

KULUS - THE 3 000 m PEAKS OF SOUTH AFRICA

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There are lists of famous or named peaks, but to date there has been no definitive list of all of the highest peaks in South Africa.

Catching Kulus has been a pursuit of mine for five or six years now and it's time the challenge is shared. Of the 161 Kulus, I have done about 70. A Kulu is a point of 3000 m or more inside or on the borders of South Africa, The name Kulu is an invention derived from African words for 'big' - kgolo in Sotho and khulu in Zulu. There is a similar challenge in Britain, where the hardy folk set out to 'bag a Munro'. A Munro is a Scottish peak of at least 3 000 feet. The pursuit is very popular in the U.K. mountain fraternity, and the list is administered by the Scottish Mountain Club.

Fifty of the peaks in the Kulu list have no existing names that I could discover, probably because they are not conspicuous from inside South Africa. For these, names have been temporarily assigned in quotes. I have full details of each peak in a book looking for a publisher, but such details cannot be included here for lack of space; thus the details given below will have to suffice for purposes of identification in the interim.

The locality code given for each peak consists of an area code and a peak number, the peaks being numbered within the area from north to south. Area codes are as follows:

Area Code	Area	Area Code	Area
A	Malutis	K	Injasuti North
B	Namahadi (Malutis)	L	Injasuti
C	Tugela	M	Bushman's North
D	Mnweni	N	Bushman's
E	Mnweni Cutback	O	Loteni
F	Intonyelane	P	Mkhomazi
G	abaMponjwana Spur	Q	Umzimkulu
H	Mlambonja	R	Umzimkulu South
I	Didema	S	KwaDuma
J	Mhlwazini	T	Ben Macdhui

The last two areas have only one Kulu each and are in the extreme SE and S respectively.

A distinction is made between peaks which can be conquered relatively easily by hikers and those which need climbing gear. Heights with a '+' have been estimated from map contours; those with a '?' are dubious, e.g. where point heights conflict with contours. The 'Territory' columns indicate the (old) province(s) involved and any common border with Lesotho. The final column states the point's position relative to the escarpment - 'Out' is a free-standing peak, 'In' is one above and behind the escarpment, whereas 'Scarp' indicates a point on or very close to the escarpment.

Table 1: Full list of Kulus (peaks of over 3 000 m in South Africa) from north to south .

Kulu Code	Name	Hike / Climb	Height (m)	Natal	OFS / Cape	Lesotho	Position re Scarp
A1	Methatihane	Hike	3014		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
A2	Kgotjwane Spons	Hike	3170		OFS	Lesotho	In
A3	Kgotjwane Peak	Hike	3060		OFS		Scarp
A4	'The Palisades'	Hike	3085		OFS		Scarp
A5	'Kgotjwane East'	Hike	3140		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
A6	'Transit 1'	Hike	3037 I		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
A7	'Transit 2'	Hike	3012		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
A8	'Transit 3'	Hike	3015		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
A9	'Transit 4'	Hike	3032		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
B1	Namahadi Corner'	Hike	3024		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
B2	'Mom'	Hike	3110		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
B3	'Dad'	Hike	3171		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
B4	Namahadi Ridge	Hike	3254		OFS	Lesotho	In
B5	'Tongue'	Hike	3060		OFS		Scarp
B6	Namahadi Peak	Hike	3275+		OFS	Lesotho	In
B7	'Flat Top'	Hike	3274		OFS	Lesotho	In
B8	'Namahadi Z'	Hike	3245		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
B9	'Namahadi Y'	Hike	3225		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
B10	'Namahadi Pass Peak'	Hike	3200+		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
B11	'Long Buttress'	Hike	3058	Natal	OFS		Scarp
C1	Sentinel	Climb	3165	Natal	OFS		Out
C2	Beacon Buttress	Hike	3121	Natal	OFS		Scarp
C3	Mont-aux-Sources	Hike	3282	Natal		Lesotho	In
C4	Crew's Nest	Hike	3152	Natal			In
C5	Amphitheatre	Hike	3020+	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
C6	'Bilanjil Bump'	Hike	3031	Natal		Lesotho	In
C7	'Amphingati'	Hike	3184	Natal		Lesotho	In
C8	Eastern Buttress	Climb	3047	Natal			Out
C9	Inner Tower	Climb	3044	Natal			Out
C10	Mount Amery	Hike	3143?	Natal			Scarp
C11	Singati	Hike	3143	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
D1	Ntaba Endanyazana	Hike	3084	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
D2	Ifidi North Pinnacle	Climb	3033	Natal			Out
D3	Ifidi South Pinnacle	Climb	3033	Natal			Out
D4	Ifidi	Hike	3219	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
D5	Ifidi Buttress	Hike	3148	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
D6	'Icidi Crown'	Hike	3215	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
D7	'Icidi Back Ridge'	Hike	3240	Natal		Lesotho	In
D8	Icidi Buttress	Hike	3290	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
D9	'Caboose'	Hike	3192	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
D10	Stimela Ridge	Hike	3146	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
D11	Stimela Peak	Hike	3239	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
D12	Mbundini Buttress	Hike	3120+	Natal			Scarp
D13	Mbundini Abbey	Hike	3089	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
D14	Mbundini Fangs	Climb	3024	Natal			Out
D15	'Rwanqa Spear'	Hike	3175	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
E1	Rwanqa	Hike	3175	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
E2	Black & Tan Wall	Hike	3224	Natal		Lesotho	In
E3	Mnweni Outer Pinnacle	Climb	3099	Natal			Out
E4	Mnweni Inner Pinnacle	Climb	3096	Natal			Out
E5	'Pins Buttress'	Hike	3225	Natal		Lesotho	In
E6	'Sur Twelve Apostles'	Hike	3148	Natal			In
E7	'Cutback Highway'	Hike	3194	Natal		Lesotho	In
E8	Mnweni Buttress	Hike	3137	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp

