



South Africa, often described as 'a world in one country' is one of the world's great tourist destinations. An excellent climate, natural beauty, first-rate infrastructure and welcoming people made this country the world's fastest-growing tourism destination in 2002.

Added to these attractions are value for money and the fascinating story, accessible through ordinary people and historical monuments, of the transition from apartheid to democracy.

Tourism contributes about 4,9% of gross domestic product. Foreign tourist arrivals to South Africa increased by 10,1% for the first 10 months of 2002 – 478 580 tourists – compared to the same period the previous year. October 2002 recorded the highest monthly foreign tourist arrivals in 2002. A total of 579 355 foreign tourists visited the country in October last year, against 480 464 in October 2001, recording a 20,6% (98 891) growth – the highest since 1998.

It is projected that in 2010 the South African tourism economy will employ more than 1,2 million people directly and indirectly.



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

National and provincial parks in South Africa, as well as private game reserves, involve local communities in the conservation and management of natural resources. These communities are not only benefiting financially from ecotourism, but are also becoming aware of their responsibility to the environment.

Community tourism is becoming increasingly popular, with tourists wanting to experience South Africa in the many rural villages and townships across the country.

Whether foreign tourists want endless beaches, birding, sports tours, the Big Five, historic battlefields, hunting, mountains, bush or forest, millions of people are discovering that South Africa is an exceptional holiday destination.

## **Tourism in the provinces**

### **Western Cape**

The Western Cape continues to be one of the most favoured destinations for foreigners. Everyone, it seems, is determined to visit Cape Town, and with good reason: it is indisputably one of the world's most beautiful cities.

Major attractions in Cape Town include the Dutch-built Castle of Good Hope, the Company's Garden, the District Six Museum, flea markets, the Grand Parade, the Houses of Parliament and the South African National Gallery. Also worth a visit are historical buildings in the Bo-Kaap and District Six.

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 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.

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.

Against the backdrop of the magnificent Hottentots Holland and Helderberg mountains, the Helderberg region is a paradise for tourists, hikers, wine and nature lovers.

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 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, making the region popular all year round. The city of George is at the heart of the Garden Route and the mecca of golf in the southern Cape, being the home to the renowned Fancourt Country Club and Golf Estate.

Knysna has become South Africa's favourite official destination. What makes it unique is the fact that the town nestles on the banks of an estuary, guarded by The Heads (two huge sand-stone cliffs) surrounded by indigenous forests, tranquil lakes and golden beaches. This natural wonderland is home to the largest and smallest of creatures, from the Knysna



seahorse to the Knysna elephants, rare delicate butterflies, and the endemic Knysna *loerie*, a colourful forest bird. It is also an oyster-lover's delight.

Just 26 km from Oudtshoorn, the ostrich feather capital of the world, are the remarkable Cango Caves, a series of spectacular subterranean limestone caverns. Bearing evidence of early San habitation, the 30-cave wonderland boasts magnificent dripstone formations.

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

Beaufort West, the oldest town in the Central Karoo, is often referred to as the 'Oasis of the Karoo'. The local museum features a display of awards presented to pioneer heart transplant surgeon, the late Prof Chris Barnard, a son of this town.

Matjiesfontein, the whole railway village being a national monument, offers tourists a peek into the splendour of colonial Victorian England, in the middle of nowhere.

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 the old gold-mining activities of the 19th century. The Museum has a license to distil and sell *Witblits* (white lightning), South Africa's own potent version of moonshine.

### Northern Cape

The Augrabies Falls National Park, with its centrepiece the magnificent falls pressing through a narrow rock ravine, remains the main attraction of the Northern Cape. Game-viewing drives reveal a



DID YOU KNOW?

The 2002 tourist arrival statistics confirm that South Africa is the fastest growing tourist destination in the world, having attracted over 6,4 million tourists last year.

variety of bird life, and animals such as klipspringer, steenbok, various wildcats and otters.

Kimberley, though, is not to be missed. The city's Big Hole is the largest hand-dug 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

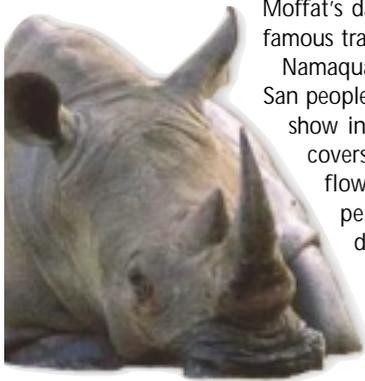
Museum. Underground mine tours are a big attraction, as well as the famous ghost tours, during which many historical buildings are seen from a different perspective.

