





# Tourism

South Africa is a tourist paradise – offering scenic beauty, diverse wildlife, a kaleidoscope of cultures and traditions, and endless opportunities to explore the outdoors through sport and adventure activities.

Tourism is South Africa's fastest-growing industry and contributes about 7,1% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In 2004, total international arrivals increased by 2,7%. Although European arrivals decreased by 2,4%, arrivals from North America increased by 10,4%, Central and South America by more than 12%, Australasia by 4,4%, Asia by 3,1% and other African countries by 4,2%.

In the first quarter of 2005, there were 1,7 million foreign tourist arrivals – the highest in South African history, representing exceptional growth of more than 10%. At the same time, foreign tourism spending increased by more than 25% to R12,9 billion.

The tourism industry employs an estimated 3% of South Africa's workforce, and is regarded as potentially the largest provider of jobs and earner of foreign exchange. Some 27 000 new direct tourism jobs were created in 2004.

The fastest-growing segment of tourism in South Africa is ecological tourism (ecotourism), which includes nature photography, birdwatching, botanical studies, snorkelling, hiking and mountaineering.

Community tourism is becoming increasingly popular, with tourists wanting to experience South Africa's rural villages and townships. (See chapter 5: *Arts and culture*.)

Another key aspect of South Africa's tourism vision for the next three years, is the vast business tourism potential. Injecting about R20 billion annually into the economy, business tourism is estimated to sustain almost 260 000 jobs, paying an estimated R6 billion in salaries and accounting for R4 billion in taxes every year.

South Africa ranks as the 28th most popular global business tourism destination. To improve this ranking, the *Business Tourism* Campaign was launched in November 2005 to industry and business leaders in Amsterdam. The campaign was also launched in London in 2005, and an Asian and American roll-out is planned for 2006.

## Tourism policy and initiatives

At national level, the Tourism Branch in the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism leads and

directs tourism-policy formulation and implementation. It works in partnership with South African Tourism, provincial tourism authorities, the tourism industry and other relevant stakeholders. It aims to ensure and accelerate the practical delivery of tourism benefits to the broad spectrum of South Africans, while maintaining sustainability and quality of life.

The *White Paper on Tourism* provides a policy framework for tourism development, and entails, among other things:

- empowerment/capacity-building
- a focus on tourism-infrastructure investment
- aggressively marketing South Africa as a tourism destination to international markets
- a domestic tourism and travel campaign.

Raising general awareness about the opportunities for domestic travel continues to be a priority. The aim is to encourage South Africans to travel within their country, to make tourism products accessible to all, to facilitate the development of a culture of tourism, and to create a safe and welcoming environment for visitors.

### Poverty-relief funding

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's poverty-relief projects promote the development of community-owned tourism products and the establishment of tourism infrastructure, including roads, information centres and tourism signage.

These poverty-relief projects are categorised into product development, infrastructure development, capacity-building and training, the establishment of



Government will spend R12 million over the next three years to implement the Tourism Satellite Account in partnership with StatsSA, the Reserve Bank and others. Among the most important information that this will generate for South Africa's tourism industry is the specific contribution of tourism to gross domestic product, the actual number of direct and indirect jobs in tourism, the quantity of tourism investment and revenue generated by tourism throughout South Africa.

small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), and business-development projects.

### Welcome Campaign

The *Welcome Campaign* encourages all South Africans to embrace tourism and share South Africa's rich natural and cultural heritage. It is run as a national general-awareness campaign, through roadshows and community-outreach programmes.

Another facet of the campaign is the celebration of Tourism Month. This annual promotion, held in September, aims to promote a culture of tourism among all South Africans.

### SA Host

SA Host, a national customer-service training programme, was introduced in December 2001. The programme aims to develop and promote a culture of customer service in South Africa by creating awareness of the importance of the individual's role in delivering superior customer service in their place of work and their community.

The programme was originally developed in Canada and has been successfully run in 14 countries.

Successful workshop participants become South African hosts and are awarded a certificate and a lapel pin identifying them as people who are committed to excellent service and who are ambassadors for their community and South Africa.

The objectives of SA Host programmes are to:

- improve service-delivery standards through training
- change attitudes towards visitors by creating an awareness of the value of the visitor industry to the country and the role played by every resident
- elevate national pride.

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism provided funding to develop seven regional trainers.

### Sho't Left Campaign

The second *Sho't Left Campaign* was launched in February 2005. This R20-million domestic marketing campaign aims to increase the number of domestic tourists nationally. The campaign show-

cases accessible holiday opportunities in all nine provinces.

*Sho't Left* focuses on converting interest into the actual booking of accommodation and inspiring people to discover the country. The campaign facilitated closer co-operation with the private sector, and particularly the Association of Southern African Travel Agents (ASATA). As a result, the public can book affordable *Sho't Left* holidays through the retail network of more than 5 000 agents, all of whom are equipped with brochures and educational leaflets. ASATA was also working with South African Tourism to develop the *Sho't Left* Enterprise Programme where travel agencies employ domestic agents to stimulate the domestic travel market.

In alignment with the Tourism Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Charter, this project also addresses unemployment and skills transfer.

### International tourism

Cabinet approved the International Tourism Growth Strategy in June 2003. The strategy includes an analysis of core markets and their segments.

Priority markets have been identified in Europe, Asia and Africa.

The strategy not only aims to increase arrivals, but also to:

- increase the duration tourists spend in South Africa
- increase the spending of tourists
- ensure that tourists travel throughout the country, and not just in a few provinces
- facilitate transformation and BEE in the local tourism industry.

South Africa has made its mark as a world meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions destination.

In February 2004, South African Tourism launched its *Woza 2004* Campaign. This deal-driven consumer campaign is aimed at encouraging German travellers to visit South Africa in large groups, particularly during the low tourist season. It is also intended to increase awareness about South Africa and entrenches the country as an affordable, year-round, preferred tourist destination.

The *Woza* Campaign offers two value-for-money packages that include return flights into South Africa, airport taxes, world-class accommodation at some of the country's leading quality-graded establishments, and hotel and airport transfers.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) identified tourism as an important sector to address the development challenges facing Africa. The NEPAD Tourism Action Plan has been developed, providing a more detailed framework for action at national and subregional levels. The action plan proposes concrete interventions in the following focus areas:

- the creation of an enabling policy and regulatory environment
- institution-building aimed at promoting tourism
- tourism marketing
- research and development
- investment in tourism infrastructure and products
- human resource development (HRD) and quality assurance

Some of the tourism initiatives South Africa is actively participating in, include the:

- Okavango Upper Zambezi International Tourism Spatial Development Initiative (SDI)
- Coast-2-Coast SDI.

### Domestic tourism growth

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, in conjunction with South African Tourism,



In April 2005, the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk, announced that the South African Government would, over the next three years, invest another R193 million in transfrontier conservation areas, creating visitor centres, upgrading access routes, building camps and improving tourism infrastructure.

Originating in Africa, the transfrontier conservation initiative has been spearheaded by the Southern African Development Community. By April 2005, there were 169 such areas worldwide, involving 113 countries and 667 protected areas.

launched the Domestic Tourism Growth Strategy at the Tourism Indaba in Durban in May 2004.

Domestic tourism is particularly valuable to the country because unlike foreign tourism, it is not seasonally based. It contributes R47 billion to South Africa's economy and there is huge potential for growth.

Some 49,3 million trips are made annually by South Africans within their own country. This comprises 46% of the country's total income from travel expenditure.

A study conducted by the department and South African Tourism, as part of developing the strategy, found that nearly two-thirds of trips were conducted to visit friends and relatives. Although holiday travel accounts for only 16% of trips, it accounts for 44% of all expenditure. Therefore, by focusing on holiday travel, the overall value of the domestic tourism market will be increased.

Some 64% of local people who travel reside in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. These three provinces, in turn, receive 60% of the domestic tourist trade.

Some 60% of domestic travel is undertaken in the province in which people live (intraprovincial travel), while only 40% of trips taken are to another province (interprovincial travel).

To continuously support the growth of the domestic industry, the following have been implemented:

- greater promotion of the domestic tourism brand
- promoting a set of experiences that relate to South African consumers
- distributing appropriate information in specific places
- facilitating the development of co-operative product packages
- developing marketing and distribution channels
- promoting repeat visitation.

### Tourism Enterprise Programme (TEP)

TEP was initially launched as a four-year job-creation initiative in July 2000, with R60,4 million in funding from the private sector through the Business Trust. The primary thrust of the pro-

gramme is to facilitate the growth and expansion of SMMEs in the tourism economy, resulting in job creation and income-generating opportunities.

TEP exceeded all its targets during Phase I. As a result, the programme was renewed for a further three years with R80 million provided jointly by the Business Trust and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.

In TEP Phase II, the core transaction facilitation model that was developed in Phase I was retained. In addition, systemic issues designed to maximise the growth and development of tourism SMMEs are addressed. These include implementing tourism-specific training programmes for SMMEs; assistance in strengthening and establishing local tourism associations; developing HIV and AIDS workplace programmes for SMMEs; and strategies to help SMMEs gain maximum benefit from the Tourism Industry BEE Scorecard.

In June 2004, TEP was instrumental in establishing South Africa's premier contemporary arts trade show, *One of a Kind*. The show was hosted in conjunction with Decorex SA in August 2005 at Gallagher Estate in Midrand, Gauteng.

Some 177 crafters, representing 40 individual exhibitors, financially assisted by the TEP, and 137 provincial exhibitors, assisted by the Department of Trade and Industry, as well as various provincial departments, showcased their crafts. These were highly acclaimed by international buyers from as far afield as Canada, the United States of America (USA), Japan, France and Germany. Total funds leveraged were in excess of R3,5 million.

### Human resource development

Tourism HRD is considered one of the pillars of the development of a new responsible tourism culture in South Africa.

The department supports the full introduction of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality studies as a subject in schools. Travel and Tourism was introduced in 2000 in all schools wishing to offer the subject from grades 10 to 12.

## Tourism and Hospitality Education and Training Authority (THETA)

The THETA comprises the following chambers:

- Hospitality
- Conservation and Tourist Guiding
- Sport, Recreation and Fitness
- Tourism and Travel Services
- Gaming and Lotteries.

Every chamber has its own committee that helps the THETA to identify industry needs. The Tourism Learnership Project (TLP) is a multimillion rand partnership between the Business Trust, THETA and the Department of Labour.

The TLP aims to raise the standards of South Africa's tourism industry by ensuring the development of useful, transferable and accredited skills. The TLP's three core objectives are to:

- accelerate the development of national qualifications for all primary subsectors of the tourism sector
- ensure the availability of national qualifications, which will trigger increased investment in training by employers
- develop systems and support the training of unemployed people through learnerships that provide them with the necessary skills to find jobs.

## South African Tourism Institute (SATI)

The SATI was established with the assistance of the Spanish Government, which provided some R13 million for the project.

The SATI has initiated a number of projects that create a supportive learning environment for teachers, high-school learners and employees in the tourism industry.

The SATI focuses on teacher-development programmes aimed at enhancing the quality of the Travel, Tourism and Hospitality subjects.

The project started with 14 schools and 800 learners in 1996. By 2004, more than 700 schools and 150 000 learners had participated in the project.

There is also emphasis on capacity-building of Department of Education officials and educators.

In 2004, the SATI launched an information pack on tourism and hospitality careers, which contains

videos, presentations, leaflets and notes on these careers.

A SATI resource centre has also been established, containing electronic and physical resources on many aspects of tourism and its related industries. The centre is open to the public. Other developmental projects are also underway that include working with tourism role-players to develop levels of customer service and staff training.

## Black Economic Empowerment

The department has embarked on a legislative reform process to reflect the guidelines set out in the *White Paper on Tourism*.

The Tourism Transformation Strategy was approved by Cabinet in November 2001. More emphasis has since been placed on developing BEE businesses within the tourism industry, by having raised the proportion of government expenditure going to these businesses from 30% in 2001/02 to 50% in 2004/05.

A database of BEE tourism enterprises was compiled to assist government departments to meet affirmative-procurement targets.

All these initiatives have culminated in the Tourism BEE Charter and the Tourism Scorecard launched by



The School for Tourism and Hospitality in Johannesburg, the first combined hospitality and tourism training school in the country, was officially opened by Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka in August 2005.

The school is situated on the Auckland Park campus of the University of Johannesburg. Some 750 students enrolled, but the intake was expected to increase to 1 000 a year.

The school has various modern facilities, including, among others, two restaurants catering for fine dining, à la carte, buffet and fast food; a bar; a wine cellar; six en-suite bedrooms; computer rooms; and museums featuring the hotel school and the history of catering and cuisine in South Africa.

Students can obtain national diplomas or master's degrees in Technology (MTech) in Hospitality Management, Tourism, and Food and Beverage Management, preparing them for employment in all sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry.

the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk, in May 2005. The charter is the result of intensive negotiations with the tourism industry, and represents the commitment of this industry to transformation.

The scorecard comprises seven indicators, namely ownership, strategic representation, employment equity, skills development, preferential procurement, enterprise development and social development. Weightings and targets for each of these indicators have been set for two milestone dates in 2009 and 2014. It applies to large and small businesses alike.

### Hints for the tourist

Every traveller to South Africa must be in possession of a valid passport and, where necessary, a visa.