F1	Mponjwane	Climb	3177	Natal			Out
F2	Ncedamabutho	Hike	3080	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
F3	Rockeries	Climb	3027	Natal			Out
F4	'Nguza Pass Peak'	Hike	3092	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
F5	North Peak	Climb	3153	Natal			Out
F6	'Saddle North Rise'	Hike	3040+	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
F7	'Saddle South Rise'	Hike	3060+	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
F8	South Peak	Climb	3120	Natal			Out
F9	'Intonyelana Knife'	Hike	3127	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
F10	'Intonyelana Ridge'	Hike	3173	Natal		Lesotho	In
F11	'Easter Cave Peak'	Hike	3002	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
F12	'Twins Top'	Hike	3000+	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
G1	Cathedral Peak	Hike	3004	Natal			Out
G2	OuterHom	Climb	3005	Natal			Out
G3	Inner Horn	Climb	3005	Natal			Out
G4	Mitre	Climb	3023	Natal			Out
H1	Mlambonja Buttress	Hike	3007	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
H2	'Leopard'	Hike	3109	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
H3	XeniPeak	Climb	3080+?	Natal			Out
H4	'Mahout'	Hike	3170+	Natal		Lesotho	In
H5	Elephant	Hike	3109	Natal			Scarp
H6	Cockade	Hike	3161	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
H7	'Tseketske Peak'	Hike	3021	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
H8	Cleft Peak	Hike	3281	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
H9	Castle Buttress	Hike	3053	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
I1	Ndumeni Dome	Hike	3206	Natal		Lesotho	In
I2	Windsor Castle	Hike	3065	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
I3	Little Saddle North	Hike	3069	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
I4	Little Saddle Peak	Hike	3075	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
I5	Didema Dome	Hike	3078	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
I6	Didema Buttress	Hike	3170	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
I7	'U-Bend'	Hike	3338	Natal		Lesotho	In
I8	Witch Peak	Hike	3062	Natal			Scarp
I9	Pampiring	Hike	3335	Natal		Lesotho	In
J1	'Nkosazana Peak'	Hike	3314	Natal		Lesotho	In
J2	Dragons Back	Hike	3135	Natal			Scarp
J3	'Cowl View'	Hike	3300+	Natal			Scarp
J4	Mdedelele	Climb	3149	Natal			Out
J5	Monks Cowl	Climb	3234	Natal			Out
J6	Champagne Castle	Hike	3248	Natal			Scarp
J7	Champagne Castle Buttress	Hike	3377	Natal			In
J8	Thabana Tsooana	Hike	3333	Natal		Lesotho	In
K2	'Starboard'	Hike	3261	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
K3	'Old Man'	Hike	3137	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
K4	The Ape	Hike	3045	Natal			Scarp
K5	'Sur The Molar'	Hike	3096	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
K6	The Molar	Climb	3045	Natal			Out
K7	'Sombbrero'	Hike	3228	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
L1	Greater Injasuti Buttress	Hike	3202	Natal			Scarp
L2	Lesser Injasuti Buttress	Hike	3212	Natal			Scarp
L3	Western Triplet	Climb	3187	Natal			Out
L4	Eastern Triplet	Climb	3143	Natal			Out
L5	Lithobolong	Hike	3325	Natal		Lesotho	In
L6	'Shepard Ridge'	Hike	3375	Natal			In
L7	Mafadi	Hike	3446	Natal		Lesotho	In
L8	Injasuthi Dome	Hike	3410	Natal		Lesotho	In
L9	Trojan Wall	Hike	3343	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
L10	The Corner	Hike	3188	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
M1	The Judge	Hike	3191	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
M2	Popple Peak	Hike	3325	Natal		Lesotho	In
M3	Gypaetus Point	Hike	3120+	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
M4	'Sur Bannerman Pass'	Hike	3295	Natal		Lesotho	In
M5	Bannerman Face	Hike	3235	Natal		Lesotho	In
M6	'Sur The Thumb'	Hike	3055	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp

