



SOUTH AFRICA



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1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: Southern Africa.

South African Tourism Board (SATOUR)

Street address: 12 Rivonia Road, Illova, Sandton 2146, South Africa

Postal address: Private Bag X1002, Sandton 2146, South Africa

Tel: (11) 778 8000. Fax: (11) 778 8001. E-mail: satour@icon.co.za

Web site: <http://www.southafrica.net>

South African High Commission

South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DP

Tel: (020) 7451 7299. Fax: (020) 7451 7284.

E-mail: general@southafricahouse.com

Web site: <http://www.southafricahouse.com>

Opening hours: 0900-1700.

South African Consulate

2 GENERAL

15 Whitehall, London W1A 2DD

Tel: (020) 7925 8900 or (0891) 441 100 (recorded visa, immigration and health information; calls cost 60p per minute). Fax: (020) 7930 1510. Opening hours: 0845-1245 Monday to Friday (personal applications only).

All correspondence should be addressed to the High Commission.

South African Tourism Board (SATOUR)

5-6 Alt Grove, London SW19 4DZ

Tel: (020) 8971 9350 or (0906) 364 0600 (tourism enquiry line; calls cost 60p per minute). Fax: (020) 8944 6705. E-mail: info@south-african-tourism.org

Web site: <http://www.south-african-tourism.org>

British High Commission

255 Hill Street, Pretoria 0002, South Africa

Tel: (12) 483 1200. Fax: (12) 483 1302. E-mail: bhc@icon.co.za

Web site: <http://www.britain.org.za>

Consular section: Liberty Life Place, Block B, 1st Floor, 256 Glyn Street, Hatfield, Pretoria 0083, South Africa

Tel: (12) 483 1400. Fax: (12) 483 1444 (passport section) or 483 1433 (visa section).

Also in: Cape Town (tel: (21) 461 7220).

British Consulate General

15th Floor, Southern Life Centre, 8 Riebeeck Street, Cape Town 8000, South Africa

Tel: (21) 425 3670. Fax: (21) 425 1427.

Other consulates in: Durban, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth.

Embassy of the Republic of South Africa

3051 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008

Tel: (202) 232 4400. Fax: (202) 265 1607 or 232 3402.

E-mail: safrica@southafrica.net

Web site: <http://www.usembassy.southafrica.net>

Consulates in: Chicago and New York (tel: (212) 213 4880).

South African Tourism Board (SATOUR)

Suite 2040, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110

Tel: (212) 730 2929 or (1 800) 822 5368 (toll free; USA only). Fax: (212) 764 1980. E-mail: satourny@aol.com

Web site: <http://www.satour.org>

Embassy of the United States of America

Street address: 877 Pretorius Street, Arcadia, Pretoria, South Africa

Postal address: PO Box 9536, Pretoria 0001, South Africa

Tel: (12) 342 1048. Fax: (12) 342 2244.

Web site: <http://www.usembassy.state.gov/southafrica>

Consulates General in: Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg.

High Commission of the Republic of South Africa

15 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1M 1M8

Tel: (613) 744 0330. Fax: (613) 741 1639. E-mail: rsafrica@sympatico.ca

Web site: <http://www.docuweb.ca/SouthAfrica/>

Consulates in: Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver.

South African Tourism Board (SATOUR)

Suite 200, 43 Colbourne Street, Toronto, Ontario M5E 1E3

Tel: (416) 861 8790. Fax: (416) 861 1108.

Canadian High Commission

1103 Arcadia Street, Hatfield 0083, Pretoria, South Africa

Tel: (12) 422 3000. Fax: (12) 422 3052 or 422 3053 (visa section).

E-mail: pret@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Web site: <http://www.canada.co.za>

Also in: Cape Town.

Country dialling code: 27.

General

Area: 1,219,080 sq km (470,689 sq miles).

Population: 43,054,306 (1999).

Population Density: 35.3 per sq km.

Capital: Pretoria (administrative). Population: 1,080,187 (1991). Cape Town (legislative).

Population: 2,350,157 (1991). Bloemfontein (judicial). Population: 300,150 (1991).

Geography: The Republic of South Africa lies at the southern end of the African continent. It is bounded by the Indian Ocean to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west, and is bordered to the north by Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland and totally encloses Lesotho. South Africa has three major geographical regions, namely plateau, mountains and the coastal belt. The high plateau has sharp escarpments which rise above the plains, or veld. Despite two major river systems, the Limpopo and the Orange, most of the plateau lacks surface water. Along the coastline are sandy beaches and rocky coves, and the vegetation is shrublike. The mountainous regions which run along the coastline from the Cape of Good Hope to the

Limpopo Valley in the northeast of the country are split into the Drakensberg, Nuweveldberg and Stormberg ranges.

Following the 1994 elections, South Africa was organised into nine regions. These comprise the Western Cape with its provincial and national capital of Cape Town, the Eastern Cape with its provincial capital of Bisho, the Northern Cape with its provincial capital Kimberley, KwaZulu-Natal with its provincial capital Pietermaritzburg, the Free State with its provincial capital of Bloemfontein, the North West Province with its provincial capital Mmabatho, the Northern Province with its provincial capital Pietersburg, Mpumalanga with its provincial capital of Nelspruit, and Gauteng with its provincial capital of Johannesburg.

Government: Republic. Gained independence from the UK in 1910. Head of State and Government: President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki since 1999.

Language: The official languages at national level are Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu.

Religion: Most inhabitants profess Christianity of some form and belong to either Catholic, Anglican and other protestant denominations, Afrikaner Calvinist churches or African independent churches. There are also significant Hindu, Muslim and Jewish communities, and traditional beliefs are still practised widely, sometimes in conjunction with Christianity.

Time: GMT + 2.

Electricity: 220/230 volts AC; 250 volts AC (Pretoria), 50Hz. 3-pin round plugs are in use.

Communications:

Telephone: IDD is available. Country code: 27. Outgoing international code: 09.

Mobile telephone: GSM 900 network. Operators include MTN (web site: <http://www.mtn.co.za>) and Vodacom (web site: <http://www.vodacom.co.za>). Coverage extends to most urban areas.

