

Tourism



Tourism is a national priority and contributes significantly to economic development. The national tourism sector strategy provides a blueprint for the sector to meet the growth targets contained in the new growth path.

The inflow of tourists to South Africa is the result of the success of policies aimed at entrenching South Africa's status as a major international tourism and business events destination.

The Tourism Business Index's quarterly index produced by the Tourism Business Council of South Africa indicated that revenue per available room in the hotel sector increased by 7,9% during the first 10 months of 2014. A Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) report has found that the total income for the South Africa tourist accommodation industry, which includes restaurant and bar sales, grew by 7%.

In May 2015, there were 1 202 795 foreign arrivals to South Africa. The arrivals were made up of 89 257 non-visitors and 1 113 538 visitors. The visitors consisted of 428 131 same-day visitors and 685 407 overnight visitors. The breakdown of the tourists by region was as follows: 138 258 from overseas; 533 361 from the Southern African Development Community countries; 12 594 from other African countries and the country of residence of 1 194 tourists was classified as unspecified.

Role players

South African Tourism (SAT)

Business tourism has also increased, especially since the establishment of the country's first South African National Convention Bureau as a business unit under SAT.

Given the strong growth potential in Africa, SAT was allocated R300 million to expand its marketing presence on the continent, which will include the opening of another four offices in the next few years.

SAT's Sho't Left marketing campaign for domestic tourists is already delivering results and will be bolstered by another R100 million in secured ring-fenced investment in 2015/16.

The "It's Here, Vaya Mzansi" campaign is an industry-wide project that relies on collaboration and partnership from the wider industry for success and to grow domestic leisure travel to meet targets. SAT partnered with more than 50 tourism companies in South Africa to create discount vouchers ranging from tour-operator services, accommodation and experiences including wine tastings, canopy tours and hiking.

In 2014, SAT introduced a global hub strategy created to effectively deliver the destination marketing message with a wider reach than ever before.

Tourism Enterprise Partnership (TEP)

TEP is a non-profit company that facilitates the growth, development and sustainability of small tourism businesses. This is achieved through a number of products and services that provide hands-on, step-by-step support and guidance, ultimately leading to improved product quality, operational efficiency and market reach.

Funding for TEP's small tourism business development interventions is provided by the NDT as well as the Business Trust, the Tourism Micro-enterprises Support Fund (a sister company that provides funding specifically for the support of micro enterprises), global financial services company Credit Suisse, and the Eastern Cape Development Corporation.

Tourism Indaba

The Tourism Indaba, held from 10 to 12 May, provided an opportunity to showcase South Africa and its people.

The Tourism Indaba that takes place in Durban annually is one of the largest tourism marketing events in Africa and one of the top three events of its kind in the world. For two years in a row, Indaba has won the award for Africa's best travel and tourism show. This award was presented by the Association of World Travel Awards.

It showcases a wide variety of southern Africa's best tourism products and attracts international visitors and media from across the world.

To bolster growth, government has identified core markets, investment markets and tactical markets across regional Africa, the Americas, Asia and Australasia, as well as in Europe.

Meetings Africa

Attendance figures at Meetings Africa 2014 were up by 15% compared to 2013, with a total of 3 295 delegates attending Africa's premier business events trade show.

Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA)

The TGCSA's grading system is South Africa's only officially recognised system for the star-grading of accommodation establishments.

Tourism in the provinces

Western Cape

The Western Cape is South Africa's most developed tourism region.

The tourism industry in the province has grown faster and created more jobs than any other industry.

One in 10 employees in the Western Cape earns a living in the tourism industry, and it contributes more than R25 billion to the provincial economy.

Key attractions

- Table Mountain, which forms part of the Table Mountain National Park, is one of the official New Seven Wonders of Nature, following a lengthy international public voting process. A modern cableway takes visitors to the top of the mountain, providing spectacular views.
- The Victoria and Alfred (V&A) Waterfront, the Company's Gardens, the District Six Museum, the houses of Parliament and the South African National Gallery.
- The Nelson Mandela Gateway to Robben Island is in the Clock Tower Precinct at the V&A Waterfront. It houses interactive multimedia exhibitions, an auditorium, boardrooms, the Robben Island Museum and a restaurant.
- The Gold of Africa Museum, established by Anglo Gold, houses a celebrated collection of more than 350 gold artefacts.
- The South African Rugby Museum in Newlands reflects the history of the sport as far back as 1891.
- All South African wine routes fall under the auspices of the Wine of Origin Scheme. Production is divided into official regions, districts and wards. There are five principle demarcations – Coastal, Breede River Valley, Little Karoo, Olifants River and Boberg, covering 21 districts and 61 wards.
- Jazz is big in Cape Town. From traditional blues through progressive jazz to African-influenced jazz, every taste is catered for at a number of restaurants, jazz cafés, cigar bars, pubs and wine farms. The top jazz event in the Western Cape is the annual Cape Town International Jazz Festival.

