



THE MARULA WAY LOOP – 14.85KM

This route is more suited to MTB riders, however the fitter of us can always give it a crack with the running shoes. We start at the junction of East Shore and Rangers Rock Road. The decision is whether to choose clockwise or anti-clockwise.

Clockwise gives you better views of the dam when up on Mountain Road but you do miss out on some great technical descent on Marula way, so the description for the route below is based on travelling anti-clockwise.

The first 4.5kms along East Shore Road is flat and pretty standard giving you some time to warm up the muscles and check the gears are working efficiently. When you see the stone sign – take a left up “Link Road”. This takes you winding up into the mountains through some crocodile back koppies. There used to be a lot of Aloe Marlothii but these were hammered when the elephant resided inside this area – they are making a recovery though. The land is reasonably open with scented thorn scattered around and the brilliant reds of FireFinches or Tinker Barbets flashing past you. There is usually a lot of warthog in this area, as well as common reedbeek, grey duiker, steenbok and the occasional mischievous vervet monkey troop!

Link Road is a nice little tester on the legs. It does give you a breather as you pass the koppie before plunging up towards the base of the Lubombo mountain and encountering a nasty little incline which will get even the racing snakes sweating on a winter’s morning .

Turn left onto Mountain road for a little reprieve as you cruise through some slight decline with great views of the cliff faces ahead. As you travel into the recess of the mountain you will see a huge rocky outcrop towering above you on your right. Legend has it that a British officer rode off this rock face on horseback in a moment of “insanity” during the Anglo-Boer wars.

Carrying on - there is a bit of uphill before turning left onto “Marula Drive”. This is a great track to test the skills on downhill at speed. Running next to a ravine and lush vegetation, the bush here is thick so keep your eyes peeled for what’s around the next corner. The ground changes from soil to rocks and everything in between while the jeep track winds its way back down the mountain slopes through the crocodile back koppies towards Rangers Rock Road. Turn right into Rangers Rock, stop at the lookout if you still have some juice left in the tank, otherwise free wheel / run down the hill to East Shore Road.

Well done!

Distance – 14.85 km

Ascent – 155 m