Fax: Most main hotels have this service.

Internet/E-mail: ISPs include M-Web (web site: <http://www.cis.co.za>), I-Africa (web site: <http://www.iafrica.com>) and Sangonet (web site: <http://sn.apc.org>). Visitors can access their e-mail from cybercafés around the country.

Telegram: Services are available in all towns.

Post: Airmail to Europe takes up to seven days. Post office hours: Generally 0800-1630 Monday to Friday, 0800-1200 Saturday. Some transactions may not be carried out after 1530 Monday to Friday or after 1100 Saturday. The smaller post offices close for lunch 1300-1400. Poste Restante services are available throughout the country.

Press: The main newspapers are in English and Afrikaans, and include Business Day, Cape Times, The Argus, Mail and Guardian, The Star, Sowetan, Sunday Times, and Natal Mercury.

BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies: From time to time these change.

BBC:

MHz21.666.0053.2551.197

3 PASSPORT

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
British	Yes	No	Yes
Australian	Yes	No	Yes
Canadian	Yes	No	Yes
USA	Yes	No	Yes
OtherEU	Yes	No	Yes
Japanese	Yes	No	Yes

PASSPORTS: Passports valid for at least 6 months beyond date of departure from South Africa required by all.

VISAS: Required by all except the following for business and tourist purposes:

- (a) nationals of countries referred to in the chart above for visits of up to 90 days;
- (b) nationals of Iceland, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland for visits of up to 90 days;
- (c) nationals of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Israel, Jamaica, Malta, Paraguay, St Helena, Swaziland, Uruguay and Venezuela for visits of up to 90 days;
- (d) nationals of Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Gabon, Guyana, Hong Kong (SAR), Hungary, Jordan, Korea (Rep. of), Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, Peru, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Thailand, Turkey and Zambia for visits of up to 30 days;
- (e) transit passengers continuing their journey by the same or first connecting aircraft provided holding onward or return documentation and not leaving the airport.

Note: (a) Holders of Visitors visas are not allowed to take up employment in South Africa. (b) Unaccompanied children must hold written consent from their parents when travelling alone. (c) Study or work permits must be obtained in the country of normal residence before entry into South Africa.

Types of visa and cost: Visitors, Business and Transit: £30. Study Permits: £80-£110 (depending on level of education). Work Permits: £110. Work Seekers Permits: £55. GAP students and nationals of India and Zimbabwe are exempt from visa fees. Other nationals must apply for a visa with the appropriate fee.

Application to: Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy or High Commission); see address section. Applicants in countries where South Africa is not represented may send their applications to the embassy in the nearest country.

Application requirements: (a) Passport valid for 6 months beyond date of departure. (b) 2 passport-size photos with signature on reverse side. (c) 1 completed application form (failure to complete the application fully and in detail may result in visa being delayed or refused). (d) Proof of sufficient funds to cover visit. (e) Provisional travel arrangements. (f) Onward/return ticket and, if in transit, proof of sufficient documentation for admission to the country of destination. (g) Visitors should be of sound mind and body.

For study permits: (a)-(g) and, (h) Official letter of acceptance from South African academic institution. (i) Details of accommodation and payment of tuition fees. (j) Medical insurance. (k) A £400 deposit refundable on departure from South Africa.

For work permits: (a)-(g) and, (h) Official letter of employment from South African company stating salary and position.

For business visas: (a)-(g) and, (h) Letter from employer.

Note: (a) In the case of failure to comply with any of these regulations, visitors may be required to leave a cash deposit with the Immigration Officer. (b) Applicants with criminal records will not be granted visas.

Working days required: Applications should be made well in advance. Although the minimum processing time is 3 days, nationals applying in the UK for a visa are advised to apply well in advance of their departure date. Work permits may take up to 12 weeks to process.

Temporary residence: Temporary residence permits can be obtained free of charge on arrival to those entering for a temporary purpose, provided they are not seeking work or studying.

4 MONEY

Currency: Rand (R) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of R200, 100, 50, 20 and 10. Coins are in denominations of R5, 2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Currency exchange: Money can be changed at banks, bureaux de change, some hotels, and larger shops and restaurants. Automated foreign exchange machines and cash dispensers are available at various locations.

Credit cards: MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club and Visa are widely accepted. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other facilities which may be available.

Travellers cheques: Valid at banks, hotels, restaurants and shops. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in Pounds Sterling or US Dollars.

Exchange rate indicators

The following figures are included as a guide to the movements of the Rand against Sterling and the US Dollar:

Date May '00 Aug '00 Nov '00 Feb '01 £1.00=10.65 10.45 10.86 11.52 \$1.00=7.186.977.507.89

Currency restrictions: The import and export of local and foreign currency are limited to R5000 or equivalent.

Banking hours: 0830-1530 Monday to Friday, 0800-1130 Saturday.

5 DUTY FREE

The following goods may be imported into South Africa by passengers over 18 years of age without incurring customs duty:

400 cigarettes and 50 cigars and 250g of tobacco; 1 litre of spirits and 2 litres of wine; 50ml of perfume and 250ml of eau de toilette; gifts up to a value of R500 per person.

Note: There is a flat-rate duty of 20% on gifts in excess of R1250, up to R10,000.

Prohibited goods: Narcotics, flick-knives, ammunition, explosives and obscene literature.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1 2001 New Year's Day. Mar 21 Human Rights Day. Apr 13 Good Friday. Apr 16 Family Day. Apr 27 Freedom Day. May 1 Workers' Day. Jun 16 Youth Day. Aug 9 National Women's Day. Sep 24 Heritage Day. Dec 17 Day of Reconciliation. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 Day of Goodwill.
Jan 1 2002 New Year's Day. Mar 21 Human Rights Day. Mar 29 Good Friday. Apr 1 Family Day. Apr 27 Freedom Day. May 1 Workers' Day. Jun 17 Youth Day. Aug 9 National Women's Day. Sep 24 Heritage Day. Dec 16 Day of Reconciliation. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 Day of Goodwill.