The Immigration Act, 2002 (Act 13 of 2002), stipulates that all visitors to South Africa are required to have a minimum of one blank page (both back and front) in their passport to enable the entry visa to be issued. If there is insufficient space in the passport, entry will be denied.

Enquiries may be directed to South African diplomatic representatives abroad or to the Department of Home Affairs in Pretoria. Visas are issued free of charge. Visitors who intend travelling to South Africa's neighbouring countries and back into South Africa are advised to apply for multiple-entry visas.



The top 10 tourist attractions in South Africa are:

1. Kruger National Park
2. Table Mountain
3. Garden Route
4. Cape Town's Victoria and Alfred Waterfront
5. Robben Island
6. Beaches
7. Sun City
8. Cultural villages
9. Soweto
10. The Cradle of Humankind

Source: SA Venues

Passport-holders of certain countries are exempt from visa requirements. Tourists must satisfy immigration officers that they have the means to support themselves during their stay and that they are in possession of return or onward tickets. They must also have valid international health certificates.

Visitors from the yellow-fever belt in Africa and the USA, as well as those who travel through or disembark in these areas, have to be inoculated against the disease.

Malaria is endemic to parts of KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. It is essential to take precautions when visiting these areas.

Foreign tourists visiting South Africa can have their value-added tax (VAT) refunded, provided the value of the items purchased exceeds R20.

VAT is refunded on departure at the point of exit.

South Africa's transport infrastructure – airlines, railroads, roads, luxury touring buses (coaches) and motor cars – is such that tourists can travel comfortably and quickly from their port of entry to any part of the country. A number of international airlines, including South African Airways, operate regular scheduled flights to and from South Africa. Several domestic airlines operate in the country. There are also mainline trains to all parts of the country. (See chapter 22: *Transport*.)

A brochure entitled *Helpful Hints to Make Your Stay Enjoyable and Safe* is distributed to tourists at international airports.

South African Tourism's state-of-the-art global call centre in Johannesburg offers information on travelling to South Africa.

Operated 24 hours a day and equipped with 19 international operators, the centre provides information telephonically and via e-mail to English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese and Mandarin-speaking customers. The centre, which became operational in October 2004, handled over 7 000 contacts in the first month. Calls and e-mails are handled from 16 countries.

### Accommodation

The tourist accommodation industry in South Africa provides a wide spectrum of accommodation, from formal hotels to informal holiday flats and cottages,

game lodges and reserves, guest-houses, youth hostels and bed-and-breakfast establishments.

A variety of promotional material on South Africa is available. Comprehensive guides and maps cover all the regions and aspects of interest to tourists, including accommodation. Various useful tourism websites can be found on the Internet.

### Quality assurance

The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) inspects the standards in the hospitality and accommodation industry.

This voluntary grading system, which was launched in 2001, uses internationally recognised star insignia to rate accommodation establishments and will be extended to include relevant businesses in classified sectors of the tourism industry. Once graded, establishments will be encouraged to utilise the star system for marketing and advertising purposes.

Establishments will be assessed according to the type of accommodation they provide. There are currently nine types of establishments:

- bed-and-breakfast
- guest-house
- hotel
- self-catering
- backpacker and hostelling
- caravan and camping
- country house
- meeting, exhibitions, special events
- restaurants.

Grading assessors undergo training to receive the National Certificate in Tourism Grading. The awarding of such a qualification is a world-first. Assessors are accredited with the THETA and registered with the TGCSA before being recommended to the industry. Larger hotel groups with their own internal assessors will also be accredited with the THETA. Independent auditors conduct random audits. These auditors also assist in ensuring that the assessors adhere to a code of conduct.

Star grading is the only system recognised by government and the TBCSA.

By March 2005, 54% of all accommodation rooms in South Africa had been star graded. Some

30 000 accommodation establishments and more than 40 conference venues had been graded. The grading scheme for the food and beverage sector was also operational and restaurants were invited to apply for grading.

### Tourist safety

South African Tourism has launched several initiatives aimed at ensuring the safety of travellers to the country.

These include a partnership initiative with the oil company Engen and the Tourism Information and Safety Call Line, 083 123 2345, which provides tourists with information on what to do in an emergency and where to locate services.

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism established the National Tourism Safety Network, a multistakeholder forum comprising provincial representatives, the South African Police Service, Business Against Crime, the departments of foreign affairs and of justice, the Metro Police, organised local government, community policing structures, South African Tourism and other key stakeholders.

The forum has developed the Tourism Safety Communications Strategy and redrafted the National Tourism Safety Tips.

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism also hosted a tourism safety workshop in early February 2005 to address the needs and challenges facing the tourism industry.



The National Tourist Guide of the Year and Emerging National Tourist Guide of the Year Awards recognised and encouraged tour-guiding excellence.

In 2005, the National Tourist Guide of the Year was Mr Alan Weyer and the Emerging Tourist Guide of the Year was Mr Tebogo Ramathunya. These awards will be incorporated with the new Welcome Awards in 2006.



## Tourism in the provinces

### Western Cape

The Western Cape lies at the southern tip of the African continent. Considered one of the most beautiful regions in Africa, it is also the place where two oceans meet and the home of the famous fynbos vegetation.

The paternal presence of Table Mountain, the pristine coastline with its white sandy beaches, the magnificent countryside with its bountiful rivers, vleis and dams, fauna and flora, together with the warm summer climate and friendly community, makes the Western Cape the perfect holiday destination.

### Cape Metropole

Tourism in the city of **Cape Town** centres around the Victoria & Alfred (V&A) Waterfront, a working harbour offering everything from upmarket shopping malls, arts and craft markets, theatres and live music, to museums.

Other major attractions in the city include the Bo-Kaap Museum, the Castle of Good Hope, the Company's Garden, the District Six Museum, flea markets, the Grand Parade, the houses of Parliament, the South African Cultural History Museum and the South African National Gallery. Also worth a visit are historical buildings in the Bo-Kaap and District Six.



In June 2005, South Africa was one of the most affordable holiday destinations in the world.

The findings were from the annual American Express Foreign Exchange Holiday Cost of Living Index, which compares prices in 12 popular holiday resort areas for 13 'shopping basket' items.

Even with the strength of the Rand, South Africa offered significant value for overseas tourists, finishing second only to Thailand.

South Africa was ranked the cheapest on five of the 14 shopping items surveyed, making it the country with the highest number of cheapest items. South Africa also didn't have a product ranked most expensive of all the 14 items listed.

The Gold of Africa Museum established by Anglo Gold is home to a celebrated collection of more than 350 gold artefacts.

Air flips and trips are available, as well as many boat and yacht trips from Table Bay Harbour, including trips to Robben Island (proclaimed a World Heritage Site and also the place where former President Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for several years).

The Nelson Mandela Gateway to Robben Island is situated in the Clock Tower Precinct at the V&A Waterfront. The gateway houses interactive multimedia exhibitions, an auditorium, boardrooms, the Robben Island Museum and a restaurant.

Jazz is big in Cape Town. From traditional blues through progressive jazz to African-influenced jazz, every taste is catered for at a number of restaurants, jazz cafés, cigar bars, pubs and at some of the wine farms. The top jazz event in the Western Cape is the annual Cape Town International Jazz Festival.

Table Mountain, which forms part of the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) is a popular attraction for visitors and provides a majestic backdrop to the vibrant and friendly Mother City. An ultra-modern cableway takes visitors to the top of the mountain, providing spectacular views.

**Newlands** is home to the renowned Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden. In summer, various open-air concerts are held here.

The South African Rugby Museum in Newlands reflects the history of the sport as far back as 1891.

The Rhodes Memorial is situated at **Rondebosch** on the slopes of Table Mountain. It was built of granite from the mountain as a tribute to the memory of Cecil John Rhodes, prime minister of the Cape from 1890 to 1896.

The University of Cape Town is worth a visit for its historic Middle Campus and many buildings designed by Sir Herbert Baker.

**Cape Point**, part of the TMNP, offers many drives, walks, picnic spots and a licensed restaurant. Care has been taken to protect the environmental integrity of this 22 100-hectare (ha) reserve of indigenous flora and fauna.

**Simon's Town's** naval atmosphere and Historic Mile are major attractions in the area. A statue of the

famous dog and sailor's friend, Able Seaman Just Nuisance, stands at Jubilee Square.

Other attractions include the South African Naval Museum and the Warrior Toy Museum. One of only two of the mainland African penguin-breeding colonies in the world can be found at Boulders Beach, also part of the TMNP.

**Hout Bay** is well-known for its colourful working harbour. Seafood outlets, round-the-bay trips to the nearby seal colony, shell and gift shops, and a famous harbourfront emporium attract many visitors. Duiker Island is a seal and sea-bird sanctuary. The World of Birds Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the largest bird parks in the world and is home to some 3 000 birds.

In **Oostenberg**, visitors can enjoy some fine wine and flower farms, such as Zevenwacht Wine Estate with its graceful Cape Dutch homestead. Tygerberg Zoo boasts a collection of exotic animals. Endless stretches of quiet beaches provide popular surfing and windsurfing spots. Big Bay in **Bloubergstrand** is a surfer's paradise and host to an international windsurfing event. Rietvlei Nature Reserve is a unique wetland area, boasting over 110 bird species, including pelicans and flamingos.

Canal Walk Century City is the largest shopping centre in Africa, with close to 400 shops and home to the largest cinema complex in South Africa.

**Tygerberg** is a vibrant and fast-growing area with a well-developed business centre, numerous sports fields, an international indoor cycle track, well-kept golf courses and a racecourse.

New Year in Cape Town is a festive affair, when the Cape minstrels take to the streets with their upbeat music and fancy costumes.

## Garden Route

This area features the pont at **Malgas**, which is the only remaining pont in the country, ferrying vehicles and livestock across the Breede River. Whale-watching attracts tourists at **Witsand** and **Port Beaufort** from June to November.

The Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve outside **Heidelberg** comprises the popular Bushbuck Trail, a wilderness trail and two mountain-bike trails.

**Riversdale** is one of South Africa's most important fynbos export areas. Other attractions include the Julius Gordon Africana Museum.

At the historical Strandveld Architectural Heritage Site at **Still Bay**, visitors can watch tame eels being fed. Ancient fish-traps can be seen at Morris Point and the harbour.

At the aloe factories at **Albertinia**, aloe juice is extracted for medicine and high-quality skin-care products.

Nearby, bungee-jumping on the Gourits River Gorge, hiking, mountain-biking and angling are popular pastimes.

The Point in **Mossel Bay** is not only popular among surfers, but its natural pool formed by rock, is also a favourite swimming spot at low tide. The St Blaize trail starts here and it is the ideal place to watch the whales and dolphins at play in season.

The harbour at Mossel Bay is one of the most modern commercial and recreational harbours on the southern Cape coastline. PetroSA's Information Centre informs visitors about the production of synthetic fuels from Mossel Bay's offshore gas fields. Other attractions include the Atteguas Kloof Pass, Anglo-Boer/South African War blockhouses and the Bartolomeu Dias complex.

**Great Brak River** offers a historic village with many opportunities for whale and dolphin watching along the extensive coast.

**George** is at the heart of the Garden Route. It is the mecca of golf in the southern Cape, as it is home to the renowned Fancourt Country Club and Golf Estate, as well as various other acclaimed golf courses. Board the Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe on its daily trip along the coastline between George and Knysna (except Sundays) at the Outeniqua Transport Museum.

Visitors can also board the Power Van here, and enjoy a glimpse of the Garden Route Botanical Garden from this rail bus.

The George Museum, with its theme of timber history, offers ongoing exhibitions. The Montagu and Voortrekker passes are national monuments, providing spectacular views of the Outeniqua Nature Reserve, which offers several hiking trails.

The George Airport, the Outeniqua Pass, the railway line and the N2 offer convenient access to this

region, making George the ideal hub from which to explore the Garden Route and Little Karoo.

**Victoria Bay** and **Wilderness** are popular for their unspoilt beaches. Wilderness is the western gateway to the southern Cape lakes area. It is a nature lover's paradise, best known for its beaches, lakes, placid lagoon and lush indigenous forests. Birdwatchers flock to the Langvlei and Rondevlei bird sanctuaries in the Wilderness National Park, which hosts over 230 different bird species.

**Sedgefield** borders Swartvlei Lagoon, the largest natural inland saltwater lake in South Africa. Activities include beach horse-riding, hiking, angling and birdwatching.

**Knysna** nestles on the banks of an estuary, guarded by The Heads (two huge sandstone cliffs) and surrounded by indigenous forests, tranquil lakes and golden beaches.

This natural wonderland is home to the largest and smallest of creatures, from the Knysna sea-horse to the Knysna elephants, rare delicate butterflies and the endemic Knysna loerie, a colourful forest bird. Over 200 species can be found in the abundant fynbos and forest settings.

Knysna is also famous for its delectable home-grown oysters, enjoyed with locally brewed beer in quaint pubs and restaurants. An eclectic mix of art galleries showcases the diversity of talent in the area. The area also offers lagoon cruises, forest hikes, golf and adventure sports.

**Plettenberg Bay** is adventure country, offering boat-based whale watching, black-water tubing, hiking, and forest and cycling trails.

