South Africa occupies the most southern tip of Africa with its long coastline stretching more than 3,000 km from the desert border with Namibia on the Atlantic coast southwards around the tip of Africa and then north to the border of subtropical Mozambique on the Indian Ocean.

The country has more than 290 conservation parks. It is home to almost 300 mammal species, about 860 bird species and 8,000 plant species. The annual sardine run is the biggest migration on the planet.

South Africa comprises eight world heritage sites and is divided into eight biomes.

The heritage sites are:
- Cradle of Humankind
- Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape
- Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape
- Robben Island
- Cape Floral Region Protected Areas
- iSimangaliso Wetland Park
- Vredefort Dome
- uKhahlamba / Drakensberg Park

The biomes are:
- Grassland
- Savanna
- Succulent Karoo
- Nama Karoo
- Forest
- Fynbos
- Desert
- Thicket

The country is considered to be the cradle of humankind and boasts 40% of all hominid finds on Earth.

The land

Stretching latitudinally from 22°S to 35°S and longitudinally from 17°E to 33°E, South Africa’s surface area covers 1,219,602 km². Physical features range from bushveld, grasslands, forests, deserts and majestic mountain peaks, to wide unspoilt beaches and coastal wetlands.

The country shares common boundaries with Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland, while the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho is landlocked by South African territory in the south-east.

The Prince Edward and Marion islands, annexed by South Africa in 1947, lie some 1,920 km south-east of Cape Town.

The oceans and coastline

The warm Mozambique-Agulhas Current skirts the east and south coasts as far as Cape Agulhas, while the cold Benguela Current flows northwards along the west coast as far as southern Angola.

The contrast in temperature between these two currents partly accounts for significant differences in climate and vegetation, as well as differences in marine life.

Owing to the cold waters of the west coast being much richer in oxygen, nitrates, phosphates and plankton than those of the east coast, the South African fishing industry is centred on the west coast.
Saldanha Bay on the west coast is the only ideal natural harbour.

**Rivers and lakes**

None of the country’s rivers are commercially navigable and most river mouths are unsuitable as harbours because large sandbanks block entry for most of the year. South Africa has no significant natural lakes. Artificial lakes are used mostly for crop irrigation.

The Orange River is South Africa's largest river. Rising in the Drakensberg Mountains, it traverses through the Lesotho Highlands and joins the Caledon River between the Eastern Cape and the Free State before it empties into the Atlantic Ocean forming the border with Namibia.

Other major rivers include the Vaal, Breede, Komati, Lepelle (previously Olifants), Tugela, Umzimvubu, Limpopo and Molopo.

**Relief features**

South Africa’s surface area falls into two major physiographic categories: the interior plateau and the land between the coastal plains. The dissected Lesotho plateau, which is more than 3,000 m above sea level, is the most prominent.

Between the Great Escarpment and the coast lies an area which varies in width from 80 km to 240 km in the east and south, and 60 km to 80 km in the west. At least three major subdivisions are recognised – the eastern plateau slopes, the Cape folded belt and adjacent regions, and the western plateau slopes.

**Climate**

A subtropical location, moderated by ocean on three sides of the country and the altitude of the interior plateau, account for the warm temperate conditions. South Africa is a relatively dry country, with an average annual rainfall of about 464 mm.

While the Western Cape gets most of its rainfall in winter, the rest of the country is generally a summer-rainfall region.

Temperatures in South Africa tend to be lower than in other countries at similar latitudes owing mainly to greater elevation above sea level.

On the interior plateau, the altitude – Johannesburg lies at 1,595 m in the dolerite-capped Roggeveld scarp in the southern continuation of the great African plateau stretching north to the Sahara Desert. The plateau is characterised by wide plains with an average height of 1,200 m above sea level. The dissected Lesotho plateau, which is more than 3,000 m above sea level, is the most prominent.

**Languages**

Besides the official languages, scores of others – African, European, Asian and more – are spoken in South Africa, as the country lies at the crossroads of southern Africa. Other languages spoken here and mentioned in the Constitution are the Khoi, Nama and San languages, sign language, Arabic, German, French, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Portuguese, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. There are also a few indigenous creoles and pidgens.

English is generally understood across the country, being the language of business, politics and the media, and the country’s lingua franca. But it only ranks fourth out of 11 as a home language.

