



Tourism

Tourism

South Africa's status as a premier global leisure destination is firmly established. The country has the capability and the means, the welcoming culture, the diversity and the scenic beauty that the world's travellers are looking for when they choose a destination.

In addition, South Africa's tourism sector is emerging as one of the most important pillars of the country's economy in terms of growth and competition with other emerging world economies. This industry contributes significantly towards creating employment, growing the economy and developing entrepreneurs. It presents opportunities for self-employment, contributing to rural and urban development and foreign exchange earnings.

The purpose of the Department of Tourism is to be a catalyst for tourism growth and development in South Africa, as well as drive the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS), which was adopted in 2011.

To this end, the department has established an International Tourism Management Branch to provide strategic, political and policy direction for the development of South Africa's tourism potential throughout the world.

Furthermore, public and stakeholder participation has been concluded, and the draft Tourism Bill has been developed as a legal framework and introduced in Parliament.

During the last five years, South Africa has outpaced the growth of all competitor locations in the leisure arrivals category. Foreign direct spend in rand terms has grown faster than arrivals, with an 11% per year growth rate.

International tourist arrivals in South Africa grew by 10,2% year-on-year to almost 9,2 million in 2012, more than double the global average of around 4%. In 1993, South Africa received a mere 3,4 million foreign visitors. By 2012, the figure had grown by 300% to 13,5 million visitors, of which 9,2 million were tourists.

Europe remained the highest source of overseas tourists to South Africa in 2012, with arrivals growing by 9,5% year-on-year to 1 396 978 tourists, and the United Kingdom (UK) holding its position as South Africa's biggest overseas tourism market: 438 023 UK tourists travelled to South Africa in 2012, a 4,2% increase from 2011.

The United States of America (USA) was South Africa's second biggest overseas market, with the numbers up by 13,6% to 326 643 tourists, followed by Germany in third place, up 13% to 266 333 tourists. France, up 16% to 122 244 tourists in 2012, is now South Africa's fifth biggest overseas market.

The biggest growth in 2012 came from Asia and South America, driven by large increases in arrivals from South Africa's BRICS partners Brazil, Russia, India and China. Since 2009, arrivals from China have more than tripled, while arrivals from Brazil and India, respectively, have more than doubled.

China became South Africa's fourth biggest overseas market at 132 334 tourists last year, up 55,9% on 2011 figures, while Indian arrivals grew by 18,2% to 106 774 visitors, and Brazilian arrivals grew by 44,7% to 78 376 visitors.

Africa remained the pillar of South Africa's tourism economy, with growth from the continent up by 8,5%.

From an African continental perspective, Nigeria and Tanzania were two of the continent's biggest growth markets during the past financial year, with tourist arrivals from these two countries growing by 37,5% and 45,8%, respectively.

Business tourism has also increased, especially since the establishment of the country's first South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB) as a business unit under South African Tourism (SAT). For the next five years, South Africa has already secured over 200 international conferences, which are estimated to attract 300 000 delegates and provide an economic boost of more than R1,6 billion.

Foreign tourists spent a total of R76,4 billion in South Africa in 2012, up 7,6% on the total foreign direct spend in the country in 2011.

Legislation and policies

The Department of Tourism operates under the following legislation and policies.

- The Tourism Bill 2012 was presented to the Portfolio Committee in February 2013. The Bill's provides for the development and promotion of sustainable tourism for the

In June 2012, CNNgo, the travel wing of CNN International, listed Cape Town as one of the World's 10 Most Loved Cities, alongside cities such as Barcelona, New York, Paris, San Francisco, Montreal and Tokyo. According to CNNgo, Cape Town was chosen because of its "sweet harbour, nice architecture, weather, lovely waterfront shopping and the wonder of wonders, Table Mountain." Tourism contributes over 10% to the region's gross domestic product. During 2012, there was a 14% increase in international tourism arrivals at Cape International Airport.

social, economic and environmental benefit of South African citizens. With that in mind, the Bill boasts five key objectives, namely:

- promoting the practice of responsible tourism
- providing for the effective marketing of South Africa, both domestically and internationally
- promoting quality tourism products and services
- promoting the growth and development of the sector
- effective intergovernmental relations in developing and managing tourism
- The Tourism Act, 1993 (Act 72 of 1993) provides for:
 - promoting tourism to and in South Africa
 - regulating and rationalising the tourism industry
 - implementing measures aimed at the maintenance and enhancement of the standards of facilities and services hired out or made available to tourists
 - coordinating and rationalising the activities of people who are active in the tourism industry
 - establishing a board with legal powers
 - authorising the Minister of Tourism to establish a grading and classification scheme in respect of accommodation establishments
 - authorising the Minister to establish schemes for prescribed sectors of the tourism industry
 - registering tourist guides

- prohibiting any person to act for gain as a tourist guide unless he has been registered as a tourist guide in terms of the Act
- authorising the Minister to make regulations.

Budget and funding

The NTSS seeks to increase tourism's total direct and indirect contribution to the economy from R189,4 billion in 2009 to R318,2 billion in 2015 and R499 billion in 2020.

To ensure the achievement of the sector's targets, the department will support the implementation of the NTSS and work towards increasing the number of foreign arrivals from 9 933 966 in 2009 to 12 068 030 by 2015, and increasing the number of domestic tourists from 14 600 000 in 2009 to 16 000 000 by 2015.

The department's spending focus over the medium term is on increasing the number of tourists from other African countries.

Expenditure increased from R1,2 billion in 2008/09 to R1,3 billion in 2011/12, at an average annual rate of 1,7%, mainly due to allocations for the refurbishment of an office building acquired in 2011/12, and for the implementation of the Tourism 2010 Plan, which enabled South Africa to meet its obligations to FIFA.

These allocations also explain the growth in spending on goods and services, which increased from R75,5 million to R127,7 million between 2008/09 and 2011/12, at an average annual rate of 19%.

Over the medium term, expenditure is expected to increase to R1,6 billion at an average annual rate of 7,7%. This increase is mainly due to an additional allocation of R218 million for SAT to expand tourism from Africa.

The department received additional allocations of R4,7 million in 2012/13, R5,1 million in 2013/14 and R5,6 million in 2014/15 for improved conditions of service. A Cabinet-approved baseline cut of R1,3 million in 2012/13, R667 000 in 2013/14, and R831 000 in 2014/15 was also made.

Between 2012/13 and 2014/15, R29,6 million was allocated for spending on consultants

During 2011/12, the Department of Tourism developed the Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy, as well as the Rural Tourism Strategy. The former aims to mainstream heritage and cultural resources into the ambit of tourism, thereby enhancing the country's competitive edge as a tourist destination. The Rural Tourism Strategy will in turn focus on ensuring a more even geographic spread of tourism, with more emphasis on supporting tourism growth in rural areas in particular, with more rural community involvement.

to provide support to the department's internal audit unit.

Role players

South African Tourism (SAT)

SAT is mandated to market South Africa internationally as a preferred tourism destination, to maximise the economic potential of tourism for the country and its people.

SAT encourages the trade to take domestic tourism seriously; to target products, experiences and marketing campaigns at domestic tourists and to creatively manage products and services to meet the specific consumer needs of domestic tourists.

The It's Here, Vaya Mzansi Campaign is an industry-wide campaign that relies on collaboration and partnership from the wider industry for success and to grow domestic leisure travel to meet targets.

Its website, www.vayamzansi.co.za, offers more than 100 special offers and leisure deals to domestic tourists. They include experiences across South Africa that offer excellent value for money.

SAT has partnered with more than 50 tourism companies in South Africa to create discount vouchers ranging from tour-operator services, accommodation and experiences including wine-tasting, canopy tours and hiking.

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.

In 2012/13, 25 South African beaches were awarded Blue Flag status. The Blue Flag is a voluntary eco-label awarded to approximately 3 650 beaches and marinas in 46 countries across Europe, South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, New Zealand, Brazil, Canada and the Caribbean for excelling in safety, cleanliness, water quality, provision of amenities and maintenance of environmental standards.

The following South African beaches received Blue Flag accreditation:

Eastern Cape

- Dolphin Beach, Jeffrey's Bay
- Humewood Beach, Port Elizabeth
- Kariega Beach, Kenton-on-Sea
- Kelly's Beach, Port Alfred
- Robberg 5 Beach, Plettenberg Bay

KwaZulu-Natal

- Lucien Beach, South Coast
- Marina/San Lameer Beach, South Coast
- Ramsgate Beach, South Coast
- Trafalgar Beach, South Coast
- Umzumbe (Pumula) Beach, South Coast

Northern Cape

- McDougalls Bay Beach, Port Nolloth

Western Cape

- Bikini Beach, Gordon's Bay
- Camps Bay Beach, Cape Town
- Clifton 4th Beach, Cape Town
- Grotto Beach, Hermanus
- Hartenbos Beach, Mossel Bay
- Hawston Beach, near Hermanus
- Kleinmond Beach, Kleinmond
- Llandudno, Cape Town
- Lappiesbaai Beach, Stilbaai
- Mnandi Beach, Cape Town
- Muizenberg Beach, Cape Town
- Santos Beach, Mossel Bay
- Strandfontein Beach, Cape Town
- Witsand Beach, mouth of the Breede River
- Silberboom Beach, West Coast

The Blue Flag Programme is owned and run by the non-government, non-profit organisation the Foundation for Environmental Education.

Funding for TEP's Small Tourism Business Development interventions is provided by the National Department of Tourism 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.

In 2011/12, TEP trained over 3 500 tourism individuals, assisted small tourism businesses to create over 5 000 jobs and increased their revenue by just under R500 million.

Tourism Indaba

The Tourism Indaba is an annual event that takes place in Durban. It is one of the largest tourism marketing events in Africa and one of the top three events of its kind in the world. It showcases a wide variety of Southern Africa's best tourism products, and attracts international visitors and media from across the world.

More than 13 000 delegates from around the world attended the event in 2012. Approximately 1 800 exhibitors showcased new products reflecting the latest global trends in tourism, while representatives of influential industry stakeholders with more than 200 international hosted buyers were guests at the event.

The 2013 Tourism Indaba was a four-day event, from 11 to 14 May 2013.

Meetings Africa

Meetings Africa is an annual exhibition that serves as SAT's marketing platform to expose local and international buyers to the range of services and products in southern Africa's MICE (meetings, incentives, conference and exhibitions) industry.

It is the biggest business-to-business tourism exhibition on the African continent. The 2012 event introduced the industry to the SANCB, an entity that provides a strategic and operational platform from which to boost the country's business tourism global competitiveness.

The bureau is central to South Africa's ambition to leverage the global opportunities to

remain Africa's number one host of meetings and conferences.

The bureau has set a 2012/13 target of supporting at least 30 bids for new international meetings, with a potential of 18 000 delegates and R162 million in direct economic spend.

Meetings Africa 2013 saw a record number of hosted buyers and brisk business, as well as regional cooperation to grow Africa's share of the global business events market. Almost 9 000 meetings were held over the two days and 2 884 delegates attended.

There were 300 international, regional and local buyers in attendance, 30% more than last year. The Indian market was best represented from a buyer perspective. There were more than 30 buyers from India, 20 from the USA and Canada, 13 from China, nine from Brazil, and eight from Germany and Russia, respectively.

There were also buyers from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Spain, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, the UK and the Ukraine.

Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education and Training Authority (Theta)

Theta is the sector education and training authority (Seta) established under the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998), for the tourism, hospitality and sport economic sector.

The National Tourism Careers Expo is a forum where young people from high schools, Further Education and Training colleges and universities are exposed to existing professional and career opportunities that exist within the tourism sphere. This programme was initiated in 2008, also as a response to the gaps identified in the 2007 Tourism Skills Audit. This intervention is also prudent in exposing the tourism industry to the host of skills that exist among young people of this country that the industry could harness and benefit from. The third expo was held in September 2012 in East London in the Eastern Cape.

Theta comprises the following chambers:

- hospitality
- conservation and tourist guiding
- sport, recreation and fitness
- tourism and travel services
- gaming and lotteries.

Every chamber has its own committee that helps Theta to identify industry needs.

As a Seta, Theta's main function is to contribute to raising skills, or bringing skills to the employed or those wanting to be employed in their sector. This is done by ensuring that people learn skills that are needed by employers and communities.

Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA)

In June 2012, the Minister of Tourism, Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk, announced the appointment of the new Awards Committee of the TGCSA.

The committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation and management of the TGCSA's grading system, South Africa's only officially recognised system for the star-grading of accommodation establishments.

Establishments are assessed according to the type of accommodation they provide. There are currently nine types of establishments:

- formal service accommodation (hotels, lodges)
- self-catering
- backpacker and hostelling
- caravans and camping
- meetings, exhibitions and special events.

About 1 160 properties have entered the tourism sector as lodges, guest houses or hotels after complying with TGCSA standards.

Tourism Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Charter Council

In May 2009, the Tourism Sector Charter was gazetted as a Section 9 sector charter of the BBBEE Act, 2003 (Act 53 of 2003), giving it the same legal status as the BBBEE Codes of Good Practice.

The Tourism BBBEE Charter Council's roles include:

- providing guidance on sector-specific matters effecting BBBEE in entities within the sector
- compiling reports on the status of BBBEE within the sector for the Minister and the BEE Advisory Council
- sharing information with sector members, approved accreditation agencies and the Minister pertaining to BBBEE in the sector.

In September 2012, Minister Van Schalkwyk appointed the new members of council.

Programmes and projects

National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS)

The vision of the NTSS is to position South Africa as one of the top 20 tourism destinations globally by 2020.

The overall goal of the strategy is to drive the tourism economy, enhance visitor experiences, position South Africa as a destination of choice and sustain good governance in the industry.

The key focus areas of the NTSS are arrivals, gross domestic product (GDP) and job creation. In the area of job creation, the tourism sector is working towards creating 225 000 jobs by 2020.

As part of the broader perspective of the National Tourism Sector Strategy, the National Department of Tourism launched the Sommelier Programme in November 2012. Also known as wine stewarding, sommelier is a much sought-after skill in the culinary world. The department has invested an amount of R11 million and appointed the Cape Wine Academy to present a 12-month training programme for 200 previously unemployed youths between the ages of 18 to 34 years in the following courses:

- Wine Service
- Preliminary Wine
- Certificate Wine
- Front of House
- Marketing
- Wines of the World.

The Department of Tourism hosted a Local Government Tourism Conference in February 2013 at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg under the theme *Tourism Development: Why Local Government Matters*. The purpose of the conference was to provide a platform for dialogue among public and private sector tourism stakeholders, including leadership, to engage, share information on tourism developments and challenges at the local government level.

To achieve all of this, the NTSS focuses on domestic tourism, with the intention to increase the number of domestic trips from 30,9 million in 2009 to 54 million by 2020.

Regional tourism is also be targeted, with South Africa looking to take advantage of markets such as outbound tourists who have not been tapped into in the past.

This strategy represents the department's commitment to intelligent planning and policy formulation. It was developed over a two-year period in close collaboration with local and provincial government, an advisory panel of top industry minds, representatives of various professional bodies, academia, tourism marketing agencies, civil society and the broader public.

The NTSS is a document that the entire sector is committed to and includes coordinated and credible targets. The strategy rests on three pillars, namely:

- driving the tourism economy
- enhancing visitor experiences
- ensuring sustainability and good governance in the industry.

Tourism Support Programme (TSP)

The TSP is a reimbursable cash grant designed to support setting up tourism-related businesses. A key objective is to spread tourism investment across South Africa, while job creation is also a priority. It was introduced in 2008 and is set to end in 2014. A grant of between 15% and 30% of investment costs for start-up and expansion is offered. So far, 545 applications have been approved with an incentive value of R1,1 billion.

Originally managed by the Department of Trade and Industry, the TSP was transferred to the Department of Tourism from April 2013 in line with the Industrial Policy Action Plan 2011/12 – 2013/14. This means that the Department of Tourism will in future also develop and implement an incentive that is better aligned with the current strategic priorities of the tourism sector.