The Keurbooms River Nature Reserve at Plettenberg Bay offers a canoeing trail, while the Robberg Nature Reserve is a treasure trove of land, marine, geological and archaeological wealth.

At 21,6 m high, the bungee jump from the Bloukrans River Bridge is the highest commercial bungee jump in the world.

### Little Karoo

The Little Karoo's spectacular landscape is fashioned almost entirely by water. Its vegetation ranges from lush greenery in the fertile river valleys to short, rugged Karoo plants in the veld. Gorges follow rivers

that cut through towering mountains, while breathtakingly steep passes cross imposing terrain. The region is also home to the largest bird in the world – the ostrich. The Little Karoo is rich in culture and history.

Excellent wines and port are produced in the **Calitzdorp** and **De Rust** areas.

**Oudtshoorn**, the world's ostrich-feather capital, is the region's main town. The Swartberg Nature Reserve and Pass with its gravel roads, are also worth a visit. The *Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees* is held in the town annually. Some 29 km from Oudtshoorn lie the remarkable Congo caves, a series of spectacular subterranean limestone caverns. Bearing evidence of early San habitation, the 30-cave wonderland boasts magnificent dripstone formations.

**Amalienstein** and **Zoar** are historic mission stations midway between Ladismith and Calitzdorp. Visitors can go on donkey-cart and hiking trails through orchards and vineyards, while the Seweweekspoort is ideal for mountain-biking, hiking, and protea and fynbos admirers.

**Calitzdorp** boasts four wine estates, three of which are open to the public. The spring water of the Calitzdorp Spa is rich in minerals and is reputed to have medicinal properties. The Gamka Mountain Reserve is home to the rare and endangered Cape mountain zebra.

**De Rust** lies at the southern entrance to Meiringspoort. The Meiringspoort Gorge extends 20 km through the Swartberg Mountain Range. Halfway through, a beautiful 69 m-high waterfall can be seen. Wine farms in the area are open to the public.

**Ladismith** is home to the Towerkop Cheese Factory. There are various hiking, mountain-biking and 4x4 trails in the area. The Anysberg, Klein Karoo and Towerkop nature reserves are also worth a visit.

**Uniondale**, on the main route between George and Graaff-Reinet, features the largest water-wheel in the country, the Old Watermill. Uniondale Poort is a scenic drive linking Uniondale with Avontuur in the Langkloof Valley.

At **Vanwyksdorp**, visitors can see how fynbos is dried and packed for the export market. Donkey-

cart rides take visitors to Anglo-Boer/South African War grave sites.

### Central Karoo

The Central Karoo, a fascinating semi-desert area, lies in the heart of one of the world's most unique and interesting arid zones.

This ancient, fossil-rich land, which is five times the size of Great Britain, is also home to the richest desert flora in the world.

In the Central Karoo, visitors will find the largest variety of succulents found anywhere on Earth.

**Beaufort West**, the oldest town in the Central Karoo, is often referred to as the Oasis of the Karoo. Awards presented to heart-transplant pioneer, the late Prof. Chris Barnard, a son of this town, are on display in the local museum.

A township route introduces visitors to the Xhosa culture in the area. At the Karoo National Park on the town's doorstep, visitors can experience the flora and game of the Karoo. A challenging 4x4 route takes visitors to the escarpment and new areas of ecological discovery. The park is also home to a variety of game, as well as the highly endangered riverine rabbit.

**Matjiesfontein**, a national monument, offers tourists a peek into yesteryear and the opportunity to overnight in Victorian splendour. The village houses a small railway museum, a private motor museum and the largest privately owned museum in South Africa.

Experience the vastness of the Great Karoo in **Murraysburg**, an ecotourist and hunter's paradise.

**Laingsburg**, a tiny village almost totally wiped out by floods a century after it was established, is the best place to study the geology of the region.

**Prince Albert** is a well-preserved town which nestles at the foot of the Swartberg mountains. It is the ideal place to sample the great variety of Karoo cuisine, see examples of local architecture dating back to the early 1800s and enjoy several scenic drives. The Fransie Pienaar Museum introduces visitors to the cultural history of the area. It has a fossil room and an exhibit covering the gold rush to this area in the 19th century. The museum has a licence to distil and sell witblits (white lightning).

Prince Albert is the closest town by road to Gamkaskloof.

The Hell, a little valley in the heart of the Swartberg mountains, was the home of one of the world's most isolated communities for almost 150 years. Today, Gamkaskloof is a nature reserve and national monument managed by Cape Nature Conservation. It has overnight facilities and can be accessed by a 57-km long (but two-hour drive) winding road which starts at the peak of the Swartberg Pass.

### Cape winelands

The Cape winelands, including the former Breede River Valley, are situated in close proximity to Cape Town.

The Cape winelands are a rural enchantment of dramatic mountains, rolling farmlands and peaceful vineyards.

They are home to Route 62, the world's longest wine route.

**Stellenbosch**, the oldest town in South Africa, is also known as the *Eikestad* (City of Oaks). Various historical walks delight visitors. The town is a gracious blend of old Cape Dutch, Georgian and Victorian architecture. Dorp Street consists of one of the longest rows of old buildings in the country. The Stellenbosch Village Museum consists of four homesteads and gardens ranging from the late 17th to the middle 19th centuries.

The Spier Summer Arts Festival livens up sultry summer nights from November to March at the Spier Wine Estate near Stellenbosch. The Stellenbosch Wine Route comprises over 100 wine estates, most of which offer cellar tours.



South Africa's Blue Train is one of the world's most luxurious railway services. The train runs between Cape Town and Pretoria, to Hoedspruit in Mpumalanga, and along a section of the Garden Route between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. It also travels to the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

The Freedom Monument at Pniel, which was built in 1992, commemorates the freed slaves who were the first settlers at the mission station, which was established in 1843.

**Franschhoek** has become known as the gourmet capital of the Cape. Originally known as *Olipfantshoek*, it was named after the arrival of Huguenots who were predominantly French. The Huguenot Monument was built in 1944 to commemorate their arrival in 1688.

Visitors can also enjoy various hiking trails and historical walks, as well as the *Vignerons de Franschhoek* wine route.

**Paarl** lies between the second-largest granite rock in the world and the Du Toit's Kloof mountains. It is famous for its architectural treasures found along a 1-km stretch of the main street featuring Cape Dutch and Victorian architecture.

The area's fynbos vegetation supports a number of south western Cape endemics, such as the Cape sugarbird and the orange-breasted sunbird.

The *Afrikaanse Taalmonument* is situated on the slopes of the Paarl Mountain, while the *Afrikaanse Taalmuseum* is in the centre of the town.

The town of **Wellington** lies in a picturesque valley, with the majestic Hawequa mountains on its eastern boarder. Apart from three renowned co-operative wineries, one can visit a number of prestigious wine cellars situated on historic Huguenot farms with Cape Dutch homesteads.

Flower lovers will enjoy the chrysanthemum show in May, the longest-running show of its kind in South Africa. More than 90% of South Africa's vine-cutting nurseries are found in Wellington. The town is also the home of South Africa's dried-fruit industry.

Experience life as the pioneers lived in years gone by at the Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum. The KW Brandy Cellar, the largest of its kind in the world, offers cellar tours and brandy tasting.

**Tulbagh** is famous for its heritage, historical homesteads and magnificent country living. Church Street, home to 32 national monuments, constitutes the largest concentration of national monuments in one street in South Africa.

**Ceres**, named after the Roman goddess of fruitfulness, is the largest deciduous fruit-producing

region in South Africa. Tours are offered at various fruit farms. The area also boasts several 4x4 trails, horse-riding, mountain-biking and abseiling.

The **Hex River Valley** is the largest producer of table grapes in southern Africa. Visitors can pick their own grapes at harvest time and sample the variety of export-quality produce. The well-known Hex River 4x4 trail and the Ochre San rock art trails are a must for nature lovers.

**De Doorns** is situated in the heart of the Hex River Valley.

Situated on the Breede River, **Bonnievale** features several cheese factories. For the adventurous outdoor enthusiast there are canoe trips, birdwatching and riverboating.

Known as The Valley of Wine and Roses, **Robertson** is one of the most beautiful areas in South Africa. Surrounded by vineyards, orchards, delectable fruit and radiant roses, Robertson produces connoisseur-quality wines and is also known for its thoroughbred horses.

Renowned for its muscadel wines, **Montagu** is the gateway to the Klein Karoo and is set in a fertile valley. Relax in the healing waters of the Avalon Springs or visit the waterfowl breeding camp, the largest of its kind in the Western Cape.

The area also offers several hiking trails, game-viewing drives, guided cultural tours and excellent rock climbs.

The picturesque village of **Gouda** is renowned for the Parrots Den Pub, a living museum in the Gouda Hotel.

**McGregor** has a wealth of fascinating white-washed, thatched cottages and well-preserved Victorian houses, making it one of the best-preserved examples of mid-19th century architecture in the Western Cape.

**Prince Alfred Hamlet** is the gateway to the Gydo Pass, known for its scenic views. This quaint village lies in an important deciduous-fruit farming area.

Hidden amidst vineyards and wine estates lies the picturesque town of **Rawsonville**, renowned for its array of award-winning wines. Tourists can enjoy an afternoon drive along the awe-inspiring Slanghoek Valley, with its lush vineyards and breath-

taking views, or relax in the warm-water mineral springs at Goudini Spa.

### West Coast

The West Coast is a region of extreme beauty and contrast. The solitary coast's scenic beauty is challenged only by rich culinary experiences of mussels, oysters, calamari, crayfish and abalone in season, or linefish pulled from the Benguela current's cold waters. The area is a birdwatcher's paradise. In addition, every year migrating whales visit the coastal waters from July.

Within the first two months of the first good winter rains, wild flowers on the West Coast explode in a brilliant array of colour.

The Swartland region is known for its undulating wheat fields, vineyards, wineries and outdoor activities. Further north, visitors encounter the fertile Olifants River Valley and the vast plains of the Knersvlakte with its wealth of indigenous succulent plants.

The town of **Darling** draws visitors to its country museum and art gallery, annual wild flower and orchid shows, basket factory and wine cellars. The entertainment venue Evita se Perron is situated at the old Darling Railway Station and offers top entertainment from South African entertainers.

**Malmesbury** is the biggest town in the Swartland. Major attractions include Bokomo Mills, the Malmesbury Museum, the Sugarbird glazed fruit factory and the historical walk-about.

The Riebeek Valley is known for its scenic beauty. The area has become a popular haven for well-known artists of various disciplines. Wines and olives can be tasted at various cellars.

**Elands Bay** is a popular holiday resort and surfer's paradise. Khoi and San rock art can be viewed at the Elands Bay caves.

**Moorreesburg** and **Koringberg** are major wheat-distributing towns. Tourists can visit the Wheat Industry Museum, one of only three in the world. Birdwatching, hiking, 4x4 routes, clay-pigeon shooting, mountain-bike trails, canoeing and water-skiing at Misverstand are popular activities.

**Yzerfontein** is famous for its unspoilt beaches, fynbos, beautiful views and whale watching. Another major attraction is the historical lime furnaces.

**Langebaan** is a popular holiday destination. The West Coast National Park, an internationally renowned wetland which houses about 60 000 waterbirds and waders, attracts thousands of visitors each year. The park is also the site where the oldest anatomically modern fossilised human footprints were discovered.

The Langebaan Lagoon forms part of the park and is zoned for specific activities. The Postberg section of the park, across the lagoon, is famous for its wild flowers blooming mainly during August and September.

Cape Columbine at **Paternoster** is the last manned lighthouse built on the South African coast. The Columbine Nature Reserve is home to many seabird species.

**Saldanha** is a watersport enthusiast's paradise. Other attractions include Doc's Cave, a landmark on the scenic breakwater drive, and the Hoedjieskoppie



Southern Africa has become one of the most popular big-game hunting regions in the world. It offers a great variety to trophy hunters, including the Big Five, namely elephant, white rhino, lion, leopard and buffalo, as well as 26 species of antelope.

The hunting proclamations of the various provinces differ and are promulgated annually. The hunting season is normally during the winter months, from May to the end of July.

Most species may be hunted legally by non-landowners during the hunting season, provided they have the written consent of the landowner and a valid hunting permit issued by the appropriate conservation authority.

Trophy hunting by overseas clients is subject to uniform legislation throughout South Africa, and all hunters are required to be accompanied by registered professional hunters and have their hunts arranged by approved hunting outfitters.

All nine provinces provide schedules of ordinary, protected and specially protected game. Ordinary game may be hunted under licence during an open season. Protected game may be hunted only under permit and licence, the fee depending on the species. Specially protected game, which includes grysbok, klipspringer, red hartebeest, giraffe, black rhinoceros, pangolin and antbear, may not be hunted at all.

Nature Reserve. There are various hiking trails in the SAS Saldanha Nature Reserve.

**St Helena Bay** is best known for the Vasco Da Gama Monument and Museum. Fishing (snoek in season), hiking, bird and whale-watching opportunities also draw many visitors.

**Vredenburg**, the business centre of the area, offers shopping opportunities, cinemas and a golf course with a bird hide where various species can be viewed.

**Lambert's Bay** is a traditional fishing village with Bird Island as a tourist attraction. It is a breeding ground for African penguins, Cape cormorants and other sea birds. Visitors can also watch southern right whales from July to November.

