

## The Provinces



South Africa is divided into nine provinces. Each has its own Legislature, Premier and provincial members of executive councils. Each also has its own unique climate, tourist attractions and people.

The provinces are: Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape, Free State, North West, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo (formerly Northern Province).

### **Western Cape**



The Western Cape is a region of majestic mountains, well-watered valleys, wide, sandy beaches and breathtaking scenery.

Cape Town, the capital, is considered one of the world's most beautiful cities. Other important towns in the province include Vredenburg-Saldanha, an important harbour for iron exports and the fishing industry; Worcester and Stellenbosch in the heart of the winelands; George, renowned for indigenous timber and

vegetable produce; and Oudtshoorn, known for its ostrich products and the world famous Cango Caves.

The Western Cape boasts one of the six accepted floral kingdoms of the world. Known locally as *fynbos*, this kingdom contains more plant species than the whole of Europe. The Knysna-Tsitsikamma region has the country's biggest indigenous forests.

The area around the Cape Peninsula and the Boland is a winter-rainfall region with sunny, dry summers. Along the south coast, the climate gradually changes to year-round rainfall, while inland, towards the more arid Great Karoo, the climate changes to summer rainfall.

### **The people**

More than four million people live in the Western Cape on 129 386 km<sup>2</sup> of land. Most are Afrikaans-speaking, the other main languages being English and isiXhosa.

### **Agriculture and marine fishery**

The Western Cape is famous for its fruits and wines. The Swartland area is the country's breadbasket, while the Great Karoo is an important sheep-farming area.

The west coast's rich fishing waters create jobs for some 27 000 people, and delicious seafood for visitors and for export.

### **Industry**

The Western Cape makes the third-highest contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Cape Town is home to the head offices of many of South Africa's petroleum, insurance and retail giants. Some 170 000 people are employed in the clothing and textile industry. Many printing and publishing houses are also found here.

## **Eastern Cape**



The Eastern Cape is the poorest province in terms of average monthly expenditure. However, it is rich in scenic attractions – a

land of undulating hills, endless sandy beaches, majestic mountain ranges and emerald green forests.

The Eastern Cape has a rare mix of flora, indigenous forests, mangroves, savannah bushveld and the aromatic succulent Karoo.

The capital is Bisho. Other important towns in the province include Port Elizabeth, East London, Umtata and Uitenhage. Grahamstown is known as the City of Saints because of its more than 40 churches; Graaff-Reinet has an interesting collection of historic buildings; Cradock is the hub of the Central Karoo; Aliwal North is famous for its hot sulphur springs; and Port St Johns is the largest town on the beautiful Wild Coast.

### **The people**

Seven million people live in the Eastern Cape on 169 580 km<sup>2</sup> of land. Most speak isiXhosa, followed by Afrikaans and English.

### **Agriculture, fishing and forestry**

The Eastern Cape has excellent agricultural and forestry potential. The fertile Langkloof valley in the southwest has enormous deciduous fruit orchards, while the Karoo interior is an important sheep-farming area. The Alexandria-Grahamstown area produces pineapples, chicory and dairy products. People in the former Transkei region depend on cattle, maize and sorghum farming.

The province is a summer-rainfall region with high rainfall along the coast, becoming gradually drier behind the mountain ranges into the Great Karoo.

The fishing industry, based largely on squid, generates about R200 million a year.

### **Industry**

The metropolitan economies of Port Elizabeth and East London are based primarily on manufacturing, the most important being motor manufacturing. With two harbours, three airports and an excellent road and rail infrastructure, the province has been earmarked as a key area for growth and economic development.

## KwaZulu-Natal



South Africa's garden province KwaZulu-Natal has a subtropical coastline, sweeping savannah in the east and the magnificent Drakensberg mountain range in the west. The warm Indian Ocean washing its beaches makes it one of the country's most popular holiday destinations.

Durban is a major business centre and holiday and conference destination. Its port is one of the 10 largest in the world.

KwaZulu-Natal is the only province with a monarchy specifically provided for in its Constitution. Pietermaritzburg and Ulundi are joint capitals. Other important towns include Richards Bay, a major coal export harbour, and many coastal holiday resorts. In the interior, Newcastle is well-known for steel production and coal-mining, Estcourt for meat processing, and Ladysmith and Richmond for mixed agriculture.

The KwaZulu-Natal coastal belt yields sugar cane, wood, oranges, bananas, mangoes and other tropical fruit. Some of South Africa's best-protected indigenous coastal forests are found along the subtropical coastline of KwaZulu-Natal. It is also along this coast that the magnificent St Lucia Estuary and Kosi Bay lakes are located.

### The people

KwaZulu-Natal has the largest population in the country, with some nine million people living on 92 100 km<sup>2</sup> of land. The principal language spoken is isiZulu, followed by English and Afrikaans.

Remnants of British colonialism, together with Zulu, Indian and Afrikaans traditions make for an interesting cultural mix in the province.