Hospitality Youth Initiative (HYI)

The Hospitality Youth Initiative is aimed at helping unemployed youth to find meaningful employment in the hospitality industry at entry level. The programme targets unemployed youths between the ages of 18 and 35, with a matric qualification.

The programme, which started in 2010, initially took in 300 youths for training.

It is divided into two phases. The first phase provides an intensive one-month theoretical training course for entry into the hospitality industry. Training focuses on communication, life skills, customer care, leadership, and HIV and AIDS management.

On completion of the first phase, learners are placed in tourism establishments where they receive on-the-job training with internationally accepted standards as laid down by the hospitality industry. At the end of the training, beneficiaries receive certificates of competence and can be absorbed by hospitality establishments.

National Tourism Service Excellence Requirements

In February 2012, the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms Tokozile Xasa, launched the National Tourism Service Excellence Requirements in Johannesburg.

The requirements are aimed at improving and maintaining service levels at all service touch points in the tourism value chain, as well as guiding the sector to achieve the NTSS's objective of positioning South Africa as one of the top 20 global tourism destinations.

Previously the tourism value chain in South Africa did not have integrated standards and

norms, and this contributed to inconsistencies in service levels. Research conducted in 2009 identified inconsistent service levels and a lacking culture of complaining about poor service as critical challenges in the sector. The Service Excellence Requirements will provide a yardstick that will be used by all tourism service providers in the value chain to deliver quality service and experiences that equal or surpass world standards.

The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) developed the standards on behalf of the tourism sector and benchmarked them against international requirements. The requirements have four key focus areas namely marketing, products, delivery of service, and monitoring and evaluation.

The Deputy Minister also introduced a National Service Excellence campaign under the theme *Excellent Service Starts with Me*. The campaign is aimed at creating awareness and educating consumers and tourism product owners about the requirements. It was rolled out in the nine provinces from July 2012.

National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism (NMSRT)

Responsible tourism is a tourism management strategy in which the tourism sector and tourists take responsibility to protect and conserve the natural environment, respect and conserve local cultures and ways of life, and contribute to stronger local economies and a better quality of life for local people.

In October 2012, South Africa won 32 awards in the 2012 World Travel Awards for Africa. These included Durban's International Convention Centre being named Africa's leading conference centre.

South African Airways was named Africa's leading airline as well as leading airline economy class. Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport was voted the leading airport, Durban the leading port, and the Blue Train the leading luxury train on the continent.

Cape Town was voted Africa's leading beach destination.

It includes providing better holiday experiences for guests and good business opportunities for tourism enterprises. The concept of responsible tourism is gaining ground as a newly emerging and growing trend worldwide.

The National Department of Tourism, in partnership with tourism stakeholders and the private sector, particularly accreditation agencies, developed the NMSRT. Prior to the development of the NMSRT, there were various schemes certifying the sustainability of tourism businesses using different sets of criteria.

By developing a single set of standards to be applied throughout South Africa, the different sets of criteria that were used for certifying the sustainability of tourism businesses has been brought together. The draft NMSRT, developed through a consultative process with the wider tourism sector role players, was approved by the SABS in 2011. South Africa has thus taken the lead within the continent by publishing a set of national minimum standards that are aligned to international standard ISO/IEC 17011.

The NMSRT comprise 41 criteria, divided into four categories, namely:

- sustainable operations and management
- economic criteria
- social and cultural criteria
- environmental criteria.

Imvelo Awards

Imvelo means "nature" in South Africa's Nguni languages. The Imvelo Responsible Tourism Awards were initiated to coincide with the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in South Africa in 2002. They recognise tourism and hospitality businesses that make a real, measurable and sustained contribution to responsible tourism.

The awards are in line with the responsible tourism guidelines for the South African hospitality industry and the United Nations (UN) World Tourism Organisation's (UNWTO) code of ethics. Imvelo is also supported by the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme. The Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa is the custodian of Imvelo. The main Imvelo partners for 2012 are Absa, the Depart-

ment of Tourism, the Department of Water Affairs, Eskom, the Industrial Development Corporation and Don't Waste Services.

The overall winner in 2012 was Riverside Sun Resort, while the group winner was Sun International Zambia and the independent winner was Ulusaba Private Game Reserve.

The Chairman's Award is independent of the other awards and may be awarded to any organisation or individual making a meaningful contribution to responsible tourism. The winner in this category was Mavuso Msimang, chairperson of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa, who is heading up a government project to address the issue of rhino poaching in South Africa.

Tourism Month

Tourism Month is an annual celebration held in September to focus on the importance of tourism to South Africa's economy.

In 2012, South Africa adopted the UNWTO's theme for World Tourism Day on 27 September, namely *Tourism and Sustainable Energy: Powering Sustainable Development*. The Department of Tourism led the celebrations with a number of events.

The strategic objectives of Tourism Month include:

- raising awareness of travel and tourism within the country, with focus on the less visited local destinations
- promoting geographic spread
- celebrating and generating awareness of the enormous contribution domestic tourism contributes to the economy and to job creation
- entrenching a culture of domestic tourism through strategic activities designed to engage South Africans to travel their own country. These include campaigns such as the Vaya Mzansi campaign.

Vaya Mzansi

The NTSS has identified domestic tourism as a critical element, not only in reaching the job creation targets set by government, but, in doing so, also developing a sustainable and

reliable basis on which future tourism growth can flourish. The Vaya Mzansi campaign, which was launched in 2012, aims to provide more affordable and accessible tourism experiences for the domestic market.

This is effectively supported by the campaign *Whatever You're Looking For, It's Right Here in South Africa*, which was launched in May 2012. It is aimed at increasing domestic tourism's contribution to 60%, of the overall tourism sector contribution to the GDP, by 2020.

The strategy also addresses issues of geographic spread and seasonality, to increase the number of first-time domestic holiday travellers, the number of leisure travellers, as well as the number of domestic holiday trips from four million in 2009 to nine million in 2020.

In 2011, domestic tourism contributed about R20 billion to the national economy. In the first quarter of 2012, more than five million domestic trips were recorded in South Africa, injecting R5,2 billion to the economy.

International tourism

SAT recognises that the world scenario has been changing since the 2009 global financial crisis, as South Africa's core market of European travellers has significantly decreased. As a result, SAT has been shifting focus to other markets, such as India, China and Brazil.

SAT also increased efforts throughout continental Africa by opening regional hubs, as Africa is becoming an important source of tourism to South Africa. SAT opened up hubs in Nigeria and Ghana to serve the West African market, in Kenya to serve the East Africa market, and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to serve Central Africa. This strategy offered a positive return on investment.

SAT's five-year plan contains five different programmes, aimed at:

- increasing international arrivals, focusing on regional Africa
- promoting global visibility of the South African brand
- ensuring delivery of quality experiences using global best-practice grading systems
- ensuring quality execution of approved business plans and budgets
- providing the human resources, systems and structures to support the execution of SAT's business plans and budgets.

In an effort to make South Africa a most preferred tourism brand by 2014, obtaining at least a 79% brand awareness, SAT looked at three criteria: brand knowledge, brand journey, and conversion of positive brand awareness to sales.

SAT introduced a new grading system for universal accessibility in 2011, and 800 establishments have already been certified as universally accessible. SAT aims to grade 9 000 properties by 2016/17.

Guidelines for international tourists

Every international traveller to South Africa must have a valid passport and, where necessary, a visa.

The Immigration Act, 2002 (Act 13 of 2002), stipulates that all visitors to South Africa are required to have at least one blank page (both back and front) in their passport to enable the entry visa to be issued. If there is insufficient space in the passport, entry will be denied.

Enquiries may be directed to South African diplomatic representatives abroad or to the Department of Home Affairs in Pretoria. Visas are issued free of charge.

Visitors who intend travelling between South Africa and neighbouring countries are advised to apply for multiple-entry visas.

Passport-holders of certain countries are exempt from visa requirements.

Tourists must satisfy immigration officers that they have the means to support themselves during their stay and that they have return or onward tickets. They must also have valid international health certificates.

The popular Tjing Tjing Rooftop Bar in Cape Town came in fourth on *Condé Nast Traveler's* list of Best New Bars in 20 Cities worldwide, it was announced in the international magazine's July 2012 issue.

Visitors from the yellow-fever belt in Africa and the USA, and those who travel through or disembark in these areas, have to be inoculated against the disease.

Malaria is endemic to parts of KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. It is essential to take anti-malaria precautions when visiting these areas.

Remote areas in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo are low-risk malaria areas and standard precautions should be taken.

Foreign tourists visiting South Africa can have their value-added tax (VAT) refunded, provided the value of the items purchased exceeds R20. VAT is refunded on departure at the point of exit.

South Africa's transport infrastructure – airlines, railroads, roads, luxury touring buses (coaches) and motor cars – is such that tourists can travel comfortably and quickly from their port of entry to any part of the country.

South African Airways, as well as a number of international airlines, operate regular scheduled flights to and from South Africa. Several domestic airlines operate in the country. There are also mainline trains to all parts of the country.

The tourist-accommodation industry in South Africa provides a wide spectrum of accommodation, from formal hotels to informal holiday flats and cottages, game lodges and reserves, guest houses, youth hostels and bed-and-breakfast establishments.

Tourist guiding

Tourist guides are among the first and last contact people for tourists. All 11 200 tourist guides in South Africa are brand ambassadors.

Government recognises that tourist guiding is an ideal entry point into the sector, particularly for previously disadvantaged groups. Therefore, it will be pursuing a developmental approach to law enforcement and local community participation, particularly in areas rich with natural, cultural and historical resources.

The department aims to create awareness among consumers, product owners and aspirant tourist guides to ensure that there is com-

pliance with the law. Illegal guiding is not only a crime, but could also destroy the country's brand.

Tourism niche markets **Adventure tourism**

Adventure tourism in South Africa is a thriving niche market. The country's diverse terrain, together with an ideal climate for outdoor activities, makes it perfect for activities such as climbing, surfing, diving, hiking, horseback safaris, mountain biking, river rafting – and just about any other extreme activity, all of which is supported by dedicated operators.

South Africa offers some of the best and most diverse rock climbing, as well as abseiling opportunities in the world. Those who prefer rivers have a choice of trips ranging from mostly scenic to Grade 5 white water rafting. Opportunities to practice the art of canyoning – known as "kloofing" in South Africa – with both self-guided and escorted trips are also available.

For those who want to take to the skies, there are more than 100 listed paragliding or hang gliding launch sites, as well as numerous lesser known sites. There are also many opportunities for helicopter rides, balloon flights, aerobatics, skydiving and microlight flights.

Thousands of kilometres of hiking trails wind around the country in desert, forest, mountain or coastal terrain, many with mountain bike trails adjacent.

In addition, South Africa offers a wide variety of horse trails through vineyards, on the beach, in the mountains, and for the more adventurous there are also horseback safaris in big game reserves.

The 216-metre Bloukrans bridge on the border of the Eastern and Western Cape offers the highest commercial bungee jump in the world.

Business tourism

South Africa remains in the top 15 long-haul business-events destinations in the world and is the premier business-events destination in Africa.

The business events industry was identified as an important component in helping to reach the NTSS's target of 15 million international arrivals by 2020.

Government recognises business events tourism as an area with significant growth potential and has therefore established the first SANCB to further promote growth in the conferencing industry.

The SANCB is tasked with coordinating national bidding, undertaking research and collaborating with city and provincial convention bureaus and the business events industry to present a united front for destination South Africa.

For the next five years, South Africa has already secured over 200 international conferences that are estimated to attract 300 000 delegates and an additional R1,6 billion to the economy.

In 2011, South Africa had 392 000 business travellers, of which 140 000 attended conferences and meetings.

Cruise tourism

The Department of Tourism aims to help position the tourism sector in such a manner that its economic benefits become a reality to all South Africans.

The department is exploring ways to ensure that South Africa increases its global competitiveness such as identifying and further developing niche markets.

The department works closely with the cruise line industry to ensure that packages and excursions are developed and that passengers are encouraged to visit the country's shores, enjoy what it has on offer and inspire other travellers to visit South Africa.

Cultural tourism

Heritage and cultural tourism is the fastest emerging competitive niche within domestic and international tourism markets. This category accounts for 40% of international tourism.

A new strategy to promote heritage and cultural tourism was launched by Minister Van Schalkwyk in March 2012.

The Tourism Greening and Climate Change Programme initiated by the Department of Tourism aims to promote efficient use of natural resources.

The department in partnership with Eskom, the departments of environmental affairs and of water affairs, conducted resource efficiency and tourism greening workshops in 2011/12 to educate and create awareness of resource efficiency within the tourism sector.

The Department of Trade and Industry, together with stakeholders in the sector, also developed a National Tourism and Climate Change Response Programme and Action Plan to ensure that the tourism sector responds effectively to the challenge of climate change.

The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through the implementation of energy efficiency measures is a major focus of the sector's Climate Change Response Programme. A brochure on tourism and climate change has been developed to create awareness for industry role players.

The strategy is aimed at guiding the integration of heritage and cultural resources into mainstream tourism. It is set to stimulate sustainable livelihoods through heritage and cultural tourism products and to diversify the tourism sector and raise awareness of heritage and cultural resources.

In developing the National Heritage and Cultural Strategy, the tourism department engaged with a range of stakeholders in the heritage and cultural fields, as well as the tourism and private sectors and local communities.

Medical tourism

South Africa has emerged as a medical tourism destination of choice for travellers from other African countries, as well as further afield; and the industry is proving to be a market with extensive growth potential.

In a move designed to showcase South Africa's high-quality facilities and services for health, wellness and medical care to foreign markets, the Medical Tourism Association of South Africa launched a web portal in collaboration with a number of stakeholders at the Medi-Clinic Morningside in February 2012.

Medical tourism, or the process of seeking medical treatment in another country, is a fast-growing source of income. It covers both elective procedures and specialised operations such as joint replacement and spinal fusion.

Most medical tourists come to South Africa for cosmetic surgery, but the country's skilled surgeons can also provide organ transplants, cardiac, orthopaedic and obesity surgery, and dentistry.

Nature-based tourism

South Africa's fauna and flora and variety of landscapes have enormous recreational value and attract several million tourists each year.

Protected natural areas serve not only to maintain biodiversity, but sustainable visitor access to these areas adds economic, recreational and aesthetic value to that which is being conserved within their borders. It also helps to preserve a wealth of traditional indigenous knowledge related to biodiversity, which is in itself a tourism resource.

South Africa boasts 19 national parks, as well as numerous private game farms and nature reserves. Three of the country's eight UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) world heritage sites are natural sites, while one is a mixed cultural/natural site. These are the Cape Floral Region, the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, the Vrededorst Dome, and the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park.

Birding is experiencing fast growth and interest both internationally and locally. South Africa's national birding organisation – Birdlife South Africa – boasts a membership of more than 8 000 and has 40 branches nationwide.

South Africa's popularity as an avi-tourism destination is due to the large number of birds, endemic species and major bird habitats.

Rural tourism

The Department of Tourism's National Rural Strategy is aimed at creating a community-driven bed-and-breakfast operation, catering for international and domestic tourists.

South African Airways (SAA) launched two new mobile applications (apps) allowing customers to access their travel information on the go. The two new apps are available on iOS or Android mobile phones and tablets and allows customers to view their booking information, check in for a flight, find the status of their checked-in luggage and view information on flights, lounges and destinations.

Passengers can also search for information on special fares, view Voyager status and miles, use a currency converter, or get an updated 10-day forecast of the weather at any destination to which SAA flies.

Travellers can download the newly developed mobile apps – which became operational at the end of March 2013 – from the Apple App Store and Google play stores, respectively.

The department also aims to create a platform to develop opportunities for rural development and to create an enabling environment for rural tourism development to stimulate job creation.

This strategy is also in line with the NTSS, which highlights the issue of seasonality and geographic spread as challenges that make it difficult to spread the benefits of tourism.

In supporting the geographic spread of tourism with more emphasis on supporting tourism growth in rural areas and enhancing the supply of rural tourism products, the department will focus more weight towards supporting tourism in rural areas, with the involvement of rural communities.