**Piketberg** offers arts and crafts, fauna and flora, wine culture and recreation. The Goedverwacht and Wittewater Moravian mission stations are situated close to the town.

**Porterville** is famous for its Disa Route (best in January and February). The Groot Winterhoek Mountain Peak in the Groot Winterhoek Wilderness Area is the second-highest in the Western Cape. The Dasklip Pass is popular with hang gliders.

At **Velddrif/Laaipek**, visitors can indulge in some bakkem (a West Coast salted-fish delicacy) at factories along the Berg River. Tourists can also visit the salt-processing factory or the West Coast Art Gallery in town.

The citrus area in the Olifants River Valley is the third-largest in South Africa. The wine route from Citrusdal to Lutzville boasts a selection of internationally acclaimed wines. The world-renowned rooibos tea is also produced here.

**Citrusdal** is famous for its citrus products and wines. The Citrusdal Museum depicts the pioneering days of the early colonists. The Goede Hoop Citrus Co-op is the largest single packing facility in South Africa. The annual Citrusdal Outdoor Calabash features, among others, 4x4 outings, lectures and visits to rock-art sites, and an arts and crafts market.

The Sandveldhuisie is a recently built example of a typical Sandveld dwelling. There are several recognised mountain-biking, walking, hiking and

canoeing trails and a sky-diving club. The Cederberg Wilderness Area features the elephant's foot plant, the rare snow protea, and some of the best examples of San rock art in the Western Cape.

Visitors to **Clanwilliam** can visit the rooibos and velskoen factories and the grave of the well-known South African poet Louis Leipoldt. Various historical buildings can also be viewed. The Clanwilliam and Bulshoek dams are popular among watersport enthusiasts.

**Wuppertal**, at the foot of the Cederberg mountains, features the oldest Rhenish Mission Station. Proceeds from 4x4 trails in the area go to community coffers for establishing new hiking trails and building more overnight huts and guest-houses.

**Vredendal** is the centre of the Lower Olifants River Valley. Major attractions include marble-processing and manufacturing, industrial mines (dolomite and limestone), the KWW Grape Juice Concentrate Plant and Distillery, and the South African Dried Fruit Co-op. The town is also home to the Vredendal Wine Cellar, the largest co-operative wine cellar under one roof in the southern hemisphere.

The picturesque town of **Doringbaai** with its attractive lighthouse is well known for its seafood.

**Strandfontein**, situated about 8 km north of Doring Bay, is essentially a holiday and retirement resort. It offers a breathtaking view of the ocean.

**Klawer** was named after the wild clover growing in the area. During the flower season, the area is a kaleidoscope of colour. There are hiking trails and river-rafting along the Doring River.

**Lutzville** and **Koekenaap** are synonymous with wine and flowers in season.

Visitors can also view the Sishen-Saldanha Railway Bridge. Where the railway line spans the Olifants River, it is divided into 23 sections, each 45 m long. The 14 100-ton deck was pushed into position over teflon sheets with hydraulic jacks from the bridgehead. It is the longest bridge in the world built using this method.

**Vanrhynsdorp** houses the largest succulent nursery in South Africa. The Latsky Radio Museum houses a collection of old valve radios, some dating back to 1924. Birdwatching, mountain-biking, day walks, and hiking and 4x4 trails abound. The Tree-

Troe and Rietpoort mission stations are a must-see for historians.

### Overberg

In the most southerly region of Africa, only one hour east of Cape Town, lies a fertile area surrounded by mountains and sea, called the Overberg.

The **Hangklip-Kleinmond** area comprises **Kleinmond, Betty's Bay, Pringle Bay** and **Rooiels**. It is a popular holiday region, ideal for whale watching, and includes the Kleinmond Coastal Nature Reserve and the Harold Porter Botanical Garden.

The Penguin Reserve at Stoney Point, **Betty's Bay**, is one of two breeding colonies of the jackass penguin on the African continent.

South Africa's first international biosphere reserve, the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, was proclaimed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in 1999. It runs along the coast from Gordon's Bay to the Bot River Vlei, stretching 2 km out to sea, and inland to the Groenlandberg, the mountains near Grabouw.

**Hermanus** is a popular holiday resort, famous for the best land-based whale watching in the world.

**Stanford** is one of the few villages in South Africa where the market square has been retained. The central core of the village has been proclaimed a national conservation area.

**Gansbaai** is known for its excellent rock and boat angling, diving, shark-cage diving and whale watching. The Danger Point Lighthouse, named as such because of the ships that have been wrecked and lives that have been lost on this dangerous coast, is open to the public.

**De Kelders** is the only freshwater cave on the African coast. Spectacular views of southern right whales can be enjoyed from the cliffs at De Kelders and along the coast to Pearly Beach. Also popular are white-shark tours, diving safaris and fishing trips.

**Elim** was founded by German missionaries in 1824, with its only inhabitants being members of the Moravian Church. Visitors are welcome to attend services. The Old Watermill (1833) has been restored and declared a national monument.

Popular sites in **Napier** include the Militaria Museum and Rose Boats and Toy Museum. The

Shipwreck Museum in **Bredasdorp**, founded in 1975, specialises in shipwrecks found along the South African coastline.

De Mond Nature Reserve boasts rare bird species including the damara tern and giant tern.

The Geelkop Nature Reserve derives its name from the mass of yellow flowering plants, particularly leucadendrons, which cover the hill during spring.

The lighthouse at **L'Agulhas**, which forms part of the Agulhas National Park, is the country's second-oldest working lighthouse. It celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1999.

The Agulhas National Park, home to a rich and diverse plant population, includes more than 110 *Red Data Book* species. Among these are the endangered Cape platanna and microfrog, and rare coastal birds such as the African oystercatcher. The damara tern finds the area ideal for breeding.

At **Cape Agulhas**, the southernmost tip of the continent, the waters are cleaved into the Indian and Atlantic oceans.

**Struisbaai** has the longest white coastline in the southern hemisphere.

**Arniston** was named Waenhuiskrans (coach-house cliff) by the local fishers in honour of the huge sea cave capable of housing several ox-wagons. For outsiders it was named after the *Arniston*, a ship wrecked here in 1815. The Waenhuiskrans Cave can be explored at low tide.

The De Hoop Nature Reserve on the way to Swellendam includes an internationally renowned wetland and bird sanctuary. It is a winter retreat for the southern right whale and the Western Cape's only Cape griffen vulture colony.

The red Bredasdorp lily and many species of protea and erica are found in the Heuningberg Nature Reserve.

**Swellendam** is well-known for its youngberries and eclectic architecture. The Drostdy Museum consists of a group of buildings containing a huge selection of period furniture. The Bontebok National Park, about 7 km from Swellendam, provides sanctuary to the threatened bontebok.

Known for its world-class wine, **Barrydale** offers the visitor fruit and fresh air in abundance.



Situated on the N2, about 160 km from Cape Town, **Riviersonderend** offers beautiful mountain and river scenery, a nine-hole golf course and sightings of the blue crane.

**Caledon** is famous for its natural mineral waters, hot springs and wild-flower shows. Southern Associated Maltsters is the only malt producer for the South African lager beer industry and the largest in the southern hemisphere.

**Genadendal** is the oldest Moravian village in Africa, with church buildings and a school dating back to 1738. The Genadendal Mission and Museum Complex documents the first mission station in South Africa.

The Theewaterskloof Dam outside **Villiersdorp** is the seventh-largest dam in the country. The Villiersdorp Wild Flower Garden and Nature Reserve boasts an indigenous herb garden and a reference library.

The **Grabouw/Elgin** district produces about 60% of South Africa's total apple exports. The valley is also renowned for cultivating fresh chrysanthemums, roses and proteas. The Elgin Apple Museum is one of only two in the world. Sir Lowry's Pass offers spectacular views of False Bay from Gordon's Bay to Cape Point.

## Northern Cape

Characterised by its vast expanses of space and silence, blazing summer sunshine and interesting and friendly people, the Northern Cape is a province rich with culture.

### Diamond fields

The Big Hole in **Kimberley** is the largest hand-dug excavation in the world. In 1871, diamonds were discovered at the site and mined manually by prospectors. The Kimberley Tram Service dates from the beginning of the century and still transports passengers from the City Hall to the Mine Museum.

Underground mine tours are a big attraction, as are the famous ghost tours, during which many historical buildings are seen from a different perspective. Hand and mechanical diamond-digging by private diggers can be viewed by appointment.

The McGregor Museum houses invaluable collections of the archaeological finds in the area, as well as San art works. The house where Sol Plaatje (African National Congress founding member and human-rights activist) lived in Kimberley, boasts a library of Plaatje's and other black South African writers' works, and several displays, including a portrayal of black involvement in the Anglo-Boer/South African War.

A township tour of **Galeshewe** provides a fresh perspective on South Africa's socio-historical realities. Pan African Congress founder Robert Sobukwe's house is worth a visit.

The Magersfontein Battlefield outside Kimberley with its original trenches and other defences intact, is the site of the Boers' crushing defeat of the British during the siege of Kimberley.

A cultural centre at Wildebeestkuil outside Kimberley features !Xun and Khwe artwork for sale and a tour of rock engravings by these indigenous people.

A short distance from Kimberley is the mining town **Barkley West**, which, due to its proximity to the Vaal River, is a favourite spot for many water-sport enthusiasts and anglers.

Tucked along the Vaal River near Barkley West lies the Vaalbos National Park. The park is not only home to large raptors, but is also a breeding centre for endangered African herbivores such as rhino, roan, sable and disease-free buffalo.

## Kalahari

At **Black Rock**, visitors are afforded the opportunity to view a worked-out manganese mine.

**Danielskuil** lies at the foot of the Kuruman hills. The Tswana people occupied it before it became home to the Griquas. Boesmansgat, on the farm Mount Carmel outside Danielskuil, is a unique natural sinkhole – the second-deepest and largest of its kind in the world.

Known as the Oasis of the Kalahari, **Kuruman** is blessed with a permanent and abundant source of water. Its water flows from Gasegonyana (Tswana for 'the little water calabash') – commonly called the Eye of Kuruman.

Moffat's Mission in Kuruman is a tranquil place featuring the house of missionary Robert Moffat, the

church he built, and several other buildings. Moffat translated the Bible into Setswana – the first African language in which the Bible was made accessible.

The printing press on which he printed the first 2 000 copies can still be viewed. The church seats 800 people and is still in use. David Livingstone married Moffat's daughter and started many famous travels from this mission station.

The Wonderwerk Cave at Kuruman features extensive San paintings that may be viewed by appointment.

The Kalahari Raptor Centre cares for injured birds and many of these majestic birds can be seen at close quarters. Another marvel is the Witsand Nature Reserve situated about 80 km south-west of **Postmasburg**, which features a 100-m high dune of brilliant white sand. It stretches for about 9 km and is about 2 km wide.

### Green Kalahari

The roaring sands on the farm Doornaar near Groblershoop is an interesting site. The white dunes, surrounded by typically red Kalahari dunes, are said to 'roar' when the wind blows.

Eleven water wheels are still used today along the hand-built irrigation canals at **Kakamas**. The Orange River Wine Cellar Co-op Rockery Route runs between Keimoes and Kakamas.

**Kanoneiland** is a settlement on the biggest island in the Orange River.

At **Keimoes**, the Orange River flows at its widest. The Tierberg Nature Reserve offers spectacular views of the Keimoes Valley and the many islands in the Orange River. The original irrigation canal system is still in use. The Orange River Wine Cellar Co-op's largest cellar is situated here.

**Kenhardt** is the oldest town in the Lower Orange River area. The Quiver Tree Forest and Kokerboom Hiking Trail, consisting of between 4 000 and 5 000 quiver trees, are within easy driving distance of the town.

**Upington** is the commercial, educational and social centre of the Green Kalahari, owing its prosperity to agriculture and its irrigated lands along the Orange River. A camel-and-rider statue in front of the town's police station pays tribute to the 'moun-

ties', who patrolled the harsh desert territory on camels.

The South African Dried Fruit Co-operative is the second-largest and one of the most modern of its kind in the world. Tours of the plant are offered and freshly packed dried fruit is sold.

The Orange River displays its impressive power at the Augrabies Falls, also known as the Place of Great Noise, in the Augrabies Falls National Park. Visitors can hire canoes to ensure closer contact with the natural heritage surrounding the world's sixth-largest waterfall.

The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park comprises half-a-million hectares of sparsely vegetated, red sand dunes and dry riverbeds within South Africa's borders. Straddling the Green Kalahari and Botswana, the park is a two-million ha sanctuary for antelope, gemsbok, springbok, blue wildebeest, red hartebeest, eland, the Kalahari lion, leopard, cheetah and smaller game, including mongoose, porcupine and honey badger.

Fifty-eight mammal, 55 reptile, countless insect and a host of plant species share the desert and dry savannah, while 260 species of bird, including at least 20 species of raptor, share the endless skies.

### Namaqualand

The indigenous people of the Namaqualand region are the Namas. They speak their own language and can still be found in Namaqualand. Their traditional Nama reed huts still abound in **Leliefontein**, **Nourivier** and **Steinkopf**.