A township tour to Galeshewe provides a fresh perspective on South Africa's socio-historical realities. Pan-Africanist Congress founder Robert Sobukwe's house in Galeshewe is also worth a visit.

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 and one of the most modern of its kind in the world.

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. David Livingstone married Moffat's daughter and embarked on many famous travels from this mission station.

Namaqualand, the land of the Nama and San people, annually puts on a spectacular show in spring when a floral splendour covers vast tracts of desert. The flowers sprout and survive for a brief period before they wilt and disappear just as suddenly in the face of blistering heat and dry conditions.



### **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 existing 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 from 1899 to 1902. It is a haunting place. Gardeners love the King's Park Rose Garden which contains over 4 000 rose bushes.

Located in the Free State's Eastern Highlands, 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.

The Golden Gate Highlands National Park outside Clarens is known for its beautiful sandstone scenery and is a very popular holiday destination.

### **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. With approximately 820 km of unspoilt coastline, the beaches of the Eastern Cape are among the most impressive anywhere, stretching from the Tsitsikamma National Park along the south coast, through St Francis Bay, Jeffreys Bay and Algoa Bay, up to the pristine Wild Coast and south-eastern coast to Port Edward.

East London, South Africa's only river port, 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.

Port Elizabeth is a superb holiday destination, offering a diverse mix of eco-attractions, while Grahamstown, often called the City of the Saints because of its more than 40 churches, is rich in 1820 Settlers history.

The spectacular Wild Coast (which more than lives up to its name) draws many anglers and those seeking a retreat from the madding crowd. Small hotels offer excellent accommodation and outstanding seafood. Visitors to the rural village of Qunu are shown the plot where former President Nelson Mandela's childhood home used to stand, as well as his parents' graves.

Popular conservation areas in the Eastern Cape include the Addo Elephant, Mountain Zebra and Mkambati parks.

### **Limpopo**

Limpopo (formerly the Northern Province) is well endowed with cultural diversity, historic sites and tourist attractions.

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.

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 caves are being developed into an archaeological site. The Thabazimbi district has a large concentration of private game reserves and is one of the fastest-growing ecotourism areas in the country.

Bela-Bela (formerly Warmbaths) is known for its hot springs, which attract more than a million visitors every year. There are a number of game reserves and leisure resorts in the area. The Waterberg Range is rich in indigenous trees, streams, springs, wetlands, bird life and dramatic scenery.

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. Her descendants still hold sway over the area.

### **North West**

The Historic Route of Mafikeng includes an Anglo-Boer/South African War siege site. The Lichtenburg



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

The Groot Marico region is known as *mampoer* (moonshine) country, and visitors can embark on a *mampoer* and tobacco route.

The Hartbeespoort Dam is a popular spot for weekend outings, breakfast runs and yachting. The Hartbeespoort Cableway offers a breathtaking view of the dam and surrounding areas.

The De Wildt Cheetah Breeding and Research Centre specialises in breeding cheetah and other endangered wildlife species.

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. Guided day and night game drives are available. The Madikwe Game Reserve is home to the biggest game-relocation programme ever. Over 10 000 animals of 27 major species have been reintroduced under Operation Phoenix.

World famous, 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.

### **Mpumalanga**

Mpumalanga – ‘the place where the sun rises’ – is located in the north-eastern part of South Africa, bordered by Mozambique to the east and the Kingdom of Swaziland to the south and east.

Scenic beauty, climate and wildlife, voted the most attractive features of South Africa, are found in abundance in the province.

Historical sites and villages, old wagon routes and monuments mark events and characters who passed this way before in search of adventure and wealth. The Blue Train runs between Pretoria and Nelspruit from May to September on a trip called the Lowveld Experience.

Barberton features many reminders of the early gold-rush era, as does Pilgrim’s Rest, a living museum and,

like Barberton, a boom town which in its heyday attracted prospectors from across the world.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Kruger National Park is home to an impressive number of fauna and flora. The Park has some 336 tree, 49 fish, 34 amphibian, 114 reptile, 145 mammal and 300 bird species. History was made in March 2003 when visitor numbers to the Kruger National Park reached and exceeded one million for the year for the first time ever.

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 view of kilometres of thickly forested mountains, the green lowveld and the canyon.

The southern section of the Kruger National Park falls in this region. The park is a major tourist attraction, locally and internationally, with the main camps offering excellent but affordable range of facilities.