### Agriculture and industry

KwaZulu-Natal, with its key strengths in trade and logistics infrastructure and tourism, is the second highest contributor to South Africa's GDP. In recent

times, the province has undergone rapid industrialisation. Sugar-cane is an economic mainstay, supplemented by subtropical fruit. In the hinterland, farmers concentrate on vegetable, dairy and stock farming.

## Northern Cape



The mighty Orange River provides the basis for a healthy agriculture industry in the Northern Cape. The landscape is characterised by vast arid plains with outcroppings of haphazard rock piles.

The Northern Cape has the largest area of all the provinces but the smallest population. It is well served by airports at Kimberley and Upington and an excellent road network.

Important towns are Upington, centre of the karakul sheep and dried fruit industries, and Springbok in the heart of Namaqualand spring-flower country. Kimberley, the capital, can claim to be the diamond capital of the world.

The area is known worldwide for its spectacular display of spring flowers. It is also home to exceptional plant species, such as the elephant trunk (*halfmens*), tree aloe (*kokerboom*) and a variety of succulents.

The province has several national parks and conservation areas. The Kalahari Gemsbok National Park forms part of Africa's first transfrontier game park, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, which is one of the largest nature conservation areas in southern Africa. The Park provides unfenced access to a variety of game between South Africa and Botswana.

Nowhere is the Orange River more impressive than at the Augrabies Falls, among the world's greatest cataracts.

### The people

The Northern Cape is sparsely populated and houses some 873 000 people on 361 830 km<sup>2</sup> of land. About 69% of the people speak Afrikaans. Other languages

spoken are Setswana, isiXhosa and English. The last remaining true San (Bushman) people live in the Kalahari.

### **Agriculture and industry**

The Northern Cape remains an important mining area. The country's chief diamond pipes are found in the Kimberley district. Alluvial diamonds are also extracted from the beaches and sea on the north-west coast. Iron ore and copper are also important. A large part of the economy depends on sheep farming. In the Orange River Valley, grapes and fruit are extensively cultivated.

## **Free State**



At the heart of South Africa, the Free State's rolling plains stretch away to the horizon. The capital, Bloemfontein, is a thriving institutional, educational and administrative centre. Other important towns are Welkom, capital of the province's gold-fields; Bethlehem, gateway to the eastern Highlands and the famous Golden Gate National Park; and Sasolburg, home to a sprawling petrochemical industry.

### **The people**

The Free State has the second smallest population and the second lowest population density. It has some 2,8 million people on about 129 48 km<sup>2</sup> of land. The main languages spoken are Sesotho and Afrikaans.

Many of the towns display a mix of culture clearly evident in street names, public buildings, monuments and museums. Dressed sandstone buildings abound on the Eastern Highlands, while beautifully decorated Sotho houses dot the grasslands. The Free State is home to some of South Africa's most outstanding San (Bushman) rock paintings.

### **Agriculture**

The Free State has cultivated land covering 3,2 million ha,

while natural veld and grazing cover 8,7 million ha. Field crops yield almost two-thirds of the gross agricultural income of the province. Animal products contribute a further 30%, with the balance coming from horticulture.

Various districts in the Free State are important producers of potatoes, cherries, asparagus, soya, sorghum, sunflowers and wheat.

### Mining and manufacturing

The Free State contributes about 16,5% to South Africa's total mineral output (30% of its gold). Mining is the province's biggest employer.

Bituminous coal is mined in the province and converted to petrochemicals at Sasolburg.

Best known for its maize production, the Free State has, in the last decade, reduced its dependency on the primary sector, and is increasingly becoming a manufacturing economy. Some 14% of manufacturing is classified as high-technology industry.

## North West



North West is centrally located in the subcontinent with direct road and rail links to all of the southern African countries, and its own airport.

Most economic activity is concentrated between Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp, Rustenburg and the eastern region, where more than 83,3% of the province's gross geographic product is produced. Forty-eight percent of the province's population live here. The province covers an area of 116 320 km<sup>2</sup>.

### The people

Of the 3,6 million people in the North West, 65% live in the rural areas. In spite of its small population, it is estimated that 9% of all the poor people in the country live in the North West.

### **Mining**

The platinum province is the dominant province in terms of mineral sales. Mining contributes 35,5% to the economy and 17,8% of total employment in the North West. It makes up 15,5% of the mining GDP in South Africa. Diamonds are mined at various places, while Orkney and Klerksdorp have gold-mines. The area surrounding Rustenburg and Brits is the largest platinum production area in the world.

### **Industry**

Manufacturing is almost exclusively dependent on the performance of a few sectors in which the province enjoys a competitive advantage. These are fabricated metals, food and non-metallic metals. Industrial activity is centred around the towns of Brits, Klerksdorp, Vryburg and Rustenburg. Tourism also forms a significant part of the provincial economy.

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture in the North West is the second most important sector, contributing about 8,6% to the provincial GDP. Maize and sunflowers are the most important crops. The North West is the biggest producer of white maize in the country. Some of the largest cattle herds in the world are found at Stellaland near Vryburg.