The department, through its Expanded Public Works Programme budget, has allocated R20 million for the third phase of the project.

In growing the country as a destination of choice, the Department of Tourism has developed the Culture and Heritage as well as the Rural Tourism strategies.

Culture and heritage products are the fastest emerging competitive niche products in the domestic and international markets.

South Africa's competitiveness improved from 66th to 55th out of 139 countries that are rich in natural and cultural resources.

Sustainable development will be achieved if the beneficiaries or people, whose land, culture and natural resources are used for tourism, benefit from such use in a meaningful way.

Sports tourism

It is estimated that sports tourism contributes more than R6 billion to the South African tourism industry. More than 10% of foreign tourists come to South Africa to watch or participate in sports events, with spectators accounting for 60% to 80% of these arrivals.

There are numerous world-class sporting events on South Africa's calendar every year, such as:

- the annual Cape Argus Cycle Race, which caters for 35 000 people riding and pushing their bikes over a 109-km course
- the Midmar Mile in KwaZulu-Natal, in which 18 000 swimmers participate annually
- the Comrades Marathon.

In September 2013, the third annual Sports Events & Tourism Exchange (SETE) will be hosted in Durban to outline the implementation of the Sport Tourism strategy that was adopted at the 2012 conference.

SETE 2013 is also taking a proactive move to strategically align Africa as a whole, as the arena that has the potential and capabilities of hosting international events, sporting teams (especially during their winter months for training purposes) and also to use the time wisely when travelling to an African country by experiencing all the tourism offerings available.

Township tourism

In February 2012, Deputy Minister Xasa kicked off government's plans to raise the profile of township tourism by taking a tour of Umlazi in the eThekweni Municipality. Government wants to capitalise on job creation opportunities that lie in this sector.

Township tours have the potential to showcase South Africa's culture and heritage and the Department of Tourism wants packages to be developed to achieve that goal.

Government wants to capitalise on job creation opportunities that lie in this sector. In 2009, tourism contributed around R189 billion to the GDP and provided 500 000 jobs. Domestic tourism, if elevated adequately, could bolster job creation.

Wine tourism

Wine tourism is growing fast worldwide and plays an especially important role in South Africa with its centuries old reputation for making high-quality wine. South Africa's wine tourism has been rated the best-developed in the world by *International Wine Review*, one of the world's most influential opinion formers on wine.

The country's vineyards are mostly situated in the Western Cape near the coast. Wine-lands stretch from the rugged mountains and multi-directional slopes of the coastal region to the open plains of the Klein Karoo, where viticulture – the study of grape cultivation – takes place mainly in the verdant riverine valleys.

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. Stylistically, South African wines fit somewhere between Old World and New World.

As the tourism sector works towards positioning South Africa as one of the world's top 20 travel destinations by 2020, key stakeholders in wine and tourism united to present the country's first specialist wine tourism exhibition, Vindaba, in September 2012.

Held in Cape Town, Vindaba targeted local and international travel trade as well as wine, travel and lifestyle media.

The initiative represents a partnership between Wines of South Africa, SAT, the wine routes, Cape Town Tourism, Cape Town Routes Unlimited and the Western Cape Department of Finance, Tourism and Economic Development.

Table Mountain National Park won the Best Performing Park award at the prestigious South African National Parks (SANParks) Kudu Awards ceremony held at Gallagher Estate in Midrand in November 2012. These awards recognise SANParks staff members and parks throughout the country for their exceptional performance during the year and their efforts in customer service excellence with various categories under the Chief Executive Awards.

Table Mountain National Park performed exceptionally well in the core functions of conservation, constituency building and tourism development, including the implementation of a Visitor Safety Plan to reduce crime.

Regional tourism

Western Cape

The Western Cape lies at the southern tip of Africa. The province's unmatched natural beauty, famous hospitality, cultural diversity, excellent wine and rich cuisine make it one of the world's greatest tourist attractions.

The Western Cape is also 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.

Cape Metropole

Tourism in the city of Cape Town, which lies at the foot of the magnificent Table Mountain, centres on the Victoria and Alfred (V&A) Waterfront. A working harbour, the V&A offers everything from upmarket shopping malls, arts and craft markets, and a variety of restaurants, to theatres, live music and museums.

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.

Other major attractions in the city include the Bo-Kaap Museum, the Castle of Good Hope, the Company's Garden, the District Six Museum, flea markets, the Grand Parade, the houses of Parliament, the South African Cultural History Museum and the South African National Gallery. Also worth a visit are historical buildings in the Bo-Kaap and District Six.

The Gold of Africa Museum, established by Anglo Gold, houses a celebrated collection of more than 350 gold artefacts.

Air flips and trips are available, as are many boat and yacht trips from Table Bay Harbour, including trips to Robben Island (proclaimed a world heritage site and also the place where former President Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 18 of his 27 years in prison).

The Nelson Mandela Gateway to Robben Island is in the Clock Tower Precinct at the V&A Waterfront. The gateway houses interactive multimedia exhibitions, an auditorium, boardrooms, the Robben Island Museum and a restaurant.

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.

Newlands is home to the renowned Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden. In October 2011, *National Geographic* named the botanical garden as one of the world's best picnic spots. Summer sunset music concerts at the garden are held on Sunday evenings during the summer months, from late November until early April. The South African Rugby Museum in Newlands reflects the history of the sport as far back as 1891.

The Rhodes Memorial in Rondebosch on the slopes of Table Mountain was built of granite from the mountain as a tribute to the memory of Cecil John Rhodes, Prime Minister of the Cape from 1890 to 1896. The University of Cape Town is worth a visit for its historic Middle Campus and many buildings designed by Sir Herbert Baker.

Cape Point, part of the Table Mountain National Park, offers many drives, walks, picnic spots and a licensed restaurant. Care has been taken to protect the environmental integrity of this 22 100-ha reserve of indigenous flora and fauna.

Simon's Town's naval atmosphere and Historic Mile are major attractions in the area. A statue of the famous dog and sailors' friend, Able Seaman Just Nuisance, stands at Jubilee Square.

Hout Bay is well known for its colourful working harbour. Seafood outlets, round-the-bay trips to the nearby seal colony, shell and gift shops, and a famous harbour-front emporium attract many visitors. Duiker Island is a seal and sea-bird sanctuary. The World of Birds Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the largest bird parks in the world and houses some 3 000 birds.

Big Bay in Bloubergstrand is a surfers' paradise and host to an international windsurfing event. Rietvlei Nature Reserve is a unique wetland area, with over 110 bird species, including pelicans and flamingos.

Canal Walk Century City is one of the largest shopping centres in Africa, with close to 400 shops, and is home to the largest cinema complex in South Africa.

New Year in Cape Town is a festive affair, when the Cape minstrels take to the streets with their upbeat music and fancy costumes.

The Monkey Town Primate Centre is home to over 200 individual primates and is located east of Somerset West on the N2.

Strawberry-picking in Cape Town on the Mooiberge Strawberry Farm is available in season, which begins in November.

Cape winelands

The Cape winelands, including the former Breede River Valley, are close to Cape Town. The Cape winelands feature dramatic mountains, rolling farmlands and peaceful vineyards. They are home to Route 62, the world's longest wine route.

Stellenbosch, the oldest town in South Africa, is also known as the "Eikestad" (City of Oaks). Various historical walks delight visitors. The

town is a gracious blend of old Cape Dutch, Georgian and Victorian architecture. Dorp Street consists of one of the longest rows of old buildings in the country. The Stellenbosch Village Museum consists of four homesteads and gardens ranging from the late-17th to the middle-19th centuries.

The Stellenbosch Toy and Miniature Museum houses a collection of 1:12 scale miniatures such as room boxes, miniature houses, antique dolls, cars and cuddly toys.

The Spier Summer Arts Festival livens up summer nights from November to March at the Spier Wine Estate near Stellenbosch. Supervised pony and cart rides for children are available on the lawns of the Spier Estate. There is also a horse-carriage tour and equestrian centre for older children.

The Cheetah Outreach is an education and community-based programme, created in January 1997 on land proved by the Spier Wine Estate, to raise awareness of the plight of the cheetah and to campaign for its survival.

The Stellenbosch Wine Route comprises over 100 wine estates, most of which offer cellar tours.

The Freedom Monument at Pniel, which was built in 1992, commemorates the freed slaves who were the first settlers at the mission station, established in 1843.

Franschhoek has become known as the "Gourmet Capital" of the Cape. Originally known as Oliphantshoek, it was renamed after

South Africa's wine tourism has been rated the best-developed in the world by *International Wine Review*, one of the world's most influential opinion formers on wine.

Wine tourism is growing fast worldwide and plays an especially important role in South Africa with its century old reputation for making high-quality wine.

It is estimated that wine tourism now generates an annual income in excess of R5 billion (US\$590 million), while also being a major job creator. Wine exports from South Africa stood at 350 564 774 litres in 2011, with Europe as its biggest buyer.

the arrival of Huguenots who were predominantly French. The Huguenot Monument was built in 1944 to commemorate their arrival in 1688. In April each year, the region hosts the South African Cheese Festival.

Visitors can also enjoy various hiking trails and historical walks, as well as the Vignerons de Franschhoek Wine Route.

Butterfly World, one of the more unique attractions of the Western Cape winelands, consists of a tropical garden in a 1 000-m² greenhouse. This luxuriant paradise makes the free-flying exotic butterflies feel right at home. The butterfly park is located at the crossroads of the Paarl, Stellenbosch and Wellington wine routes, near Klappmuts.

The Giraffe House Wildlife Awareness Centre is on 15 hectares (ha) situated between Klappmuts and Stellenbosch. Focusing mainly on African wildlife, Giraffe House provides a place for people to enjoy a picnic in the fresh air, while experiencing and learning about animals and conservation.

Drakenstein Lion Park was established in 1998 as a sanctuary for lions born in captivity. The park comprises 50 acres of sprawling lion habitat.

Jonkershoek Nature Reserve, which includes the smaller Assegaaibosch Nature Reserve, lies near Stellenbosch. The reserve comprises the Jonkershoek Mountains and portions of the upper Jonkershoek Valley. The reserve stretches over 9 800 ha and its rugged terrain is ideal for hiking. Assegaaibosch is much smaller and is suitable for shorter walks and picnics.

On Le Bonheur Estate visitors can experience guided croc-pond tours, which lead across open dams via ramp-ways. Over 1 000 crocodiles are housed in these dams. Visitors have an opportunity to touch a baby crocodile, and during summer months, witness a feeding.

Paarl lies between the second-largest granite rock in the world and the Du Toit's Kloof Mountains. It is famous for its Cape Dutch and Victorian architectural treasures found along a 1-km stretch of the main street. The area's fynbos vegetation supports a number of south-

western Cape endemics, such as the Cape sugarbird and the orange-breasted sunbird.

The Afrikaanse Taalmonument (Language Monument) is on the slopes of Paarl Mountain, while the Afrikaanse Taalmuseum (Language Museum) is in the centre of the town.

The town of Wellington lies in a picturesque valley, with the majestic Hawequa Mountains on its eastern border. Apart from three renowned cooperative wineries, there are also several prestigious wine cellars on historic Huguenot farms with Cape Dutch homesteads. More than 90% of South Africa's vine-cutting nurseries are in Wellington. The town is also the home of South Africa's dried-fruit industry.

Experience life as the pioneers did in years gone by at the Kleinplasia Living Open Air Museum. The KWV Brandy Cellar, the largest of its kind in the world, offers cellar tours and brandy tastings.

Ceres, named after the Roman goddess of fruitfulness, is the largest deciduous-fruit-producing region in South Africa. Tours are offered at various fruit farms. The area also offers several 4x4 trails, horse-riding, mountain-biking and abseiling.

The Hex River Valley is the largest producer of table grapes in southern Africa. Visitors can pick their own grapes at harvest time and can sample the variety of export-quality produce.

The well-known Hex River 4x4 Trail and the Ochre San Rock Art Trail is a must for nature lovers. De Doorns lies in the heart of the Hex River Valley. Situated on the Breede River, Bonnievale features several cheese factories. For the adventurous outdoor enthusiast there are canoe trips, as well as bird watching and river boating.

Known as "The Valley of Wine and Roses", Robertson is one of the most beautiful areas in South Africa. Surrounded by vineyards, orchards, delectable fruit and radiant roses, Robertson produces connoisseur-quality wines and is also known for its thoroughbred horses.

Renowned for its muscadel wines, Montagu is the gateway to the Klein Karoo and set in a fertile valley. Relax in the healing waters of the

Avalon Springs or visit the Montagu Museum, which houses, among other things, original cartoons and books by well-known cartoonist TO Honiball.

The area also offers several hiking trails, game-viewing drives, guided cultural tours and excellent rock climbs.

The picturesque village of Gouda is known for the Parrotts Den Pub, a living museum in the Gouda Hotel.

McGregor boasts a variety of charming thatched cottages and well-preserved Victorian houses, making it one of the best-preserved examples of mid-19th century architecture in the Western Cape.

Prince Alfred Hamlet is the gateway to the Gydo Pass, known for its scenic views. This quaint village lies in an important deciduous-fruit farming area.

Hidden amid vineyards and wine estates lies the picturesque town of Rawsonville, known for its award-winning wines. Tourists can enjoy an afternoon drive along the beautiful Slanghoek Valley, with its lush vineyards and panoramic views, or relax in the mineral springs at Goudini Spa.

Garden Route

The popular Garden Route spans roughly 200 km of South Africa's southern coast, incorporating the picturesque stretch of coastline which includes the towns of Mossel Bay, George, Wilderness, Sedgefield, Knysna, Plettenberg Bay and Nature's Valley – each with its own charm and attractions. Named for its lush greenery and the vast Tsitsikamma Forest, the Garden Route is the most biodiverse region in the world.

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.

Whale watching attracts tourists at Witsand and Port Beaufort from June to November.

The Grootvadersbosch Nature Reserve outside Heidelberg comprises the popular Bushbuck Trail, a wilderness trail and two mountain-bike trails.

Riversdale is one of South Africa's most important fynbos export areas. Other attractions include the Julius Gordon Africana Museum.

At the historical Strandveld Architectural Heritage Site at Still Bay, visitors can watch tame eels being fed. Ancient fish-traps can be seen at Morris Point and the harbour.

At the aloe factories at Albertinia, aloe juice is extracted for medicine and high-quality skin-care products.

Nearby, bungee-jumping at the Gouritz River Gorge, hiking, mountain-biking and angling are popular pastimes.

The Point in Mossel Bay is not only popular among surfers, but its natural pool formed by rock is also a favourite swimming spot at low tide. The St Blaize Trail starts here and is the ideal place from which to watch the whales and dolphins at play in season.

The harbour at Mossel Bay is one of the most modern commercial and recreational harbours on the southern Cape coastline. PetroSA's Information Centre informs visitors about the production of synthetic fuels from Mossel Bay's offshore gas fields. Other attractions include the Attequas Kloof Pass, Anglo-Boer/South African 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.

George is a historically significant location, with features such as the Slave Tree. Located just outside the Old Library, it was planted in 1811, when George was laid out. It is known to be the biggest English oak in the Southern Hemisphere.

George is popular among golfers and is home to the renowned Fancourt Country Club and Golf Estate, as well as various other acclaimed golf courses.

Visitors can board the Power Van at the Outeniqua Transport Museum, and enjoy a glimpse of the Garden Route Botanical Garden from this rail bus. The Big Tree at Woodville, an Outeniqua yellowwood, is estimated to be around 850 years old. It is located about 40 km outside of George in the direction of Knysna.

The George Airport, the Outeniqua Pass, the railway line and the N2 offer convenient access to this region, making George the ideal hub from which to explore the Garden Route and Little Karoo. Victoria Bay and Wilderness are popular for their unspoilt beaches. Wilderness is the western gateway to the southern Cape lakes area. It is a nature lover's paradise, best known for its beaches, lakes, placid lagoon and lush indigenous forests. Birdwatchers flock to the Langvelei and Rondevlei bird sanctuaries in the Wilderness National Park, which hosts over 230 different bird species.