Note: Holidays falling on a Sunday are observed the following Monday.

7 HEALTH

	<i>Special Precautions</i>	<i>Certificate Required</i>
Yellow Fever	No	1
Cholera	No	-
Typhoid and Polio	Yes	-
Malaria	2	-
Food and Drink	3	-

1: A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travellers over one year of age arriving from infected areas. African countries formerly classified as endemic zones are considered by the South African authorities to be infected areas. The yellow fever vaccination certificate only becomes valid 10 days after immunisation.

2: Malaria risk, predominantly in the malignant falciparum form, exists throughout the year in the low altitude areas of the Northern Province, Eastern Transvaal (including the Kruger National Park) and northeastern KwaZulu/Natal as far south as the Tugela River. The risk is highest from October to May. Resistance to chloroquine has been reported. It is strongly recommended that visitors to these areas take anti-malaria tablets before entering these zones (tablets are available from pharmacies without prescription). The recommended prophylaxis is chloroquine plus proguanil (World Health Organisation) or chloroquine plus pyrimethamine (South African High Commission).

3: Tap water is considered safe to drink in urban areas but may be contaminated elsewhere and sterilisation is advisable. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat. Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is endemic in the north and east and may be present elsewhere. Avoid swimming and paddling in fresh water. Swimming pools which are well-chlorinated and maintained are safe. Hepatitis A occurs and hepatitis B is hyperendemic.

Health care: Medical facilities are excellent. Health insurance is recommended. A leaflet on health precautions is available from the South African High Commission (see address section).

Travel - International

AIR: South Africa's national airline is South African Airways (SA). There are frequent direct and indirect flights by numerous major airlines from destinations throughout Europe and North America. For more information regarding airports, contact Airports Company South Africa (tel: (11) 453 9116; fax: (11) 453 9353/4; web site: <http://www.airport.co.za>).

Approximate flight times: From Cape Town to London is 12 hours 35 minutes, from Durban is 14 hours and from Johannesburg is 11 hours 50 minutes. From Johannesburg to New York is 17 hours (including stop in Cape Verde).

International airports: Cape Town (CPT) (Cape Town International), 22km (14 miles) east of the city (travel time - 25 minutes). Airport facilities include outgoing duty-free shop, car hire, bank/bureau de change (0830-1630 Monday to Friday, 0830-1200 Saturday) and restaurant/bar (0600-0305). Inter-Cape buses meet all incoming and outgoing flights. Courtesy buses are operated by some hotels. Taxis are available, with a surcharge after 2300.

Bloemfontein (BFN) (Bloemfontein International), 10km (6 miles) east of the city (travel time - 15 minutes). Airport facilities include automatic teller machine, restaurants, car hire and conference facilities. Airport shuttle bus to the city centre (leaving from outside the airport building). Taxis are also available.

Durban (DUR) (Durban International), 16km (10 miles) south of the city (travel time - 20 minutes). Airport facilities include outgoing duty-free shop, car hire, bank/bureau de change and bar/restaurant. Airport buses and taxis are available to the city.

Johannesburg (JNB) (Johannesburg International), 24km (15 miles) northeast of the city (travel time - 35 minutes). Airport facilities include incoming and outgoing duty-free shops, post office, car hire, bank/bureau de change (24 hours), restaurant and bar (1000-2400). Bus services to Pretoria and Johannesburg are available. Buses link Kempton Park with Johannesburg. Taxis are available. Courtesy coaches are operated by some major hotels.

Port Elizabeth (PLZ) (Port Elizabeth International) is 25km (16 miles) from the city (travel time - 30 minutes). Airport facilities include Nedbank automated teller machine, conference facilities, information desk (0600-2200 Monday to Friday; 0700-2100 Saturday; 0800-2210 Sunday) restaurants and pubs, shops, a pharmacy, postal services, car hire. Airport shuttle bus to the main international hotels in Port Elizabeth. Taxis are also available.

Departure tax: None.

SEA: The main ports are Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and East London. St Helena Shipping Co Ltd runs a regular passenger service from Avonmouth to Cape Town. The Royal Viking Line includes South Africa on its southern Africa cruise. Cruises are offered by various companies between South Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands. Cruise lines include P&O, Cunard, Princess, Orient Lines and Silversea Cruises.

RAIL: The main routes are from South Africa to Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique. Contact South African Railways (SPOORNET) (web site: <http://www.spoornet.co.za>) for further information.

ROAD: There are main routes into South Africa from Zimbabwe (via Beit Bridge) and Botswana (via Ramatlabama), Mozambique (now open after a long war - check with local police about state of road and safety) Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland.

Travel - Internal

AIR: Daily flights link Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, East London, Kimberley and Bloemfontein with other connecting flights to provincial towns. South African Airways operates on the principal routes.

Discounts: An 'Africa Explorer' fare is available to foreign visitors entering South Africa with an IATA airline. It offers a significant saving for anyone planning to use South African Airways' internal network. The fare is valid for a minimum of three days and a maximum of two months: travel may originate and terminate at any point within South Africa which is served by the airline. Travel is not permitted more than once in the same direction over any given sector. There is also a reduction of approximately 30% on some standby fares. South African Airways has various other discount domestic fares including Apex, Slumber, Supersaver and Saver fares.

SEA: Starlight Cruises offers links between major ports.

RAIL: The principal intercity services are as follows: the Blue Train (web site: <http://www.bluetrain.co.za>) is a luxury express offering routes between Pretoria, Victoria Falls, Hoedspruit, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town; the Trans-Oranje between Cape Town and Durban via Kimberley and Bloemfontein (weekly); and the Trans-Natal Express between Durban and Johannesburg (daily). Rovos Rail offers luxury steam safaris to the eastern Transvaal. The Transnet Museum also offers various steam safaris around South Africa and Zimbabwe, and the Trans-Karoo Express travels between Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria (four times a week). All long-distance trains are equipped with sleeping compartments, included in fares, and most have restaurant cars. Reservations are recommended for principal trains and all overnight journeys. There are frequent local trains in the Cape Town and Pretoria/Johannesburg urban areas. All trains have first- and second-class accommodation. Children under two years of age travel free. Children aged 2-11 pay half fare.