South Africa’s linguistic diversity means that all 11 languages have had a profound effect on one another. South African English, for example, is littered with words and phrases from Afrikaans, isiXhosa and other African languages.

According to Stats SA’s Community Survey 2016, isiZulu is the most common home language spoken by 24,6% of the population, followed by isiXhosa (12,1%), Sepedi (9,5%), Setswana (8,8%), and English (8,3%). Sesotho (8%), Xitsonga (4,2%), Siswati (2,8%), Tshivenda (2,4%) and isiNdebele (1,6%).

**Religion**

South Africa is a secular democracy with freedom of religion. Many religions are represented in the ethnic and regional diversity of the population.

According to Stats SA’s Community Survey 2016, the distribution of religious beliefs in South Africa is as follows: Christianity (43 423 717); Islam (892 685); Traditional African religion (2 454 887); Hinduism (561 268); Buddhism (24

The estimated overall HIV prevalence rate is approximately 12,6% among the South African population. The total number of people living with HIV is estimated at approximately 7,06 million in 2017. For adults aged 15 to 49 years, an estimated 18,0% of the population is HIV positive.

The number of AIDS-related deaths declined consistently since 2007 from 345 185 in 2006 to 126 755 AIDS related deaths in 2017. Access to antiretroviral treatment has changed historical patterns of mortality. Access to ART has thus extended the lifespan of many in South Africa, who would have otherwise died at an earlier age, evident in the decline of AIDS deaths post-2006.

**Inland Pale**

Inland from the escarpment lies the interior plateau, which is the southern continuation of the great African plateau stretching north to the Sahara Desert. The plateau is characterised by wide plains with an average height of 1,200 m above sea level. The dissected Lesotho plateau, which is more than 3,000 m above sea level, is the most prominent.

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**Average temperatures (°C) in South Africa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloemfontein</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Town</td>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Elizabeth</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretoria</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richards Bay</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skukuza</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thohoyandou</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upington</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South African Weather Service

**Languages according to mother tongue**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IsiZulu</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>isiNdebele</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IsiXhosa</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>Siniwali</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>Tshivenda</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sepedi</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>Xitsonga</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>Sesotho</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setswana</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>Sign Language</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Stats SA’s Community Survey 2016

**Life expectancy at birth for 2017 is estimated at 61.2 years for women and 57.8 years for men.**
Agriculture and forestry
The fertile Langkloof Valley in the south-west has enormous deciduous fruit orchards, while sheep farming predominates in the Karoo. An olive nursery has been developed in collaboration with the University of Fort Hare to form a nucleus of olive production in the Eastern Cape. The coastal areas receive good summer rainfall and have a moderate climate, becoming more subtropical to the north-west, which makes it particularly suitable for forestry.

The basis of the province’s fishing industry is squid, some recreational and commercial fishing for line fish, the collection of marine resources, and access to line-catches of hake.

Industry
There are two industrial development zones: the West Bank in East London and Coega, near Port Elizabeth, which includes the deepwater Port of Ngqura. The metropolitan economies of Port Elizabeth and East London are based primarily on manufacturing, the most important being automotive manufacturing. The province is the hub of South Africa’s motor industry. With its ability to link throughout the economy, the government has identified the automotive industry as a key growth sector. It already exhibited significant growth under the Motor Industry Development Programme.

Other important sectors include renewables and green industries, forestry and timber processing, pharmaceuticals, plastics and chemicals, capital goods and tourism.

Free State
According to the Mid-year population estimates, 2017, there were over 2.8 million people in the province on about 129 825 km² of land. The main languages spoken are Sesotho, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. The Free State has wide horizons and blue skies, farmland, mountains, goldfields and widely dispersed towns. It lies in the heart of South Africa, with Lesotho nesting 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.

Mapoleng, comprising Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu, has an established institutional, educational and administrative infrastructure. With Bloemfontein being South Africa’s judicial capital, the province houses the Supreme Court of Appeal. Important towns include Welkom, Sasolburg, Onderstepoort, Kroonstad, Parys, Phuthaditjhaba, Bethlehem and the charming village of Clarens situated in the rolling foothills of the Maluti Mountains.