N1	Erskine	Hike	3148	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
N2	The Bond	Hike	3156	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
N3	Potterhill	Hike	3159	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
N4	Mount Durnford	Hike	3294	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
N5	Kambule	Hike	3140+	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
N6	Carbineer Point	Hike	3154	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
N7	Katana	Hike	3072	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
N8	Long Wall	Hike	3257	Natal		Lesotho	In
N9	Giants Castle	Hike	3314	Natal			Scarp
O1	'Lotheni'	Hike	3298	Natal		Lesotho	In
O2	The Tent	Hike	3130	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
O3	The Hawk	Hike	3077	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
O4	Lithabeneng	Hike	3220+	Natal		Lesotho	In
O5	Terateng	Hike	3280+	Natal		Lesotho	In
O6	Redi	Hike	3314	Natal		Lesotho	In
O7	Litseketske Spur	Hike	3267	Natal		Lesotho	In
P1	Mlahlangubo Peak	Hike	3071	Natal		Lesotho	In
P2	Ntsupenyana	Hike	3006	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
P3	Nqaqamadola	Hike	3166	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
P4	Nhlangeni Peak	Hike	3068	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
P5	Mohlesi	Hike	3301	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
P6	'Shadow'	Hike	3292	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
P7	'Sehonghong'	Hike	3278	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
P8	Ka-Ntuba	Hike	3355	Natal		Lesotho	In
P9	'Big Ears'	Hike	3092	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
P10	Mqatsheni	Hike	3249	Natal		Lesotho	In
P11	Phinong	Hike	3121	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
Q1	Sani	Hike	3129	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
Q2	Hodgeson's Peak North	Hike	3244	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
Q3	Hodgeson's Peak South	Hike	3257	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
Q4	No Man's Peak	Hike	3100	Natal		Lesotho	In
Q5	Verkyker	Hike	3160	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
R1	Rhino Peak	Hike	3051	Natal			Scarp
R2	Mlambonja Peak	Hike	3309	Natal		Lesotho	In
R3	'Shiver'	Hike	3283	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
R4	Wilson's Peak	Hike	3276	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
R5	Mashai	Hike	3313	Natal		Lesotho	In
R6	Mzimude	Hike	3210	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
R7	Walkers Peak	Hike	3306	Natal		Lesotho	In
R8	Thaba Ngwangwe	Climb	3068	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
R9	Thaba Ntsu	Hike	3028	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
S1	'KwaDuma'	Hike	3019		E.Cape	Lesotho	In
T1	Ben Macdhu	Hike	3001		E.Cape		N/A

As with the Munros, there will be endless debate on which peaks should and shouldn't be listed. Many criteria were used, but the most important is the concept of an 'effort shadow', whereby two peaks would need to be at least thirty minutes' hiking (backpacking) effort from each other for both to be listed - if not, only the higher point would be listed. For this a speed of 4 km/hour horizontally and 200 m/hour for ascent was used. Common sense was another guideline.

The fifty highest Kulus are listed in Table 2. Note that the one-time highest favourite Mont Aux-Sources is number 26! Monk's Cowl is the highest climber's peak. The highest peak which is not a Kulu is the 2 999 m Meeny, a pinnacle in the Mnweni Cutback.

Table 2: The fifty highest Kulus (peaks of over 3 000 m in South Africa).