Sedgefield borders Swartvlei Lagoon, the largest natural inland saltwater lake in South Africa. Activities include beach horse-riding, hiking, angling and bird watching.

Knysna nestles on the banks of an estuary, guarded by The Heads (two huge sandstone cliffs) and surrounded by indigenous forests, tranquil lakes and golden beaches.

This natural wonderland is home to the largest and smallest of creatures, from the Knysna seahorse to the Knysna elephants, rare delicate butterflies and the endemic Knysna loerie, a colourful forest bird. Over 200 species can be found in the abundant fynbos and forest settings.

Knysna is also famous for its delectable home-grown oysters, enjoyed with locally brewed beer in quaint pubs and restaurants. The Knysna Oyster Festival, a celebration of the good life, has established itself as one of the most popular annual events in the Western Cape.

An eclectic mix of art galleries showcase the diversity of talent in the area.

There are also lagoon cruises, forest hikes, golf and adventure sports on offer.

Plettenberg Bay is adventure country, offering boat-based whale watching, black-water tubing, hiking, and forest and cycling trails.

The Keurbooms River Nature Reserve at Plettenberg Bay offers a canoeing trail, while the Robberg Nature Reserve is a treasure trove of land, marine, geological and archaeological wealth.

At 216 m, the bungee jump from the Bloukrans River Bridge on the border between the

Western and Eastern Cape is the highest commercial bungee jump in the world.

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 largest bird in the world – the ostrich. The Little Karoo is rich in culture and history.

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.

Oudtshoorn, the world's ostrich-feather capital, is the region's main town. The Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (National Arts Festival) is held in the town annually. Some 29 km from Oudtshoorn lie the remarkable Cango Caves, a series of spectacular subterranean limestone caverns.

Bearing evidence of early San habitation, the 30-cave wonderland boasts 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, while

The Northern Cape's central Karoo district, with its "quiet skies", is ideal for astrological research, which not only draws researchers to the area, but also tourists.

Astrological tourism has already created good economic spin-offs at Sutherland, the site of the Southern Hemisphere's largest astronomical observatory, the multinational-sponsored Southern African Large Telescope (Salt).

Two Sutherland entrepreneurs rehabilitated the conservation land around the Salt facility, which has now become the site of guided tours and accommodation venues have flourished in recent times. A satellite visitors' centre will be built in the township of Schietfontein.

the Seweweekspoort is ideal for mountain-biking, hiking, and protea and fynbos admirers.

Calitzdorp has four wine estates, three of which are open to the public. The spring water of the Calitzdorp Spa is rich in minerals and reputed to have medicinal properties. The Gamka Mountain Reserve is home to the rare and endangered Cape mountain zebra.

De Rust lies at the southern entrance to Meiringspoort. The Meiringspoort Gorge extends 20 km through the Swartberg Mountain Range. Halfway through is a beautiful 69-m waterfall. Wine farms in the area are open to the public.

Ladismith is home to the Towerkop Cheese Factory. There are various hiking, mountain-biking and 4x4 trails in the area, as well as the Anysberg, Klein Karoo and Towerkop nature reserves.

Uniondale, on the main route between George and Graaff-Reinet, features the largest water-wheel in the country, the Old Watermill. Uniondale Poort is a scenic drive linking Uniondale with Avontuur in the Langkloof Valley.

At Vanwyksdorp, visitors can see how fynbos is dried and packed for the export market. Donkey-cart rides take visitors to Anglo-Boer/South African War grave sites.

Central Karoo

The Central Karoo, a fascinating semi-desert area, lies in the heart of one of the world's most unique and interesting arid zones.

This ancient, fossil-rich land, which is five times the size of Great Britain, is also home to the richest desert flora in the world.

In the Central Karoo, visitors will find the largest variety of succulents found anywhere on Earth. Beaufort West, the oldest town in the Central Karoo, is often referred to as the "Oasis of the Karoo". The local museum displays awards presented to heart-transplant pioneer, the late Prof. Chris Barnard, a son of this town.

A township route introduces visitors to the Xhosa culture in the area. The Karoo National Park on the town's doorstep, is home to a variety of game, as well as the highly endangered riverine rabbit.

Matjiesfontein, a national monument, offers tourists a peek into yesteryear and the opportunity to overnight in Victorian splendour. The village houses a transport museum and the Marie Rawdon Museum. Experience the vastness of the Great Karoo in Murraysburg, an ecotourist and hunter's paradise.

Laingsburg, a tiny village devastated by floods about a century after it was established, is the best place to study the geology of the region.

Prince Albert is a well-preserved town at the foot of the Swartberg Mountains. It is the ideal place to sample a great variety of Karoo cuisine. See examples of local architecture dating back to the early 1800s, and enjoy several scenic drives.

The Fransie Pienaar Museum introduces visitors to the cultural history of the area. It has a fossil room and an exhibit covering the gold rush in this area in the 19th century. The museum has a licence to distil and sell "witblits" (white lightning). Prince Albert is the closest town by road to Gamkaskloof.

The Hell, a little valley in the heart of the Swartberg Mountains, was the home of one of the world's most isolated communities for almost 150 years. Today, Gamkaskloof is a nature reserve and national monument managed by Cape Nature Conservation. It has overnight facilities and can be accessed by a 57 km long (but two-hour-drive) winding road which starts at the peak of the Swartberg Pass.

West Coast

The West Coast is a region of outstanding beauty and contrast. The solitary coast's scenic beauty is challenged only by rich culinary experiences of mussels, oysters, calamari, crayfish and abalone in season, or linefish pulled from the Benguela Current's cold waters. During April every year, Lamberts Bay has the Crayfish and Cultural Festival.

The area is not only a birder's paradise, but every year migrating whales also visit the coastal waters from July.

Within two months of the first good winter rains, wild flowers on the West Coast explode in a brilliant display of colour.

The Swartland region is known for its undulating wheat fields, vineyards, wineries and outdoor activities.

Further north, visitors encounter the fertile Olifants River Valley and the vast plains of the Knersvlakte with its wealth of indigenous succulent plants.

The town of Darling draws visitors to its country museum and art gallery, annual wild flower and orchid shows, basket factory and wine cellars. The entertainment venue Evita se Perron is situated at the old Darling Railway Station and offers top performances by South African entertainers.

Malmesbury is the biggest town in the Swartland. Major attractions include the Malmesbury Museum and the historical walk-about.

The Riebeeck Valley is known for its scenic beauty. The area has become a popular haven for well-known artists of various disciplines. Wines and olives can be tasted at various cellars.

Elands Bay is a popular holiday resort and surfer's paradise. Khoi and San rock art can be viewed at the Elands Bay caves.

Moorreesburg and Koringberg are major wheat-distributing towns. Tourists can visit the Wheat Industry Museum, one of only three in the world. Bird watching, hiking, 4x4 routes, clay-pigeon shooting, mountain-bike trails, canoeing and waterskiing at Misverstand are popular activities.

Yzerfontein is famous for its unspoilt beaches, fynbos, beautiful views and whale watching. Another major attraction is the historical lime furnaces.

Langebaan, a popular holiday destination, is home to the West Coast National Park. An internationally renowned wetland that houses about 60 000 waterbirds and waders, the park attracts thousands of visitors each year. The oldest anatomically modern fossilised human footprints were also discovered here.

The Langebaan Lagoon forms part of the park and is zoned for specific activities. The Postberg section of the park, across the lagoon, is famous for its wild flowers that bloom mainly during August and September.

Cape Columbine at Paternoster is the last manned lighthouse on the South African coast. The Columbine Nature Reserve is home to a variety of seabird species.

Saldanha is a water sport enthusiast's paradise. Its attractions include Doc's Cave, a landmark on the scenic breakwater drive, and the Hoedjieskoppie Nature Reserve. There are various hiking trails in the *SAS Saldanha* Nature Reserve.

St Helena Bay is best known for the Vasco Da Gama Monument and Museum. Fishing (snoek in season), hiking and whale- and bird watching opportunities also draw many visitors.

Vredenburg, the business centre of the area, has a popular golf course with a bird hide, while Lamberts Bay is a traditional fishing village, with Bird Island as a popular tourist attraction.

It is a breeding ground for African penguins, the Cape cormorant and other sea birds. Visitors can also watch southern right whales here from July to November.

Piketberg offers arts and crafts, fauna and flora, wine culture and recreation. The Goedverwacht and Wittewater Moravian mission stations are close to the town.

Porterville is famous for its Disa Route (best in January and February). The Groot Winterhoek Mountain Peak in the Groot Winterhoek Wilderness Area is the second-highest in the Western Cape. The Dasklip Pass is popular with hang-gliders.

At Velddrif/Laaiplek, visitors can indulge in bakkems (a West Coast salted-fish delicacy) at factories along the Berg River.

Tourists can also visit the salt-processing factory and the West Coast Art Gallery in town.

The citrus area in the Olifants River Valley is the third-largest in South Africa. The wine route from Citrusdal to Lutzville produces a selection of internationally acclaimed wines. The world-renowned rooibos tea is also produced here.

Citrusdal is famous for its citrus products and wines. The Citrusdal Museum depicts the pioneering days of the early colonists. The Goede Hoop Citrus Co-Op is the largest single packing facility in South Africa.

The annual Citrusdal Outdoor Calabash features, among other things, 4x4 outings, lectures and visits to rock-art sites, and an arts and crafts market. Annually, scores of sky-diving enthusiasts visit Citrusdal for a skydiving “boogie” that lasts several days.

The oldest orange tree in the country, calculated to be more than 250 years old, grows in the Citrusdal Valley. The Sandveldhuisie is a recently built example of a typical Sandveld dwelling. There are several recognised mountain-biking, walking and hiking trails, a sky-diving club and canoeing opportunities.

The Cederberg Wilderness Area features the elephant’s foot plant, the rare snow protea and some of the best examples of San rock art in the Western Cape.

Visitors to Clanwilliam can visit the rooibos and velskoen factories and the grave of the well-known South African poet Louis Leipoldt.

Various historical buildings can also be viewed. The Clanwilliam and Bulshoek dams are popular among watersport enthusiasts.

Wuppertal, at the foot of the Cederberg mountains, features the oldest Rhenish Mission Station. Proceeds from 4x4 trails in the area fund the creation of new hiking trails and the building of more overnight huts and guest houses.

South African tourist attractions now also include a rooibos tea safari, exclusive to the Cederberg region of the Cape West Coast. Elandsberg Eco Tourism, a tour operator and accommodation provider based at one of the region's largest tea plantations, offers one-hour guided tours of a rooibos tea farm in a safari vehicle.

The Groenkol Rooibos Tea Estate, where the tours take place, is unique in that all aspects related to the production of rooibos tea are done on the estate – from growing the seedlings through to the final packaging and marketing.

South Africa produces some 15 000 to 20 000 tons of rooibos tea a year, with 6 000 tons being consumed locally and the balance being exported. In South Africa, rooibos tea occupies approximately 17% to 20% of the available shelf space.

Wuppertal, which is well-known for its rooibos and buchu production, has added one more attraction to its tourism offerings – the Cederberg Donkey Cart Route.

The project entails a three-day tour through the Cederberg Mountain area and Heuningvlei with accommodation facilities for overnight visitors.

Vredendal is the centre of the Lower Olifants River Valley. Major attractions include marble-processing and manufacturing, industrial mines (dolomite and limestone), the KWV Grape Juice Concentrate Plant and Distillery and the South African Dried Fruit Co-Operative.

The town is also home to the Vredendal Wine Cellar, the largest cooperative wine cellar under one roof in the Southern Hemisphere.

The picturesque town of Doringbaai with its attractive lighthouse is well known for its seafood.

Strandfontein, about 8 km north of Doringbaai, is essentially a holiday and retirement resort with a panoramic view of the ocean.

Klawer was named after the wild clover growing in the area. During the flower season, the area is a riot of colour. The Doring River features hiking trails and opportunities for river-rafting.

Lutzville and Koekenaap are synonymous with wine and flowers in season.

Visitors can also view the Sishen-Saldanha Railway Bridge. Where the railway line spans the Olifants River, it is divided into 23 sections, each 45 m long. The 14 100-ton deck was pushed into position over teflon sheets with hydraulic jacks from the bridgehead. It is the longest bridge in the world built using this method.

Vanrhynsdorp houses the largest succulent nursery in South Africa. The Latsky Radio Museum houses a collection of old valve radios, some dating back to 1924.

Bird watching, mountain-biking, day walks, hiking and 4x4 trails abound. The Troe-Troe and Rietpoort mission stations are a must-see for history enthusiasts.

Overberg

In the most southerly region of Africa, just over an hour's drive east of Cape Town, lies a fertile area surrounded by mountains and sea, called the Overberg.

The Hangklip-Kleinmond area comprises Kleinmond, Betty's Bay, Pringle Bay and Rooi Els. It is a popular holiday region, ideal for whale watching, and includes the Kleinmond Coastal Nature Reserve and the Harold Porter Botanical Garden.

The Penguin Reserve at Stoney Point, Betty's Bay, is one of two breeding colonies of the jackass penguin off Africa.

South Africa's first international biosphere reserve, the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, was proclaimed by the Unesco in 1999. It runs along the coast from Gordon's Bay to the Bot River Vlei, stretching 2 km out to sea, and inland to the Groenlandberg Mountains near Grabouw.

Hermanus is a popular holiday resort, famous for the best land-based whale watching in the world.

Stanford is one of the few villages in South Africa where the market square has been retained. The central core of the village has been proclaimed a national conservation area. Award-winning wines are produced in the area.

Gansbaai is known for its excellent rock and boat angling, diving, shark-cage diving and whale watching. The Danger Point Lighthouse, named as such because of the ships that have been wrecked and lives lost on this dangerous coast, is open to the public.

De Kelders is the only freshwater cave on the African coast. Spectacular views of southern right whales can be enjoyed from the cliffs at De Kelders and along the coast to Pearly Beach. Also popular are white-shark tours, diving safaris and fishing trips.

Elim was founded by German missionaries in 1824, with its only inhabitants being members of the Moravian Church. Visitors are welcome to attend services. The Old Watermill (1833) has been restored and declared a national monument.

Popular sites in Napier include the Militaria Museum and Rose Boats and Toy Museum. The Shipwreck Museum in Bredasdorp, founded in 1975, specialises in shipwrecks found along the South African coastline. The town also has the Audrey Blignault Museum.

De Mond Nature Reserve is home to some rare bird species, including the damara tern and giant tern.

The Geelkop Nature Reserve derives its name from the mass of yellow flowering plants that cover the hill during spring.

The lighthouse at L'Agulhas, which forms part of the Agulhas National Park, is the country's second-oldest working lighthouse. It celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1999.

The Agulhas National Park, a ruggedly beautiful coastal plain, was proclaimed in September 1999. The park started as a four-hectare portion of land at the southern tip and has grown through the additions of 36 portions, bringing the area of the park to 20 959 ha.

At Cape Agulhas, the southernmost tip of the continent, the waters are cleaved into the Indian and Atlantic oceans. The wrecks of some 130 seafaring craft – yachts, Spanish galleons, Dutch East Indiamen, the legendary Birkenhead, and even modern-day fishing trawlers – have found a watery grave around the notorious Cape of Storms.

Struisbaai has the longest white coastline in the Southern Hemisphere.

Arniston was named Waenhuiskrans (coach-house cliff) by the local fishers in honour of the huge sea cave capable of housing several oxwagons. For outsiders, it was named after the Arniston, a ship wrecked there in 1815. The Waenhuiskrans Cave can be explored at low tide.

The De Hoop Nature Reserve on the way to Swellendam includes an internationally renowned wetland and bird sanctuary. It is a winter retreat for the southern right whale and the Western Cape's only Cape griffen vulture colony.

The red Bredasdorp lily and many species of protea and erica are found in the Heuningberg Nature Reserve.