Some of South Africa’s most valued San rock art can be found in the Free State. Other tourist attractions include the Golden Gate National Park, the annual air show in Bethlehem, the Cherry Festival in Ficksburg and the Fauresmith International Endurance Ride equestrian event.

Manufacturing and industry
The Maluti-a-Phofung Special Economic Zone is the Free State’s share of the logistics and industrial corridor. The Vehicle Distribution Centre was established in partnership with the German Bremen Logistics Group, which committed R60 million towards this project. The Harrismith Food Processing Park forms part of the broader development initiative.

The green economic solar zone in the Xhariep district was expected to result in the establishment of the Xhariep Solar Park, harnessing the solar radiation in the southern part of the Free State.

The Ingula Pumped Storage Scheme forms part of Eskom’s capital expansion programme. This energy infrastructure project is located on the border of the Phumelela and Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipalities in the Free State and emNambithi Local Municipality and the uThukela District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal.

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

The Vredefort Dome, 10 km in diameter, is South Africa’s seventh World Heritage Site.

Mining
The National Development Plan has intensified the mining potential that still exists in the goldfields region of Matjhabang in the Lejweleputswa District as a job intervention zone. The De Bron-Merriespruit Gold Project and the Bloemhoek Gold Project are included as potential development projects in the scope of work of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission.

The province has 12 gold mines, producing 30% of South Africa’s output and making it the fifth-largest producer of gold in the world. Gold mines in the Free State also supply a substantial portion of the total silver produced in the country. Uranium occurring in the gold-bearing conglomerates of the goldfields is extracted as a by-product.

The Free State’s gold reef of more than 400 km stretches across the province from Gauteng. South Africa’s largest gold-mining complex is Free State Consolidated Goldfields, with an area of 330 km².

Bituminous coal is mined and converted to petrochemicals at Sasolburg.

The province also produces high-quality diamonds from its Kimberlite pipes and fissures, and the country’s largest deposit of bontonite is found in the Koppies district.

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Agriculture
Agriculture dominates the Free State landscape, with cultivated land covering 32 000 km² and natural veld and grazing 87 000 km² of the province. Field crops yield almost two thirds of the gross agricultural income of the province. Animal products contribute a further 30%, with the balance generated by horticulture.

The province is home to a number of higher education institutions, including Rhodes University, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, the University of Fort Hare and the Walter Sisulu University of Technology.

It has airports in Bhisho, East London, Mthatha and Port Elizabeth. It also has two major harbours in East London and Port Elizabeth respectively.

Agriculture, fisheries and forestry
The fertile Langkloof Valley in the south-west has enormous deciduous fruit orchards, while sheep farming predominates in the Karoo. The Alexandria-Grahamstown area produces pineapples, chicory and dairy products, while coffee and tea are cultivated in the Eastern Cape. Various floral habitats meet in the province, ranging from tropical forests in the north to the more temperate woods of the south.

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South Africa yearbook 2016/17

South Africa, the largest producer of synthetic fuels on the sub-continent, remains a key role-player in the Free State economy. Its investment in its Sasolburg operations is evident from the Wax Expansion project, the Ethylene Purification Unit 5, the Gas Engine Power Plant and Clean Fuels 2.

The Omnia Nitric Acid complex, located within the Sasol Industrial Complex, includes a nitric acid plant, an ammonium nitrate plant, a porous ammonium nitrate plant, a fleet of 145 specialised ammonia rail tankers and other ancillary facilities.

**Gauteng**

The 2017 Mid-year population estimates show that Gauteng remains the most populous province – 14 278 700 (25,3%). Gauteng contributes 33,9% to South Africa’s gross domestic product (GDP) and is also one of the biggest contributors to the economy of the continent.

Gauteng accounts for the bulk of all employees’ remuneration in the country, at a whopping 47,7%, and is responsible for 50,4% of all company turnover in South Africa. Financial and business services, logistics, manufacturing, property, telecommunications and trade are some of the province’s most important economic sectors.

It is the business heart of South Africa, but it is also the shopping mecca of Africa, with 60% of tourists from the rest of the continent citing shopping as their reason for visiting the province.

The population of more than 13 million people has the highest per-capita income level in the country. The province blends cultures, colours and first- and third-world traditions in a spirited mix, flavoured by a number of foreign influences.

