously respected in the preparation of this Catalogue:

"The passes listed in this Catalogue are those bearing this name, or any other local, regional or national equivalent, appearing (or having appeared) on cartographic or documentary sources deemed reliable by the Club. "(Rules of the Game)

"Because of the multitude of terrain configurations encountered, the minimum definition of the topographical character of a pass adopted by the Club is as follows: a privileged point of passage, imposed by the relief, situated on a watershed, and other than a summit."(Document appended to the Rules of the Game)

## 7. Descriptors that have been accepted as naming a pass in South Africa

<u>Descriptor</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Meaning in English</u>
Cutting	English	Notch
Gap	English	Low point on a ridge
Hoogte	Afrikaans	Height
Kloof	Afrikaans	Gorge
Lekhala	Sesotho	Col, Pass
Nek	Afrikaans	Neck, Col
Noute	Afrikaans	Narrow passage
Pass/Pas	English, Afrikaans	Pass, passage,
Poort	Afrikaans	Opening
Window, Venster	English, Afrikaans	Window
Kerf	Afrikaans	Notch

The most common families show that :

Nek is generally reliable

Pass/Pas is often reliable

Poort is sometimes reliable

Kloof is rarely reliable

For Pass/Pas, Poort and Kloof it is often the notion of "Passage" that is favoured and if the climb does not lead to an lpe these candidates cannot be considered as "pass".

## **8. Sources and map coordinates**

The primary source of maps for South Africa is the 1:50000 topographic maps published today by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (1913 sheets).

These maps are easily available in digital format at reasonable prices - distributed by Compepps and Memory Map, for example.

A second source for the mountainous and tourist parts of the country would be local "Slingsby Maps" ([www.slingsby.com](http://www.slingsby.com)) - often more detailed and up-to-date than the official maps.

The country's geographical names database is maintained by the South African Geographical Names Council. Extracts (not necessarily up to date) from this database can be found at :

<http://africaopendata.org/dataset/south-african-geographical-names-system>

<http://zaf.geonamebase.com>

<http://www.geonames.org/>

In reality, the most interesting categories ("Gap", "Pass") cover a wider range of place names than our "passes" - including defiles, ravines, etc. So you need to look carefully at the topographical situation in the country of the landscape.

Other smaller-scale maps (National Geographic, InfoMap, MapStudio, Freytag & Berndt, Reise Know-How, IGN...) are intended more for motorists than cyclists/hikers. All the place names on these maps with a ) symbol are not necessarily passes.

For an account of the history of a number of passes, study :

Dictionary of Southern African Place Names - Peter Edmund Raper 1st Ed. Lowry 1987

Dictionary of Southern African Place Names - Peter Edmund Raper 3rd Edition Hall 2004

Finally, a site packed with information on many passes can be found at :

<http://www.mountainpassessouthafrica.co.za/>

The passes listed on this site are referred to as "MPSA" in the "Remarks" column of this catalogue.

It has to be said that the Webmeister of this site leads commercial 4x4 trips, so not all the "passes" correspond to our criteria.

There are 2 local "Transverse Mercator" coordinate systems on paper maps:

"Cape - used before 1999

"Hartebeesthoek 1994" - used subsequently

The 2 systems are centred on a line of Longitude ("Longitude Origin") and cover an area of 2 degrees. "Lo 17", for example, covers the 16°E - 18°E zone. There are therefore both negative and positive values.

More and more modern maps have a UTM WGS84 grid.

## 9. Catalogue User Manual – explanations of the columns

Column Header	Description
Code	Country + Sub-Division + Initial Altitude of the Pass
Complete Name	The name exactly as it appears on the source document or the romanized version without diacritical marks
Alias	Some alternative names that have been recorded
Short name	The specific component of the name without the generic term
Altitude	Altitude of the geographical pass in meters as it is marked on the most precise source. This altitude can be corrected in later editions of the catalogue but the altitude included in the pass' code will not change. Hence one should always refer to the column "Alti" for the correct altitude.
Documents	Link towards the Cent Cols visualiser which displays the pass on various interactive maps .
Access	Road grading in free format as well as the reference of the road/path.. R Track S Footpath HS Off-Trail. This information and the difficulty classifications are constantly updated by our members
Type	Type of road/path 0 = Road, 10 = Track, 15 = Path, 20 = Path unknown or inexistant
Diff.	Difficulty 0 = tarmac on at least one side 1 = rideable 2 = easy pushing of the bike 3 = difficult pushing of the bike 35 = road without grading 40 = bike needing to be carried 50 = acrobatic 99 = not graded but not necessarily impossible to cross
Neighbouring	Neighbouring Province
Cape TM Lo	« Longitude Origin » or central longitude line for a 2° wide zone with a « Transverse Mercator » projection and the « Cape » datum.
Cape TM x	UTM Abscissa of the pass ("Easting") according to the « Cape » system. The value can be positive or negative.
Cape TM y	UTM Ordinates of the pass ("Easting") according to the « Cape » system.
Harte TM Lo	« Longitude Origin » or central longitude line for a 2° wide zone with a « Transverse Mercator » projection and the « Hartebeesthoek 1994 » datum.
Harte TM x	UTM Abscissa of the pass ("Easting") according to the « Hartebeesthoek 1994 » system. The value can be positive or negative.
Harte TM y	UTM Ordinates of the pass ("Easting") according to the « Hartebeesthoek 1994 » system.
WGS84 Lon D	Longitude of the pass in the decimal format of the WGS84 system (directly usable in GPS devices, Google Earth etc).
WGS84 Lat D	Latitude of the pass in the decimal format of the WGS84 system (directly usable in GPS devices, Google Earth etc).

WGS84 Lon S	Longitude of the pass in the sexagesimal format of the WGS84 system.
WGS84 Lat S	Latitude of the pass in the sexagesimal format of the WGS84 system.
WGS84 zone	UTM zone according to the WGS84 system
WGS84 UTM x	UTM abscissa of the pass ("Easting") according to the WGS84 system
WGS84 UTM y	UTM ordinates of the pass("Northing") according to the WGS84 system..
Sources	Source map or signpost for at least one of the names of the pass!
Remarks	« MPSA » if the pass is mentioned in the database and on the site of « Mountain Passes of South Africa »
Follow-up	The year in which the pass was added or modified
Date of addition	Date for additions or modifications Rejected/Valid
Last Update	Date of the last update of the pass' data

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Please send any comments, suggestions, corrections or proposals for new passes or additional information to [cols@centcols.org](mailto:cols@centcols.org)