ROAD: There is a well-maintained network of roads and motorways in populous regions. 30% of roads are paved (with all major roads tarred to a high standard). Traffic drives on the left. In non-residential areas speed limits are 120kph (75mph). Fines for speeding are very heavy. It is illegal to carry petrol other than in built-in petrol tanks. Petrol stations are usually open all week 0700-1900. Some are open 24 hours. Petrol must be paid for in cash. Bus/coach: Various operators, such as Greyhound and Translux, run intercity express links using modern air-conditioned coaches. On many of the intercity routes passengers may break their journey at any scheduled stop en route by prior arrangement at time of booking and continue on a subsequent coach at no extra cost other than for additional accommodation. Taxi: Available throughout the country, at all towns, hotels and airports, with rates for distance and time. For long-distance travel, a quotation should be sought. Car hire: Self-drive and chauffeur-driven cars are available at most airports and in major city centres. Avis, Imperial and Budget are represented nationwide. Documentation: An International Driving Permit is required. The minimum age is 23 (or 21 on presentation of an American Express/Diners card). British visitors who are planning to drive in South Africa should check with the AA or RAC prior to departure that they have all the correct documentation.

URBAN: There are bus and suburban rail networks in all the main towns. Fares in Cape Town and Johannesburg are zonal, with payment in cash or with 10-ride pre-purchase 'clipcards' from kiosks. In Pretoria there are various pre-purchase ticket systems, including a cheap pass for off-peak travel only. In Durban, conventional buses face stiff competition from minibuses and combi-taxis (both legal and illegal), which are also found in other South African towns. These, although cheap and very fast, should be used with care. For ordinary taxis, fares within the city areas are more expensive than long distances. Taxis do not cruise and must be called from a rank. Taxi drivers expect a 10% tip.

JOURNEY TIMES: The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from Cape Town to other major cities/towns in South Africa.

Air	Road	Rail	
Johannesburg	2.00	15.00	24.00
Durban	2.00	18.00	38.00
Pretoria	2.00	16.00	26.00
Port Elizabeth	1.00	07.00	-
Bloemfontein	1.30	10.00	20.00

8 ACCOMMODATION

South Africa offers a wide range of accommodation from luxury 5-star hotels to thatched huts (rondavels) in game reserves. 'Time-sharing condominiums' are developing in popular resorts. Comprehensive accommodation guides giving details of facilities, including provision for the handicapped, are available at all SATOUR offices and from regional tourist offices. Information covers hotels, motels, farm holidays, game park rest camps, caravan and campsites and supplementary accommodation such as beach cottages, holiday flats and bungalows. Rates should always be confirmed at time of booking. It is forbidden by law to levy service charges, although phone calls may be charged for.

HOTELS: All hotels are registered with the South African Tourism Board, which controls standards. For further information, contact SATOUR (see address section). 800 hotels are members of the Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa (FEDHASA), PO Box 718, Randburg 2125 (tel: (11) 886 2394; fax: (11) 789 4811; e-mail: fedhasa@fedhasa.co.za). FEDHASA has regional offices throughout the country. Grading: The National Grading and Classification Scheme was introduced in 1994. Participation is voluntary. Hotels are graded 1 to 5 stars according to the range of facilities on offer plus an optional classification band grading the level of services and hospitality. The classification band is colour-coded as follows:

Burgundy: Acceptable standard of services and hospitality in addition to the required facilities.

Silver: Superior services, hospitality, quality and ambience.
Each hotel taking part in the scheme will display a plaque indicating the star-rating and the classification band.

GUEST-HOUSES/BED & BREAKFAST: The accreditation programme now applies to guest houses and bed and breakfast establishments. There are very few towns that do not offer this type of accommodation. Advance bookings during the summer season (October-April) are becoming essential, especially in the Western Cape region.

SELF-CATERING: Holiday flats, resorts and health spas are available along main routes. Grading: The Accreditation and Classification Programme for self-catering accommodation is part of the National Grading and Classification Scheme which was introduced in 1994. Self-catering accommodation is graded 1 to 5 stars according to the facilities available and the level of services and hospitality. The classification band is split into three levels.

CAMPING/CARAVANNING: Caravan parks are to be found along all the tourist routes in South Africa, particularly at places favoured for recreation and sightseeing. The standard is usually high. Many caravan parks have campsites. A number of companies can arrange motor camper rentals, with a range of fully-equipped vehicles. Full details can be obtained from SATOUR. Grading: Camp and caravan sites are classed as self-catering accommodation (see above).

GAME RESERVES: Game reserve rest camps are protected enclosures within the confines of the park. Accommodation is usually in thatched huts known as rondavels, or in small cottages. Some camps have air-conditioned accommodation. Most rondavels and cottages are self-contained, with private baths and showers, and sometimes kitchens. Some camps have luxury air-conditioned accommodation. Conservation Corporation Africa (CCA) was founded in 1990 to develop sustainable wildlife reserves, achieved through low-density, high-quality tourism. Its lodges are bywords for luxury and elegance, but equally important is CCA's work to promote biodiversity, invest in the local rural economies and restore land.

FARM HOLIDAYS: There is a wide range of guest farms open to tourists offering stays in various ecological regions. Opportunities exist for adventure activities such as horseriding, mountain-biking and fishing as well as agricultural activities like bee-keeping and cattle-ranching. Full details can be obtained from SATOUR.

Gauteng

South Africa was organised into nine regions in 1994 (see Geography section), the attractions of which are detailed below.

The economic hub of South Africa, Gauteng means 'place of gold' in Sotho, and contains the cities of Johannesburg, Pretoria and a scattering of satellite towns in between.