No	Kulu Code	Name	Hike / Climb	Height (m)	Natal	OFS / Cape	Lesotho	Position re Scarp
1	L7	Mafadi	Hike	3446	Natal		Lesotho	In
2	L8	Injasuthi Dome	Hike	3410	Natal		Lesotho	In
3	J7	Champagne Castle	Hike	3377	Natal			In

4	L6	'Shepard Ridge'	Hike	3375	Natal		Lesotho	In
5	P8	Ka-Ntuba	Hike	3355	Natal		Lesotho	In
6	L9	Trojan Wall	Hike	3343	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
7	I7	'U-Bend'	Hike	3338	Natal		Lesotho	In
8	I9	Pampiring	Hike	3335	Natal		Lesotho	In
9	J8	Thabana Tsooana	Hike	3333	Natal		Lesotho	In
10	L5	Lithobolong	Hike	3325	Natal		Lesotho	In
11	M2	Popple Peak	Hike	3325	Natal		Lesotho	In
12	N9	Giants Castle	Hike	3314	Natal			Scarp
13	J1	'Nkosazana Peak'	Hike	3314	Natal		Lesotho	In
14	O6	Redi	Hike	3314	Natal		Lesotho	In
15	R 5	Mashai	Hike	3313	Natal		Lesotho	In
16	R 2	Mlambonja Peak	Hike	3309	Natal		Lesotho	In
17	R 7	Walkers Peak	Hike	3306	Natal		Lesotho	In
18	P5	Mohlesi	Hike	3301	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
19	J3	'Cowl View'	Hike	3300 +	Natal			Scarp
20	O1	'Lotheni'	Hike	3298	Natal		Lesotho	In
21	M4	'Sur Bannerman Pass'	Hike	3295	Natal		Lesotho	In
22	N4	Mount Durnford	Hike	3294	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
23	P6	'Shadow'	Hike	3292	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
24	D8	Icidi Buttress	Hike	3290	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
25	R 3	'Shiver'	Hike	3283	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
26	C3	Mont-aux-Sources	Hike	3282	Natal		Lesotho	In
27	H8	Cleft Peak	Hike	3281	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
28	O5	Terateng	Hike	3280 +	Natal		Lesotho	In
29	P7	'Sehonghong'	Hike	3278	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
30	R 4	Wilsons Peak	Hike	3276	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
31	B6	Namahadi Peak	Hike	3275 +		OFS	Lesotho	In
32	B7	'Flat Top'	Hike	3274		OFS	Lesotho	In
33	O7	Litseketseke Spur	Hike	3267	Natal		Lesotho	In
34	K2	'Starboard'	Hike	3261	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
35	N8	Long Wall	Hike	3257	Natal		Lesotho	In
36	Q3	Hodgeson's Peak South	Hike	3257	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp

37	B4	Namahadi Ridge	Hike	3254		OFS	Lesotho	In
38	P10	Mqatsheni	Hike	3249	Natal		Lesotho	In
39	J6	Champagne Castle Buttress	Hike	3246	Natal			Scarp
40	B8	'Namahadi Z'	Hike	3245		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
41	Q2	Hodgeson's Peak North	Hike	3244	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
42	D7	'Icidi Back Ridge'	Hike	3240	Natal		Lesotho	In
43	D11	Stimela Peak	Hike	3239	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
44	M5	Bannerman Face	Hike	3235	Natal		Lesotho	In
45	J5	Monks Cowl	Climb	3234	Natal			Out
46	K7	'Sombrero'	Hike	3228	Natal		Lesotho	Scarp
47	B9	'Namahadi Y'	Hike	3225		OFS	Lesotho	Scarp
48	E5	'Pins Buttress'	Hike	3225	Natal		Lesotho	In
49	E2	Black & Tan Wall	Hike	3224	Natal		Lesotho	In
50	O4	Lithabeneng	Hike	3220 +	Natal		Lesotho	In

References

Maps: SA Trig, survey 1:50 000 and 1:250 000 maps; Lesotho Government 1:250 000 maps; The three Drakensberg maps published by the former Directorate of Forestry (produced by Mapcape: Peter Slingsby)

Books: All the southern African mountain books by David Bristow, T.V. Bulpin, James Byrom, James Clarke, David Coulson, Gerald Cubitt, David Dodds, Dave and Pat Irwin, Doyle Liebenberg, Malcolm Pearse and R.O. Pearse.

MCSA Journals going back nearly a century.

Editorial note: Although the editorial committee has made every effort to verify the accuracy of heights given in this article, we stress that these cannot be taken as authoritative.