



Provinces

With its spectacular views, stunning wildlife and unbeatable biodiversity in contrast with its bustling modern cities, and vibrant economy, South Africa is often described as “A world in one country.” The country has more than 290 conservation parks. It is home to almost 300 mammal species, and about 860 bird species, and 8 000 plant species.

The annual sardine run is the biggest migration on the planet.

There are eight World Heritage Sites and seven different biomes. It is considered the cradle of humankind and boasts 40% of all hominid finds on Earth.

South Africa has nine provinces. Each province has its own Legislature, Premier and Executive Council. The country has common boundaries with Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, while Mozambique and Swaziland lie to the north-east. Completely enclosed by South African territory in the south-east is the mountain kingdom of Lesotho.

Eastern Cape

The Eastern Cape, lying on the south-eastern South African coast, is a region of great natural beauty, particularly the rugged cliffs, rough seas and dense green bush of the stretch known as the Wild Coast. In the Eastern Cape, various floral habitats meet. Along the coast, the northern tropical forests intermingle with the more temperate woods of the south.

The province is serviced by airports situated in Port Elizabeth, East London, Mthatha and Bhisho.

The Coega Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) has operational investors on site with private investment of more than R1,2 billion. In addition, secured private investments of R5,4 billion were implemented, with investments of more than R8 billion in the project pipeline. The East IDZ secured R2,2 billion in investments, with a project pipeline of R12,7 billion.

Eastern Cape

Capital: Bhisho

Principal languages:

isiXhosa	78,8%
Afrikaans	10,5%
English	5,6%



Population: 6 562 053

Percentage share of the total population: 12,67%

Area: 168 966 km²

Source: Statistics South Africa (*Census 2011*)

Free State

Capital: Bloemfontein

Principal languages:

Sesotho 64,2%

Afrikaans 12,2%

isiXhosa 7,5%



Population: 2 745 590

Percentage share of the total population: 5,3%

Area: 129 825 km²

Source: Statistics South Africa (*Census 2011*)

Free State

The Free State, a province of wide horizons and blue skies, farmland, mountains, goldfields and widely dispersed towns, lies in the heart of South Africa.

Between the Vaal River in the north and the Orange River in the south, this immense rolling prairie stretches as far as the eye can see.

Mining, particularly gold, is the biggest employer, followed by manufacturing.

The Free State also produces high-quality diamonds from its kimberlite pipes and fissures, and the country's largest deposit of bentonite is found in the Koppies district.

The National Development Plan has intensified the mining potential that still exists in the goldfields region of Matjhabeng in the Lejweleputswa District as a job intervention zone.

The capital, Bloemfontein, houses the Supreme Court of Appeal, a leading university and some top schools. Important towns include Welkom, Sasolburg, Odendaalsrus, Kroonstad, Parys, Phuthaditjhaba, Bethlehem.

The charming village of Clarens situated in the rolling foothills of the Maluti Mountains.

Some of South Africa's most valued San rock art can be found in the Free State.

Other key tourist attractions in the province include the majestic Golden Gate National Park, the annual air show in Bethlehem, the Cherry Festival in Ficksburg, and the Fauresmith International Endurance Ride equestrian event.

The annual Mangaung African Cultural Festival, known as Macufe, is hosted in partnership with the Tourism Authority and the Performing Arts Centre of the Free State.

The Vredefort Dome, 10 km in diameter, is on the United Nations' World Heritage Site List.

Gauteng

Gauteng is the economic centre of South Africa and the continent, responsible for over 34,8% of the country's total gross domestic product, although it is the smallest of South Africa's nine provinces. More than 60% of South Africa's research and development takes place in Gauteng.

Gauteng

Capital: Johannesburg

Principal languages:

isiZulu	19,79%
Afrikaans	12,4%
Sesotho	11,5%
English	13,27%



Population: 12 272 263

Percentage share of the total population: 23,7%

Area: 18 178 km²

Source: Statistics South Africa (*Census 2011*)

Financial and business services, logistics, manufacturing, property, telecommunications and trade are some of the most important economic sectors.

The province is an integrated industrial complex with major areas of economic activity in three subregional areas, namely the Vaal Triangle; the East, West and Central Rand, and Pretoria. Johannesburg houses the Johannesburg Stock Exchange Limited, the largest securities exchange in Africa.

Most overseas visitors enter South Africa via OR Tambo International Airport. Some 50 km north of Johannesburg lies Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa and home to the Union Buildings. The Gauteng Investment Centre, launched in 2013, hosted 52 trade missions during 2013/14.

KwaZulu-Natal

KwaZulu-Natal is one of the country's most popular holiday destinations. This verdant region includes South Africa's lush subtropical east coast. Washed by the warm Indian Ocean, it stretches from Port Edward in the south, and northwards to the Mozambique boundary.

KwaZulu-Natal

Capital: Pietermaritzburg

Principal languages:

isiZulu	77,8%
English	13,1%
Afrikaans	1,5%



Population: 10 267 300

Percentage share of the total population: 19,8%

Area: 94 361 km²

Source: Statistics South Africa (*Census 2011*)

In addition to the magnificent coastline, there is the sweeping savanna in the east, and the majestic Drakensberg mountain range in the west that offers some of the country's most awe-inspiring landscapes.

Within the area is a vast 243 000-hectare sweep of basalt summits and buttresses. This section was formally granted World Heritage status in November 2000, and was renamed uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park.

Visitors can enter the province through the King Shaka International Airport at La Mercy, north of Durban or use the extensive national road network. There are also two major harbours – the port of Durban, which is one of the busiest in Africa, and Richards Bay, which is an important coal-export harbour.

There are several tertiary institutions of learning, such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the Durban Institute of Technology.