Namaqualand annually puts on a spectacular show in spring when an abundance of wild flowers cover vast tracts of desert. The flowers sprout and survive for a brief period before they wilt and disappear just as suddenly in the blistering heat and dry conditions.

The small town of **Garies** is the centre for those setting out to enjoy spring's show of exuberance in the Kamiesberg.

After diamonds were discovered along the West Coast in 1925, **Alexander Bay** was known for its mining activities. The town is no longer a high-security area and no permits are needed to enter. The Alluvial Diamond Mine paints a picture of the

history of the area. The town also features the world's largest desert lichenfield with some 26 species.

At **Hondeklip Bay**, visitors can dive for crayfish and watch the local fishermen conduct their trade.

Established as a small-vessel harbour and railway junction in 1954 for the copper-mining industry, **Port Nolloth** is a centre for the small-scale diamond recovery and crayfish industries. It is the only holiday resort on the Diamond Coast. Fish and crayfish can be bought from the local factory when in season.

Set in a narrow valley bisecting the granite domes of the Klein Koperberge lies **Springbok**.

South of Springbok, near Kamieskroon, lies the Skilpad Wild Flower Reserve, part of the Namaqua National Park, which captures the full grandeur of the flower season. The 1 000-ha reserve operates only during the flower season.

The Goegap Nature Reserve comprises 15 004 ha of typically granite, rocky hills and sandy flats. The reserve also offers a 4x4, and several hiking and mountain-biking trails.

Namaqualand is also home to the Richtersveld National Park, the only contractual national park.

### Upper (Bo-Karoo)

One of the Northern Cape's most beautiful towns, Colesberg, is flanked by the Towerberg.

The town features one of the country's last working horse mills. An Anglo-Boer/South African War tour is also on offer. A weekend tour includes a visit to the Norvalspont prisoner-of-war camp and cemetery. Colesberg has bred many of the country's top merino sheep. It is also renowned for producing high-quality racehorses.

**De Aar** is the most important railway junction in South Africa. The author Olive Schreiner lived in the town for many years. Visitors can dine in her house, which has since been converted into a restaurant.

**Hanover** is known for its handmade shoes and articles, made mostly from sheepskin and leather.

The Star of South Africa diamond was discovered at **Hopetown**. The town, which is steeped in history, also features an old toll house and a block house dating from the Anglo-Boer/South African War.

At **Wonderdraai** near **Prieska**, visitors can visit the horseshoe-shaped island formed by the flow of the Orange River. It seems as if the river turns to flow uphill.

**Vanderkloof** was built to house people building the Vanderkloof Dam. Today, it is a flourishing holiday resort. Visitors can enjoy waterskiing, boardsailing, boating and swimming, or visit the Eskom Hydroelectric Power Station situated within the dam's wall.

Victoria West is home to the Apollo Theatre, South Africa's last operational art deco movie theatre from the 1950s. The theatre comes alive each September with the Apollo Film Festival.

The Victoria West Nature Reserve is the habitat of the rare riverine rabbit.

### Hantam Karoo

Near the small town of **Brandvlei** lies Verneukpan, where Sir Malcolm Campbell unsuccessfully attempted to break the world land-speed record in 1929.

**Carnarvon** is well-known for its corbelled domed-roofed houses built of flat stones because of a lack of wood. The floors of these interesting houses were smeared and coloured with a rich red mixture of fat and oxblood, polished with smooth stone.

The mountain tortoises at the Carnarvon Nature Reserve each respond to their name and fetch a titbit from visitors when called.

A few kilometres outside **Fraserburg** lies the Gansfontein Palaeosurface. Discovered in 1968, it comprises several trackways of large, four-footed, five-toed mammalian reptiles. The prints are estimated to be some 190 million years old.

**Sutherland**, birthplace of well-known Afrikaans author and poet N.P. van Wyk Louw is known for its brilliant night skies and cold, biting winters.

The *sterboom* (star tree), which blossoms in September, is found only in Sutherland.

The Southern African Large Telescope at Sutherland will boast a science-education centre based in Sutherland and a visitor's centre adjacent to the telescope sites on the mountainside. Observation telescopes will be available to the public on open nights.

## Free State

The Free State lies in the heart of South Africa with the Kingdom of **Lesotho** nestling in the hollow of its bean-like shape. Between the Vaal River in the north and the Orange River in the south, this immense rolling prairie stretches as far as the eye can see. This central region is characterised by endless rolling prairies of wheat, sunflower and maize fields, and forms the principle bread basket of South Africa.

### Motheo

With its King's Park Rose Garden containing more than 4 000 rose bushes, the Free State's major city, **Bloemfontein**, has rightfully earned the nickname City of Roses. The city also hosts an annual rose festival.

The *Eerste Raadsaal* (First Parliament Building), built in 1849 as a school, is Bloemfontein's oldest surviving building. Still in its original condition, this historical building is used as the seat of the Provincial Legislature.

The National Afrikaans Literary Museum and Research Centre has a repository of works by prominent Afrikaans authors. Exhibits in the Afrikaans Music Museum and the Theatre Museum (part of the centre) include old musical instruments, sheet music, costumes, photographs and furniture.

The national museum is notable for its wide collection of fossils, cultural-historical exhibits and archaeological displays, including the Florisbad skull, which was discovered in the 1930s at the Florisbad spring, about 50 km north of Bloemfontein.

The National Women's Memorial is a sandstone obelisk, 36,5 m high, which commemorates the women and children who died in concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer/South African War from 1899 to 1902. Visitors are afforded a glimpse into life in the concentration and prisoner-of-war camps. The research library contains an extensive collection of Africana.

The Old Presidency dates back to 1885 and was the official residence of three presidents of the former Republic of the Orange Free State. It houses a museum depicting their respective terms of office, and a cultural centre for art exhibitions, theatrical productions and musical events.

The Observatory Theatre in Bloemfontein's game reserve is a unique attraction.

Bloemfontein has a busy cultural and social events calendar. One of the annual events not to be missed is the Manguang African Cultural Festival, popularly known as the Macufe Arts Festival, in September.

The Sand du Plessis Theatre and Art Gallery at Oliewenhuis are also worth visiting.

**Botshabelo** (Place of Refuge) is 45 km from Bloemfontein on the N8 road to Lesotho, and is believed to be the largest township settlement in the Free State – and the second-largest in South Africa after Soweto.

Nearby, the town of **Thaba Nchu** features luxury hotels and a casino, with the Maria Moroka Nature Reserve surrounding Thaba Nchu Sun and the Setlogelo Dam.

### Xhariep

**Bethulie** used to be a London Missionary Society station. The original mission buildings still stand.

The Pellissier House Museum depicts the history of events in the area.

The Gariep Dam, more than 100 km long and 15 km wide, is part of the Orange River Water Scheme, the largest inland expanse of water in South Africa.

Situated between the dam and Bethulie lies the Gariep Dam Nature Reserve. On the southern side of the dam lies the Oviston Nature Reserve.

**Philippolis**, the oldest town in the Free State, was founded as a London Missionary Society station in 1824. It was the first mission station in the province.

**Trompsburg** is the hub of the Free State Merino sheep-farming industry.

The Tussen-die-Riviere Nature Reserve reputedly supports more game than any other sanctuary in the Free State. It is reserved for hunters in autumn and winter.

A fountain near **Koffiefontein** was a favourite outspan for transport riders in the 19th century. In June 1870, one of these transport riders picked up a diamond near the fountain. This prompted the usual diamond rush and by 1882, Koffiefontein was a booming town with four mining companies.

**Thabo Mofutsanyana**

With its beautiful snow-capped mountains providing a backdrop to numerous romantic hide-aways, this untouched, pristine area with its breathtaking scenery possesses a grandeur of majestic proportion.

The Basotho Cultural Village in the QwaQwa Nature Reserve is a living museum where visitors can witness the Sotho traditions and lifestyle in the chief's kraal.

**Clocolan** is known for its cherry trees, which provide a spectacular sight when they blossom in spring. San rock paintings and engravings are also found in the area.

**Clarens** is often described as the Jewel of the Free State, owing to the spectacular scenery. San paintings are found on farms in the area. Close by, the Highlands Route meanders along the foothills of the Maluti mountains. One can also explore the magnificent mountain scenery by bike.

**Ficksburg** is known for its cherry and asparagus farms. A cherry festival is held annually in November. The town is a gateway to the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho.

The Golden Gate Highlands National Park, known for its beautiful scenery, is a very popular holiday destination. A vulture restaurant enables visitors to observe these scavengers closely. San paintings can also be viewed.

The Highlands Route follows the Lesotho border via **Ladybrand** and ends at **Zastron** in the south. San caves and rock art are some of the main features of the route.

The birdwatching mecca of Seekoeivlei Nature Reserve near **Memel** constitutes a wetland with Ramsar status, and is surrounded by private game and holiday farms.

**Lejweleputswa region**

**Bethlehem** lies on the banks of the Jordaan River and was founded by the Voortrekkers during the 1840s. The museum in Miller Street depicts the history of the area. The banks of the Jordaan River form part of the Pretoriuskloof Nature Reserve – a sanctuary for birds and small game.

Van Reenen's Pass winds through the Drakensberg, and was originally used by migrating herds of

zebra, hartebeest, blesbok and wildebeest. The Llandaff Oratory in the nearby village of **Van Reenen** is believed to be the smallest Roman Catholic church in the world.

At **Harrismith**, there are various memorials in honour of those who fought in the Anglo-Boer/South African War and World War I. Of particular interest is a memorial for the Scots Guards and Grenadier Guards. Platberg, the 2 394 m 'flat mountain', is the town's landmark. A well-known race, claimed by some to be the toughest in the country, is run annually up, along and back down the mountain. Sterkfontein Dam is ideal for water sports and fishing.

The Riemland Museum in **Heilbron** depicts the heritage and agricultural activities of the region.

The QwaQwa district is a traditional home to the Basotho people. Karakul carpets, mohair, wall hangings, copper, glassware and brass are made and sold at **Phuthaditjhaba**. The Metsi Matsho and Fika Patso dams are renowned for trout fishing.

**Welkom** is known for its gold mines. It is also the only city in the country where traffic circles are used instead of traffic lights.

The world's deepest wine cellar is at the St Helena Mine which is 857 m below the Earth's surface.

**Bothaville** is regarded as the centre of the Free State Maize Route. The NAMPO Harvest Farm and Festival attracts more than 20 000 visitors each year and is the second-largest private agricultural show in the world. Bothaville also hosts the annual Food and Witblits Festival, drawing visitors from all over South Africa.

**Winburg** is the oldest town and first capital of the former Republic of the Orange Free State. The Voortrekker Museum, using life-size models, depicts the daily routine of the trekkers. A concentration camp cemetery is situated close by.

**Sasolburg** originated in 1954 with the establishment of Sasol, the synthetic fuel producer.

**Parys**, which is situated on the banks of the Vaal River, is a popular holiday destination.

The Vredefort Dome is a crater, caused by the collision of a meteorite with the Earth many years ago. In July 2005, it was declared a World Heritage Site.

It features unique fauna and flora, including 100 different plant species, more than 300 types of birds and a variety of small mammals. Various hiking and mountain-bike trails are also on offer.

## Eastern Cape

The main feature of the Eastern Cape is its magnificent coastline. With its wide open sandy beaches, secluded lagoons and towering cliffs, the Indian Ocean coastline provides the province with a rich natural tourist attraction, which is also a paradise for watersports enthusiasts.

Added to the diverse coastal experiences are more than 60 state-owned game reserves and more than 30 private game farms, which collectively cover an area greater than the Kruger National Park.

### Amatola Mountain region

The Amatola mountains are famous for their scenery and history, and stretch from **Adelaide** in the east to **Stutterheim** in the west. With its lush forests and ancient battlefields, it is an area steeped in Xhosa culture and early settler history.

The dense forests of the Amatolas are a haven for the endangered Cape parrot. It was also home to the first dinosaur to be identified in South Africa, 'The Blinkwater Monster', a large fossilised reptile discovered near **Fort Beaufort**.

Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy **Cathcart**, where trout-fishing, hiking, riding and birdwatching are among the attractions.

The Amatole Hiking Trail is a well-known scenic but strenuous trail.

The coastal city of **Port Elizabeth**, which has earned the name of Friendly City, is a superb holiday destination, offering a diverse mix of eco-attractions. The Isuzu National Sailing Week is held annually in April in the waters of Algoa Bay.

The city boasts various scuba-diving sites. Visitors can also visit Bay World with its oceanarium and snake park, and many splendid museums. Other attractions include the Greater Addo Elephant National Park and game reserves; the traditional healing village, Kaya Lendaba; birdwatching; air tours; canoeing; various mountain-bike and horse-riding trails; and organised outdoor excursions.

The Greater Addo Elephant National Park nurtures some 400 elephants; one of the largest concentrations of elephant to be found in the world. Plans are underway to expand the park to incorporate a marine reserve from the Sundays River Mouth to Cape Pardone, including off-shore islands. It will feature the Big Five as well as southern right whales and great white sharks.

Tourists can also explore the Donkin Heritage Trail, take a ride on the famous Apple Express and go hiking along the site of ancient shipwrecks on the Sacramento Trail.

### Wild Coast

Since Portuguese mariners first pioneered the sea route around the Cape to India, this notorious coast has claimed countless ships.

