

GUIDED BATTLEFIELD TOURS

Please note that it is essential to pre-book battlefield tours should you be particularly interested. (Even if you are on Fully Inclusive package) We do not run every single tour type every day, and our guides may already be committed with a different tour. Please email frontdesk@threetreehill.co.za to arrange.

Three Tree Hill Lodge specializes in the history of the South African War, (2nd Anglo-Boer War 1899 – 1902) with the Battle of Spioenkop being our focal point. One cannot however hope to understand this watershed event without studying what caused one of the smallest countries in the world to declare war on the world's greatest empire of the time. Our guides will bring this dramatic period of our history to life, presenting world class, holistic, evocative and insightful tours.

1. Battle of Spioenkop – Three Trees Flagship Tour – half-day(4hours) This tour tells of the bloodiest single day of the entire South African War. During January, General Sir Redvers Buller was joined by Lt General Sir Charles Warren, but their renewed attempts to breach the Boer defense line along the Thukela River were unsuccessful. Spioenkop was the highest point on the Boer defensive line and on 23 January 1900, a British attempt to capture it began. Astonishingly, Louis Botha, Winston Churchill and Mohandas Ghandi all played a role in this battle. The result of this battle confirmed that those early disasters of 'Black Week' were not merely beginners luck on the part of the Boers. Spioenkop, together with Majuba, are arguably the best known of all the battles between the British and the Boers.



2. Battle of Platrand & Ladysmith Siege – half day (4 hours)

Situated to the south of Ladysmith, lies a 3 km long crescent shaped hill, called Platrand (by the Boer forces), and known as Wagon Hill/Caesar's Camp by the defending British forces. Both sides recognized the tactical importance of this feature. After a Krygsraad (council of war) on the 3rd of January 1900 it was decided that the hill needed to be taken and the Boers would launch a determined attack from a nearby hill, called Mounted Infantry Hill in the early morning of the 7th of January 1900. Fighting raged all day, the outcome being in the balance until a late heroic charge by the Devon's kept the

feature in British hands. A day of heroics and selfless courage on both sides, where 5 Victoria Crosses were won by British soldiers and a similar number of awards could have been awarded to Boer men if they had issued such awards.

3. Battle of Colenso & Churchill's Capture – half day (4 hours) The Boers, in response to the anticipated arrival of thousands of British troops in Durban, took up defensive positions along the Thukela River near Colenso. In mid-December a British force of over 15,000 men, under Sir Redvers Buller, suffered a humiliating defeat in attempting to break through to Ladysmith. In this battle 7 Victoria Crosses were won, contributing to two of only three father & son VCs ever to be awarded. Young Winston was contracted by the Morning Post to cover the war in South Africa. However, his capture near Frere and subsequent remarkable escape, thrust him into the political and public limelight, and arguably launched his political career. Less than a year later, aged 25, he became a MP for Oldham.



4. Three Tree Hill Artillery Trail – 2 hours by foot – Also suitable for children under 16 years

This 5km (return) walking trail to the site of General Warren's Camp, provides you with spectacular views of the Drakensberg & Spioenkop from the British perspective. Opportunity to visit all 16 marked gun placement sites

5. Anglo-Zulu War Tours: Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift – full day (10 hours) The British army under Lord Chelmsford had moved from the Eastern Cape border to the Zululand border during 1878. When the British ultimatum to the Zulu king, Cetshwayo, expired in January 1879, the British invaded Zululand in three separate columns. The Battle of Isandlwana took place when the central British column came into contact with the Zulus and suffered a humiliating and bloody defeat at the hands of a spirited Zulu army.



6. Battle of Blood River 1838, Battles of Talana & Elandslaagte – full day (10 hours) In 1838, the mighty Zulu army was defeated for the first time by the Voortrekker Commando under their leader, Andries Pretorius, hereby opening the way for the proclamation of the first Boer Republic – The Republic of Natalia. Talana was the Boers opening gambit in Natal, and although hailed as a British success, it was a pyrrhic victory with the Boers withdrawing in good order, leaving major casualties on the British side, including their general. Elandslaagte, fought the next day, was a decisive British victory. It may be considered to be the last of the set piece battles of the war. Curiously, having driven the Boers from the railway line, the British immediately withdrew, allowing the Boers to re-occupy it.

What to expect:

Half day tours 1,2,3 begin either at 08h30 & return around 13h00 for lunch or begin after lunch around 13h30 & return at sunset around 18h00. Times will be determined by guest numbers or weather conditions at the time. Full day tours 4 & 5 will depart at 07h00 & return around sunset.

Picnic lunches & refreshments are included on the tours. However, it is possible to dine at eateries on the battlefields route at your own cost.

A small amount of walking on fairly uneven terrain is required, so comfortable walking shoes are recommended. Sunscreen, sunhat & sunglasses are always required, winter or summer. Light fleece or jacket to be taken during all seasons. Light rain or wind proof jacket also recommended. Binoculars are recommended if you have an interest in nature, as you never know what might be encountered whilst on tour.

Children under 16 years are not permitted on the tours. The Artillery Trail is better suited to children.

PRICES

Half Day Tours 1,2,3 – R1 555 per person (2025) R1 680 per person (2026) Minimum charge 2.

Walking Artillery Trail 4 – R685 per person (2025) R750 per person (2026) Minimum charge 2.

**Full Day Tours 5, 6 – R14 550 per tour (2025) R15 715 per person (2026)
for the guide & vehicle (1 – 6 persons)**