JOHANNESBURG: JOHANNESBURG: The discovery of gold near Johannesburg in 1886 turned a small shanty town into the bustling modern city which is today the centre of the world's gold-mining industry and the commercial nucleus of South Africa. The city is currently undergoing a fundamental transformation as planners in the post-apartheid era struggle to integrate wealthy 'white' areas to the north, a decaying inner city, and the poverty-stricken 'black' townships to the south. The city is, as well as being a dangerous place to live and stroll about, the cultural centre of South Africa, with a post-apartheid influx of traders from the north enhancing its cosmopolitan character. The Central Business District is characterised by a stark contrast of skyscrapers and bustling street markets; most businesses catering to affluent clients have moved north to Sandton, with the notable exception of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange on Diagonal Street. A spectacular view of the city is available from the Observatory on the 50th floor of the Carlton Centre. To the west, of some historical interest, is the Rand Club, haunt of mining magnates past and present. To the west of the centre is Newtown, the main attraction of which is the Cultural Precinct, part of a broader urban renewal project which includes the excellent Museum Africa. Adjacent is the Market Theatre, a famous centre of alternative theatre during the apartheid era and after. More mainstream theatre, music and dance can be seen at the Civic Theatre in Braamfontein, also the location of the Gertrude Posel Gallery, housing a collection of traditional African art.

Just outside the centre is Hillbrow, home to, amongst others, large communities of immigrants from the rest of Africa; a landmark is the massive Ponti building, dubbed 'petit Kinshasa' by locals. To the north of the CBD lies Yeoville, more bohemian and considerably safer. The centre of Yeoville life is Rockey Street, lined with cafes and bars where one can while away the days in relative peace.

The north of Johannesburg consists of affluent leafy suburbs. Notable landmarks are the Johannesburg Zoo, Zoo Lake (across the road), and further east, the Houghton Wilds, another park linked to the James and Ethel Gray Park by an interesting trail. Nearby are Rosebank, teeming with upmarket bars, restaurants and shops; and Sandton, probably the wealthiest part of Johannesburg. By contrast, the massive township to the south, Soweto, is home to some of the province's poorest people, and also to many shebeens (informal bars) and thousands of churches representing hundreds of mainline and independent African denominations. The safest way to visit Soweto is as part of an organised tour.

PRETORIA: PRETORIA: Named after the Voortrekker leader Andries Pretorius, Pretoria is the administrative capital of the country. The city is known as the 'Jacaranda City' because of the flowering trees lining its streets in late spring. Church Square is the centre of the city, and a space of historical importance. Adjacent is the old Raadsaal (parliament) of the Boer republic that preceded the modern state. East along Church Street is Paul Kruger's House, as well as the Groote Kerk. Other notable landmarks include the Union Buildings, the administrative seat of the national government designed by Herbert Baker, famous as the site of Nelson Mandela's 1994 inauguration as President; Loftus Versveld Stadium known to rugby fans the world over; and the State Theatre, which features a programme of fairly mainstream dance, music and drama. In the immediate vicinity, the Wonderboom Nature Reserve, Rietvlei Nature Reserve and Roodepoort Nature Reserve offer lovers of wildlife a variety of local fauna and flora including giant wild figs, antelope and the odd rhino and plentiful birdlife. Also in the vicinity is the Voortrekker Monument, an imposing block of granite built to commemorate the Boer victory over the Zulus at Blood River; on route from Pretoria, appropriately, is the Correctional Services Museum, at Pretoria Central Prison.

AROUND GAUTENG: AROUND GAUTENG: Other than Pretoria and Johannesburg and the conurbations in between, Gauteng also boasts part of the Magaliesberg mountains, in which hiking is popular, as well as the Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve to the southeast of Johannesburg.

Mpumalanga

Somewhat vaster than Gauteng, Mpumalanga covers the highveld plains and mountains from Gauteng to the borders with Swaziland and Mozambique. Its most famous feature is the Kruger National Park, a massive reserve the size of Wales and amongst the best places in Africa to see the Big Five (elephant, lion, leopard, rhino and buffalo) as well as thousands of other species. The park features a wide range of accommodation from camping (in fenced enclosures to keep lions out) to self-catering huts and cottages. Surrounding the park are a large number of private game parks, less crowded but more expensive than Kruger. The Ngala Game Lodge was the first private safari lodge to be included in the Kruger National Park through an agreement between Conservation Corporation Africa and the SA National Parks Trust. There are large breeding herds of elephants, buffalo, giraffe and antelope to be viewed, as well as lion, leopard and rhino. The lodge has 20 air-conditioned thatched rondavels as well as an exclusive Safari Suite with its own landrover and ranger, swimming pool and viewing deck. Other game reserves in this region include the Klaserie, Sabi Sabi, Timbavati and the Umbabat Nature Reserve.

The other notable area of Mpumalanga is the Escarpment. The Summit Route through this area takes in Long Tom Pass, 2150m (7050ft) above sea level; Sabie, situated against the backdrop of Mauchsberg and Mount Anderson with an abundance of waterfalls and wild flowers; Graskop, a forestry village perched on a spur of the Drakensberg escarpment; Pilgrim's Rest, a gold-rush

town with many historic buildings; and Mount Sheba Nature Reserve, embracing 1500 hectares of ravines and waterfalls.

The central feature of the area is the Blyde River Canyon, providing spectacular views of the landscape below, including The Pinnacle, a massive, free-standing granite column; God's Window, a spectacular viewing point over the Lowveld 1000m (3300ft) below; Lisbon Falls and Berlin Falls; and Bourke's Luck Potholes, formed by the swirling action of pebble-laden flood water over the course of time. There is a spectacular 5-day hiking trail along the canyon called the Blyderivierspoort Hiking Trail beginning at God's Window.

Nelspruit: Nelspruit, the provincial capital, features the Lowveld National Botanical Gardens on the banks of the Crocodile River, specialising in Cycads, as well as other semi-tropical Lowveld vegetation.

The Northern Cape

This vast and barren wilderness stretches from the west coast north to the Namibian and Botswana borders and east to the Free State and North West provinces. The southwest features spectacular carpets of wild flowers in early spring, while the south is part of the Great Karoo and the north intrudes into the Kalahari Desert.