Southern right and humpback whales and their calves are regularly spotted from the high dunes, usually between May and November, while common and bottlenose dolphins are often seen close to shore.

The entire region, once known as the Transkei homeland, is the home of a major section of the Xhosa-speaking southern Nguni (or Pondo) tribes. Brightly coloured examples of their beadwork, together with traditional pottery and basketry can be bought from roadside vendors and at some trading posts.

Visitors to the rural village of Qunu can view the childhood home of former President Mandela. In the city of Umtata, the Nelson Mandela Museum tells the story of this great figure.

The alignment of the N2 national route along the Wild Coast will help open up investment opportunities in this area.

**Coffee Bay** is popular among surfers, anglers and shell collectors.

Near **Coffee Bay** to the south, is the prominent rock formation called the Hole-in-the-Wall. The local Xhosa call this place *Izi Khaleni*, which means Place of the Thunder. During high tide, the waves move through the hole in such a way that the concussion can be heard throughout the valley.

## Karoo

The vast plains of the Karoo have an air of grandeur and its many picturesque towns are steeped in history.

The Owl House in **Nieu Bethesda** displays the creative talent of the late Helen Martins. Statues of mermaids, wise men, camels, owls and churches create a wonderland in the garden. All the artworks were created with broken bottles, bits of mirror and cement.

More than 200 houses in **Graaff-Reinet** have been restored to their original Victorian appearance, and proclaimed national monuments. The Old Library Museum houses the Lex Bremner Fossil Collection of Karoo reptile fossils and a collection of Khoi and San art reproductions. Urquhart House has a popular genealogical research centre.

Almost 50 km south-west of Graaff-Reinet is the Kalkkop Crater, a gigantic circular impact. Kalkkop is of major scientific importance.

To the north-west of Graaff-Reinet lies the Valley of Desolation. A steep and narrow road leads into the mountains that surround the valley.

The Valley of Desolation is a national monument within the Karoo Nature Reserve, and was formed millions of years ago by weathering erosion.

The first evidence of the presence of dinosaurs in South Africa can be viewed at **Maclear**.

The Mountain Zebra National Park is a haven for the Cape mountain zebra species, which at one time inhabited most of the Cape.

The park saved these animals from extinction and today their population stands at about 350.

Other species found in the park include antelope, eland, African wildcat, bat-eared fox, and more than 200 bird species, including the pale-winged starling, booted eagle and the blue crane.

## N6 Route

The route runs from Bloemfontein to East London. Popular attractions include the slopes of the Tiffindell Ski Resort and the streams filled with trout, as well as the many caves adorned with ancient rock art.

Several historic towns can be found in the region, including Barkly East, Rhodes, Lady Grey, Elliot, Aliwal North, Burgersdorp and Queenstown.

## Sunshine Coast

The Sunshine Coast comprises miles of unspoilt sun-drenched beaches.

**Port Alfred** lies at the mouth of the Kowie River. Coastal hills are home to the oribi – a small territorial buck that was recently near extinction.

Inland, **Grahamstown** is sometimes referred to as the City of Saints, because of the more than 40 churches found in the town. The town is also known for the National Arts Festival, which is held here annually. During this time, Grahamstown is transformed into a dedicated arts venue where performers, visual artists, audiences, writers and craftspeople fuse in a celebration of creative energy.

Other attractions include various museums and historical buildings, the oldest post-box in South Africa, botanical gardens, the cathedrals of St Michael and St George, nature reserves and hiking trails.

Situated north-east of Grahamstown, the Great Fish River Reserve consists primarily of valley bushveld habitat and is surrounded by both tribal land and commercial game reserves and farms.

The reserve boasts abundant wildlife such as white rhino, giraffe, waterbuck, Cape buffalo, hippo, kudu, springbok and eland.

There are several historic forts and remains from the legendary frontier wars located in the area.

**East London**, South Africa's only river port city, was originally established as a supply port to serve the military headquarters at King William's Town. The city's own waterfront development, Latimer's Landing, is situated on the banks of the Buffalo River. The East London Aquarium houses approximately 400 different species of marine and freshwater animals.

The East London Museum depicts the natural environment and rich heritage of the region. Best known for the prehistoric coelacanth, the museum also displays reconstructions of the extinct dodo of Mauritius, along with the only extant dodo egg in the world.

The Baviaanskloof Wilderness Area is the largest of the inland protected areas and provides opportunities to visit spectacular fynbos-covered mountains on foot or in off-road vehicles.

## Tsitsikamma

This region, stretching from **Plettenberg Bay** to **Jeffreys Bay**, is renowned for its dense forests, majestic mountains and deep river gorges. It forms the eastern end of the Garden Route.

The word *tsitsikamma* is derived from the Khoekhoen words *tse-tsesa* meaning clear and *gami* meaning water.

South Africa's first marine park, the Tsitsikamma National Park, extends along a rocky coastline of 50 km, and 3 km out to sea.

Inland, adventure seekers will find deep gorges and temperate evergreen forests criss-crossed by six hiking trails, including the five-day Otter Trail. The varied wildlife includes dolphins and whales, caracal, genet, chacma baboon, dassie and mongoose.

Another popular adventure is a black-water tubing experience on the Storms River.

Prominent bird species in the area are the African black oystercatcher, the orange-breasted sunbird, the Nerina trogon and the colourful Knysna loerie. A lucky few may catch a glimpse of the rare Cape clawless otter, after which the Otter Trail is named.

## Limpopo

Limpopo is a land of dramatic contrasts characterised by hot savanna plains and mist-clad mountains, age-old indigenous forests and cycads alongside latter-day plantations, ancient mountain fortresses and the luxury of contemporary infrastructure and modern-day facilities.

Steeped in history, Limpopo celebrates a rich cultural heritage and at many archaeological sites the mysteries of the past and ancient peoples are still being unearthed. The present tranquillity of the province belies a turbulent past, to which many monuments and museums attest.

Much of the land, particularly in the Kruger National Park and other game and nature reserves is unspoilt, providing sanctuary to large numbers of game.

## Waterberg

The Nylsvley Nature Reserve boasts one of the greatest concentrations of waterfowl and bushveld

birds in South Africa. More than 400 species frequent the area.

The **Mokopane** vicinity has several nature reserves. The Arend Dieperink Museum features a fine cultural-historical collection and the Makapan caves are notable for their fossils. The caves are being developed into an archaeological site.

In July 2005, Makapan Valley was inscribed as an extension of The Cradle of Human Kind World Heritage Site. The Makapansgat caves and lime-works near Mokopane represent an archaeological site of global importance.

The **Thabazimbi** district has a large concentration of private game reserves and is one of the fastest-growing ecotourism areas in the country. The Marakele National Park is home to some rare yellowwood and cedar trees and is the world's largest colony of Cape vultures. It is a leader in the conservation of the black rhino outside of the Kruger National Park and the KwaZulu-Natal parks.

**Bela-Bela** is known for its hot springs. There are also a number of game reserves and leisure resorts in the area.

The Waterberg range is rich in indigenous trees, streams, springs, wetlands and bird life. Cliffs known as the Palace of the Vultures harbour a large breeding colony of Cape vultures. **Modimolle** is the region's main town.

## Capricorn district

The Bakone Malapa Open-Air Museum outside **Polokwane** is a traditional Northern Sotho kraal. Men and women practise traditional skills such as making baskets, clay pots, furniture and utensils, and preparing hides.

Zion City at Moria near Polokwane is the headquarters of the Zion Christian Church, which attracts more than a million pilgrims every Easter.

Polokwane hosts a great variety of museums and art galleries.

## Vhembe district

The Mapungubwe Archaeological Site, situated 80 km west of **Musina**, lies within the boundaries of the Mapungubwe National Park, (formerly known as Vhembe/Dongola National Park). It is one of the rich-



est of its kind in Africa and is a World Heritage Site. Excavations in the 1930s uncovered a royal graveyard, which included a number of golden artefacts, including the famous gold foil rhinoceros.

The Schoemansdal Voortrekker Town and Museum, west of **Makhado** (formerly known as Louis Trichardt), is built on the site of an original Voortrekker village and depicts their lifestyle between 1848 and 1852.

Also worth visiting is the Big Tree in the Mutale Municipality, which is the largest known baobab in southern Africa; the Tshatshingo potholes; the mystical lake of Dzivhafunduzi; and the holy forest and waterfalls at Phiphidi.

### Mopani district

The Modjadji Nature Reserve, north of **Tzaneen**, is named after the legendary Rain Queen, Modjadji, who is believed to have settled in the area early in the 16th century. The reserve encompasses the world's largest concentration of the cycad species *Encephalartos transvenosus*, also known as the Modjadji cycad.

The Hans Merensky Nature Reserve and Mineral Spa on the southern banks of the Great Letaba River supports a large variety of game.

At the Tsonga Kraal Open-Air Museum, arts, crafts and traditional huts reflect the Tsonga lifestyle of 100 years ago.

The Kruger National Park (northern section) is one of South Africa's major tourist attractions. The park is home to a large number and wide variety of amphibians, reptiles and birds, as well as 147 mammal species, including the Big Five.

Thulamela, in the northern part of the Kruger National Park, was opened to guided groups in June 1997. This followed seven years of archaeological excavations, which brought to light the skeletons of two ancient royals and a multitude of artefacts, including gold bangles, beads and a double gong.

### Bohlabela district

On the way to the Kruger National Park, visitors can enjoy the wildlife experiences at **Manyeleti**, the home of the Big Five. Adventurers can attempt mountain-

climbing at the Mangwazi Nature Reserve and enjoy the Mapulaneng Trail at Zoeknog.

The Inyaka Dam at **Bushbuckridge** is also worth a visit.

### North West

The North West is blessed with several cultural villages that entertain and enrich.

A number of excellent game reserves have been established, including the Pilanesberg National Park, known as the Jewel of the North West. It is set in a crater on an extinct volcano and is home to the Big Five as well as a wide variety of smaller game and birds.

### Central district

The historic route of **Mafikeng** includes an Anglo-Boer/South African War siege site, the Molema House where Sol Plaatje lived while writing his *Mafikeng Diary*, and the Mafikeng Museum.

The Lichtenburg Game-Breeding Centre and the Botsalano Game Reserve are well worth a visit.

The Groot Marico region is known as mampoer country and visitors can embark on a mampoer and tobacco route. The Kortkloof Cultural Village is dedicated to the Tswana people.

Other attractions include the Wondergat; the Bosbult Monument, which commemorates a battle during the Anglo-Boer/South African War; the Kaditshwene Iron Age Village Ruins; and various hiking trails.

### Eastern district

The Hartbeespoort Dam is a popular spot for weekend outings, breakfast runs and yachting. The Hartbeespoort Reptile and Animal Park is situated on the banks of the dam.

Cultural experiences in the area include the popular Mapoch and Gaabo Motho cultural villages as well as the Ring Wagon Inn.

The De Wildt Cheetah-Breeding and Research Centre specialises in the breeding of cheetah and other endangered wildlife species. Other places of interest include the Borakalalo Game Reserve, the Margaret Roberts Herb Farm and the Phaladingwe Nature Trail.

### Bophirima district

The Taung skull fossil site and the blue pools are renowned for the Taung skull found in the Buxton quarries. In July 2005, the World Heritage Committee declared the Taung skull fossil site an extension of the Sterkfontein fossil hominid site. This region is popular with adventure-seekers – especially the 4x4 routes and hunting farms.

### Rustenburg district

The Pilanesberg National Park supports more than 7 000 head of game and 350 bird species.

The Madikwe Game Reserve is home to a major game-relocation programme. Over 10 000 animals of 27 major species have been reintroduced under Operation Phoenix. A hot-air balloon ride, day and night game drives, and bushwalks are available. Sun City and the Palace of the Lost City are very popular tourist attractions offering gambling, golf, extravaganza shows, watersport and an artificial sea.

There are various hiking trails in the region. The Heritage Route starts at the Sterkfontein caves World Heritage Site and ends at Pilanesberg.

### Southern district

The O.P.M. Prozesky Bird Sanctuary in **Potchefstroom** has over 200 bird species and is situated adjacent to the Mooi River. The Oudorp Hiking Trail takes visitors through the old part of **Klerksdorp** where 12 Voortrekker families settled.

Other attractions in the region include the Potchefstroom Lakeside Resort, the Faan Meintjies Nature Reserve in Klerksdorp, mine tours at **Orkney**, the Diggers Route at **Wolmaransstad** and the Bloemhof Dam Nature Reserve.

## Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga – The Place Where The Sun Rises – epitomises every traveller's dream of the true African experience. Located in the north-eastern part of South Africa, the province is bordered by Mozambique to the east and the Kingdom of Swaziland to the south and east.

The climate and topography vary from cool highland grasslands at 1 600 m above sea level, through the middleveld and escarpment, to the subtropical

Lowveld towards the Kruger National Park and many private game reserves. Scenic beauty, climate and wildlife, voted the most attractive features of South Africa, are found in abundance in this province.

Attractions range from game viewing and bird-watching to scenic drives across the valleys and peaks of the vast Drakensberg escarpment, and include agritourism, industrial and adventure tourism and cultural experiences. Historical sites and villages, old wagon routes and monuments mark events and characters who passed this way in search of adventure and wealth.

