



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, and activities such as diving or snorkelling, or birdwatching. Whatever their reasons, visitors will find South Africa positively inviting, with world-class infrastructure, transport and accommodation.

In 2005, international tourism to South Africa surge to record levels, with 10,3% more foreigners visiting the country than in 2004.

Some 7,4 million people from other countries visited South Africa in 2005.

With just over 2,7 million arrivals from January to April 2006, the 2,5 million target was reached for the first time. There was a 16% increase in arrivals across all territories compared with the same period in 2005, translating into almost 377 000 more visitors.

South Africa's business tourism potential is vast. In 2006, the global conference and meetings sector was expected to make up 10% of the estimated US\$672 billion generated from travel and tourism. This overall total was expected to double by 2013 at an annual rate of 3,7%.

Many delegates to conferences and meetings spend generously and, if accompanied, go on pre- and post-conference tours.

By August 2006, South Africa was listed 32nd among the International Congress and Convention Association's top 40 leading conference destinations in the world. The country attracted 63% of all conferences in Africa, business tourism supported 12 000 jobs and contributed R2,6 billion a year to gross domestic product.



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 Village
9. Soweto
10. The Cradle of Humankind

Source: Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

The largest component of this growth came from Africa and the Middle East region, with visitor numbers being 21,9% higher. The number of visitors from Asia and Australasia was the second-largest at 7,1%, while the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States of America (USA) remained South Africa's most important long-haul markets.

Tourism continues to contribute significantly to job creation, with a direct increase in employment in the tourism sector totalling 539 017 in 2005.

Tourism has the potential to achieve the goals of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA), which are to boost economic growth to 6% by 2010 and halve poverty and unemployment by 2014. The strategy has identified tourism as one of the key economic sectors with excellent potential for growth. As part of the growth platform targeted by AsgiSA, tourism has been set some very steep goals for the next five years: 500 000 new jobs, 8,5 million international arrivals annually and a contribution to gross domestic product of at least R100 billion a year.



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.

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 and 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 well-known rugby stadium.

In April 2006, two of the Cape's finest restaurants made it into the top-50 list of Penfold's World's Best Restaurants for 2006.

La Colombe in Constantia clinched the 28th spot, while Le Quartier Français in Franschhoek came in at 38.

La Colombe, which made the list for the first time, was also named Best Restaurant in the Middle East and Africa. Le Quartier Français made the Top 50 list in 2002 and 2005. Both restaurants are in the Western Cape's winelands.

Cape Point, part of the Table Mountain National Park, offers many drives, walks, picnic spots and a licensed restaurant. The park has a marine protected area encompassing almost 1 000 km².

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 routes outside Cape Town offer 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.

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 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 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.

Fact:

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.

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-tastings 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, and 2-km wide white sand dune at the Witsand Nature Reserve near Postmasburg should not be missed.

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 and boasts many art galleries.
- 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, 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.
- 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 (216 m) at the Bloukrans Bridge on the Storms River.
- Outstanding, and varied game reserves, including the Addo Elephant, Mountain Zebra and Mkambati parks.

The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism has partnered with organisations such as the Business Trust in establishing initiatives like the Tourism Enterprise Programme (TEP) to create links and working relationships between small firms and established businesses. Between 2004 and April 2006, the department contributed about R32 million to the TEP, which in six years had assisted almost 3 100 small, medium and micro enterprises to grow their revenues by more than R2,1 billion, creating more than 30 500 jobs. Over the next three years, it will be investing another R185 million in the TEP. This will be boosted by more than R41 million from the Business Trust.

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, while 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 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 Makhado, is built on the site of an original Voortrekker village and depicts their lifestyle in the mid-18th century.
- the Big Tree in the Mutale Municipality is the largest known baobab in southern Africa.

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 story-telling.
- The Hartbeespoort Dam is a popular spot for weekend outings, breakfast runs and yachting. There are numerous golf courses in the area.
- 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 km² 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, 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, was the venue for the inauguration of presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki.

The first annual report on domestic travel, based on monthly surveys of incidence travel in South Africa in 2005, was released in 2006. Some 36,2 million domestic trips were undertaken in 2005, resulting in R21,2 billion of direct spending with an average of R585 being spent per trip. A record of 154,9 million bed nights was achieved with an average length of stay of 4,3 nights. In 2005, KwaZulu-Natal was the most-visited province.

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 comprises an oceanarium, dolphinarium and oceanographic research institute and is situated on Durban's Point.
- Spot dolphins or laze the days away on the coastline between the Umdloti and Tugela rivers – the Dolphin Coast.
- The Hluhluwe-Umfolozozi Park, one of the largest game parks in South Africa is home to the Big Five, as well as cheetah and wild dogs.
- The eMakhosini Valley, birthplace of King Shaka and the Valley of Zulu Kings give visitors insight into the history and culture of the Zulu nation.

- The Greater St Lucia Wetland Park is one of the highest forested dunes in the world, and boasts an abundance of fish and birds.
- The Banana Express runs between Umkomaas and the Wild Coast.
- 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.

The Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk has launched the official Tourism Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Charter.

The charter will affect all companies involved in the tourism industry, and aims to include black people in the industry.

It will rate businesses that operate in the industry on seven levels – similar to standard BEE principles. These include ownership, strategic management, employment equity, skills development, preferential BEE procurement, enterprise development and social development.

The charter includes measurement tools to help participants in the industry identify their current BEE levels, gaps in their BEE profile, and how to improve their rating on a balanced scorecard.

In accordance with the legislative framework on BEE, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism has established a council for the implementation of the BEE Charter, which has been in operation since 2005.

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
- 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 strange halfmens (half-human) and the exotic baobab, just some of South Africa's many amazing trees and plants
- 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.