Most overseas visitors enter South Africa via OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg.

The City of Johannesburg is the capital of the province. In 2015, it was rated as one of the best cities in Africa, economically, according to ratings agency, Fitch. Another ratings agency, Moody’s, also increased their ratings of Johannesburg in the same year.

South of Johannesburg lies Soweto, the most populous urban residential area in the country, with a population of more than a million.

The Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (GEP), an entity that falls under the Gauteng Department of Economic Development, signed a partnership with the United Nations Development Programme that is expected to boost small businesses and create jobs.

The GEP’s new partnership would, through supplier links between small enterprises and bigger firms, assist in transforming the province’s and South Africa’s economy.

Some 50 km north of Johannesburg lies South Africa’s administrative capital, Pretoria. The magnificent Union Buildings, which overlook the city from Meintjieskop, represent the official seat of the South African Government and house the offices of the country’s President.

The industrial area of Rosslyn and the townships of Soshanguve and Ga-Rankuwa are situated north of Pretoria. Cullinan, which is well known for its diamonds, and Mamelodi lie to the east. To the west lies Atteridgeville.

Other important Gauteng towns include Krugersdorp and Roodepoort on the West Rand; and Germiston, Springs, Boksburg, Benoni, Brakpan and Kempton Park on the East Rand. Vanderbijlpark and Vereening in the south of the province are major industrial centres, while Heidelberg, Nigel and Bronkhorstspruit, to the east, are of agricultural importance.

The University of Pretoria is the largest residential university in South Africa, while the University of South Africa is believed to be the largest correspondence university in the world. Other universities include the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Johannesburg.

The province also has several other tertiary education institutions such as universities of technology and further education and training colleges. Gauteng is also home to leading research institutions such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Agricultural Research Council, the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute and the Human Sciences Research Council.

In December 2016, thousands of South Africans took part in the third annual Mandela Remembrance Walk to remember the Struggle veteran.

**Mining and manufacturing**

Manufacturing includes basic iron and steel, fabricated and metal products, food, machinery, electrical machinery, appliances and electrical supplies, vehicle parts and accessories, and chemical products.

All major gold and diamond mining houses have their headquarters in Johannesburg, the biggest being Anglo American and De Beers.

Although gold-mining and ancillary industries provide thousands of jobs, the importance of mining is declining compared to the manufacturing and financial sectors. Gauteng dominates the South African economy in every major sector except agriculture, mining and quarrying. Mining produces only 6% of Gauteng’s total income and 31% of export earnings.

**Technology**

More than 60% of South Africa’s research and development takes place in Gauteng.

The CSIR is one of South Africa’s leading science and technology research, development and implementation centres. Located in Pretoria, the CSIR’s research and development areas include biosciences; the built environment; information and communication; materials science and manufacturing; natural resources and the environment; mineral resources; space technology; nanotechnology and synthetic biology.

The Innovation Hub in Pretoria is Africa’s first internationally accredited science park and a full member of the International Association of Science Parks. Its community has become a regional centre of innovation and knowledge creation, linked to the fast-moving world of global interconnectivity, and made up of small, medium and micro-enterprises and multinational companies, employing over 1 000 people.

**Industry and agriculture**

A large area of Gauteng falls within the so-called “Maize Triangle.” The province is an integrated industrial complex with major areas of economic activity in three subregional areas, namely the Vaal Triangle; the East, West and Central Rand; and Pretoria. Johannesburg houses the Johannesburg Stock Exchange Limited, the largest securities exchange in Africa.

**KwaZulu-Natal**

KwaZulu-Natal is one of the country’s most popular holiday destinations. It includes South Africa’s lush subtropical east coast, stretching from Port Edward in the south to Mozambique in the north.
Limpopo

South Africa’s northernmost province shares borders with Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Botswana, making it the ideal gateway to Africa. Named after the Limpopo River that flows along its northern border, the province is rich in wildlife, natural beauty and historical and cultural treasures.

The province is linked to the Maputo Development Corridor through the Phalaborwa Spatial Development Initiative, which is a network of rail and road corridors connected to the major seaports, opening up Limpopo for trade and investment. This is complemented by the presence of smaller airports in centres such as Phalaborwa and Musina, as well as the Gateway International Airport in Polokwane, the capital city, which lies strategically in the centre of the province.