KwaZulu-Natal is the only province with a monarchy specifically provided for in the Constitution.

Limpopo

Limpopo, South Africa's northernmost province, borders onto Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Botswana, making it the ideal entrance to Africa. Named after the Limpopo River that flows along its northern border, the province is rich in wildlife, spectacular scenery and a wealth of historical and cultural treasures.

This province is in the Savanna Biome, an area of mixed grassland and trees, which is generally known as bushveld. The province's natural resources include more than 50 provincial reserves, as well as several private game reserves. The largest section of the Kruger National Park is situated along the eastern boundary of Limpopo with Mozambique.

Limpopo

Capital: Polokwane

Principal languages:

Sesotho sa Leboa 52,9%

Tshivenda 16,7%

Xitsonga 16,9%



Population: 5 404 868

Percentage share of the total population: 10,4%

Area: 125 754 km²

Source: Statistics South Africa (*Census 2011*)

Mpumalanga

Capital: Nelspruit

Principal languages:

siSwati	27,67%
isiZulu	24,1%
Xitsonga	10,4%
isiNdebele	10%



Population: 4 039 939

Percentage share of the total population: 7,8%

Area: 76 495 km²

Source: Statistics South Africa (*Census 2011*)

Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga means *Place where the Sun Rises*. Due to the provinces spectacular scenic beauty and abundance of wildlife, it is one of South Africa's major tourist destinations. Mpumalanga falls mainly within the Grassland Biome. The escarpment and the Lowveld form a transitional zone between this grassland area and the Savanna Biome.

The area has a network of excellent roads and railway connections, making it highly accessible. Mpumalanga is also served by a number of small airports, such as the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport.

Mbombela is the capital of the province and the administrative and business centre of the Lowveld. Other important towns are eMalahleni, Standerton, Piet Retief, Malalane, Ermelo, Barberton and Sabie.

Large-scale manufacturing occurs especially in the northern Highveld area, particularly chrome-alloy and steel manufacturing.

Northern Cape

The Northern Cape is the largest province in South Africa, (slightly bigger than Germany) – taking up almost a third of the country's total land area.

The province is noted for its San rock art, diamond diggings, 4X4 safaris and the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. It is a vast stretch of semi-desert land.

Northern Cape

Capital: Kimberley

Principal languages:

Afrikaans	53,75%
Setswana	33,08%



Population: 1 145 861

(*Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2011*)

Percentage share of the total population: 2,2%

Area: 372 889 km²

Source: Statistics South Africa (*Census 2011*)

The province is renowned for its spectacular display of spring flowers, which, for a short period every year, attracts thousands of tourists.

Sutherland hosts the southern hemisphere's largest astronomical observatory, the multinational-sponsored Southern African Large Telescope. The Northern Cape is one of two sites to host the Square Kilo-metre Array radio-telescope (better known as the SKA Project). Developed by scientists from 17 countries, it will be the largest and most advanced radio telescope in the world.

Among many other benefits, the province's tourism and hospitality industry is profiting from the project, as scientists and other interested parties are flooding into the town of

North West

Capital: Mahikeng

Principal languages:

Setswana 63,38%

Afrikaans 8,96%

isiXhosa 5,51%

Population: 3 509 953

Percentage share of the total population: 6,8%

Area: 140 882 km²



Source: Statistics South Africa (*Census 2011*)

Carnarvon.

North West

North West lies in the north of South Africa, on the Botswana border, fringed by the Kalahari desert in the west, Gauteng to the east, and the Free State to the south. Sun City, the Pilanesberg National Park, the Madikwe Game Reserve, the Cradle of Humankind Site, the Taung Heritage Site, the De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Trust and the Lesedi Cultural Village are some of the tourist attractions.

Some of the largest cattle herds in the world are found at Stellaland near Vryburg, which explains why this area is often referred to as the Texas of South Africa. Marico is also cattle country. North West is South Africa's major producer of white maize.

Mining contributes 23,3% to North West's economy, and makes up 22,5% of the South African mining industry. It is known as the Platinum Province for the wealth of this metal it has underground. The Rustenburg and Brits districts produce 94% of the country's platinum. In addition to granite, marble, fluorspar and diamonds, the province also produces a quarter of South Africa's gold.

Western Cape

Capital: Cape Town**Principal languages:**

Afrikaans 49,6%

isiXhosa 24,7%

English 20,2%

Population: 5 822 734**Percentage share of the total population:** 11,2%**Area:** 129 462 km²Source: Statistics South Africa (*Census 2011*)

Western Cape

Situated on the south-western tip of Africa, the Western Cape with its wide beaches and breathtaking scenery, complemented by a rich variety of cultures, historical landmarks, world-class restaurants and entertainment, is a world-famous tourist destination.

Table Mountain, the Cape winelands, Robben Island and the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens are among the province's most popular tourist attractions.

The Western Cape is also known for its floral diversity. The Cape Floristic Region World Heritage Site comprising eight separate protected areas, covers an area of more than 553 000 ha stretching from the Cape Peninsula to the Eastern Cape. The Knysna-Tsitsikamma region has the country's biggest indigenous forests.

In October 2013, SAF3, the new television show running in the United States of America, and already sold worldwide, was being filmed on location in Cape Town. SAF3 was one of the biggest TV series yet filmed in South Africa, bringing 103 filming days, over 200 jobs, and approximately R160-million into the local economy.

All post-production was done in South Africa, which was a first for an international television series of this scale. Cape Town has proved again that it's a film-friendly destination, and it's reaping the benefits.

The Department of Trade and Industry's rebate, which offers international productions like SAF3 up to 25% of their qualifying South Africa spend back, is also a big incentive for foreign film makers.