## **Gauteng**



Although the smallest of the nine provinces, Gauteng (a Sotho word for the Place of Gold) is the powerhouse of South Africa and the heart of its commercial business and industrial sectors.

It is the largest contributor to South Africa's GDP at 36,5%. The three most important sectors are financial and business services, logistics and communications and mining. Pretoria is the administrative capital of South Africa and Johannesburg its business capital.

The country's industrial heartland stretches to the West and East Rands and south to Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging.

### **The people**

Gauteng covers an area of 17 010 km<sup>2</sup>. It is the most densely populated province in South Africa with eight million people, 97% of them urbanised. Since the discovery of gold here in the 1880s, Gauteng has attracted people from all over South Africa and the world. More people work in professional, technical, managerial and executive positions than in any other province. Not surprisingly, Gauteng has South Africa's highest per capita income.

### **Manufacturing**

The manufacturing sector in Gauteng has over 9 300 firms, employing more than 600 000 people. Gross annual output exceeds R50 billion. Industry is increasingly being aligned towards hi-tech output.

### **Agriculture and industry**

Gauteng's agricultural sector is geared to provide the cities and towns of the province with daily fresh produce. However, a large area of the province falls within the so-called maize triangle. The Vaal Triangle has a strong manufacturing sector; the West Rand concentrates on primary mining, and the central Witwatersrand is dominated by the manufacturing and finance sectors, with mining capital playing a major role. All sectors rely heavily on the Vaal Dam from where water is piped across the province.

## **Mpumalanga**



Mpumalanga means 'place where the sun rises'. It is situated mainly on the high plateau grasslands of the Middleveld, which roll eastwards for hundreds of

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**M**ore than half of the global reserves of chrome and platinum are found in the Bushveld Complex in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West.

kilometres. In the north-east, the province rises towards mountain peaks and then terminates in an immense escarpment. In some places, this escarpment plunges hundreds of metres down to the lowveld. This dramatic scenery helps make Mpumalanga a magnet for tourists, as does the

world-renowned Kruger National Park. The newly opened Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport outside Nelspruit serves as a gateway to the Park.

Nelspruit is the capital of the province. The towns of Witbank and Middelburg make up an important mining and manufacturing centre; Piet Retief in the south-east is a production area for tropical fruit and sugar; and Barberton is one of the oldest gold-mining towns in South Africa. The Maputo Corridor, which links the province with Gauteng and Maputo in Mozambique, heralds a new era in terms of economic development and growth for the region.

**The people**

Even though it is one of the smaller provinces (some 79 490 km<sup>2</sup> in surface area), Mpumalanga has a population of about three million people. The main languages spoken are siSwati, isiZulu and isiNdebele.

**Agriculture and forestry**

The lowveld produces an abundance of citrus fruit and many other subtropical fruits, as well as nuts and a variety of vegetables. Nelspruit is the second largest citrus-producing area in South Africa. Plantations of exotic trees, mainly pine, eucalyptus and wattle, have made the Sabie area South Africa's biggest forestry region.

**Industry**

Secunda is home to the country's second petroleum-from-coal installation, while Ngodwana is among South

Africa's largest paper mills. Middelburg produces steel and vanadium, while Witbank is the biggest coal producer in Africa.

## Limpopo



Limpopo is a province of dramatic contrasts, from true Bushveld country to majestic mountains, primeval indigenous forests, plantations and unspoilt wilderness areas.

Limpopo is the gateway to the rest of Africa, being well situated for economic co-operation with other parts of southern Africa.

Polokwane (formerly Pietersburg) is the capital city. The Great North Road through the centre of the province strings together a series of interesting towns. Bela-Bela (formerly Warmbaths), with its popular mineral spa, is near the southern border of the province. North of Bela-Bela is Modimolle (formerly Nylstroom) with its table-grape industry and beautiful Waterberg mountain range; Polokwane; Louis Trichardt at the foot of the Soutpansberg mountain range; and Musina (formerly Messina), with its thick-set baobab trees.

Other important Limpopo towns include the major mining centres of Phalaborwa and Thabazimbi. The biggest section of the Kruger National Park is situated along the eastern boundary of the province.

### The people

Some 5,7 million people live on about 123 910 km<sup>2</sup> of land. The main languages spoken are Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda and Afrikaans. Several museums and national monuments bear testimony to ancient peoples and intrepid pioneers.

### Agriculture

The bushveld is cattle country. Controlled hunting is often combined with ranching. Sunflowers, cotton, maize and peanuts are cultivated, as are tropical fruits, while Tzaneen is famous for its tea and coffee.

Zebediela, south of Polokwane, is one of the largest citrus estates in the country. There are extensive forestry plantations in the Louis Trichardt and Tzaneen districts.

### **Industry**

Limpopo is rich in minerals, including copper, asbestos, coal, iron ore, platinum, chrome, diamonds, phosphates and gold. Resources such as tourism, rain-fed agriculture, minerals and an abundant labour force offer excellent investment opportunities.