Garden Route

The Garden Route features the pont at Malgas, which is one of the two remaining pons in the country, ferrying vehicles

and livestock across the Breede River. This popular route spans roughly 200 km of South Africa's southern coast, incorporating a picturesque stretch of coastline.

Key attractions

- Attequas Kloof Pass, South African/Anglo-Boer War blockhouses and the Bartolomeu Dias complex.
- Great Brak River offers a historic village with many opportunities for whale- and dolphin-watching along the extensive coast.
- The Slave Tree in George, located just outside the Old Library, was planted in 1811. It is known to be the biggest English oak in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Nearby, bungee-jumping at the Gouritz River Gorge, hiking, mountain-biking and angling are popular pastimes.
- The Point in Mossel Bay is popular among surfers and its natural pool formed by rock is also a favourite swimming spot at low tide.
- Genadendal is the oldest Moravian village in Africa, with church buildings and a school dating back to 1738. The Genadendal Mission and Museum complex documents the first mission station in South Africa.
- Villiersdorp houses the Dagbreek Museum that dates back to 1845. The historical home, Oude Radyn, is possibly the only building in the Western Cape to have Batavian wooden gutters and down pipes.

Little Karoo

The Little Karoo's fascinating landscape is fashioned almost entirely by water. Its vegetation ranges from lush greenery in the fertile river valleys to short, rugged Karoo plants in the veld. Gorges feature rivers that cut through towering mountains, while breathtakingly steep passes cross imposing terrain. The region is also home to the world's largest bird – the ostrich.

Key attractions

- Excellent wines and port are produced in the Calitzdorp and De Rust areas.
- The Swartberg Nature Reserve and Pass with their gravel roads are also worth a visit.
- The Little Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (National Arts Festival) is held in Oudtshoorn annually.
- The Cango Caves, a series of 30 subterranean limestone

caves, bear evidence of early San habitation and features magnificent dripstone formations.

- Amalienstein and Zoar are historic mission stations midway between Ladismith and Calitzdorp. Visitors can go on donkey-cart and hiking trails through orchards and vineyards. The Seweweekspoort is ideal for mountain-biking, hiking, and protea and fynbos admirers.

Northern Cape

The Big Hole in Kimberley is the largest hand-dug excavation in the world. In 1871, diamonds were discovered at the site and mined manually by prospectors.

Key attractions

- The house where Sol Plaatje (African National Congress founding member and human-rights activist) lived in Kimberley, has a library of Plaatje's and other black South African writers' works, and several displays, including a portrayal of black involvement in the South African/Anglo-Boer War.
- Known as the "Oasis of the Kalahari", Kuruman is blessed with a permanent and abundant source of water that flows from Gasegonyana (Setswana for "the little water calabash") – commonly called the "Eye of Kuruman" – which yields 20 million litres of water a day.
- The Wonderwerk Cave at Kuruman features extensive San paintings that may be viewed by appointment.
- The Kalahari Raptor Centre cares for injured birds. Many of these majestic creatures can be seen at close quarters.
- Upington is the commercial, educational and social centre of the Green Kalahari, owing its prosperity to agriculture and its irrigated lands along the Orange River. A camel-and-rider statue in front of the town's police station pays tribute to the "mounties", who patrolled the harsh desert territory on camels.
- In September 2013, the Kalahari Desert SpeedWeek was held at Hakskeen Pan, 200 km north of Upington.
- Namaqualand is famous for a spectacular annual show in spring when an abundance of wild flowers covers vast tracts of desert.
- Namaqualand is also home to the Ais-Ais/Richtersveld National Park. It is managed jointly by the local Nama people and South African National Parks.
- De Aar is the most important railway junction in South

Africa. The author Olive Schreiner lived in the town for many years. Visitors can dine in her former house, which has been converted into a restaurant.

- Hanover is known for its handmade shoes and articles made mostly from sheepskin and leather.

Free State

This central region of South Africa is characterised by endless rolling fields of wheat, sunflowers and maize, and forms the principal bread basket of South Africa.

