



Tourism

South Africa performed very well in 2003 compared with global markets – the country posted a 4,2 % increase in overseas arrivals and a 1,2% increase in total foreign arrivals (some 6,5 million arrivals) from 2002.

Often described as ‘a world in one country’, South Africa offers the visitor a breathtaking variety of scenery, from desert and lush forest, to soaring mountains and vast empty plains. Culturally as diverse as the landscape, many visitors are drawn to experience for themselves the miracle of the peaceful overthrow of Apartheid. Others are attracted by endless golden beaches, big game, diving or snorkelling or bird watching. Whatever their reasons, visitors will find South Africa positively inviting, with world-class infrastructure, transport and accommodation.

Travel formalities

- Foreign visitors should check before arriving whether a visa is required. Visas are issued free of charge.
- Visitors must have at least one blank page in their passports.
- Tourists must have return or onward tickets.
- Those coming from yellow-fever areas should be able to prove inoculation.
- Foreign tourists may have their Value-Added Tax refunded upon departure.
- For safety, emergency and other information, phone *083 123 2345* (24 hours a day) when in South Africa.

Tourism in the provinces

Western Cape

The Western Cape continues to be one of the most favoured destinations for foreigners. Everyone wants to see Cape Town, one of the world's most beautiful cities.

Some attractions in Cape Town include:

- the Dutch-built Castle of Good Hope
- the Company's Garden
- the District Six Museum
- the Houses of Parliament and the South African National Gallery
- a boat trip to Robben Island, the place where former President Nelson Mandela spent most of his 27 years in jail.

Table Mountain is a popular site for visitors and provides the majestic backdrop to the vibrant and friendly Mother City. It can be reached by an ultra-modern cableway.

Newlands is home to the world-renowned Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, and the famous rugby stadium.

At Cape Point, part of the Cape Peninsula National Park, there are many drives, walks, picnic spots and a licensed restaurant. This is the point where the Atlantic and Indian oceans meet.

Hout Bay is well-known for its colourful working harbour. Seafood outlets, round-the-bay trips to the nearby seal island, and a famous harbour-front emporium attract many visitors.

The Wine Route outside Cape Town offers the chance to taste first-class wines in arguably the most beautiful winelands in the world. Superb accommodation is available



FACT

Cape Town's V&A Waterfront is a bustling harbour with exceptional shopping, bars and restaurants – all set against the magnificent backdrop of Table Mountain.

in historic towns such as Paarl, Stellenbosch and Franschhoek, as well as on many estates and farms.

The Garden Route

The Garden Route has a well-developed tourist infrastructure, spectacular scenery and a temperate climate, making the region popular all year round.

Not to be missed

- The city of George is at the heart of the Garden Route and is the mecca of golf in the southern Cape. It is home to the renowned Fancourt Country Club and Golf Estate, scene of the 2003 Presidents Cup.
- Knysna, nestling on an estuary, is officially South Africa's favourite destination, famous for its indigenous forests, lakes and beaches.
- Just 26 km from Oudtshoorn, the ostrich feather capital of the world, are the remarkable Cango Caves, a series of 30 spectacular subterranean limestone caverns.

Central Karoo

The Central Karoo forms part of one of the world's most interesting and unique arid zones. This ancient, fossil-rich land, with the richest desert flora in the world, also has the largest variety of succulents found anywhere on earth.



FACT

There are over 9 000 plant species in the Karoo. The Beaufort West area alone is home to more plant species than the whole of Great Britain.

Key attractions

- Matjiesfontein, a tiny railway village in the middle of nowhere, offers tourists a peek into the splendour of colonial Victorian England.
- Prince Albert is a well-preserved town which nestles at the foot of the Swartberg Mountains. The Fransie Pienaar

Museum offers interesting cultural history displays, a fossil room and an exhibit of gold-mining activities in the 19th century.

Northern Cape

The Augrabies Falls National Park, with its magnificent falls pressing through a narrow rock ravine, remains the main attraction of the Northern Cape. Game drives reveal a variety of bird life and animals such as klipspringer, steenbok, wildcats and otters.

Rare attractions

- Kimberley, with its Big Hole, is the largest man-made excavation in the world. 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.
- The Orange River Wine Cellars Co-op in Upington offers wine-tasting and cellar tours. The South African Dried Fruit Co-operative is the second largest in the world.
- Moffat's Mission in Kuruman is a tranquil place, featuring the house of missionary Robert Moffat, the father-in-law of explorer David Livingstone.
- Namaqualand, the land of the Nama and San people, puts on a spectacular show in spring when a floral splendour covers vast tracts of desert.
- A cultural centre at Wildebeestkuil outside Kimberley features !Xun and Khwe artwork for sale and a tour of rock engravings by these indigenous people.