The Great North Road, running through the centre of the province, strings together a series of towns such as Bela-Bela, with its popular mineral spa; Modimolle, with its beautiful Waterberg mountain range; Mokopane; Polokwane; Makhado, at the foot of the Soutpansberg mountain range; and Musina, which is well-known for its majestic baobab trees. The crossing into Zimbabwe is at Beit Bridge.

Phalaborwa and Thabazimbi are Limpopo’s major mining centres, while the town of Tzaneen in the picturesque Magogebaskloof is known for its tea plantations, forestry products and tropical fruit.

The province is in the Savanna Biome, an area of mixed grassland and trees, generally known as bushveld. Natural resources include more than 50 provincial nature reserves and several private game reserves. The largest section of the Kruger National Park is along Limpopo’s eastern boundary, which borders on Mozambique.

Several museums and national monuments bear testimony to the ancient people and fearless pioneers who braved the unknown.

Living museums include the Bakone Malapa Museum near Vosho, the Mapungubwe National Park, Mapungubwe (“Place of the Jackal”) Hill, some 75 km from Musina, is a world heritage site. It served as a natural fortress for its inhabitants from about 950 AD to 1200 AD.

**Industry and mining**

Limpopo also has abundant mineral resources, making mining the critical sector of the province’s economy by contributing 22% of the gross geographic product. Metals include platinum, chromium, nickel, cobalt, vanadium, tin, limestone and uranium clay.

Other reserves include antimony, phosphates, fluorspar, gold, diamonds, copper, emeralds, scheelites, magnetite, vermiculite, silicon, mica, black granite, corundum, feldspar and salt.

**Mpumalanga**

Spectacular scenic beauty and an abundance of wildlife make the province one of South Africa’s major tourist destinations.

Mpumalanga, which means “Place Where the Sun Rises”, is home to just more than four million people. The principle languages are Siswati and isiZulu.

With a surface area of only 76 495 km², it is the second-smallest province after Gauteng, yet has the fourth-largest economy in South Africa.

Bordered by Mozambique and Swaziland in the east, and Gauteng in the west, the province is situated mainly on the high plateau grasslands of the Middleveld. In the north-east, it rises towards mountain peaks terminating in an immense escarpment. In some places, this escarpment plunges hundreds of metres down to the low-lying area known as the Lowveld.

The province has a network of excellent roads and railway connections, making it highly accessible. Owning to its popularity as a tourist destination, Mpumalanga is also served by a number of small airports, including the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport.

Mbombela is the capital of the province and the administrative and business centre of the Lowveld. Other important towns are eMalahleni, Standerton, Piet Retief, Malalane, Ermelo, Barberton and Sabie, which lies in the centre of one of the largest man-made forests in the world. Mpumalanga lies mainly within the Grassland Biome.

The escarpment and the Lowveld form a transitional zone between this grassland area and the Savanna Biome. The Maputo Corridor, which links the province with Gauteng, and Maputo in Mozambique, facilitates economic development and growth for the region.
Agriculture and forestry

Mpumalanga is a summer-rainfall area divided by the escarpment into the Highveld region with cold frosty winters and the Lowveld region with mild winters and a subtropical climate. The escarpment area sometimes experiences snow on the high ground. Thick mist is common during the hot, humid summers. Agriculture, as the backbone of the province’s economy, employs 8,1% of its total workforce. An abundance of citrus fruit and many other subtropical fruits – mangoes, avocados, litchis, bananas, papayas, granadillas, guavas – as well as nuts and a variety of vegetables are produced here.

Most of the manufacturing production in Mpumalanga occurs in the southern Highveld region; especially in Highveld Ridge, where large petrochemical plants such as Sasol 2 and Sasol 3 are located. Large-scale manufacturing occurs especially in the northern Highveld area, particularly chrome-alloy and steel manufacturing. In the Lowveld subregion, industries concentrate on manufacturing products from agricultural and raw forestry material. The growth in demand for goods and services for export via Maputo will stimulate manufacturing in the province.

Northern Cape

The Northern Cape is South Africa’s largest province, taking up almost a third of the country’s total land area. However, the province is sparsely populated with only about 1.2 million people on 372 889 km² of land.