KIMBERLEY: KIMBERLEY: In 1866 a boy found a shiny 'pebble' at Hopetown, 128km (80 miles) south of Kimberley, allowing a primitive and sparsely populated settlement to become the diamond capital of the world. Today, Kimberley is an attractive city with broad tree-lined streets and good shopping centres. Its attractions include the Big Hole, which is the largest man-made excavation in the world, and the Kimberley Mine Museum, with its replicas of 19th-century Kimberley at the height of the gold rush. The De Beers Hall Museum houses a display of cut and uncut diamonds; here can be seen the famous '616' - at 616 carats, the largest uncut diamond in the world - and the 'Eureka' diamond, the first to be discovered in South Africa. The William Humphreys Art Gallery has one of the finest collections of South African art, along with French, English, Dutch and Flemish contributions.

Near Kimberley is the Vaalbos National Park, a small reserve containing the extremely rare Black Rhino, as well as some other big game. Also in the area is the Wonderwerk Cave, an archaeological site of great importance where some of the earliest evidence of the use of fire has been found. For those with a military bent, Magersfontein lies to the south of Kimberley, site of a catastrophic defeat inflicted on the British by the Boers early in the Boer War.

To the north, one passes through Uppington, a pleasant desert town on the banks of the Orange River, on the way to the Au-grabies National Park.

Au-grabies: Au-grabies is a Hottentot name for 'place of great noise', which accurately describes the falls plummeting 56m (184ft) into a 20m (66ft) wide ravine, 120km (75 miles) west of Uppington. There are spectacular rapids as the river drops a further 35m (115ft) along the ravine's 18km (11-mile) length. The area is a national park, and is home to many animal species, including baboons, vervet monkeys, rhino and antelope.

Further to the north is the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park, a staggering area of 127,135 sq km (79,000 sq miles), which shares a common boundary with the Botswana National Park. It is the largest nature conservation area in southern Africa and one of the largest unspoilt ecosystems in the world, supporting fauna and flora in bewildering variety. To the west, Namaqualand is a vast area of seemingly barren semi-desert, harbouring a treasure-house of floral beauty, appearing **after sufficient winter rains:** daisies, aloes, lilies, perennial herbs and many other flower species. The rich deposits of copper in the region had been used for centuries by the Nama tribe of Hottentots before the advent of white settlers in the 17th century; in 1685 the Governor of the

Cape, Simon van der Stel, led an expedition to the 'Copper Mountain', near to the present town of Springbok. The copper boom finally began in earnest in the 19th century. The flowers are best seen from July to September, depending on when the rains fall. Calvinia and Niewoudtville are good locations for flowers.

The Eastern Cape

The Eastern Cape has an extraordinary variety of scenic beauty, ranging from the vast and arid Great Karoo to the Knysna Forest, the fertile agricultural lands of the Little Karoo and the Long Kloof. Two of the country's major seaports (East London and Port Elizabeth) are located in this area.

PORT ELIZABETH: PORT ELIZABETH: 'PE' as the city is known locally, is unremarkable, being dominated by industry and freeways, and subject to strong winds for most of the year. The City Hall and Market Square are worth a visit, with a replica of the Dias Cross, originally placed by the Portuguese navigator Bartholomew Dias. There is also a memorial to Prester John here. The old part of town, above the city centre, has some attractive Victorian buildings. South of the city are good beaches, such as King's Beach and Humewood Beach. The latter features the Apple Express, one of the few remaining narrow-gauge steam trains, which runs on occasion from Humewood to Thornhill. The Oceanarium, Snake Park and Tropical House are also on the seafront at Humewood. The King George IV Art Gallery & Fine Arts Hall has an excellent collection of 19th- and 20th-century art. Settler's Park Nature Reserve at How Avenue abounds with indigenous flora and St George's Park has open-air exhibitions and craft fairs, as well as theatrical productions.

Near Port Elizabeth is the Addo Elephant National Park, 72km (45 miles) north of Port Elizabeth, which was created in 1931 to protect the last of the eastern Cape elephants. There are also rhino, buffalo and antelope and more than 170 species of birds. South of here is Jeffreys Bay, a world-renowned surfer's paradise.

North from Port Elizabeth all the way up the coast are miles and miles of sandy beaches. The Alexandria State Forest is a reserve that runs along the coast and contains a hiking trail along the beach. East from here is Diaz Cross, the location of one of Bartholomew Diaz's stone crosses and a desolate paradise for beach lovers. Kenton-on-Sea and Port Alfred are quaint holiday towns north of here; the latter is on the mouth of the Kowie River - canoeing trips can be undertaken from Port Alfred to Bathurst, upriver, and home of the oldest pub in South Africa. More or less between Port Elizabeth and East London is Grahamstown, a small university town which hosts a giant arts festival, the Grahamstown Festival, every year in the first week of July. The town also has some good museums, including the International Library of African Music. Local development projects offer traditional Xhosa meals.

An hour's drive from Grahamstown is the village of Hogsback, situated in the striking Amatola Mountains. It is an ideal place to walk in the forest of yellowwood, stinkwood and Cape chestnut trees along trails to magical waterfalls - the most spectacular being the aptly-named Bridal Veil and Madonna and Child.