Between April 2002 and 8 March 2003 over a million tourists visited the Park – setting a record.

### **Gauteng**

Gauteng offers a vibrant business environment and many tourist attractions, including a rainbow of ecological and cultural diversity.

The Vaal Dam covers some 300 km<sup>2</sup> and is a popular venue for water sport. Numerous resorts line the shore. The dam also attracts a great diversity of birds.

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 caves comprise a series of caverns with many stalactites and stalagmites and a huge underground lake. Guided tours are available. The Wonder Cave, about 2 billion years old, is one of South Africa's most impressive natural assets

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 left by an asteroid that hit there some 200 000 years ago.

The Tswaing Meteorite Crater is similar in size to the well-known Barringer meteor crater in Arizona. The Crater walls at Tswaing were originally about twice as high as they are today.

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

Gold Reef City is a reconstruction of Johannesburg during the gold-rush era. Attractions include a Victorian fun fair, pubs, miners' houses, a brewery, restaurants, a hotel and a stock exchange. Visitors can take a trip down an old mine shaft and watch molten gold being poured.

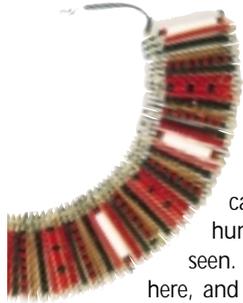
Many tourists are attracted to Soweto, the sprawling township south of Johannesburg which is synonymous with the anti-apartheid struggle. Excellent tours give visitors a taste of life under apartheid, and the enervating environment that followed democracy in 1994. Not to be missed is the Hector Peterson Museum.

Johannesburg is replete with reminders of the greatest gold rush in history, including the mansions of the so-called landlords, mine dumps and the economy that sprung up suddenly less than 120 years ago to support the region's sudden boom.



## **KwaZulu-Natal**

KwaZulu-Natal continues to attract the largest number of local tourists, catering for 44% of the domestic tourist market in 2000.



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

The coastline between the Umdloti River and the Tugela 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 rarely seen. Many of the first Indian immigrants settled here, and the markets, mosques and temples bring an authentic eastern flavour to the region.

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 dogs.

The eMakhosini Valley, birthplace of King Shaka, is the venue for a new tourism and economic development project. Known as Makhosini, the Valley of Zulu Kings, the joint public-private sector project aims to preserve the culture and history of the Zulu people. Authentic Zulu villages such as Shakaland, Kwabhekithunga Kraal and Stewart's Farm offer accommodation and the opportunity to experience traditional Zulu culture.

In addition to 25 major tourist attractions, there are 11 game reserves and the World Heritage Site, the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park. The Greater St Lucia Wetlands have some of the highest forested dunes in the world. The St Lucia Lake and its surroundings comprise a wetland of global importance. It is a fishing and bird-watcher's paradise.

The Kosi Bay Nature Reserve is a remarkably unspoilt part of the Coastal Forest Reserve between Mozambique and Sodwana Bay. The adjacent Indian Ocean provides exciting snorkelling and fishing opportunities.

The coral reef in the Sodwana Bay National Park attracts hundreds of scuba divers throughout the year,



DID YOU KNOW?

Eight beaches along the South African coastline received the internationally renowned Blue Flag for excellence in beach management on National Marine Day in 2002. South Africa is the only country outside Europe to be granted the right to partake in the campaign.

and in summer powerboaters arrive for some of the best marlin fishing in the world.

On the South Coast, the narrow-gauge Banana Express runs between Port Shepstone and Paddock and back (39 km) twice a week.

This, 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.

Inland, historic 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 Midlands Meander is a series of popular drives 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.

Further inland are the Drakensberg (dragon) Mountains, an area of rare and dramatic beauty – and excellent trout fishing.

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

In northern KwaZulu-Natal, the Battlefields Route has the highest concentration of battlefields and related military sites in South Africa. Battlefields and fascinating tours take visitors back to the Anglo-Boer/South African War. Near Dundee, tourists can visit various battlefields,



including Blood River, Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift and Talana.

### **Things to do in South Africa**

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of a holiday in South Africa is deciding what to do and where to go. Not surprisingly, repeat visitors make up an increasing proportion of South Africa's foreign tourists.

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 Nelson Mandela was incarcerated
- the delights of Sun City and many 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
- Johannesburg's moving, state-of-the-art new Apartheid Museum
- 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
- the fabulous golf courses that produced the likes of Gary Player and Ernie Els.