About 68% of the people speak Afrikaans while Setswana, isiXhosa and English are also widely spoken.

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Industry and manufacturing

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Agriculture and industry

The economy of the province’s Karoo region depends on sheep farming, while the karakul-pelt industry is one of the most important in the Gordonia district.

MINING

Mining contributes 27.6% to the gross regional domestic product. Iron-ore mining in the north-eastern corner of the province has been expanding despite the global recession, driven largely by China’s demand for steel.

The province has fertile agricultural land, especially in the Orange River Valley. A variety of fruit is cultivated at Upington, Kakamas and Keimoes. The Vaalharts Irrigation Scheme near Warrenton facilitates the production of wheat, fruit, peanuts, maize and cotton.

The province has various tourist attractions including Sun City, the Pilanesberg National Park, Mafikeng Game Reserve, and the De Wildt Cheetah and Wildlife Trust. A portion of one of South Africa’s seven Unesco world heritage sites also falls within the borders of North West namely the Taung hominin fossil site, which has been incorporated into South Africa’s Cradle of Humankind.
Land and its People

Mining and manufacturing

Mining contributes 23.3% to North West's economy, and makes up 22.5% of the South African mining industry. The Rustenburg and Brits districts produce 94% of the country’s platinum, which is more than any other single area in the world. In addition to granite, marble, fluor spar and diamonds, the province also produces a quarter of South Africa’s gold. Employment along the Platinum Corridor, from Pretoria to eastern Botswana, accounts for over a third of the province’s total employment.

North West's manufacturing sector centres on the municipalities of Brits, Rustenburg, Potchefstroom, Klerksdorp and Mahikeng, which together account for more than 50% of the province’s total manufacturing production.

The industries in Brits concentrate on manufacturing and construction, while those in Klerksdorp are geared towards the mining industry. In the manufacturing arena, automotive parts, machinery, electronic, audio, and medical equipment are manufactured using local materials and resources.

Agriculture

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

North West is South Africa’s major producer of white maize. The areas around Rustenburg are fertile, mixed-crop farming land, with maize and sunflowers being the most important crops.

Western Cape

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

Cape Town, often referred to as the “Mother City”, houses Parliament and is South Africa’s legislative capital. The province has a strong network of higher education institutions including the universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and the Western Cape, and has the highest adult education level in the country.

Visitors to the province can disembark at one of the province’s two main airports, Cape Town International or George Airport or at the seaports of Cape Town, Mossel Bay and Saldanha.

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

The Western Cape is also known for its floral diversity. The Cape Floristic Region World Heritage Site, comprising eight separate protected areas, covers an area of more than 553 000 ha stretching from the Cape Peninsula to the Eastern Cape.

The Knersna-Tsitsikamma region has the country’s biggest indigenous forests.

The cold Atlantic Ocean along the West Coast is a rich fishing area, while the warmer Indian Ocean skirts the province’s southern beaches.

Agriculture and fisheries

The Western Cape’s sheltered valleys between mountains are ideal for the cultivation of export-grade fruit such as apples, table grapes, olives, peaches and oranges.

A variety of vegetables is cultivated in the eastern part of the Western Cape, while the Swartland and Overberg districts are well-known as the country’s prime wheat-growing areas.

The agricultural sector is critical to the Western Cape economy, accounting for 60% of regional exports.

The Western Cape is also well known for its wine production. According to a study, commissioned by the SA Wine Industry Information & Systems, published in 2015, some 300 000 people were employed both directly and indirectly in the wine industry in 2015, including farm labourers, those involved in packaging, retailing and wine tourism.

The study also concluded that of the R36.1 billion gross domestic product (GDP) contributed by the wine industry to the regional economy, about R19.3 billion eventually would remain in the Western Cape.

Some 75% of all South African fishing takes place along the Western Cape coastline. The rich fishing grounds on the west coast are protected from exploitation by a 200 km commercial fishing zone and a strict quota system. Snoek, Cape lobster, abalone, calamari, octopus, oysters and mussels are among the delicacies found in these waters.

Other exports are fruit, wine, wool and ostrich. The high quality of exports, combined with the relative weakness of the local currency, makes the products some of the most affordable high-quality exports in the world.