East London: East London has a sub-tropical climate and is situated on the magnificent coastline of the eastern seaboard, part of the 'Romantic Coast'. There is excellent swimming at Eastern Beach, Nahoon Beach and Orient Beach. North of here is the Wild Coast, a remarkable stretch of coast that offers spectacular walks. Many parts are inaccessible to normal vehicles. Inland, the Karoo is a vast and beautiful upland area with spectacular sunsets, drier, hotter and colder than the coasts. The novelist Olive Schreiner made the area famous and her house at Cradock has been restored. The Mountain Zebra National Park is worth a visit, on the northern slopes of the Bankberg range. The town of Graaff-Reinet is situated in the heart of the Karoo Nature Reserve, at the foot of the Sneeuberg Mountains. It has many attractive 18th- and 19th-century buildings, as well as parks and museums, and is an excellent centre for exploring the

area. Just 5km (3 miles) outside the town, it is possible for visitors to drive into the Valley of Desolation along a twisting single-track road that eventually climbs into the mountains. From the viewpoints, it is possible to look down over Graaff-Reinet across towering red and ochre outcrops of rock. The nearby town of Nieu Bethesda is worth a visit for the Owl House, a remarkable sculpture garden by eccentric artist Helen Martins, subject of a play by Athol Fugard. As well as various guesthouses in the village, there are several Afrikaaner farms situated outside offering a warm welcome, comfortable accommodation and a traditional braai. One of these farms, Ganora, offers visitors a tour around the Khoisan rock paintings discovered on its land. To the north is the southern end of the Drakensberg Mountains. South Africa's only ski resort, Tiffendel, is near the small village of Rhodes, where trout fishing, hiking and pony-trekking are all possible. The Eastern Cape Portion of the Garden Route (see Western and Southern Cape) notably includes the Tsitsikamma Coastal National Park, the remnant of a once-massive indigenous forest, home to a unique sub-species of elephant and immense indigenous trees such as yellowwoods.

The Western & Southern Cape

An area of outstanding natural and floral beauty, stretching from the remote rocky outcrops beyond Lambert's Bay in the west to the mountains of the southern peninsula. The area is famous for its wines.

CAPE TOWN: CAPE TOWN: South Africa's legislative capital is situated at the foot of Table Mountain looking out onto the Atlantic Ocean. Places of interest include the Castle of Good Hope in Darling Street, built in 1666; the Cultural History Museum; the Malay quarter (or Bo-Kaap); the Nico Malan Theatre Complex; and the Old Townhouse on Greenmarket Square, housing a permanent collection of 17th-century Dutch and Flemish paintings. The Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, the old Victorian harbour which has been restored, offers free entertainment, a variety of shops, taverns and restaurants, and has become a major attraction. There are excellent sporting and shopping facilities. The Baxter Theatre complex offers a mix of local and international fare. Nightlife is concentrated in the Waterfront, Sea Point, and parts of the central business district. Further out, Maynardville, a park which contains an open-air theatre, and Groot Constantia, one of the first wine farms in the Cape, are worth seeing. Created in 1895 by Cecil Rhodes, the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens are one of Capetown's delights. Sloping towards Table Mountain, the gardens contain around 22,000 indigenous plants. In the summer there are open-air concerts. About an hour's drive from Cape Town, the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve covers the southern tip of the Cape peninsula, with a profusion of flowers, birds and animals, culminating in Cape Point, where the Indian Ocean meets the Atlantic. There are many fishing villages and holiday resorts around the bay, including Llandudno, Hout Bay, Kommetjie and Fish Hoek; Chapman's Peak has a spectacular scenic drive from Hout Bay, traversing Chapman's Peak Mountain. Tours are available to the Cape Flats, north of the city centre, where most of Cape Town's less affluent residents live. There is a lively craft market in Khayelitsha.

Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch, a centre for wine production, has many attractive buildings, including the Village Museum and the Dutch Reform Church. Franschhoek is also a wine production centre, which originally hosted refugee Huguenots from France, many of them involved in wine-growing, who brought their skills to South Africa.

The fertility of the southern Cape region gradually gives way to the rugged and beautiful West Coast, which has abundant shellfish, and numerous fishing villages, including Lambert's Bay, a good surfing spot. Inland is the Cederberg, sculpture-like sandstone mountains separating the arid Karoo from the west coast.

East from Cape Town is the Southern Cape coast, where The Garden Route begins (see Eastern Cape) and encompasses about 200km (124 miles) and includes the Outeniqua Mountains inland,

the arid plains of the Little Karoo and the Swartberg Mountains with their immense subterranean Cango Caves. Plettenberg Bay has magnificent beaches. Knysna is situated between lush inland forests and the Knysna lagoon and is a popular tourist resort. The lagoon is a national park area, stretching from Buffels Bay to Noetzie, both with beautiful beaches. The Wilderness National Lakes area, with its ferns, lakes and tidal rivers, lies between Knysna and George. The latter town is known as the 'Garden City' because of its magnificent yellowwood and stinkwood trees. Oudtshoorn is famous for its ostrich farms as well as the Kango Caves. Other Little Karoo towns such as Ashton, Robertson and Montagu are well-known for wine and olives.

KwaZulu-Natal

Perhaps the most diverse province in South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal contains approximately a quarter of the South African population and ranges from semi-tropical and tropical coastlands to snow-capped peaks in the Drakensberg. In an otherwise arid country it has the same rainfall as Great Britain.

DURBAN: Growing at an alarming rate, Durban is South Africa's third-biggest city, a mix of cultures including a large Indian community and a new influx of Africans from countries to the north. Because of the almost tropical climate, swimming is possible all year round, although the city's beaches are becoming increasingly crowded. The central beach area is called the Golden Mile, and stretches for six kilometres from the Umgeni River to the Point. This stretch has also increasingly become a target for muggers; safer and quieter beaches stretch to the north and south. Besides beaches, Durban has many other facets. Colonial Durban has its heart in Francis Farewell Square, surrounded by a number of fine Victorian and Edwardian buildings including the City Hall (which now contains the Natural Science Museum); nearby is the excellent Durban Art Gallery, featuring a fine collection of black South African art and craft. Not far away is the African Art Centre, where much local art is for sale. To the north is Central Park. To the west of the centre is the Indian District, characterised by markets, mosques, temples and well-preserved buildings from the turn of the century, including the Juma Masjid Mosque. At the other end of the Madressa Arcade is the Emmanuel Cathedral. To the north is the Victoria Street Market, filled with spices, curios and fresh produce.

To the north, the Botanical Gardens offer cool respite. The other major attractions of Durban lie along the Victoria Embankment and beyond, and include the Yacht Mole, the Ocean Terminal Building (relic of the age of sea travel), and the Sugar Terminal, the nexus of KwaZulu-Natal's massive sugar industry. Further out west is the suburb of Cato Manor, a fascinating mix of shanties and temples including the Shree Alayam Second River Hindu Temple, which has a firewalking festival in autumn.

