



## Tourism

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 the 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.

Since 1994, tourism in South Africa has emerged as a leading economic growth sector. It is now one of the largest contributors to gross domestic product (GDP), and offers significant employment and enterprise-development

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 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.

### Top 10 tourist attractions

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

Source: SA Venues

opportunities. Tourism is the fastest-growing economic sector in South Africa, contributing close to 7,1% of GDP. It is a labour-intensive industry that attracts foreign revenue and stimulates a broad range of other industries.

The global travel industry showed real signs of recovery in 2004. Total foreign arrivals to South Africa increased by almost 1% during the first nine months of the year – to more than 4,77 million compared with 4,72 million in 2003. Some 27 000 new direct tourism jobs were created in 2004. In the first quarter of 2005, there were 1,7 million foreign tourist arrivals – the highest in South Africa's history. At the same time, foreign tourism spending increased by more than 25% to R12,9 billion.

fact

According to Statistics South Africa, the country offers an average of 1,6 million room-nights a month and registers an average occupancy of 54,2%. The average monthly revenue for accommodation in the country amounts to almost R593 million.

fact

The Tourism Black Economic Empowerment Charter was officially launched at the Annual Tourism Indaba in Durban, in May 2005.

The charter is a ground-breaking commitment by industry to greater access for all communities to the benefits of tourism.

### Arrivals and departures of foreign travellers, 1999-2004



Source: Statistics South Africa

## 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.
- Visitors from yellow-fever areas must have proof of 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.

In June 2005, the first of four new hiking trails in the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) was launched. The new trail forms part of the long-term plan to upgrade and reinvigorate 350 km of trails within the TMNP to help cater for the 4,5 million annual visitors. Lasting two days and one night, the People's Trail begins at Constantia Nek and winds along Disa Gorge to the Woodhead Dam where hikers overnight. The next morning the group descends either via Platteklip Gorge or Kasteel's Poort.

## 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 are:

- the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront
  - 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 a majestic backdrop to the vibrant and friendly 'Mother City'. The top of the mountain can be reached by an ultra-modern cableway.

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

Cape Point, part of the Table Mountain National Park, offers many drives, walks, picnic spots and a licensed restaurant. This is the point where the Atlantic and Indian oceans meet. The park has a marine protected area encompassing almost 1 000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Hout Bay is well-known for its colourful working harbour. Seafood outlets, round-the-bay trips to the nearby seal island, and a 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 in historic



South Africa is ranked among the top 30 global convention countries in the world, with business tourism generating about R20 billion a year in revenue. Business tourism is estimated to sustain almost 260 000 jobs.

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.
- Knysna, nestling on an estuary, is one of South Africa's favourite destinations, 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. The cave system is 5,3 km long.

## 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.

### 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.
- The museum in Beaufort West, birthplace of famous heart surgeon Prof Chris Barnard, depicts the story of the

world's first heart transplant. The Karoo National Park on the outskirts of the town is also worth a visit.

## 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, wild cats and otters.

### Key attractions

- The Big Hole in Kimberley is the largest man-made excavation in the world. The Kimberley Mine Museum is South Africa's largest full-scale open-air museum. Underground mine tours are a big attraction. The Freddy Tate Golf Museum at the Kimberley Golf Club was the first golfing museum in Africa. The Kimberley Ghost Trail has become a popular tourist attraction.
- The Robert Sobukwe House in Galeshewe was once the residence of Robert Sobukwe, an important figure in South African history and a major role-player in the rise of African political consciousness.
- 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, who was also 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 its floral splendour covers vast tracts of desert in a kaleidoscope of colour.
- A cultural centre at Wildebeestkuil outside Kimberley features !Xun and Khwe artwork for sale and a tour of rock engravings by these indigenous people.
- 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 surrounded by spectacular scenery.
- The Golden Gate Highlands National Park outside Clarens has beautiful sandstone rock formations.
- The King's Park Rose Garden in Bloemfontein boasts more than 4 000 rose bushes.
- The Vredefort Dome, recently declared a World Heritage Site, is the oldest and largest meteorite impact site in the world. It was formed an estimated two billion years ago when a giant meteorite hit the earth.