FACT

A township tour to Galeshewe (Kimberley) provides a fresh perspective on South Africa's history. Pan-Africanist Congress founder Robert Sobukwe's house in Galeshewe is worth a visit.

- The 100 m high, 9 km long, 2 km wide white sand dune at the Witsand Nature Reserve near Postmasburg.

Free State

In the capital, Bloemfontein, the *Eerste Raadsaal* (First Parliament Building) was built in 1849 as a school and is the city's oldest surviving building still in its original condition. It is still in use as the seat of the Provincial Legislature.

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.

Not to be missed

- Clarens, the jewel of the Free State, is located in spectacular scenery.
- The Golden Gate Highlands National Park outside Clarens has beautiful sandstone scenery.
- The King's Park Rose Garden in Bloemfontein has more than 4 000 rose bushes.

Eastern Cape

The Eastern Cape is the only province in South Africa, and one of the few places on earth, where all seven biomes (major vegetation types) converge.



FACT

The Eastern Cape has a remarkable 820 km of unspoilt coastline, among the most impressive to be found anywhere in the world.

What to see and do

- the rugged beauty of the Wild Coast
- Port Elizabeth, sunshine capital of the Eastern Cape with its friendly people and excellent beaches
- the Tsitsikamma National Park, forests and rivers

- East London, South Africa's only river port, originally established as a supply port to serve the military headquarters at King William's Town
- the village of Qunu, former President Nelson Mandela's childhood home
- the world's highest bungee jump (180 m) at the Bloukrans Bridge on the Storms River
- outstanding, and varied, game reserves: the Addo Elephant, Mountain Zebra and Mkambati parks.

Limpopo

Limpopo is well endowed with cultural diversity, historical sites and tourist attractions. This is an excellent destination for a get-away-from-it-all holiday in the bush – with first-class accommodation and service.

Not to be missed

- The Mokopane (formerly Potgietersrus) vicinity has several nature reserves. The Arend Dieperink Museum has a fine cultural-historical collection, and the Makapan Caves are famous for their fossils.
- The Thabazimbi district is one of the fastest growing ecotourism areas in South Africa, thanks to its outstanding game reserves.
- Bela-Bela (formerly Warmbaths) is well-known among South Africans, and increasingly foreigners, for its hot springs, fun slides and scenery.
- The Waterberg Range is rich in indigenous trees, streams, springs, wetlands, bird life and dramatic vistas.
- The Modjadji Nature Reserve, north of Tzaneen, is named after the legendary Rain Queen, Modjadji, the inspiration for Rider Haggard's *She*.



FACT

The Nylsvley Nature Reserve in the Waterberg has one of the greatest concentrations of waterfowl and bushveld birds (more than 400 species) in South Africa.

- Phalaborwa has one of the country's top-rated golf courses – just watch out for animals on the fairways.
- The Schoemansdal Voortrekker Town and Museum, west of Louis Trichardt, is built on the site of an original Voortrekker village and depicts their lifestyle in the mid-18th century.

North West

The province abounds with attractions, including bush and wild animals and wild nights at the famous Sun City and Lost City resorts.

Key attractions

- The Historic Route of Mafikeng includes the town which was besieged during the Anglo-Boer/South African War.
- The Groot Marico region, *mampoer* (moonshine) country, is famous among South Africans for storytelling.
- The Hartbeespoort Dam is a popular spot for weekend outings, breakfast runs and yachting.
- The Pilanesberg National Park supports over 7 000 head of game, including the Big Five and 350 bird species. It is the fourth biggest national park in South Africa, and covers 65 000 ha.
- Sun City and the Palace of the Lost City are hugely popular tourist attractions offering gambling, golf, extravaganza shows, water sport and an artificial sea.



FACT

The Madikwe Game Reserve was the site of the world's biggest animal relocation programme. Today it is home to 10 000 animals of 27 major species.

Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga – 'the place where the sun rises' – is in the north-eastern part of South Africa, bordered by

Mozambique to the east and the Kingdom of Swaziland to the south-east.

Scenic beauty and wildlife are found in abundance.

Tourist must-do's

- Historical sites and villages, old wagon routes and monuments mark the lives of the characters who came to Mpumalanga seeking their fortune. The town of Pilgrim's Rest is a living monument reflecting the region's gold fever.
- The Blyderivierspoort Nature Reserve near Graskop has striking rock formations and a rich diversity of plants.
- Within the Blyderivierspoort Nature 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, the only green canyon in the world.
- The southern section of the Kruger National Park falls in this region. The Park draws a million visitors a year.