Swellendam is well known for its young-berries and eclectic architecture. The Drostdy Museum consists of a group of buildings containing a huge selection of period furniture. The Bontebok National Park, about 7 km from Swellendam, provides sanctuary to the threatened bontebok and other species.

Known for its world-class wine, Barrydale offers the visitor fruit and fresh air in abundance.

Situated on the N2, about 160 km from Cape Town, Riviersonderend offers beautiful mountain and river scenery, a nine-hole golf course and sightings of the blue crane.

Caledon is famous for its natural mineral waters, hot springs and wild-flower shows. Southern Associated Maltsters is the only malt producer for the South African lager beer industry and the largest in the Southern Hemisphere.

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 and was declared a monument in 1994. The historical home, Oude Radyn, is possibly the only building in the Western Cape to have Batavian wooden gutters and down pipes.

In November 2012, South African National Parks' (SANParks) newest attraction, Mokala National Park in the Northern Cape, added two important properties, Lilydale and Valschfontein, as part of its expansion programme.

With the inclusion of the two properties, Mokala now covers 28 151 hectares. This achievement was marked with a fence-cutting ceremony on 8 November 2012 at the Valschfontein section of the park.

Mokala National Park was established in 2007 as an alternative to the Vaalbos National Park, which was the subject of a land claim. The event marked the realisation of a commitment from SANParks to the Northern Cape Government at the time of the land claim and subsequent loss of the Vaalbos National Park.

The Theewaterskloof Dam outside Villiersdorp is the seventh-largest dam in the country. The Villiersdorp Wild Flower Garden and Nature Reserve boasts an indigenous herb garden and a reference library.

The Grabouw/Elgin district produces about 60% of South Africa's total apple exports and fine wines. The valley is also renowned for cultivating fresh chrysanthemums, roses and proteas. The Elgin Apple Museum is one of only two in the world. Sir Lowry's Pass offers spectacular views of False Bay from Gordon's Bay to Cape Point.

Northern Cape

Characterised by its vast expanses of space and silence, warm sunny climate, friendly people and hospitality, the Northern Cape is a province with a rich culture heritage.

Diamond fields

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. The Kimberley Tram Service dates back to the beginning of the 20th century and still transports passengers from the City Hall to the Mine Museum.

Underground mine tours are a big attraction, as are the famous ghost tours, during which many historical buildings are seen from a different perspective. Hand and mechanical diamond-digging by private diggers can be viewed by appointment.

The McGregor Museum houses invaluable collections of the archaeological finds in the area, as well as San art works. 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 Anglo-Boer/South African War.

The Paterson Museum near the Kimberley Airport houses a replica of a Paterson biplane, which was used for pilot training by the flying school operated by the Paterson Aviation Syn-

dicate at Alexandersfontein. A township tour of Galeshewe provides a fresh perspective on South Africa's socio-historical realities. Pan African Congress founder Robert Sobukwe's house is there.

The Magersfontein Battlefield outside Kimberley, with its original trenches and other defences intact, is the site of the Boers' crushing defeat of the British during the Siege of Kimberley. A cultural centre at Wildebeestkuil outside Kimberley features !Xun and Khwe artwork for sale and a tour of rock engravings by these indigenous people.

In October 2011, the first ever Maloof Money Cup World Skateboarding Championships was held in Kimberley. In 2012, the city also hosted the second Maloof Money Cup World Skateboarding Championships.

In February 2012, the Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre was opened in Kimberley. This facility, which has a capacity of 2 500 seats indoors and 3 500 seats in the open-air arena, is set to be the main instrument to drive business tourism to the province. By November 2012, 25 events had already been confirmed.

A short distance from Kimberley is the mining town of Barkley West, which, owing to its proximity to the Vaal River, attracts many water-sports enthusiasts and anglers.

Tucked along the Vaal River near Barkley West lies the Vaalbos National Park. The park is not only home to large raptors, but is also a breeding centre for endangered African herbivores such as rhino, roan and sable antelope and disease-free buffalo.

Kalahari

At Black Rock, visitors have the opportunity to view a worked-out manganese mine.

Danielskuil lies at the foot of the Kuruman hills. The Tswana people occupied the area before it became home to the Griquas. Boesmansgat, on the farm Mount Carmel outside Danielskuil, is a unique natural sinkhole – the second-deepest and largest of its kind in the world.

Known as the "Oasis of the Kalahari", Kuruman is blessed with a permanent and abundant source of water that flows from Gasegonyana

(Tswana for "the little water calabash") – commonly called the "Eye of Kuruman" – which yields 20 million litres of water a day.

Moffat's Mission in Kuruman features the house of missionary Robert Moffat, the church he built, and several other historic buildings. Moffat translated the Bible into Setswana – the first African language in which the Bible was made accessible. The printing press on which he printed the first 2 000 copies can still be viewed. The church he built seats 800 people and is still in use.

Explorer David Livingstone married Moffat's daughter and started many famous travels from this mission station.

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. Another marvel is the Witsand Nature Reserve, situated about 80 km south-west of Postmasburg, which features a 100-m high dune of brilliant white sand. It stretches for about 9 km and is about 2 km wide.

Green Kalahari

The Roaring Sands site on the farm Doornaar near Groblersshoop is a popular tourist attraction. Its high sand dunes, surrounded by typically red Kalahari dunes, are said to "roar" when the wind blows.

Eleven waterwheels are still used today along the hand-built irrigation canals at Kakamas.

In March 2012, the first ever Green Kalahari Canoe Marathon was staged over a distance of 99 km lasting three days and attracted 45 paddlers.

Kanoneiland is a settlement on the biggest island in the Orange River.

At Keimoes, the Orange River flows at its widest. The Tierberg Nature Reserve offers spectacular views of the Keimoes Valley and the many islands in the Orange River. The original irrigation canal system is still in use. The Orange River Wine Cellar's largest cellar is situated here.

Kenhardt is the oldest town in the Lower Orange River area. The Quiver Tree Forest and Kokerboom Hiking Trail, consisting of between 4 000 and 5 000 quiver trees, are within easy driving distance of the town.

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 August 2012, the Kalahari Desert Speed Week was held at Hakskeen Pan, 200 km north of Upington. This was the first ever annual Speed Week Club event in Africa for vehicles and motorcycles. The Mier area, in particular, continue to attract world-wide attention as the Bloodhound Supersonic Car and Haakskeen Pan are being prepared for the onslaught to break through the unimaginable 1 600 km (1 000 miles) per hour mark.

The Orange River displays its impressive power at the Augrabies Falls in the Augrabies Falls National Park. Visitors can hire canoes to ensure closer contact with the natural heritage surrounding the world's sixth-largest waterfall.

The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park comprises 38 000 m² of land, making it one of the largest conservation areas in the world. Straddling the Green Kalahari and Botswana, the park is a two million-hectare sanctuary for various raptors, antelope, gemsbok, springbok, blue wildebeest, red hartebeest, eland, Kalahari lion, black-maned lion, brown and spotted hyena, leopard, cheetah, and smaller game, including mongoose, porcupine and the endangered honey badger.

The names of various landmarks within the park reflect its long history as a crossroads of many cultures, which have included the San, the Mier, the Huguenots and the Scottish at various times.

The park is an important element of the first phase of the Transfrontier Conservation Area 2010 Strategy, which is a priority of the Southern African Development Community.

Namaqualand

The indigenous people of the Namaqualand region are the Namas. Their traditional Nama reed huts still abound in Leliefontein, Nourivier and Steinkopf.

Namaqualand is famous for a spectacular annual show in spring when an abundance of wild flowers covers vast tracts of desert. The flowers sprout and survive for a brief period before they wilt and disappear in the blistering heat and dry conditions just as suddenly as they appeared. The small town of Garies is the centre for those setting out to enjoy this show of exuberance in the Kamiesberg.

After diamonds were discovered along the West Coast in 1925, Alexander Bay was known for its mining activities. The town is no longer a high-security area and no permits are needed to enter. The Alexkor Museum paints a picture of the history of the area. The town also features the world's largest desert lichenfield, which has some 26 species.

At Hondeklip Bay, visitors can dive for crayfish and watch the local fisherfolk conduct their trade.

Established as a small-vessel harbour and railway junction in 1954 for the copper-mining industry, Port Nolloth is a centre for the small-scale diamond-recovery and crayfish industries. It is the only holiday resort on the Diamond Coast. The local factory sells fish and crayfish in season.

Set in a narrow valley bisecting the granite domes of the Klein Koperberge lies Springbok.

South of Springbok, near Kamieskroon, lies the Skilpad Wild Flower Reserve, part of the Namaqua National Park, which captures the full grandeur of the flower season. The 1 000-ha reserve is open only during the flower season.

The Goegap Nature Reserve comprises 15 004 ha of typically granite, rocky hills and sandy flats. The reserve also offers a 4x4 trail, as well as several hiking and mountain-biking trails.

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.

Upper Karoo (Bo-Karoo)

Flanked by the Towerberg, Colesberg is one of the Northern Cape's most beautiful towns.

The town features one of the country's last working horsemills. An Anglo-Boer/South African War tour is also on offer. A weekend tour includes a visit to the Norvals-pont prisoner-of-war camp and cemetery. Colesberg has bred many of the country's top merino sheep. It is also renowned for producing high-quality racehorses.

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.

The "Star of South Africa" diamond was discovered at Hopetown. The town, which is steeped in history, also features an old toll house and a block house dating from the Anglo-Boer/South African War, which took place from 1899 to 1902.

At Wonderdraai near Prieska, visitors can see the horseshoe-shaped island formed by the flow of the Orange River. It seems as if the river turns to flow uphill.

Vanderkloof was built to house the people building the Vanderkloof Dam. Today, it is a flourishing holiday resort. Visitors can enjoy

waterskiing, boardsailing, boating and swimming, or visit the Eskom Hydroelectric Power Station situated within the dam's wall.

Victoria West is home to the Apollo Theatre, the only Art Deco period theatre in the Southern Hemisphere. Up until 2009, it was world famous for playing host to an annual film festival.

The rare riverine rabbit is found in the Victoria West Nature Reserve.

Hantam Karoo

Near the small town of Brandvlei lies Verneukpan, where Sir Malcolm Campbell unsuccessfully attempted to break the world land-speed record in 1929.

Carnarvon is well known for its corbelled dome-roofed houses built of flat stones because of a lack of wood. The floors of these interesting houses were smeared and coloured with a rich red mixture of fat and oxblood and polished with smooth stone.

A few kilometres outside Fraserburg lies the Gansfontein Palaeosurface. Discovered in 1968, it comprises several trackways of large, four-footed and five-toed mammalian reptiles. The prints are estimated to be some 190 million years old.

Sutherland, birthplace of well-known Afrikaans author and poet NP van Wyk Louw, is known for its brilliant night skies and cold, biting winters.

The sterboom (star tree), which blossoms in September, is found only in Sutherland.

The South African Astronomical Observatory's (SAAO) observation telescopes, including the Southern African Large Telescope (Salt), are in Sutherland.

From Monday to Saturday, the SAAO offers two guided tours a day and two night tours a week. Day tours entail a guided walk through the visitors' centre adjacent to the telescope sites on the mountainside and a guided tour of selected telescopes, including the Salt.

During night tours, visitors can view interesting objects in the sky through two dedicated visitors' telescopes. Booking is essential.

The Steve Biko Heritage Centre in the Eastern Cape, which was opened in November 2012, is intended to educate the public about Biko's leadership and his contribution to freedom and democracy. It will also contribute to tourism and poverty eradication through the development of cultural industries and to utilise heritage as a tool for fostering social cohesion.

The heritage centre in Ginsberg, near King Williams Town, was built through a partnership between the Department of Arts and Culture and the Department of Tourism. The opening of Steve Biko Centre marked 35 years since the black consciousness leader died in police custody in 1977.

Tankwa Karoo National Park, on the southern border of the Northern Cape, 70 km west of Sutherland, offers panoramic views, and is home to a host of animals, birds and insects. It encompasses the Succulent Karoo Biome – an internationally recognised hotspot and the world’s only arid hotspot – which stretches 116 000 km² from the southwestern Cape into southern Namibia.

Tankwa’s landscape offers vivid seasonal contrasts of coloured wild flowers and stark desert, set against the backdrop of the Roggeveld Escarpment to the east, Klein Roggeveld to the south and the Cederberg to the west. Its extensive desert plateaus is also ideal for viewing game such as gemsbok, Cape mountain zebra, springbuck and bustards.

Free State

The Free State lies in the heart of South Africa, with the Kingdom of Lesotho nestling in the hollow of its bean-like shape.

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

Motheo

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.

The Eerste Raadsaal (First Parliament Building), built in 1849 as a school, is Bloemfontein’s oldest surviving building. Still in its original condition, this historical building is used as the seat of the Provincial Legislature.

The National Afrikaans Literary Museum and Research Centre has works by prominent Afrikaans authors. Exhibits in the Afrikaans Music Museum and Theatre Museum (part of the centre) include old musical instruments, sheet music, costumes, photographs and furniture.

The national museum is notable for its wide collection of fossils, cultural-historical exhibits

and archaeological displays, including the Florisbad Skull, which was discovered in the 1930s at the Florisbad Spring, about 50 km north of Bloemfontein.

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 from 1899 to 1902. Visitors get a glimpse of life in the concentration and prisoner-of-war camps. The research library contains an extensive collection of Africana.

The Old Presidency dates back to 1885 and was the official residence of three presidents of the former Republic of the Orange Free State. It houses a museum depicting their respective terms of office, and a cultural centre for art exhibitions, theatrical productions and musical events.

The Observatory Theatre in Bloemfontein’s Game Reserve is a unique attraction. Naval Hill is the biggest game reserve that is completely surrounded by a city.

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.

The Sand du Plessis Theatre and Art Gallery at Oliewenhuis is also worth visiting.

Botshabelo (Place of Refuge), 45 km from Bloemfontein on the N8 road to Lesotho, is believed to be the largest township settlement in the Free State – and the second-largest in South Africa after Soweto.

Nearby, the town of Thaba Nchu features luxury hotels and a casino, with the Maria Moroka Nature Reserve surrounding Thaba Nchu Sun and the Setlogelo Dam.

Xhariep

Bethulie used to be a London Missionary Society station. The original mission buildings still stand. The Pellissier House Museum depicts the history of events in the area.

The Anglo-Boer/South African War concentration camp cemetery in Bethulie is worth a visit.

The Gariiep 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 Gariiep Dam Nature Reserve. On the southern side of the dam lies the Ovis-ton Nature Reserve.

Philippolis, the oldest town in the Free State, was founded as a London Missionary Society station in 1824. It was the first mission station in the province.

Trompsburg is the hub of the Free State Merino sheep-farming industry.

The Tussen-die-Riviere Nature Reserve reputedly supports more game than any other sanctuary in the Free State and receives hunters in autumn and winter.

A fountain near Koffiefontein was a favourite resting place for transport riders in the 19th century. In June 1870, one of these transport riders picked up a diamond near the fountain. This prompted a rush, and by 1882 Koffiefontein was a booming town with four mining companies.

Thabo Mofutsanyana

Snow-capped mountains and beautiful scenery provide a backdrop to this pristine area.

The Basotho Cultural Village in the QwaQwa Nature Reserve is a living museum where visitors can witness the Sotho traditions and lifestyle in the chief's kraal.

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.

Clarens is often described as the "Jewel of the Free State", owing to its exceptionally beautiful scenery. San paintings are found on farms in the area. Close by, the Highlands Route meanders along the foothills of the Maluti Mountains. One can also explore the magnificent mountain scenery by bike.

The town is known for the many arts and crafts shops, which offer the visitor a wide range of curios and original artwork.

Ficksburg is known for its cherry and asparagus farms. Every November, a cherry festival

is held there. The town is a gateway to the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho.

Rosendal, surrounded by the Witte Mountains, celebrated its centenary in 2011.

The Golden Gate Highlands National Park, known for its impressive sandstone cliffs and rock formations, is a popular holiday destination. A vulture restaurant allows visitors to observe these scavengers closely. San paintings can also be viewed.