## 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.

### What to see and do

- the rugged beauty of the Wild Coast, including Hole in the Wall

South Africa has seven World Heritage Sites, namely: Robben Island, the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park, Mapungubwe, Sterkfontein Cradle of Humankind, the Cape Floral Kingdom and the Vredefort Dome.



fact


- 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 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, including 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 vicinity has several nature reserves. The Arend Dieperink Museum offers a fine cultural-historical collection, and the Makapan caves are famous for their fossils. The Makapan Valley is the only cultural heritage site of its kind. It reflects the history of the Ndebele people and resistance wars dating back 151 years. South Africa's application for the extension of the fossil



South Africa stood out as one of the hottest destinations in the 2004 World's Best Awards survey by international travel magazine *Travel & Leisure*, sweeping the World's Best Hotels category with five of the 10 highest-rated properties in the world.

Other hotels in the country ranked at numbers 13, 46, 49, 50, 61 and 74, giving South Africa more top 100 hotels than any country except the United States of America.



hominid sites of Sterkfontein to include Makapan Valley was approved in July 2005.

- The Thabazimbi district is one of the fastest-growing ecotourism areas in South Africa, thanks to its outstanding game reserves.
- Bela-Bela is well-known among South Africans, and increasingly foreigners, for its hot springs, fun water slides and scenery.
- The Waterberg mountain 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*.
- 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 Mokhado, 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 wild animals and fun 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.
- 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.
- South Africa's application for the extension of the fossil hominid sites of Sterkfontein to include the Taung Skull fossil site was approved in July 2005. The site marks the place where in 1924 the celebrated Taung Skull – a specimen of the species *Australopithecus africanus* – was found.
  - Madikwe Game Reserve is home to 66 large mammal species including the Big Five, and about 300 resident and migrant bird species. It is one of South Africa's largest game reserves.

## Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga – the place where the sun rises – is situated 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 attractions

- 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 period.
- The Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve near Graskop has striking rock formations and a rich diversity of plants.
- Within the Blyde River Canyon 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.
- An annual frog-watching festival is held at Chrissiesmeer, South Africa's largest freshwater lake.

- Dullstroom has become a popular destination for trout- and fly-fishing enthusiasts.

## 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.

### Key attractions

- 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 is also 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 Walter Sisulu 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 is considered to be one of the 10 best in the world.
- Constitution Hill Precinct is set to become one of South Africa's most popular landmarks.
- 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.

- The Union Buildings in Pretoria, venue for the inauguration of presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki.

## 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 Umhloti and Tugela rivers – the Dolphin Coast.
- The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi 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 Valley of Zulu Kings gives visitors insight into the history and culture of the Zulu nation.
- The Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, 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.
- 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.
- Every year around June/July, millions of sardines leave their home on the Agulhas banks and move up to the

coast of Mozambique. Thousands of dolphins, Cape gannets, sharks and game fish follow the ‘Sardine Run’ northwards.

## Things to see and do in South Africa

Just a few of the attractions that make South Africa 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 in Cape Town’s Table Bay where former President 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 official languages
- the country’s Blue Flag beaches
- the variety of national parks and transfrontier conservation areas
- seven World Heritage Sites
- the lilac-breasted roller, the blue crane and the other 900 bird species to be spotted in southern Africa
- the Big Five and other wild animals that abound in the many parks and game reserves

The Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk, announced in April 2005 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 rest camps and improving tourism infrastructure.

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

- 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
- fly fishing in stunning scenery with first-class accommodation
- fabulous golf courses that produced the likes of Gary Player, Ernie Els and Retief Goosen
- an array of cultural villages, arts festivals, rock paintings and museums
- the adrenaline rush of the many adventure tourism opportunities available in the country.