



HIKING TRAILS IN THE UDZUNGWA NATIONAL PARK

Prince Bernhard falls

1km, ½h, height gain 30-80m

Named after Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands – president of the World Wildlife Fund at the time the Udzungwa Mountains National Park was gazetted – these small but pretty falls are just a short walk behind the park headquarters. They are named after the Prince, as aged 84, he was unable to climb to the top of Sanje Waterfall. They are a nice quick visit for anyone visiting the park after paying park fees, regardless of which trail you plan to hike, and if you're not planning to hike one of the longer trails, you can extend your walk (by 1.5km) up to campsite 2 to spend a little more time in the forest without a long climb.

Sonje Waterfall Trail

3km, 1-2h, height gain 120m

A short (20min) easy trail to the bottom of the Sonjo waterfall, with the option of continuing up a steeper path for 15 mins to reach the second falls. These falls are very beautiful and a favourite of waterfall lovers. From the second waterfall, you can continue around the circuit to return to the start along a different path.

Sanje Waterfall Trail

6km, 4-5h, height gain 450m

The most popular trail in Udzungwa is Sanje Waterfall. This 180m waterfall is very impressive, surrounded by rainforest with excellent views over the Kilombero floodplain. At the top, you can swim in the refreshing plunge pools of the two smaller waterfalls (around 40m high) surrounded by thick rainforest. Optionally, you can take a 20min detour from the path, either on the way up, or on the way down the path from the Sanje Hotel, to the bottom of the large waterfall for fantastic views looking up, and more swimming/jumping/diving in the pool (a bit warmer). Sanje can be walked at any time of day, but it is best in the morning with the sun on the waterfalls, and very hot at midday. At the right time of year, the sides of the gorge are covered in fireball lilies. It is common to see both types of Colobus on this trail. Many people walk up and down on the Sanje Hotel trail, but there is an alternative route up or down starting at the ranger post to the south. This route is

slightly longer and is less used, so provides better chances of seeing undisturbed monkeys, and of course a circular walk. If you are using Hondo Hondo transport, you can be dropped off at one place and picked up from the other.

Njokamoni Trail

5km, 4-5h, height gain 400m

Njokamoni trail is very similar to the Sanje trail except a lot less walked. As a result, it is common to see many troupes of monkeys with a better chance of seeing the Sanje Crested Mangebey. You may also see red duiker, elephant shrews, squirrels and other rare forest mammals. This hike will also take you between 2 and 3 hours with a rewarding waterfall at the top which you can splash around in to cool off. The trail passes behind Hondo Hondo Camp and Njokamoni waterfall is on the same stream as that which provides water to Hondo Hondo. You start the hike from TANAPA HQ and end the walk 1km down from Hondo Hondo Camp.

Hidden Valleys Trail (Campsite 3 trail)

14km, 6-8h, height gain 1000m

This trail follows a big loop around the large peak rising behind Hondo Hondo Camp. It starts from Campsite 3, just after the turning for the park HQ and arrives back on the decent trail from Njokamoni Waterfall, right back into Hondo Hondo. It is a long and steep walk that climbs to over 1300m above sea level so you should plan to leave early. You discover that what you thought was a ridge looking up from the camp is actually just a step into the hidden valleys, where the streams become meandering and almost level, with open grassy areas favoured by elephants - it is necessary to take a ranger on this hike as there are several large mammals deep in the forest. The trail goes behind the peak above Hondo Hondo and the forest up there is full of large trees. You will hopefully see plenty of wildlife on this trail.

Mwanihana Peak

38km, 3 days, height gain 1850m

For the keen hiker, Mwanihana peak at 2150m is one of the highest peaks in the Eastern Arc. The 38km hike takes 3 days, 2 nights at a leisurely pace. For those who want to make the most of the hike, we recommend that you take your time as the trail passes through Miombo woodland, low-land forest, sub-montane forest, highland plateau and pristine montane forest. Just before the bare rock and grass of the summit, eerie glades of bamboo rustle in the wind. This is, in terms of habitat and associated wildlife, a very diverse journey. Much of the trek is alongside sparkling mountain streams with butterflies dancing through the dappled forest light. This is also the most successful route for spotting the elusive Sanje Mangebey. Although rarely encountered, there are also elephant and buffalo up on the plateau so your trek will be accompanied by an armed ranger.

Lumemo Trail

65km, 5 days

The longest and most arduous trail in Udzungwa is the Lumemo trail, starting along the same path as the Mwanihana trail, except instead of hiking up the peak after camping at Njia Panda, the path

continues for another 3 nights exiting the forest along the Lumemo river leading to Ifakara, where you'll be picked up and brought back to Hondo Hondo for a nice shower and a few much needed cold beers! This trail leads deep into the heart of the Udzungwas, ascending ridges, and descending into two deep valleys - areas where few people have ever been and the wildlife there has had virtually no contact with humans. You need to be a competent hiker in good physical condition to attempt this trail, and if you're really serious, you can climb Mwanihana peak on the way.