Gauteng

Gauteng, the economic heart of southern Africa, offers a vibrant business environment and many tourist attractions, including a rainbow of ecological and cultural diversity.

Things to see and do

- The Vaal Dam covers some 300 km² and is a popular venue for water sport. Numerous resorts line the shore. The Dam is popular with birders and anglers.
- The Sterkfontein Caves near Krugersdorp are the site of the discovery of the skull of the famous Mrs Ples (now believed to be Mr Ples), an estimated 2,5 million-year-old hominid fossil; and Little Foot, an almost complete hominid skeleton more than 3,3 million years old.
- The Witwatersrand National Botanical Garden boasts a

70-m high waterfall and stunning displays of indigenous plants.

- Forty kilometres north of Pretoria lies a ring of hills a kilometre in diameter and 100 m high. These hills are the walls of an impact crater, the Tswaing Meteorite Crater, left by an asteroid 200 000 years ago.
- The National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria, which is considered to be one of the 10 best in the world.
- The new Constitutional Hill Precinct which is set to become one of South Africa's most popular land marks.
- The old mining town of Cullinan is the place where the world's biggest diamond, the 3 106-carat Cullinan Diamond, was found.
- A guided tour of Soweto makes a lasting impression of this vast community's life and struggle against Apartheid.
- The Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg tells the story of the legacy of Apartheid through photographs, film and artefacts.


FACT

South Africa's capital, Pretoria, is a delight in spring when 50 000 jacaranda trees turn the city purple.

KwaZulu-Natal

Also known as the Zulu Kingdom, KwaZulu-Natal is a combination of natural wonders, fascinating culture and ultra-modern facilities.

Durban's Golden Mile skirts the main beaches of the Indian Ocean. Drawcards include an amusement centre, paddling pools, paved walkways and fountains.

Enticing attractions

- The uShaka Marine World theme park, oceanarium, dolphinarium and oceanographic research institute on Durban's Point.



- Dolphin spotting or lazing the days away on the coastline between the Umdloti and Tugela rivers – the Dolphin Coast.
- The Hluhluwe-Umfolzi Park, one of the largest game parks in South Africa and home to the Big Five, as well as cheetah and wild dogs.
- The eMakhosini Valley, birthplace of King Shaka. The new Valley of Zulu Kings tells visitors all about the Zulu nation.
- The Greater St Lucia Wetlands, with some of the highest forested dunes in the world, and an abundance of fish and birds.
- Travelling the Hibiscus Coast between Umkomaas and the Wild Coast on the Banana Express train.
- The Royal Natal National Park offers many scenic highlights, including the Amphitheatre, Mont-aux-Sources and the Tugela Falls.
- The Battlefields Route in northern KwaZulu-Natal has the highest concentration of battlefields and related military sites in South Africa.

FACT

The Midlands Meander takes tourists on a leisurely drive through the rolling hills and farms north of Pietermaritzburg, with more than 70 shops and restaurants.

Things to do in South Africa

Just a few of the attractions that make South Africa such an exceptional destination:

- breathtaking Cape Town nestling at the foot of Table Mountain
- Cape Point, where two oceans meet
- Cape Town's laid-back, welcoming attitude and fabulous nightlife
- Robben Island, the prison in Cape Town's Table Bay where former President Nelson Mandela was incarcerated

- the delights of Sun City and the Lost City, and many other first-rate casino resorts
- walking in the spectacular Drakensberg mountains
- the chance to learn how to say 'hello' in 11 or more languages
- the lilac-breasted roller, the blue crane and the other 900 species of bird to be spotted in southern Africa
- the Big Five and other wild animals that abound in the many parks and game reserves
- the strange *halfmens* (half-human) and the exotic baobab, just some of South Africa's many amazing trees and plants
- evocative battlefields on which imperial Britain fought Zulus, Xhosas and Boers
- the dazzling floral displays which carpet Namaqualand once a year
- the mountains, forests and beaches of the Garden Route
- the silence and solitude of the Karoo's wide-open spaces
- country hospitality (and home cooking) in hundreds of picturesque towns and villages across South Africa
- the endless golden beaches of the Eastern Cape
- the Big Hole in Kimberley, the world's biggest man-made hole
- fly fishing in stunning scenery with first-class accommodation
- fabulous golf courses that produced the likes of Gary Player, Ernie Els and Retief Goosen.