The Highlands Route follows the Lesotho border via Ladybrand and ends at Zastron in the south. San caves and rock art are some of the main features of the route.

The bird watching mecca of Seekoievlei Nature Reserve near Memel constitutes a wetland with Ramsar status, and is surrounded by private game and holiday farms.

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Lejweleputswa region

Bethlehem, which lies on the banks of the Jordaan River, was founded by the Voortrekkers in the 1840s. The banks of the Jordaan River form part of the Pretoriuskloof Nature Reserve – a sanctuary for birds and small game. The museum in Miller Street depicts the history of the area.

Van Reenen's Pass winds through the Drakensberg, and was originally used by migrating herds of zebra, hartebeest, blesbok and wildebeest. 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.

Platberg, the 2 394-m "flat mountain", is the town's landmark. A well-known race, claimed by some to be the toughest in the country, is run annually up, along and back down the mountain. Sterkfontein Dam is ideal for water sports and fishing. An open-water swimming race takes place there annually.

The Riemland Museum in Heilbron depicts the heritage and agricultural activities of the region.

The QwaQwa district is a traditional home to the Basotho people. Karakul carpets, mohair, wall hangings, copper, glassware and brass are made and sold at Phuthaditjhaba. The nearby Metsi Matsho and Fika Patso dams are renowned for trout fishing.

Welkom is known for its gold mines. It is also the only city in the country where traffic circles are used instead of traffic lights.

The world's deepest wine cellar is at the St Helena Mine, which is 857 m below the Earth's surface.

Bothaville is regarded as the centre of the Free State Maize Route. The Nampo Harvest Farm and Festival attracts more than 20 000 visitors each year and is the second-largest private agricultural show in the world. Bothaville also hosts the annual Food and Witblits Festival, drawing visitors from all over South Africa.

The sandstone church in Kestell is possibly the most impressive of all the Eastern Free State's sandstone buildings.

Winburg is the oldest town and first capital of the former Republic of the Orange Free State. The Voortrekker Museum, using life-size models, depicts the daily routine of the trekkers. A concentration camp cemetery is situated close by.

Sasolburg originated in 1954 with the establishment of Sasol, the synthetic fuel producer.

Parys, situated on the banks of the Vaal River, offers tourists a tranquil river retreat.

The nearby Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site was caused by the collision of a meteorite with the Earth many years ago. It is the only world heritage site in the Free State.

It features unique fauna and flora, including 100 different plant species, more than 300 bird types and a variety of small mammals. Various hiking and mountain-bike trails are also on offer.

Jukskei is the first indigenous game that has developed to international participation. The Jukskei Museum in Kroonstad has over

3 500 objects that depict the development of the game.

Jagersfontein has the deepest man-made hole in the world. The Excelsior diamond of 971 carats was found in this open-cast mine in 1893. Eagles nest against the cliffs of the mine.

Eastern Cape

The main feature of the Eastern Cape is its magnificent coastline. With its wide open sandy beaches, secluded lagoons and towering cliffs, the Indian Ocean coastline makes the province most attractive to tourists and water sports enthusiasts.

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.

Amatola mountain region

The Amatola Mountains are famous for their scenery and history, and stretch from Adelaide in the east to Stutterheim in the west. With its lush forests and ancient battlefields, it is an area steeped in Xhosa culture and early settler history.

The dense forests of the Amatolas are a haven for the endangered Cape parrot, and were also home to the first dinosaur to be identified in South Africa, the Blinkwater Monster, a large fossilised reptile discovered near Fort Beaufort.

Outdoor enthusiasts enjoy Cathcart, where troutfishing, hiking, riding and bird watching are among the attractions. The Amatole Hiking Trail is a well-known scenic, but strenuous, trail.

The coastal city of Port Elizabeth, which has earned the name "Friendly City", is a superb holiday destination offering a diverse mix of eco-attractions. The Isuzu National Sailing Week is held annually in April in the waters of Algoa Bay.

The Red Location Museum of the People's Struggle in New Brighton – winner of three international awards – was designed to be both a monument to South Africa's struggle against

apartheid and an integral part of community life in a township that acted as a crucible for the struggle.

The city boasts various scuba-diving sites. Visitors can also visit Bay World with its oceanarium and snake park, and many splendid museums. Other attractions include the Greater Addo Elephant National Park and game reserves; the traditional healing village, Kaya Lendaba; bird watching; air tours; canoeing; various mountain-bike and horse-riding trails; and organised outdoor excursions.

Within the city 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.

Tourists can also explore the Donkin Heritage Trail, take a ride on the famous Apple Express, and hike along the site of ancient shipwrecks on the Sacramento Trail. At King William's Town, tourists can visit the Amathole Missionary Museum. The grave of the Black Consciousness activist, Steve Biko, is also in the town.

Wild Coast

Since Portuguese mariners first pioneered the sea route around the Cape to India, this notorious coast has claimed countless ships.

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.

The entire region, once known as the "Trans-kei homeland", is the home of a major section of the Xhosa-speaking southern Nguni (or Pondo) tribes. Brightly coloured examples of their beadwork, together with traditional pottery and basketry, can be bought from roadside vendors and at some trading posts.

Visitors to the rural village of Qunu can view the childhood home of former President

Mandela. In the city of Mthatha, the Nelson Mandela Museum tells the story of this great figure. The museum is a collection of heritage sectors spread across three locations: Qunu, Mveso and Mthatha.

A display reflecting the life and times of Mandela can be found at the Bhunga Building section of the Nelson Mandela Museum in Mthatha. Mandela has received thousands of gifts from presidents, groups and ordinary people. Accepted on behalf of the people of South Africa, they are in safekeeping at the museum for the benefit and appreciation of the nation. Artefacts range from children's letters to bejewelled camel covers.

The alignment of the N2 national route along the Wild Coast will help open up investment opportunities in this area.

Coffee Bay is popular among surfers, anglers and shell collectors.

To the south is the prominent rock formation, the Hole in the Wall. The local Xhosa call this place Izi Kheleni ("Place of Thunder"). During high tide, the waves move through the hole in such a way that the concussion can be heard throughout the valley.

Karoo

The vast plains of the Karoo have an air of grandeur, and its many picturesque towns are steeped in history.

The Owl House in Nieu-Bethesda displays the creative talent of the late Helen Martins. Statues of mermaids, wise men, camels, owls and churches create a wonderland in the garden. All the artworks were created with broken bottles, bits of mirror and cement.

More than 200 houses in Graaff-Reinet have been restored to their original Victorian appearance, and proclaimed national monuments. The Old Library Museum houses the Lex Bremner Fossil Collection of Karoo reptile fossils and a collection of Khoi and San art reproductions. Urquhart House has a popular genealogical research centre.

Almost 50 km south-west of Graaff-Reinet is the Kalkkop Crater, a gigantic circular impact that is of major scientific importance.

To the north-west of Graaff-Reinet lies the Valley of Desolation. A steep and narrow road leads into the mountains that surround the valley.

The Valley of Desolation is a national monument within the Karoo Nature Reserve, and was formed millions of years ago by weathering erosion.

The first evidence of the presence of dinosaurs in South Africa can be viewed at Maclear.

The Mountain Zebra National Park is a haven for the Cape mountain zebra species, which at one time inhabited most of the Cape. The park saved these animals from extinction and today their population stands at about 300.

Other species found in the park include various antelope such as eland, the African wildcat, bat-eared fox, and more than 200 bird species, including the pale-winged starling, the booted eagle and the blue crane.

N6 Route

This route runs from Bloemfontein to East London. Popular attractions include the slopes of the Tiffindell Ski Resort and the trout-filled streams, as well as the many caves adorned with ancient rock art. Several historic towns can be found in the region, including Barkly East, Rhodes, Lady Grey, Elliot, Aliwal North, Burgersdorp and Queenstown.

Sunshine Coast

The Sunshine Coast comprises miles of unspoilt, sun-drenched beaches.

Port Alfred lies at the mouth of the Kowie River. Coastal hills are home to the oribi – a small territorial buck that was recently near extinction.

Inland, Grahamstown is sometimes referred to as the “City of Saints”, because of the more than 40 churches found in the town. It is also known for the National Arts Festival, which is held annually. During the festival, Grahamstown is transformed into a dedicated arts venue where performers, visual artists, audiences, writers and craftspeople fuse in a celebration of creative energy.

Other attractions include various museums and historical buildings, the oldest postbox in South Africa, botanical gardens, the cathedrals of St Michael and St George, nature reserves and hiking trails. Situated north-east of Grahamstown, the Great Fish River Reserve consists primarily of valley bushveld habitat and is surrounded by both tribal land and commercial game reserves and farms.

The reserve boasts abundant wildlife such as white rhino, giraffe, waterbuck, Cape buffalo, hippo, kudu, springbok and eland.

There are several historic forts and remains from the legendary frontier wars located in the area.

East London, which forms part of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, is South Africa’s only river port city, was originally established as a supply port to serve the colonial British military headquarters at King William’s Town. The city’s own waterfront development, Latimer’s Landing, is situated on the banks of the Buffalo River.

The East London Aquarium houses approximately 400 different marine and freshwater species.

The East London Museum depicts the natural environment and rich heritage of the region. Best known for the prehistoric coelacanth, the museum also displays reconstructions of the extinct dodo of Mauritius, along with the only extant dodo egg in the world.

The Baviaanskloof Wilderness Area is the largest of the inland protected areas and provides opportunities to visit spectacular fynbos-covered mountains on foot or in off-road vehicles.

There is a fascinating shell collection at the Shell Museum at Kei Mouth.

Tsitsikamma

This region, stretching from Plettenberg Bay to Jeffreys Bay, is renowned for its dense forests, majestic mountains and deep river gorges. It forms the eastern end of the Garden Route.

The word “tsitsikamma” is derived from the Khoekhoen words “tse-tsesa” meaning clear, and “gami” meaning water.

South Africa's first marine park, the Tsitsikamma National Park, extends along a rocky coastline of 50 km, and 3 km out to sea.

Inland, adventure-seekers will find deep gorges and temperate evergreen forests criss-crossed by six hiking trails, including the five-day Otter Trail. The varied wildlife includes dolphins and whales, caracal, genet, chacma baboon, dassie and mongoose. Prominent bird species in the area are the African black oystercatcher, the orange-breasted sunbird, the Nerina trogon and the colourful Knysna loerie. A lucky few may catch a glimpse of the rare Cape clawless otter, after which the Otter Trail is named. Another popular adventure is a black-water tubing experience on the Storms River.

Limpopo

Limpopo is a land 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.

Steeped in history, Limpopo celebrates a rich cultural heritage, and at many archaeological sites the mysteries of the past and ancient peoples are still being unearthed. The present tranquillity of the province belies a turbulent past, to which many monuments and museums attest. Much of the land, particularly in the Kruger National Park and other game and nature reserves, is unspoilt, and provides sanctuary to large numbers of game.

Waterberg

The Nylsvley Nature Reserve boasts one of the greatest concentrations of waterfowl and bushveld birds in South Africa. More than 400 species frequent the area. The Mokopane vicinity has several nature reserves.

The Arend Dieperink Museum features a fine cultural-historical collection. The Makapansgat Caves are notable for their fossils and the caves are being developed into an archaeological site. Makapan Valley is an extension of the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site.

In May 2012, a rare butterfly, the Waterberg Copper (*Erikssonia edgei*), which was thought to have gone extinct almost 30 years ago, was rediscovered by a lepidopterist, Mark Williams, at Bateleur Nature Reserve north-west of Bela-Bela in the Waterberg district of Limpopo. Thanks to the pristine conditions and favourable habitat, this is currently the butterfly's only known location in the world. It was last seen in the only known colony, west of Modimolle, in the early 1980s.

The Makapansgat Caves and limeworks near Mokopane represent an archaeological site of global importance.

The Thabazimbi district has a large concentration of private game reserves and is one of the fastest-growing eco-tourism areas in the country. The Marakele National Park is home to some rare yellowwood 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.

Bela-Bela is known for its hot springs. There are also a number of game reserves and leisure resorts in the area.

The Waterberg range is rich in indigenous trees, streams, springs, wetlands and birdlife. Cliffs known as the "Palace of the Vultures" harbour a large breeding colony of Cape vultures. Modimolle is the region's main town.

Capricorn district

The Bakone Malapa Open-Air Museum outside Polokwane is a traditional Northern Sotho kraal. Men and women practise traditional skills such as making baskets, clay pots, furniture and utensils, and preparing hides.

Polokwane is considered the premier game-hunting destination in South Africa. It is ideally located near the neighbouring countries of Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland.

Zion City at Moria, near Polokwane, is the headquarters of the Zion Christian Church, which attracts more than a million pilgrims every Easter.

Polokwane offers a variety of museums and art galleries, including among others, the Bakone Malapa Museum, the Polokwane Museum and the Hugh Exton Photographic Museum.

Vhembe district

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 Schoemansdal Voortrekker Town and Museum, west of Makhado, is built on the site of an original Voortrekker village and depicts their lifestyle between 1848 and 1852.

Also worth visiting is the Big Tree in the Mutale Municipality, the Tshatshingo potholes, the mystical lake of Dzivhafundudzi and the holy forest and waterfalls at Phiphidi.

Mopani district

The Lekgameetse Nature Reserve in the northern foothills of the Drakensberg is part of the Cloud Mountain Biosphere. This 18 000-ha nature reserve is well known for its abundant butterflies in every colour of the rainbow.

The Modjadji Nature Reserve, north of Tzaneen, is named after the legendary Rain Queen, Modjadji, who is believed to have settled in the area early in the 16th century. The reserve encompasses the world's largest concentration of the cycad species *Encephalartos transvenosus*, also known as the Modjadji cycad.

The Hans Merensky Nature Reserve and Mineral Spa on the southern banks of the Great Letaba River supports a large variety of game. At the adjoining Tsonga Kraal Open-Air Museum, arts, crafts and traditional huts reflect the Tsonga lifestyle of 100 years ago.

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.

Thulamela, in the northern part of the Kruger National Park, was opened to guided groups in June 1997. This followed seven years of archaeological excavations, which brought to light the skeletons of two ancient royals and a multitude of artefacts, including gold bangles, beads and a double gong.

Bohlabela district

On the way to the Kruger National Park, visitors can enjoy wildlife experiences at Manyeleti, home to the Big Five. Adventurers can attempt mountain climbing at the Mangwazi Nature Reserve and enjoy the Mapulaneng Trail at Zoeknag. The Inyaka Dam at Bushbuckridge is also worth a visit.

North West

North West is blessed with several cultural villages that entertain and enrich visitors.

A number of excellent game reserves have been established, including the Pilanesberg National Park, situated in the transition zone between the Kalahari and the Lowveld. Home to the Big Five, the park offers a wide variety of accommodation, is close to popular attractions such as Sun City and only a two/three-hour drive from Johannesburg.

The park has an area of approximately 550 km², making it the fourth largest park in South Africa, with an abundance of animals, and over 300 bird species.

Central district

The historic route of Mafikeng includes an Anglo-Boer/South African War siege site, the Molema House where Sol Plaatje lived while

In August 2012, Domestic Tourism in North West received a boost when the Minister of Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, launched the new tourism initiative, Harties Cableway, which spans the majestic Hartebeespoort Dam and Magaliesberg mountains. The Harties Cableway offers visitors panoramic views of the beautiful surrounds, as well as various recreational and educational facilities.

writing his Mafikeng Diary, and the Mafikeng Museum.

The Lichtenburg Biodiversity Conservation Centre and the Botsalano Game Reserve are well worth a visit.

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.

Other attractions include the Wondergat; the Bosbult Monument, which commemorates a battle fought during the Anglo-Boer/South African War; the Kaditshwene Iron Age Village Ruins; and various hiking trails.

Ottosdal is situated in the centre of the North West and was established as a Dutch Reformed Church parish on the farm Korannafontein in 1913 and named after its owner, GP Otto. Ottosdal is the only place in South Africa where the unique “wonderstone”, or pyrophyllite, is found and mined.