The cultural heritage of the province is varied and fascinating. The Ndebele beadwork and wall-painting in the north-west, the arts and crafts of the Lowveld and the different traditional villages throughout the province offer a unique insight into the people's history.

### Nelspruit

**Nelspruit** is the capital of Mpumalanga and the commercial and administrative hub of the Lowveld. The Nelspruit Historical Trail is an hour-long route stretching from the Promenade Centre to the Civic Centre.

The Blue Train runs between Pretoria and Nelspruit from May to September on a trip called the 'Lowveld Experience'. Rovos Rail's trains also travel to Nelspruit.

The Green Heritage Hiking Trail in the Nelspruit Nature Reserve is one of several walks in the reserve and one of many in the region.

Not to be missed is the Lowveld Botanical Garden, as well as the Reptile Park, the Sudwala caves, P.R. Owen Dinosaur Park, and the tranquil town of **White River**. Well-known as an artists' haven and a gateway to the Kruger National Park, White River also boasts an orange winery.

### Panorama

**Barberton** features many reminders of the early gold-rush era. Museums include Belhaven, Fernlea House and Stopforth House. The only known verdite deposits in the world are found in the rocks of the Barberton district. An annual Diggers Festival is held in September.

The Blyderivierspoort Nature Reserve near **Graskop** is characterised by striking rock formations and a rich diversity of plants. Within the reserve, the Bourke's Luck potholes were formed by river erosion and the action of flood water.

The spectacular Blyde River Canyon is a 26 km-long gorge carved out of the face of the escarpment, and is one of the natural wonders of Africa. The canyon is the third-largest in the world but the only green canyon, and hosts three rivers which feed the Blydepoort Dam at **Swadini**. God's Window provides a magnificent panoramic view across miles of densely forested mountains, the green Lowveld and the canyon. The Blyderivierspoort Hiking Trail is one of the most popular in the country. A number of other hiking trails are also available.

The southern section of the Kruger National Park, which is a major tourist attraction, falls within this region.

**Kaapsehoop** is a quaint historical village known for the wild horses that frequent the district. Blue swallows are regular visitors from September to April.

The **Lydenburg** Museum is situated in the Gustav Klingbiel Reserve, which is the site of archaeological ruins from the Later Iron Age. The Lydenburg heads, human-like masks dated to 500 AD, were discovered in this area.

**Sabie** is the centre of the largest man-made forest in South Africa. The Cultural Historical Forestry Museum depicts various aspects of the country's forestry industry. The Bridal Veil, Horseshoe and Lone Creek waterfalls, and Mac Mac pools and falls just outside **Sabie** are well worth a visit.

The 69-km Prospector's Trail starts at the Mac Mac Forest Station and leads to Bourke's Luck potholes.

At the Montrose Falls in **Schoemanskloof**, the Crocodile River cascades 12 m into a series of rock pools. It is also the starting point of the annual Lowveld Crocodile Canoe Marathon, held in February.

**Pilgrim's Rest** is a living museum and a replica of the early gold-mining town. The Alanglade House Museum offers guided tours of the former mine-manager's house, while the Diggings Museum just

outside the town arranges guided tours of gold-panning activities. This area was the setting for *Jock of the Bushveld*, the novel by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick about the experiences of a man and his dog as they shared adventures in the world of African gold-mining. The Dredzen Shop Museum consists of a store stocked with a range of items in use nearly a century ago. The Pilgrim's Rest Festival is held annually in December.

Mount Sheba Nature Reserve, south of Pilgrim's Rest, is best known for its indigenous forest – one of few left in the region.

### Highlands Meander

The Highlands Meander is a mecca for fly-fishers. It is in the placid and pristine waters of this region that one finds various stocks of fish, with trout as the major drawcard. The meander also offers numerous other activities.

At the Verloren Vlei and Steenkampsberg nature reserves (**Dullstroom**), one can get a rare glimpse of the three endangered crane species (the blue, wattled and crowned cranes).

The Loskop Dam Nature Reserve offers game watching, boating and fishing.

A large number of hiking trails are available, such as the Elandskrans Trail, which includes a 30-minute train ride between **Waterval-Boven** and **Waterval-Onder**.

### Cultural Heartland

Visitors to the Cultural Heartland can immerse themselves in the true cultural heritage of Mpumalanga. Here, one can learn about the proud and welcoming Ndebele people, revered for the striking and colourful geometric patterns on their houses, clothing and beadwork.

This region also has illuminating historical sites such as the Botshabelo Historical Village, near Middelburg.

### Cosmos Country

Cosmos Country covers parts of what is known as the energy belt of Mpumalanga, which is home to a number of power stations. This region also boasts the world's largest underground coal-mining

complex and the Sasol plant renowned for its technology of extracting oil from coal.

The carpet of cosmos flowers that blossoms in late summer lures visitors to this region.

### Wild Frontier

Various archaeological discoveries dating back almost three billion years were made in the imposing mountains of this region.

Visitors to this region have a rare glimpse of the inimitable San paintings embossed in some rocks.

The region also holds rich historical sentiments centered around the monument of the late Mozambican President, Samora Machel, constructed in the village of **Mbuzini**. Due to their proximity to this region, visitors have the opportunity to visit Swaziland and Mozambique in a short space of time.

### Grass and Wetlands

Grass and Wetlands is indeed a paradise, with its variety of bird species. This region stretches across the deep valleys and mountains of the east where thermal springs bubble to the surface.

There are 270 pans and lakes within a 20 km radius of Lake Chrissie. In this region, visitors can take part in the unusual 'frogging expedition' or simply gaze at the stars during 'star-gazing weekends'.

### Gauteng

Gauteng, the Place of Gold, is the economic powerhouse of South Africa. It is characterised by a cosmopolitan, multicultural mix of people from all walks of life. The province's unique cultural and social legacy is evident from the many excellent museums, theatres, cultural precincts and craft markets.

The Vaal Dam, which supplies water to most of Gauteng's residents, covers some 300 km<sup>2</sup> and is a popular venue for watersport. Numerous resorts line the shore. The dam also attracts a great diversity of birds.

**Vanderbijlpark** was built during the late 1940s by the then Iron and Steel Corporation to accommodate its employees.

The Sterkfontein caves near **Krugersdorp** are the site of the discovery of the skull of the famous

Mr Ples (previously known as Mrs Ples), an estimated 2,5 million-year-old hominid fossil, and Little Foot, an almost complete hominid skeleton some 3,3 million years old.

The broader Cradle of Humankind site consists of 47 000 ha, with numerous caves, the most famous of which is the Sterkfontein caves.

In 1999, Sterkfontein and its environs were declared a World Heritage Site.

Forty percent of all the world's human ancestor fossils have been found here, including several of the world's most famous and important fossils.

A further 500 hominid fossils and more than 9 000 stone tools have been excavated in the area, and work is ongoing.

The Krugersdorp Game Reserve provides sanctuary for several game species, including four of the Big Five. The African Fauna and Bird Park houses various species of wildlife and birds.

The South African National Railway and Steam Museum at Randfontein Estates Gold Mine outside Krugersdorp houses some of the country's old steam locomotives, a diesel-electric locomotive, and more than 50 vintage passenger coaches. Train rides are offered once a month.

A team of Lippizaner stallions performs every Sunday at the South African National Horsemanship Centre, in **Kyalami**, near Johannesburg.

Visitors to **Roodepoort** can go on walks and trails through the Kloofendal Nature Reserve, or enjoy a picnic or a show at the popular Kloofendal Amphitheatre. The Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden (formerly known as the Witwatersrand National Botanical Garden) boasts a 70 m-high waterfall.

Forty kilometres north of Pretoria lies a ring of hills a kilometre in diameter and 100 m high. These are the walls of an impact crater left by an asteroid that hit the area some 200 000 years ago. The Tswaing Meteorite Crater is similar in size to the well-known Barringer Meteor Crater in Arizona, USA. The crater walls at Tswaing were originally about twice as high as they are today.

There is a museum adjacent to the crater. A path leads from the museum to the crater, along the rim, and down to the central lake. The crater is covered

with indigenous trees and bushes which attract a variety of bird life.

The old mining town of **Cullinan** developed around the Premier Diamond Mine and many turn-of-the-century houses still stand. The mine has produced some of the world's most famous diamonds, including the Cullinan diamond, the world's largest at 3 106 carats.

### **Johannesburg**

The Adler Museum of the History of Medicine depicts the history of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy in South Africa. The Pharmacy Museum in Melrose houses a large variety of medicines, including more than 670 traditional medicines that have been collected throughout southern Africa.

There is also a display of old prescription books and dictionaries used by pharmacists.

The Nelson Mandela Bridge is a landmark gateway into Newtown, also known as the arts precinct of Johannesburg. It is the largest cable-stayed bridge in southern Africa.

Museum Africa in Newtown tells the story of life in South Africa from the Stone Age to the Nuclear Age and beyond. The museum is located in the old fruit-and-vegetable building next to the Market Theatre.

The Market Theatre Complex comprises three theatres, an art gallery, restaurants and pubs.

A bronze statue of the champion of passive resistance, Mahatma Gandhi, can be seen in the city centre.

Lesedi Cultural Village in the Swartkops Hills north of Johannesburg gives visitors the opportunity to meet families of different cultural groupings. It features four traditional homesteads where visitors can spend the night with a family of their choice.

The Phumanegna Zulu Kraal is home to traditional Zulu people living and working there.

The Melville Koppies in Johannesburg was once the site of a Stone Age African village and iron-smelting works. Flora includes 80% of the species recorded on the Witwatersrand. It is open to the public from September to April.

Gold Reef City is a theme park based on Johannesburg during the gold-rush era.

The Apartheid Museum tells the story of the legacy of apartheid through exhibitions consisting of film footage, photographs, text panels and artefacts.

Constitution Hill opened to the public in March 2004. It features the impressive building housing South Africa's Constitutional Court, and offers visitors the chance to view the fort, the so-called native gaol, the women's gaol and the awaiting-trial block. Inmates imprisoned at these facilities include Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Luthuli, as well as the only woman to be executed in South Africa's history, Daisy de Melker.

At Santarama Miniland and Entertainment World visitors can explore models of South Africa's most popular beacons, such as Robben Island, Johannesburg International Airport, East London Harbour, and the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

The South African Museum of Military History houses an impressive collection of weaponry and uniforms from the two world wars.

The South African Transport Museum (**Heidelberg**) represents all aspects of South Africa's transport services.

A large, well-established park surrounds Zoo Lake, which is frequented by breeding bird colonies. Other attractions include jazz concerts, rowing boats for hire, a tea garden and a restaurant.

**Soweto** is a popular tourist destination. It is estimated that some 1 000 foreign tourists visit Soweto every day. Its tourism industry contributes about R143 million to Gauteng's GDP.

The two-bedroom house where former President Mandela lived before his incarceration has been declared a national monument and converted into a museum.

The Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown (Soweto) is the place where the Freedom Charter was signed in 1955.

No tour of Soweto would be complete without a visit to the Hector Petersen Museum, which commemorates the people who died following the student uprising of 16 June 1976. The museum was named after the young boy who was the first person to be shot dead by police on that day.

Guest-houses and bed-and-breakfast establishments are a fast-growing phenomenon in Soweto.

## Pretoria

A variety of historical buildings are found in the city, which is known as the Jacaranda City because of the many jacaranda trees that line its streets. When these are in full bloom in October, they cover the city in a lilac haze, providing spectacular views from the surrounding hills.

Church Square is centred around a statue of Paul Kruger, president of the former *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek*, and includes buildings such as the *Old Raadsaal* and the Palace of Justice.

Ten minutes away from Church Square is Freedom Park which is being built to commemorate the country's political history.

Once completed in 2007, the 35-ha site will comprise a garden of remembrance, a museum, and statues and sculptures to honour South Africans who contributed to the country's freedom and development.

The Kruger House Museum contains the personal belongings of President Kruger. Melrose House is a beautiful example of Victorian architecture. The Peace Treaty of Vereeniging, which ended the Anglo-Boer/South African War, was signed here in 1902.

Demonstrations at the Pioneer Open-Air Museum include milking cows, making butter and candles, baking bread and grinding coffee beans.

Other museums include the Police Museum, the Coert Steynberg Museum and the Transvaal Museum of Natural History.

The Voortrekker Monument also houses a museum and commemorates the Great Trek. Some 260 steps lead to the dome, where spectacular views of the city can be enjoyed. The monument receives about 200 000 visitors a year.

Fort Schanskop has been refurbished and boasts a 375-seat amphitheatre.

The Union Buildings were designed by Sir Herbert Baker and completed in 1913. They were the setting for the presidential inauguration of Nelson Mandela in 1994, and those of Thabo Mbeki on 16 June 1999 and 27 April 2004.

The Sammy Marks Museum just outside Pretoria dates from 1885. Rooms in the house are filled with Victorian paintings, furniture, silver and porcelain.

Visitors can relax at the tea garden and restaurant on the premises.

The General Smuts House Museum in Irene, south-east of Pretoria, contains the original furnishings of the Smuts family. A popular arts and craft market is held here on certain Saturdays.

The Rietvlei Nature Reserve is notable for its grass types, herbs, a large number of game and many bird species.