Key attractions

- With its King's Park Rose Garden containing more than 4 000 rose bushes, the Free State's major city, Bloemfontein, has rightfully earned the nickname "City of Roses." The city also hosts an annual rose festival.
- Bloemfontein has a busy cultural and social-events calendar. One of the annual events not to be missed is the Mangaung African Cultural Festival, popularly known as the Macufe Arts Festival, in September every year.
- The National Women's Memorial commemorates the women and children who died in concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer/South African War.
- The Gariep Dam, more than 100 km long and 15 km wide, is part of the Orange River Water Scheme, the largest inland expanse of water in South Africa.
- Between the dam and Bethulie is the Gariep Dam Nature Reserve.
- Clocolan is known for the beauty of its cherry trees when they are in full bloom in spring. San rock paintings and engravings are also found in the area.
- The Llandaff Oratory in the nearby village of Van Reenen is believed to be the smallest Roman Catholic church in the world.
- At Harrismith, there are various memorials in honour of those who fought in the Anglo-Boer/South African War and World War I. Of particular interest is a memorial for the Scots Guards and Grenadier Guards.
- The Golden Gate Highlands National Park outside Clarens has beautiful sandstone rock formations.
- The Vredefort Dome, a World Heritage Site, is the oldest and largest meteorite impact site in the world. It was formed about two billion years ago when a giant meteorite hit Earth.

Eastern Cape

The main feature of the Eastern Cape is its magnificent coastline. Added to the diverse coastal experiences are more than 60 state-owned game reserves and over 30 private game farms, which collectively cover an area greater than the Kruger National Park.

Key attractions

- Within the Port Elizabeth there are some beautiful parks with well-landscaped gardens, including St George's Park, which covers 73 ha and houses the famous Port Elizabeth Cricket Club, the oldest bowling green in South Africa; Prince Alfred's Guard Memorial; the 1882 Victorian Pearson Conservatory; and the 54-ha Settlers' Park.
- To the north-west of Graaff-Reinet lies the Valley of Desolation. The valley is a national monument within the Karoo Nature Reserve, formed millions of years ago by weathering erosion.
- Varied game reserves, including the Addo Elephant, Mountain Zebra and Mkambati parks.
- South Africa's first marine park, the Tsitsikamma National Park extends along a rocky coastline of 50 km, and 3 km out to sea.
- Southern right and humpback whales and their calves are regularly spotted from the high dunes, usually between May and November, while common and bottlenose dolphins are often seen close to shore.

Limpopo

The Limpopo landscape is made up of dramatic contrasts characterised by hot savanna plains and mist-clad mountains, age-old indigenous forests and cycads alongside modern plantations, and ancient mountain fortresses and the luxury of contemporary infrastructure and modern-day facilities.

Key attractions

- The Marakele National Park is home to some rare yellow-wood and cedar trees and the world's largest colony of Cape vultures. It is also a leader in the conservation of the black rhino outside of the Kruger National Park and the KwaZulu-Natal parks.
- Polokwane is considered the premier game-hunting destination in South Africa.

- The Mapungubwe Archaeological Site, 80 km west of Musina, lies within the boundaries of the Mapungubwe National Park. It is one of the richest of its kind in Africa and a world heritage site. Excavations in the 1930s uncovered a royal graveyard, which included a number of golden artefacts, including the famous gold-foil rhinoceros.
- The Kruger National Park (northern section) is one of South Africa's major tourist attractions. The park is home to a large number and wide variety of amphibians, reptiles and birds, as well as 147 mammal species, including the Big Five.

North West

North West has several cultural villages that entertain and attract visitors.

A number of excellent game reserves have been established, including the Pilanesberg National Park.

Key attractions

- The historic route of Mahikeng includes an South African/Anglo-Boer War siege site, the Molema House where Sol Plaatje lived while writing his Mafikeng Diary, and the Mahikeng Museum.
- The Groot Marico region is known as mampoor country and visitors can explore the Mampoor Route. The Kortkloof Cultural Village is dedicated to the Tswana people.
- Ottosdal is the only place in South Africa where the unique "wonderstone", or pyrophyllite, is found and mined.
- The Ottosdal Night Race is organised in conjunction with the Diamond Marathon Club. The event consists of 42,2-km, 21,1-km, 10-km races and a 5-km fun run.
- San rock engravings, Stone Age implements and structures are found on farms such as Witpoort, Gestoptefontein, Driekuil and Korannafontein.

Mpumalanga

The climate and topography vary from cool highland grasslands at 1 600 m above sea level, through the middleveld and escarpment, to the subtropical Lowveld towards the Kruger National Park and many private game reserves.