The annual agricultural show in Ottosdal is one of the oldest in the province. Trenches and cemeteries dating from the Anglo-Boer/South African War can be found on the farms Gestoptefontein and Driekuil. San rock engravings, Stone Age implements and structures are found on farms such as Witpoort, Gestoptefontein, Driekuil and Korannafontein.

In the Garden of Remembrance are graves of soldiers killed during the war. The Old Farmhouse that was built in 1910 houses a unique African collection. The Old Water Mill that was built around 1860 is a national monument.

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.

Eastern district

Hartbeespoort Dam is a popular spot for weekend outings, breakfast runs and yachting. The Hartbeespoort Reptile and Animal Park is situated on the banks of the dam.

Cultural experiences in the area include the popular Mapoch and Gaabo Motho cultural villages as well as the Ring Wagon Inn.

The De Wildt Cheetah Breeding and

Research Centre specialises in breeding cheetah and other endangered wildlife species. Other places of interest include the Borakalalo Game Reserve, the Margaret Roberts Herb Farm and the Phaladingwe Nature Trail.

There are several golf courses in the area.

Bophirima district

The Taung Skull Fossil Site and Blue Pools are renowned for the Taung skull found in the Buxton quarries. In July 2005, the World Heritage Committee declared the Taung Skull Fossil Site an extension of the Sterkfontein Fossil Hominid Site. This region is popular with adventure seekers – especially those who enjoy the 4x4 routes and hunting farms.

Rustenburg district

The Pilanesberg National Park supports more than 7 000 head of game and 350 bird species.

The 60 000-ha Madikwe Game Reserve is home to 66 large mammal species. Over 10 000 animals of 27 major species have been reintroduced under Operation Phoenix. A hot-air balloon ride, day and night game drives and bushwalks are available. The reserve boasts the second largest elephant population in South Africa and guests are assured of sighting not only the Big Five but also the elusive cheetah and endangered wild dog. The Royal Madikwe clinched the title of the World's Best Luxury Game Lodge 2011.

Sun City and the Palace of the Lost City are very popular tourist attractions, offering gambling, golf, extravaganza shows, watersport and an artificial sea. There are various hiking trails in the region.

The Heritage Route starts at the Sterkfontein Caves World Heritage Site and ends at Pilanesberg.

Southern district

The OPM Prozesky Bird Sanctuary in Potchefstroom has over 200 bird species and is situated adjacent to the Mooi River. The Oudorp Hiking Trail takes visitors through the old part of Klerksdorp where 12 Voortrekker families settled.

Other attractions in the region include the Potchefstroom Lakeside Resort, the Faan Meintjies Nature Reserve in Klerksdorp, mine tours at Orkney, the Diggers Route at Wolmaransstad and the Bloemhof Dam Nature Reserve.

Mpumalanga

Mpumalanga – “The Place Where the Sun Rises” – epitomises every traveller’s dream of the true African experience. Located in the north-eastern part of South Africa, the province is bordered by Mozambique to the east and the Kingdom of Swaziland to the south and east.

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.

Attractions range from game viewing and bird watching to scenic drives across the valleys and peaks of the vast Drakensberg escarpment, and include agritourism, industrial and adventure tourism and cultural experiences.

Historical sites and cultural villages, old wagon routes and monuments mark events and characters who passed this way in search of adventure and wealth.

Ndebele bead work and wall-painting in the north-west, the arts and crafts of the Lowveld and the different traditional villages throughout the province offer a unique insight into the people’s history and cultures.

Plans are underway to give the Lowveld’s Panorama a facelift in 2013. A R44-million emergency fund has been set aside to upgrade a number of nature reserves throughout the province. These include the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, Manyeleti Reserve, Loskop Dam Nature Reserve and Songimvelo Reserve. The Blyde River Canyon will enjoy preference with renovations starting as soon as possible at the Bourke’s Luck Potholes, God’s Window, the Three Rondawels, Lowveld Views and River Falls.

Nelspruit

Nelspruit is the capital of Mpumalanga and the commercial and administrative hub of the Lowveld. The Nelspruit Historical Trail is an hour-long route stretching from the Promenade Centre to the Civic Centre.

The Blue Train runs between Pretoria and Nelspruit on a chartered route called the “Valley of the Olifants Route”. Rovos Rail’s trains also travel to Nelspruit.

The Green Heritage Hiking Trail in the Nelspruit Nature Reserve is one of several walks in the reserve and one of many in the region.

Not to be missed is the Lowveld Botanical Garden, as well as the Reptile Park, the Sudwala Caves and the PR Owen Dinosaur Park.

The tranquil town of White River to the north of Nelspruit, is well known as an artists’ haven and a gateway to the Kruger National Park. The town also boasts an orange winery. Rottcher Wineries have taken advantage of the area’s prime production of oranges to make a truly unique wine, which has been a hallmark of the area for over 50 years.

Panorama

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.

The Blyderivierspoort Nature Reserve near Graskop is characterised by striking rock formations and a rich diversity of plants. Within the 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, and is one of the natural wonders of Africa. The canyon is the third-largest in the world, the only green canyon, and hosts three rivers that feed the Blydepoort Dam at Swadini.

God’s Window provides a magnificent panoramic view across miles of densely forested mountains, the green Lowveld and the canyon. The Blyderivierspoort Hiking Trail is one of the

most popular in the country. A number of other hiking trails are also available.

The southern section of the Kruger National Park, which is a major tourist attraction, falls within this region.

Kaapsehoop is a quaint historical village known for the wild horses that frequent the district. Blue swallows are regular visitors from September to April.

The Lydenburg Museum is situated in the Gustav Klingbiel Reserve, which is the site of archaeological ruins from the Later Iron Age. The Lydenburg Heads, human-like masks dated to 500 AD, were discovered in this area.

Sabie is the centre of the largest man-made forest in South Africa. 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. In August 2012, Sabie was named as *Rapport* and *Kwela's* Town of the Year 2012.

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.

Pilgrim's Rest is a living museum and a replica of the early gold-mining town. The Alanglade House Museum offers guided tours of the former mine manager's house, while the Diggings Museum just outside the town arranges guided tours of gold-panning activities.

This area was the setting for *Jock of the Bushveld*, the novel by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick about the experiences of a man and his dog as they shared adventures in the world of African gold mining.

The Dredzen Shop Museum features a range of items in use nearly a century ago. The Pilgrim's Rest Festival is held every December.

Mount Sheba Nature Reserve, south of Pilgrim's Rest, is best known for its indigenous forest – one of few left in the region.

Highlands Meander

The Highlands Meander is a mecca for fly-fishers. It is in the placid and pristine waters of this region that one finds various stocks of fish, with trout as the major draw card.

The meander also offers numerous other activities.

At the Verloren Vlei and Steenkampsberg nature reserves at Dullstroom one can get a rare glimpse of the endangered blue, wattled and crowned cranes.

The Loskop Dam Nature Reserve offers game watching, boating and fishing.

Many hiking trails are available, such as the Elandskrans Trail, which includes a 30-minute train ride between Waterval-Boven and Waterval-Onder.

Cultural Heartland

Visitors to the Cultural Heartland can immerse themselves in the true cultural heritage of Mpumalanga. Here, one can learn about the proud and welcoming Ndebele people, revered for the striking and colourful geometric patterns on their houses, clothing and beadwork.

This region also has illuminating historical sites such as the Botshabelo Historical Village, near Middelburg.

Cosmos Country

Cosmos Country covers parts of what is known as the energy belt of Mpumalanga, which is home to a number of power stations. This region also has the world's largest underground coal-mining complex and the Sasol plant that is renowned for its oil-from-coal technology.

The carpet of cosmos flowers that blossoms in late summer lures visitors to this region.

Wild Frontier

Various archaeological discoveries dating back almost three billion years were made in the imposing mountains of this region. Visitors can enjoy a rare glimpse of the inimitable San paintings embossed in some rocks.

The region also holds rich historical sentiments centred on the monument of the late Mozambican President Samora Machel, con-

structed in the village of Mbuzini. The year 2006 saw the 20th anniversary of Machel's death in an aircraft crash.

While they are in this region, visitors have the opportunity to visit Swaziland and Mozambique, which are nearby.

Grass and Wetlands

Grass and Wetlands is a paradise, with its variety of bird species. This region stretches across the deep valleys and mountains of the east where thermal springs bubble to the surface.

There are 270 pans and lakes within a 20-km radius of Lake Chrissie. In this region, visitors can take part in the unusual "frogging expedition" or simply gaze at the stars during "stargazing weekends".

Gauteng

Gauteng, the "Place of Gold", is the commercial powerhouse of the country, but its offerings are not limited to commerce and industry. Anchored by the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria, Gauteng provides plenty in the way of entertainment through its network of upmarket shopping malls, casinos, street markets, theatres, restaurants, museums and parks.

Gauteng is characterised by a cosmopolitan mix of people from all walks of life. The province's unique cultural and social legacy is evident from the many excellent museums, theatres, cultural precincts and craft markets.

Although Gauteng is the most populated, built-up and industrialised province, it still boasts some natural areas offering a variety of leisure activities such as day hikes, picnic spots and sports activities.

These 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.

Tourism attractions in and around the Cradle of Humankind have grown to more than 380, with over half of these offering graded accommodation. Dinokeng attractions continue to grow.

The Vaal Dam, which supplies water to most of Gauteng's residents, covers some 300 km² and is a popular venue for watersports. Numerous resorts line the shore. The dam also attracts diverse bird species.

Vanderbijlpark was built during the late 1940s by the then Iron and Steel Corporation to accommodate its employees.

The Sterkfontein Caves near Krugersdorp are the site of the discovery of the famous skull of Mrs Ples, an estimated 2,5-million-year-old hominid fossil, and Little Foot, an almost complete hominid skeleton some 3,3 million years old.

The broader Cradle of Humankind site consists of 47 000 ha, with numerous caves, the most famous of which are the Sterkfontein caves.

In 1999, Sterkfontein and its environs were declared a world heritage site.

Forty per cent of all the world's human ancestor fossils have been found here, including several of the world's most famous and important fossils.

A further 500 hominid fossils and more than 9 000 stone tools have been excavated in the area, and work is ongoing.

The Krugersdorp Game Reserve provides sanctuary for several game species, including four of the Big Five. The African Fauna and Bird Park houses various species of wildlife and birds.

The South African National Railway and Steam Museum at Randfontein Estates Gold Mine outside Krugersdorp houses some of the country's old steam locomotives, a diesel-electric locomotive, and more than 50 vintage passenger coaches. Train rides are offered once a month.

A team of Lippizaner stallions performs every Sunday at the South African National Horsemanship Centre in Kyalami, near Johannesburg.

Visitors to Roodepoort can go on walks and trails through the Kloofendal Nature Reserve, or enjoy a picnic or a show at the popular Kloofendal Amphitheatre. The Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden boasts a 70-m-high waterfall and a breeding pair of black eagles.

Forty kilometres north of Pretoria lies a ring of hills a kilometre in diameter and 100 m high. These are the walls of an impact crater left by an asteroid that hit the area some 200 000 years ago.

The Tswaing Meteorite Crater is similar in size to the well-known Barringer Meteor Crater in Arizona, in the USA. The crater walls at Tswaing were originally about twice as high as they are today.

There is a museum adjacent to the crater. A path leads from the museum to the crater, along the rim, and down to the central lake. The crater is covered with indigenous trees and bushes, which attract a variety of bird life.

The old mining town of Cullinan developed around the Premier Diamond Mine. Many turn-of-the-century houses still stand. The mine has produced some of the world's most famous diamonds, including the Cullinan Diamond, the world's largest at 3 106 carats.

Johannesburg

The Adler Museum of the History of Medicine depicts the history of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy in South Africa. The Pharmacy Museum in Melrose houses a large variety of medicines, including more than 670 traditional medicines that have been collected throughout southern Africa.

There is also a display of old prescription books and dictionaries used by pharmacists.

Newtown is at the heart of initiatives to revitalise the inner city of Johannesburg.

Here visitors will find the renowned Market Theatre, jazz bars, dance studios and artists' communes among museums, libraries and a host of places of historic interest.

The Nelson Mandela Bridge is a landmark gateway into Newtown, the arts precinct of Johannesburg. It is the largest cable-stayed bridge in southern Africa.

Four hop-on hop-off open-top tour buses started operating in Johannesburg in January 2013. The bright red city sightseeing buses are a global brand. They already operate in Cape Town, and in 100 other countries.

The Johannesburg route starts at the Gautrain Park Station and proceeds to Gandhi Square, then City Hall, Roof of Africa at the Carlton Centre, the James Hall Transport Museum, the Apartheid Museum and Gold Reef City, the Mining District, the World of Beer, the Newtown Precinct, the Origins Centre at Wits University, and ends at Constitution Hill.

Museum Africa in Newtown tells the story of life in South Africa from the Stone Age to the Nuclear Age and beyond.

The Market Theatre complex comprises three theatres, an art gallery, restaurants and pubs. A bronze statue of the champion of passive resistance, Mahatma Gandhi, can be seen in the city centre.

The Lesedi Cultural Village in the Swartkops hills north of Johannesburg gives visitors the opportunity to meet families of different cultural groupings. It features four traditional homesteads where visitors can spend the night with a family of their choice.

The Phumangena Zulu Kraal is home to traditional Zulu people living and working there.

The Melville Koppies in Johannesburg was once the site of a Stone Age African village and iron-smelting works. Flora include 80% of the species recorded on the Witwatersrand. It is open to the public from September to April.

Gold Reef City is a theme park based on Johannesburg during the gold-rush era.

The Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg is a state-of-the-art tribute to the rise and fall of apartheid, with 22 exhibition areas that take the visitor on an emotional journey through the state-sanctioned system of apartheid.

A team of curators, film-makers, historians, designers and architects assembled the exhibits on a seven-hectare site.

Constitution Hill features the impressive building housing South Africa's Constitutional Court, and offers visitors the chance to view

the fort, the so-called native gaol, the women's gaol and the awaiting-trial block.

People once imprisoned at these facilities include Gandhi and Albert Luthuli, as well as the only woman to be executed in South Africa's history, Daisy de Melker.

A large, well-established park surrounds Zoo Lake, which breeding bird colonies frequent. Other attractions include jazz concerts, rowing boats for hire, a tea garden and a restaurant.

Fordsburg, a suburb on the western side of Johannesburg, often called the city's "Little India", has grown in recent times, its identity shifting and merging with the different customs and flavours that have made it a centrepiece in the cultural design of the city.

The South African Museum of Military History houses an impressive collection of weaponry and uniforms from the two world wars.

The South African Transport Museum in Heidelberg represents all aspects of South Africa's transport services.

Soweto is a popular tourist destination. It is estimated that some 1 000 foreign tourists visit Soweto every day. Its tourism industry contributes about R143 million to Gauteng's GDP.

The two-bedroom house where former President Mandela lived before his incarceration has been declared a national monument and converted into a museum.

The Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown, Soweto is the place where the Freedom Charter was signed in 1955.

The Kliptown Project comprises a hotel, the Kliptown Museum, retail outlets, restaurants and offices.

No tour of Soweto would be complete without a visit to the Hector Petersen Museum, which commemorates the people who died during the Student Uprising of 16 June 1976.

The museum was named after the young boy who was the first person to be shot dead by police on that day.

The Soweto Tourism and Information Centre offers comprehensive information to tourists, as well as facilities to book accommodation, tours and site guides in Soweto.

Pretoria

A variety of historical buildings is found in the city, which is known as the "Jacaranda City" because of the many jacaranda trees that line its streets. When these are in full bloom in October, they cover the city in a lilac haze, providing spectacular views from the surrounding hills.

Church Square is built around a statue of Paul Kruger, president of the former Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, and includes buildings such as the Old Raadsaal and the Palace of Justice.

Ten minutes' drive from Church Square is Freedom Park, which commemorates the country's political history.

Once fully completed, the 35-ha site will comprise a garden of remembrance, a museum, and statues and sculptures to honour South Africans who have contributed to the country's freedom and development.