The Mapoch Ndebele Village, north of Pretoria, is being restored by its residents and the National Cultural History Museum. To develop the project into a viable, living tourist village, the 50 families staying there have undergone tourist-guide and business training. It is the first living cultural village in South Africa owned and managed by its residents.

Mamelodi is situated approximately 20 km from the city centre and features the Solomon Mahlangu Square, which is dedicated to this freedom fighter.

The Willem Prinsloo Agricultural Museum outside Pretoria centres around a farmstead dating from 1880. Traditional farming activities are demonstrated, and annual events include a prickly-pear festival, a mampoer festival and the Agricultural Museum Show.

## KwaZulu-Natal

Also known as the Zulu Kingdom, KwaZulu-Natal is a many-splendoured interaction of natural wonders, ultra-modern facilities, fascinating cultural imprints and reminders of a dynamic history in a breathtakingly beautiful and varied setting.

### Durban and surroundings

Tourist Junction, in Durban's historical station building, provides access to tourist information and accommodation bookings for Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife and South African National Parks.

The Golden Mile skirts the main beaches of the Indian Ocean. Attractions include an amusement centre, paddling pools, paved walkways and fountains.

The uShaka Island marine theme park, oceanarium, dolphinarium and oceanographic research institute on Durban's Point opened in May 2004. This is the new home of a wide variety of sea life, including sharks, dolphins and seals.

There is a snorkelling trail and a tubing river around the park.

Durban's most popular fishing spot is situated at Blue Lagoon Beach at the wide Umgeni River mouth. Beyond the river, the La Lucia and Beachwood Mangroves nature reserves offer long, tranquil walks along empty sands.

The Durban area has more than 50 reserves, developed parks and specialised gardens, the most renowned being the Municipal Botanical Garden.

The Fitzsimons Snake Park offers lectures and venom-milking demonstrations. MiniTown is a model city depicting Durban's best-known buildings. Museums include the Natural History Museum, the Natural Science Museum, the Old House Museum and the Old Fort.

The Shree Ambalavaanar Alayam Temple (The Second River Temple) in **Cato Manor** was the first Hindu temple in Africa. It is a national monument.

The Juma Masjid Mosque is the largest mosque in the southern hemisphere. Daily tours are available.

Annual events in and around the city include the popular Comrades Marathon between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, an international surfing competition, the Duzi canoe marathon, the Midmar Mile swimming event, and the July Handicap horse-race.

**Umhlanga Rocks**, just north of Durban, is notable for its ski-boating facilities. The annual Ski

Boat Festival takes place in April. The Natal Sharks Board offers shark dissections and interesting displays. Guided tours of the Hwange Forest are on offer. Hwange is the last relic of coastal forest in the region and contains rare indigenous trees.

The Umgeni River Bird Park overlooks the Umgeni River and ranks among the world's best. Many varieties of birds, indigenous and exotic, inhabit walk-in aviaries.

The Millennium Town at the end of the Bluff houses the maritime offices, which control the entry of ships into and out of the busiest port in Africa.

### East Griqualand

East Griqualand is an area of great beauty featuring colourful, living history. **Kokstad** lies in the Umzimhlava River basin between Mount Currie and the Ngele mountains.

The original town hall – built in 1910 – is a national monument, now serving as the local library. The former library – built in 1907 – is also a national monument, and houses the Kokstad Museum.

The Weza State Forest runs through indigenous forests and commercial plantations. The forest is home to several antelope species and a huge variety of birds.

East Griqualand is home to the southernmost portion of the Drakensberg World Heritage Site, plus the impressive Swartberg, Bokkiesberg, Cedarberg and Ngele mountain ranges.

The Mountain Lake Nature Reserve is a National Heritage Site comprising rolling grasslands and pristine wetlands. When full, the lake offers 30 ha of deep, trout-filled waters. It also boasts 80 bird species and panoramic views of the Drakensberg mountain range.

Between **Kokstad** and **Matatiele**, the hamlet of **Cedarville** provides tranquil canoe-borne excursions on its surrounding, water-filled hollows. Also nearby, the carp-abundant Umzimvubu River is an ever-popular recreation ground for locals and visitors alike.

Steam-train journeys can be undertaken between **Swartberg** and **Creighton**.



Widely regarded as the continent's premier travel trade exhibition, Indaba has grown in status, quality and diversity to become one of the industry's top three 'must visit' travel trade shows of its kind on the global calendar.

Indaba 2005, regarded as the most successful and productive ever, saw a record number of 10 700 participants. Tourism products and services from over 1 500 companies came together to showcase the best the southern African region has to offer the international tourism trade. Visitor numbers were up by 5%, reflecting the increased interest to do business with southern Africa. Almost 600 media, both local and international, provided extensive coverage through radio, television, newspaper and dedicated travel publications worldwide.

### Dolphin Coast (North Coast)

The coastline between the Umdloti and the Tugela rivers is aptly called the Dolphin Coast, as Indian Ocean bottlenose dolphins can be seen here all year round. The larger humpback dolphins are also found here, but are rarely seen.

Many of the first Indian immigrants settled here, and the area's markets, mosques and temples bring an authentic eastern flavour to the region.

**Tongaat** is an area where sugar was first planted in 1854. The town's Indian ambience is accentuated by two prominent Hindu temples – the Juggernath Puri and Vishwaroop temples.

Other coastal towns on the Dolphin Coast include **Shaka's Rock, Salt Rock, Ballito, Verulam, Stanger, Darnall** and **Umdloti**.

### Zululand and the Elephant Coast

Cultural tourism is inextricably linked to economic upliftment in Zululand, and historically disadvantaged communities are applying their traditional skills to meet visitors' interests.

Zululand's north-east quadrant – between Mozambique, Swaziland and the warm Indian Ocean – has its own unique tale to tell. This is the Elephant Coast or Maputaland, named after the mid-17th century king who established dominion here some 200 years before Shaka consolidated his Zulu empire to the south. The Tembe Elephant Park in the far north is home to herds of the massive African elephant.

The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park is one of the largest game parks in South Africa and hosts the Big Five as well as the elusive cheetah and wild dog.

The eMakhosini Valley, birthplace of King Shaka, is the venue for a new tourism- and economic-development project. Known as eMakhosini, The Valley of Zulu Kings, the joint public-private sector project aims to preserve the culture and history of the Zulu people.

The eMakhosini Memorial Site, where seven Zulu kings are buried, was unveiled in May 2003.

**Ulundi** lies at the hub of the old Zulu Kingdom. The KwaZulu Cultural Museum houses interesting displays relating to Zulu history and archaeology. The beehive huts and the layout of the original Zulu village have been reproduced.

**Umgungundlovu** used to be the royal capital of King Dingaan and is being reconstructed. A tour provides the opportunity to observe Zulu building techniques and experience the social life of the Zulu people.

Authentic Zulu villages such as Shakaland, Kwabhekithunga Kraal, Damazulu and Stewart's Farm offer accommodation and the opportunity to experience traditional Zulu culture.

The Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, the province's second World Heritage Site, has some of the highest forested dunes in the world. **St Lucia** and its surroundings comprise a wetland of global importance and boast five separate ecosystems. It is a fishing and birdwatching paradise, and boat trips on the lake offer opportunities for crocodile and hippo sightings.

The Kosi Bay Nature Reserve is part of the Coastal Forest Reserve between Mozambique and **Sodwana Bay**. The adjacent Indian Ocean provides exciting snorkelling and fishing opportunities. On offer is a four-day guided walking trail around the estuarine system.

**Mkuze** is a small trade and transport centre. The Mkuze River cuts through the Ubombo mountains before serving as a boundary for Zululand's popular Mkuzi Game Reserve.

Lake Sibaya is South Africa's largest natural freshwater lake, covering some 77 km<sup>2</sup>. Birdwatching and walks through the coastal forest are popular pastimes.

Sibaya Lake Lodge, the first South African eco-tourism development jointly owned by private enterprise and the local community, was officially launched in September 1999.

The coral reef in the Sodwana Bay National Park attracts hundreds of scuba-divers throughout the year, and in summer, power-boaters arrive for some of the best marlin-fishing in the world.

### South Coast

The Banana Express is a narrow-gauge steam train running between **Port Shepstone** and **Paddock** and back (39 km) twice a week. A shorter route is also offered.

**Amanzimtoti** is popular for its safe swimming beaches and various other activities and attractions.



The Hibiscus Coast stretches between Umkomaas and the Wild Coast. **Margate** is the largest resort town along this coast, and is very popular during the holidays. The Hibiscus Festival is held in July.

The Oribi Gorge Nature Reserve encompasses forest, rivers, rapids and ravines. Prolific bird life, including five kingfisher species and seven eagle species, inhabits the reserve, along with a variety of mammals. There is also a 140-m abseil and gorge swing for adrenalin junkies.

**Port Edward** is known for its safe swimming and good fishing opportunities. Nearby, the Umthamvuna Nature Reserve is noted for its beautiful scenery, bird life and many rare plant species.

The Shell Museum at **Shelly Beach** is well worth a visit.

Other popular coastal towns include **Port Shepstone, Ramsgate, St Michael's-on-Sea, Uvongo** and **Scottburgh**.

Sardine fever strikes the South Coast around the end of June every year, when people flock to the beaches and anglers wait for the game fish to arrive.

### **Pietermaritzburg and the Midlands**

**Pietermaritzburg** boasts various museums, including the Voortrekker Museum, the Natal Museum and the Natal Steam Railway Museum, which offers steam-train rides on the second Sunday of every month. The Tatham Art Gallery is also extremely popular.

The Albert Falls Public Resort Nature Reserve and the Albert Falls Dam provide opportunities for sailing, canoeing and fishing.

Birdwatching, horse-riding and hiking are also popular activities.

The Howick falls are situated in the Nature Valley Reserve, where the river tumbles down 100 m in a single fall. Several climbing routes are on offer.

The Midlands Meander is a scenic drive between **Hilton** and **Mooi River** with about 70 ports of call *en route*, ranging from art studios, potters and painters, to herb gardens and cheese-makers.

Midmar Dam is zoned for yachting and power-boating. The 1 000-ha Midmar Game Park is

inhabited by rhino, zebra, a wide variety of antelope species, and waterfowl. The popular Midmar Mile event attracts thousands of swimmers every year.

### **Drakensberg**

The Drakensberg mountain range forms the north-western border of KwaZulu-Natal. The entire area is a bird sanctuary, featuring among other species, the endangered lammergeier (or bearded vulture). The highest concentration of walks and trails in South Africa is found here.

The Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg Park was declared a World Heritage Site in 2001 and consists of almost the entire range of the Drakensberg mountain range from Bushman's Neck in the south to the Royal Natal National Park in the north. Peaks soar to over 3 000 m and are often snow-covered in winter. The park is administered by Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife. Their trout hatcheries are located in the Kamberg Reserve area.

The Lotheni Nature Reserve is notable for its trout-fishing facilities (angling permits are required). Relics of the area's history have been preserved in the Settler Museum.

The Himeville Nature Reserve has two lakes stocked with trout. The Swamp Nature Reserve close by attracts a variety of waterfowl, including the rare wattled crane.

The Ndema Gorge is located in the Mdedelelo Wilderness Area near Cathedral Peak and contains examples of Khoi and San art.

Sani Pass is the only road across the high escarpment between KwaZulu-Natal and the Kingdom of Lesotho. The Giant's Cup hiking trail, starting at the foot of the pass, is described as one of South Africa's finest. Giant's Castle Game Reserve is especially known for its more than 5 000 San paintings. The Bushman Site Museum is well worth a visit.

The Royal Natal National Park offers many scenic highlights, including the Amphitheatre, Mont-aux-Sources and the Tugela Falls.

### **Battlefields**

The KwaZulu-Natal Battlefields Route has the highest concentration of battlefields and related

military sites in South Africa. The Battlefields Route starts at Estcourt and winds north through Colenso and Ladysmith to Newcastle and Volksrust, and eastwards to Utrecht, Glencoe, Dundee, Nqutu, Paulpietersburg, Vryheid, Babanango and Ulundi.

All the towns along the route have their unique charm and range of attractions: arts and crafts, scenic hiking trails, farm resorts, Zulu culture and roadside stalls. Game viewing, natural hot springs, horse trails and watersport can also be enjoyed.

The Chelmsford Nature Reserve near **Newcastle** is a birdwatcher's paradise. Powerboating and carp-fishing are added attractions. Game includes springbok, zebra, rhino and blesbok. Other interesting places to visit are Majuba Hill and O'Neill's Cottage.

The Ladysmith Siege Museum provides insight into the battles of Colenso, Spioenkop, Vaalkrans and Tugela Heights. Guided tours to nearby battlefields such as Wagon Hill are arranged by museum staff. Other attractions in **Ladysmith** include the Statue of Gandhi, the All Saints Church, the Soofi Mosque and the Spioenkop Dam and Nature Reserve.

Near **Dundee**, tourists can visit various battlefields, including Ncome-Blood River, Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift and Talana. The Talana Museum depicts various facets of the coal industry, as well as local Zulu, Boer and British history.

**Rorke's Drift** was the setting for one of the most famous battles of the war. The main attraction is the Rorke's Drift Battle Museum.

## Acknowledgements

BuaNews

*Business Day*

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