

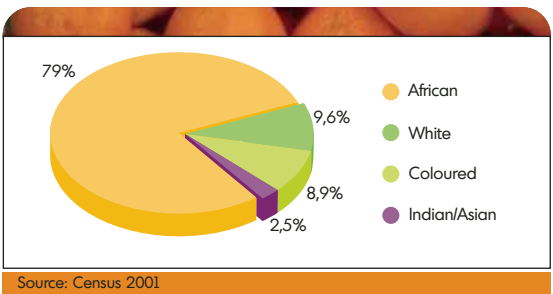


South Africa's people

South Africa is a country where various cultures form a unique nation, proud of their heritage and proud of their unity in diversity.

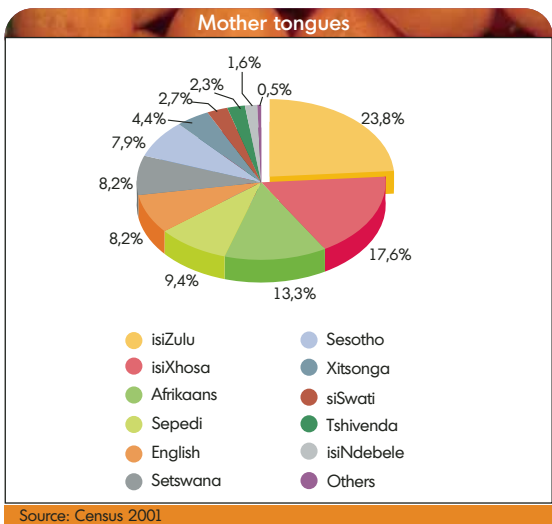
People

According to the 2001 Census, there were 44 819 778 people in South Africa on the night of 10 October 2001. They classified themselves as follows:



The South African population is made up of the following groups:

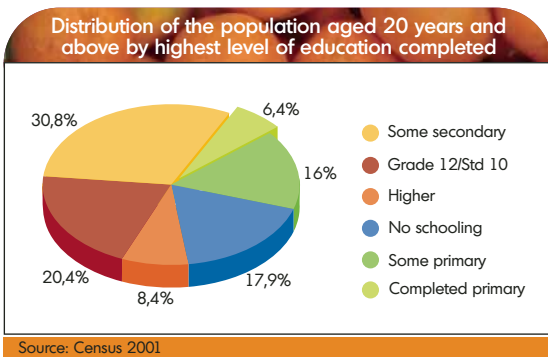
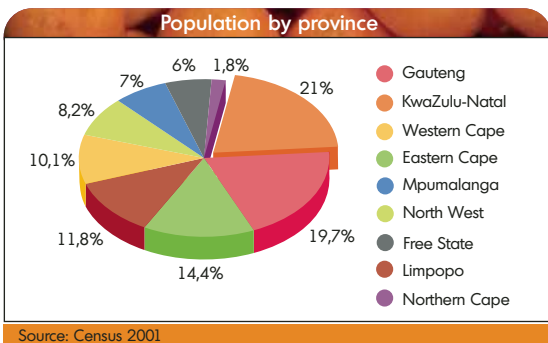
- Nguni people (the Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi)
- Sotho-Tswana people (including the Southern, Northern and Western Sotho (Tswana))
- Tsonga



- Venda
- Afrikaners
- English-speakers
- Coloureds
- Indians
- those who have immigrated to South Africa from the rest of Africa, Europe and Asia and maintain their own strong cultural identities
- a few members of the Khoi and the San.

Languages

The South African Constitution states that everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of his or her choice, but no one may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights. Each person also has the right to instruction in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable.

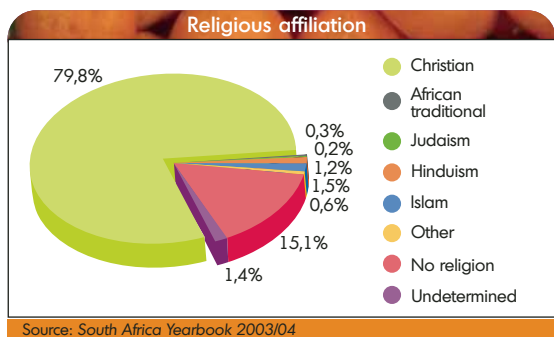


Official languages

To cater for South Africa's diverse peoples, the Constitution provides for 11 official languages, namely Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga.

Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages, the Constitution expects government to implement positive measures to elevate the status, and advance the use of these languages.

National and provincial governments may use any two or more official languages. While communications with the



public tend to be produced in more than one language, internal communications are mostly carried out in English.

Religion

Religious groups in South Africa

Almost 80% of South Africa's population is Christian. Other religious groups include the Hindus, Muslims and Jews. A minority of South Africa's population do not belong to any of the major religions, but regard themselves as traditionalists or of no specific religious affiliation.

Freedom of worship is guaranteed by the Constitution.

Christian churches

African Independent Churches (AICs)

The largest grouping of Christian churches is the AICs, and one of the most dramatic aspects of religious affiliation has been the rise of this movement.

There are 4 000 or more independent churches with a combined membership of more than 10 million.

Most are regarded as Zionist or Apostolic churches.

The Zion Christian Church is the largest of these churches in South Africa and the largest church overall, with over four million members.

Afrikaans churches

The *Nederduitsch Gereformeerde* (NG) family of churches in South Africa – the Dutch Reformed churches – represents some 3,5 million people. The *NG Kerk* has about 1 200 congregations countrywide. The other churches are the United Reformed Church of South Africa and the smaller Reformed Church in Africa, with predominantly Indian members. The *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk* and the *Gereformeerde Kerk* are regarded as sister churches.

The Roman Catholic Church

In recent years, the Roman Catholic Church has grown strongly in number and influence, even though South Africa is predominantly Protestant. It works closely with other churches on the socio-political front.

Other Christian churches

Established churches in South Africa include the Methodist Church, the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (Anglican Church), and various Lutheran, Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist churches. Together, these churches form the nucleus of the South African Council of Churches.

The largest traditional Pentecostal churches are the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Assemblies of God and the Full Gospel Church, but there are numerous others.

A number of charismatic churches have been established in recent years. Also active in South Africa, among the smaller groups, are the Greek Orthodox and Seventh Day Adventist churches.

African traditionalists

Because the traditional religion of the African people has a strong cultural base, the various groups have different rituals, but there are certain common features.

A supreme being is generally recognised, but ancestors are of great significance. As a result of close contact with

Christianity, many people find themselves in a transitional phase somewhere between traditional African religion and Christianity.

Other religions

Two-thirds of South Africa's Indians are Hindus.

The Muslim community in South Africa is small, but growing strongly. The major components of this community are the Cape Malays, who are mainly descendants of Indonesian slaves, as well as 20% of people of Indian descent.

The Jewish population is less than 100 000. Of these, the majority are Orthodox Jews.