The Kruger House Museum contains the personal belongings of President Kruger.

Melrose House is a beautiful example of Victorian architecture. The Peace Treaty of Vereeniging, which ended the Anglo-Boer/South African War, was signed there in 1902.

Demonstrations at the Pioneer Open-Air Museum include cow milking, butter- and candle-making, bread baking and coffee-bean grinding.

Other museums include the Police Museum, the Coert Steynberg Museum and the Transvaal Museum of Natural History.

The Voortrekker Monument also has a museum and commemorates the Great Trek. Some 260 steps lead to the dome, where spectacular views of the city can be enjoyed. The monument receives about 200 000 visitors a year.

Fort Schanskop has been refurbished and has a 375-seat amphitheatre. The Sammy Marks Museum near Pretoria dates from 1885. Rooms in the house are filled with Victorian paintings, furniture, silver and porcelain. Visitors can relax at the tea garden and restaurant on the premises.

The Union Buildings celebrates 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 Thabo Mbeki on 16 June 1999, and 27 April 2004, and of Jacob Zuma on 9 May 2009. It is also the setting of many national celebrations, including Women's Day and Freedom Day.

The General Smuts House Museum in Irene, south-east of Pretoria, contains the original furnishings of the Smuts family. A popular arts and crafts market is held here on certain Saturdays.

The Rietvlei Nature Reserve is notable for its grass types, herbs, large number of game including rhino and many bird species.

The Mapoch Ndebele Village, north of Pretoria, is being restored by its residents and the National Cultural History Museum. To develop the project into a viable, living tourist village, the 50 families who live there have undergone tourist-guide and business training. It is the first living cultural village in South Africa owned and managed by its residents.

Mamelodi is about 20 km from the city centre and features Solomon Mahlangu Square, which is dedicated to the freedom fighter.

The Willem Prinsloo Agricultural Museum outside Pretoria features a farmstead dating from 1880. Traditional farming activities are demonstrated, and annual events include a prickly-pear festival, a mampoer festival and the Agricultural Museum Show.

The Pretoria National Botanical Garden houses the National Herbarium of South Africa, the largest in the Southern Hemisphere.

KwaZulu-Natal

The garden province of South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal is a subtropical region of lush and well-watered valleys, washed by the warm Indian Ocean. 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.

It offers golden beaches and verdant nature reserves. Its western part is marked by the dramatic Drakensberg mountain range, with several peaks well over 3 000 m. The range has been awarded world heritage status for its dramatic natural beauty and the wealth of San Bushman rock art found in its caves – the richest concentration on the continent of Africa.

Durban and surroundings

The city of Durban, overlooking Africa's busiest seaport, is warm and inviting. It is not only South Africa's domestic tourism leader, but is also highly popular among visitors from throughout Africa and the rest of the world who seek a unique blend of vibrance, sophistication, cultural diversity and excitement in a beautiful setting.

The Golden Mile skirts the main beaches of the Indian Ocean. Attractions include an amusement centre, paddling pools, paved walkways and fountains.

The uShaka Marine World has a theme park, oceanarium, dolphinarium and oceanographic research institute. It is home to a wide variety of sea life, including sharks, dolphins and seals. One of its main attractions is the long lane of shops and the multitude of restaurants, especially those in the old wreck (a replica of a ship wreck in the centre of the park), and a tourism information office at its entrance.

There is a snorkelling trail and a tubing river around the park.

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 and includes an outdoor restaurant and a zoo, plus a sizeable playground for children.

MiniTown is a model city depicting Durban's best-known buildings.

Museums include the Natural History Museum, the Natural Science Museum, the Old House Museum and the Old Fort. One of the most intriguing museums is the Maritime Museum, complete with two floating ships in the harbour.

The Shree Ambalavaanar Alayam Temple (the Second River Temple) in Cato Manor was the first Hindu temple in Africa. It is a national monument.

The Juma Masjid Mosque is the largest mosque in the Southern Hemisphere. Daily tours are available.

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 swimming event, the July Handicap horse-race and the Amashovashova cycle tour, as well as the largest road race in the country, the Spar Mercury Ladies 10-km Challenge.

Umhlanga Rocks, just north of Durban, is notable for its ski-boating facilities and the Ski-Boat Festival held every April. The Natal Sharks Board offers shark dissections and interesting displays. Guided tours of the Hawaan Forest are also on offer. Hawaan is the last relic of coastal forest in the region and contains rare indigenous trees.

The Umgeni River Bird Park overlooks the Umgeni River and ranks among the world's best bird sanctuaries. Many varieties of birds, indigenous and exotic, inhabit walk-in aviaries.

The Millennium Town at the end of the Bluff houses the maritime offices, which control the entry of ships into and out of the busiest port in Africa.

East Griqualand

East Griqualand is an area of great beauty, featuring colourful, living history. Kokstad lies in the Umzimhlava River basin between Mount Currie and the Ngele Mountains.

The original town hall – built in 1910 – is a national monument, now serving as the local library. The former library – built in 1907 – is also a national monument and houses the Kokstad Museum.

The Weza State Forest runs through indigenous forests and commercial plantations. The forest is home to several antelope species and a huge variety of birds.

East Griqualand is home to the southernmost portion of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site, plus the impressive Swartberg, Bokkiesberg, Cedarberg and Ngele mountain ranges.

Between Kokstad and Matatiele, the hamlet of Cedarville provides tranquil canoe-borne excursions into its surrounding, water-filled hollows. Steam-train journeys can be undertaken between Swartberg and Creighton.

North Coast

Year-round frolicking dolphins and impressive seasonal whale migrations make the coastline between the Umdloti and the Thukela rivers aptly called the "Dolphin Coast". The larger humpback dolphins are also found here, but rarely seen.

Many of the first Indian immigrants settled here, and the area's markets, mosques and temples give the region an authentic Eastern flavour.

Tongaat is an area where sugar was first planted in 1854. The town's Indian ambience is accentuated by two prominent Hindu temples – the Juggernath Puri and Vishwaroop temples.

Other towns along the Dolphin Coast include Shaka's Rock, Salt Rock, Ballito, Verulam, Stanger, Darnall and Umdloti.

Zululand and the Elephant Coast

Zululand's north-east quadrant – between Mozambique, Swaziland and the warm Indian Ocean – has its own unique tale to tell. This is the Elephant Coast or Maputaland, named after the mid-17th century king who established dominion here some 200 years before Shaka consolidated his Zulu empire to the south.

The Tembe Elephant Park in the far north is home to herds of the massive African elephant.

The Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park is one of the largest game parks in South Africa and hosts the Big Five as well as the elusive cheetah and wild dog.

The eMakhosini Valley, birthplace of King Shaka, is the venue for a new tourism and economic-development project. Known as "The Valley of Zulu Kings", the joint public-private

sector project aims to preserve the culture and history of the Zulu people. A sculptured hilltop monument named Spirit of eMakhosini draws many tourists. This heritage park is near a nature reserve that will eventually support the Big Five of the animal kingdom.

At the eMakhosini Memorial Site, seven Zulu kings are buried. Ulundi lies at the hub of the old Zulu nation. The KwaZulu Cultural Museum houses interesting displays relating to Zulu history and archaeology. The beehive huts and the layout of the original Zulu village have been reproduced.

Umgungundlovu was once the royal capital of King Dingaan and is now being reconstructed. A tour provides the opportunity to observe Zulu building techniques and to experience the social life of the Zulu people. Work will begin on a R20-million multimedia centre, which will include first-rate audiovisual representations of Zulu history and culture.

Authentic Zulu villages such as Shakaland, Kwabhekithunga Kraal, Damazulu and Stewart's Farm offer accommodation and the opportunity to experience traditional Zulu culture.

The isiZulu word iSimangaliso – meaning "miracle" – has a rich historical context.

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park is one of the jewels of South Africa's coastline, with a unique mosaic of ecosystems – swamps, lakes, beaches, coral reefs, wetlands, woodlands, coastal forests and grasslands – supporting a diversity of animal, bird and marine life.

It is South Africa's third-largest park, spanning 280 km of coastline, from the Mozambican border in the north to Mapelane south of the St Lucia estuary, and made up of around 328 000 ha of pristine natural ecosystems – including swamps, lake systems, beaches, coral reefs, wetlands, woodlands and coastal forests.

St Lucia and its surroundings comprise a globally important wetland and has five separate ecosystems. It is a fishing and bird watching paradise, and boat trips on the lake offer opportunities for crocodile and hippo sightings. St Lucia is the only town in the world that is completely surrounded by a natural world heritage area.

The Kosi Bay Nature Reserve is part of the Coastal Forest Reserve between Mozambique and Sodwana Bay. The adjacent Indian Ocean provides exciting snorkelling and fishing opportunities. On offer is a four-day guided walking trail around the estuarine system.

uMkhuze is a small trade and transport centre. The Mkuze River cuts through the Ubombo Mountains before serving as a natural boundary for Zululand's popular Mkuzi Game Reserve.

The Border Cave, a site of immense archaeological interest on the border of Swaziland, now also has an interpretation centre.

Lake Sibaya is South Africa's largest natural freshwater lake, covering some 77 km².

Bird watching and walks through the coastal forest are popular pastimes.

Sibaya Lake Lodge is the first South African ecotourism development jointly owned by private enterprise and the local community.

The coral reef in the Sodwana Bay National Park attracts hundreds of scuba-divers throughout the year, and, in summer, power boaters arrive for some of the best marlin fishing in the world.

South Coast

Amanzimtoti is popular for its safe swimming beaches and a variety of fun activities and attractions for the whole family.

The Hibiscus Coast stretches between Umkomaas and the Wild Coast. Margate is the largest resort town along this coast, and is very popular during the holidays. The Hibiscus Festival is held there in July.

The Oribi Gorge Nature Reserve encompasses forest, rivers, rapids and ravines. Prolific birdlife, including five kingfisher species and seven eagle species, inhabits the reserve, along with a variety of mammals. There is also a 140-m abseil and gorge swing for adrenalin junkies.

Port Edward is known for its safe swimming and good fishing opportunities. Nearby, the Umthamvuna Nature Reserve is noted for its beautiful scenery, birdlife and many rare plant species.

The Shell Museum at Shelly Beach is well worth a visit. Other popular coastal towns include Port Shepstone, Ramsgate, St Michael's-on-Sea, Uvongo and Scottburgh. Nature's annual extravaganza – the unforgettable Sardine Run – strikes the South Coast around the end of June every year, when people flock to the beaches and anglers wait for the game fish following the sardines to arrive.

Pietermaritzburg and the Midlands

History-filled towns lead to adventure sports and game viewing, along with outlets for unique arts and crafts. Pietermaritzburg boasts various museums, including the Voortrekker Museum, the Natal Museum and the Natal Steam Railway Museum, which offers steam-train rides on the second Sunday of every month. The Tatham Art Gallery is also extremely popular.

The Albert Falls Public Resort Nature Reserve and the Albert Falls Dam provide opportunities for sailing, canoeing and fishing. Bird watching, horse riding and hiking are also popular activities.

The Howick Falls are situated in the Nature Valley Reserve, where the river tumbles down 100 m in a single fall. There are several climbing routes.

The Midlands Meander is a scenic drive between Hilton and Mooi River, with some 430 ports of call en route, ranging from 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 is inhabited by rhino, zebra, a wide variety of antelope species and waterfowl. The popular yearly Midmar Mile attracts thousands of swimmers.

Drakensberg

The mountainous "Barrier of Spears" uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site, adorned with Stone Age cave paintings, forms the north-western border of KwaZulu-Natal. The entire area is a bird sanctuary, featuring, among other species, the endangered lam-

mergeier (bearded vulture). The highest concentration of walks and trails in South Africa is found here.

The uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park was declared a world heritage site in 2001 and consists of almost the entire Drakensberg mountain range from Bushman's Neck in the south to the Royal Natal National Park in the north.

Peaks soar to over 3 000 m and are often snow-covered in winter. The park is administered by Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife. Their trout hatcheries are located in the Kambberg Reserve area. There are also trout hatcheries at Cathedral Peak.

The Lotheni Nature Reserve is notable for its trout fishing facilities (angling permits are required). Relics of the area's history have been preserved in the Settler Museum.

The Himeville Nature Reserve has two lakes stocked with trout. The Swamp Nature Reserve close by attracts a variety of waterfowl, including the rare wattled crane.

The Ndedema Gorge is located in the Mdedelelo Wilderness Area near Cathedral Peak and contains examples of Khoi and San art.

Sani Pass is the only road across the high escarpment between KwaZulu-Natal and the Kingdom of Lesotho. Sani Pass may be a road, but the top section is only passable in 4x4 vehicles. The Giant's Cup Hiking Trail, starting at the foot of the pass, is described as one of South Africa's finest. Giant's Castle Game Reserve is especially known for its more than 5 000 San paintings. The Bushman Site Museum is well worth a visit.

The Royal Natal National Park offers many scenic highlights, including the Amphitheatre, Mont-aux-Sources and the Thukela Falls.

Battlefields

The KwaZulu-Natal Battlefields Route has the highest concentration of battlefields and related military sites in South Africa. The Battlefields Route starts at Estcourt, winding north through Colenso and Ladysmith to Newcastle and Volksrust, and eastwards to Utrecht, Glencoë, Dundee, Nqutu, Paulpietersburg, Vryheid, Babanango and Ulundi.

All the towns along the route have their own unique charm and range of attractions: arts and crafts, scenic hiking trails, farm resorts, Zulu culture and roadside stalls. Game viewing, natural hot springs, horse trails and water-sports can also be enjoyed.

The Chelmsford Nature Reserve near Newcastle is a birdwatcher's paradise. Powerboating and carp fishing are added attractions. Game includes springbok, zebra, rhino and blesbok. Other interesting places to visit are Majuba Hill and O'Neill's Cottage.

The Ladysmith Siege Museum provides insight into the battles of Colenso, Spioenkop, Vaalkrans and Tugela Heights. Museum staff arrange guided tours to nearby battlefields such as Wagon Hill. Other attractions in Ladysmith include the statue of Gandhi, the All Saints Church, the Soofi Mosque and the Spioenkop Dam and Nature Reserve.

Near Dundee, tourists can visit various battlefields, including Ncome-Blood River, Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift and Talana. The Talana Museum depicts various facets of the coal industry, as well as local Zulu, Boer and British history.

Rorke's Drift was the setting for one of the most famous battles of the war. The main attraction is the Rorke's Drift Battle Museum.

Conclusion

Tourism as a labour-intensive industry has significant potential and capacity to grow the economy and to create jobs. It is, therefore, central to delivering on government's mandate of creating decent work, sustainable livelihoods and rural development.

To this end, the department's efforts are geared towards creating a conducive environment for the tourism sector to increase its direct contribution to the country's GDP and to increase the number of jobs directly supported by the sector.

From the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ experience, the department has learned that, going forward, it will be particularly critical to not only focus on convention and major-events tourism, but to enhance the capacity to bid for such events. In this regard, South Africa established the SANCB, enabling the development of a coordinated strategy on how best to promote, develop and take advantage of this growing market segment.

The tourism sector must also be able to provide quality, unique and diversified products and services. The department's interventions as far as product development is concerned will therefore still take into account geographic spread, affordability within the industry, and entrenching a culture of travel among South Africans.

To achieve its long-term goals and to position tourism as one of the six key sectors of economic growth, the department will draft a product development strategy for South Africa, as well as strategies for the development of niche tourism products.

To ensure the realisation of all the tourism development priorities, the department adopted the NTSS, which is aimed at positioning South Africa as one of the top 20 tourism destinations globally by 2020.

The department also embarked on a process to review tourism legislation. This process highlighted a number of critical areas to be addressed to achieve sustainable tourism growth and development.

The department is expecting that by 2020, many leading world economies, including South Africa, would have implemented a system of e-visas that will improve security while also facilitating hassle-free travel.

Acknowledgements

Business Day
Business Report
Department of Tourism, Annual Report 2011/12

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