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

Key attractions

- Barberton features many reminders of the early gold-rush era. Museums include Belhaven, Fernlea House and Stopforth House. The only known verdite deposits in the world are found in the rocks of the Barberton district. The annual Diggers Festival is held in September every year.
- 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. God's Window provides a magnificent panoramic view across miles of densely forested mountains, the green Lowveld and the canyon.
- Sabie is the centre of the largest man-made forest in South Africa and a popular destination among mountain bikers. The Cultural Historical Forestry Museum depicts various aspects of the country's forestry industry.
- The Bridal Veil, Horseshoe and Lone Creek waterfalls, and Mac Mac pools and falls just outside Sabie are well worth a visit.
- The 69-km Prospector's Trail starts at the Mac Mac Forest Station and leads to the Bourke's Luck potholes.
- At the Montrose Falls in Schoemanskloof, the Crocodile River cascades 12 m into a series of rock pools. It is also the starting point of the annual Lowveld Crocodile Canoe Marathon, held in February every year.
- The region also holds rich historical sentiments centred on the monument of the late Mozambican President Samora Machel, constructed in the village of Mbuzini.

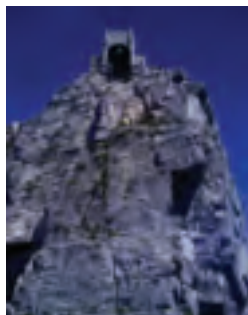
Gauteng

Gauteng is characterised by a cosmopolitan mix of people from all walks of life.

Key attractions

- Natural areas include the Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve (Heidelberg); Braamfontein Spruit Trust, The Wilds on Houghton and the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve in Johannesburg; the Kloofendal Nature Reserve and Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens (in Roodepoort); and the National Botanical Garden, Smuts House Museum, and Freedom Park in Pretoria; as well as the Tswaing Crater Trail.
- A team of Lippizaner stallions performs every Sunday at the South African National Horsemanship Centre in Kyalami.

- 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 of more than 3,3 million years old.
- The Constitution Hill Precinct is set to become one of South Africa's most popular landmarks.
- A guided tour of Soweto leaves 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 Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory opened its doors to the public following the death of former President Nelson Mandela, in December 2013.
- The Union Buildings celebrated its centenary in 2013. Designed by Sir Herbert Baker, construction started in 1910 and was completed in 1913. It has since been the setting for the presidential inauguration of former President Nelson Mandela in 1994, as well as those of former President Thabo Mbeki on 16 June 1999, and 27 April 2004, and of President Jacob Zuma on 9 May 2009, and 24 May 2014. It is also the setting of many national celebrations, including Women's Day and Freedom Day.
- In December 2013, a bronze statue of former President Mandela was unveiled at the Union Buildings.
- The National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria is considered one of the 10 best in the world.
- The old mining town of Cullinan is where the world's biggest diamond, the 3 106-carat Cullinan diamond, was found.



KwaZulu-Natal

One of the country's most popular tourist destinations, the province stretches from Port Edward in the south to the borders of Swaziland and Mozambique to the north.

Key attractions

- The Durban area has more than 50 reserves, developed parks and specialised gardens, the most renowned being the Municipal Botanical Garden. Besides the botanical gardens, Mitchell Park is one of the most popular green spaces, which includes an outdoor restaurant, a zoo and a playground for children.
- Annual events in and around the city include the popular Comrades Marathon between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, an international surfing competition, the Duzi canoe marathon, the Midmar Mile, Dolphin Mile open water swimming events, the July Handicap horse-race, the Amashova-shova cycle tour, and the Spar Mercury Ladies 10 km Challenge.
- The Weza State Forest in East Griqualand runs through indigenous forests and commercial plantations. The forest is home to several antelope species and a huge variety of birds.
- St Lucia and its surroundings comprises the iSimangaliso Wetland Park that have five separate ecosystems. It is a fishing and bird watching paradise. Boat trips on the lake offer opportunities for crocodile and hippo sightings. The Kosi Bay Nature Reserve is part of the Coastal Forest Reserve between Mozambique and Sodwana Bay.
- The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park, one of the largest game parks in South Africa, is home to the Big Five, as well as cheetah and wild dogs.
- The Battlefields Route in northern KwaZulu-Natal has the highest concentration of battlefields and related military sites in South Africa.
- The Midlands Meander is a scenic drive between Hilton and Mooi River, with some 430 art studios, potters and painters, to herb gardens and cheese makers.
- Midmar Dam is zoned for yachting and power-boating. The 1 000-ha Midmar Game Park has rhino, zebra, a wide variety of antelope species and waterfowl.