South of Durban is a series of beach towns, including Amanzimtoti, Scottsburgh and Port Shepstone. Inland from the latter is the Oribi Gorge Nature Reserve, a scenic collection of forests and steep gorges leading down to the beach, covered in dense forest. North of Durban are a similar string of towns, including Umhlanga Rocks. Further north is St Lucia, and the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, a loose collection of wilderness areas around Lake St Lucia, surrounded by five distinct ecosystems varying from dry thorn scrub to tropical forest and bordered by giant dunes, beaches and tropical reefs. Further north is Sodwana Bay, whose warm and sheltered waters and abundant tropical marine life make it a paradise for diving.

Between Natal's coast and the mountains, there is an area of gentle pastoral beauty known as the Natal Midlands. This region is characterised by undulating wooded hills and grassy plains with scattered villages and lush farmland. There are a number of game reserves with a huge variety of animal and bird life in the Midlands and the foothills of the Drakensberg. The rivers flowing through the foothills offer excellent fishing. Pietermaritzburg is the largest city in the area. Although founded by the Voortrekkers, the town's architectural heritage is mostly Victorian. The city is particularly attractive in September, when the azaleas are in bloom. The Botanic Gardens

enable visitors to look at a range of indigenous flora. Within easy reach of Pietermaritzburg are the Howick Falls, the Karkloof Falls and the Albert Falls Public Resort and Nature Reserve. The Drakensberg is South Africa's largest mountain range. Its name means 'Dragon Mountain' and stems from the fossilised remains of dinosaurs found in the region. It is a refreshing place with cold mountain streams shaded by ferns and ancient yellowwood trees. The mountains are capped with snow in winter. The area provides good climbing and is the realm of eagles and bearded vultures. Popular climbs include Champagne Castle, Cathkin Peak and Cathedral Peak. There are nature trails for walkers and those on horseback. Hotels and leisure resorts have excellent facilities for other sports. In the nearby caves are good examples of the rock art of the Bushmen who, until a century ago, inhabited the area. The Main Caves situated in the Giant's Castle Game Reserve boast more than 500 rock paintings in a single shelter. The reserve is dominated by a massive basalt wall incorporating the peaks of Giant's Castle (3314m/10,873ft) and Injasuti (3459m/11,349ft). The reserve, which flanks the border with Lesotho, is home to the eland, other antelope and a variety of birds, including lammergeyer, Cape vulture, jackal buzzard, black eagle and lanner falcon. The Royal Natal National Park plugs a niche between Lesotho and the Orange Free State. It is one of Natal's most stunning reserves. Its dramatic scenery includes the Amphitheatre, an 8km-long (5-mile) crescent-shaped curve in the main basalt wall. It is flanked by two impressive peaks, the Sentinel (3165m/10,384ft) and the Eastern Buttress (3047m/9997ft). Even higher is Mont-aux-Sources at 3284m (10,775ft). It is the source of the Tugela River which plummets 2000m (6562ft) over the edge of the plateau. Hikers should enjoy following the spectacular Tugela Gorge.

Free State

The Free State metamorphoses from grassland interspersed by small granite outcrops in the west to magnificent sandstone hills in the east, the foothill of the Maluti mountains in Lesotho. The capital of this province is Bloemfontein, which has some good museums, including the National Museum, the old Fourth Raadsaal (parliament) of the old Free State Republic, the National Afrikaans Literary Museum, which has displays on, amongst others, Eugene Marais, Breyten Breytenbach and the prominent anti-apartheid poet Adam Small, and the Oliewenhuis Art Gallery. There is also a monument commemorating the women and children who died in the British concentration camps during the Boer War. The Observatory Theatre on Signal Hill is situated in a real observatory.

Outside Bloemfontein, the Free State's most interesting scenery lies in the east. From Bloemfontein, hills rise steadily as one heads past Thaba'nchu, the old seat of the Basotho kings, to Ladybrand, the main route into Lesotho. North from here are Ficksburg, which has an annual cherry festival in spring and the new age settlement of Rustler's Valley, which hosts an annual music festival in autumn. Further to the north east is the Golden Gate National Park, verging on the KwaZulu-Natal Drakensberg, characterised by massive weathered sandstone cliffs tinted a multitude of shades of red, yellow and orange.

North West Province

This province's most famous feature is Sun City, gamblers' mecca and host to major golf tournaments and star-studded concerts. Sun City also contains The Lost City, an H Rider Haggard-like fantasy, including a spectacular hotel. Adjacent is the Pilansberg Game Reserve. South from here is Rustenburg, and just outside is the Rustenburg Nature Reserve, in the Magaliesberg, which features antelope and other game, as well as some rare birds of prey such as the black eagle and Cape vulture. To the west is Groot Marico, made famous by Herman Charles Bosman. To the south are Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom, the latter an old Afrikaaner university town.

Northern Province

This province is bordered by Botswana and Zimbabwe to the North and Mozambique to the east, and contains a large section of the Kruger National Park. In the far south is Warmbaths, which unsurprisingly contains warm mineral springs. In the centre of the province is Pietersburg, the provincial capital, notable for the Bakone Malapa Museum, just south of the centre. In the west the Waterberg mountains provide opportunity for hiking and nature watching. In contrast to the dryness of the south, the north of the province is lush, and mangoes, avocados and macadamias are famed on the slopes of the Soutpansberg. In the northeast are Venda and Gazankulu, largely rural peasant communities with a reputation for arts and crafts. The mystical South African artist Jackson Hlungwane, who has pieces of his remarkable sculpture in South African and European galleries, is based here.

9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

Wildlife safaris: Wildlife safaris: South Africa's wildlife sanctuaries generally fall into three categories: nature parks, private game reserves and national game reserves. Nature parks are noted more for their scenic beauty and hiking trails than for wildlife. Private game reserves offer a personalised game-viewing programme, while national game reserves are generally explored by tourists in their own vehicles. Further information can be found in the Resorts & Excursions section. Besides game viewing from vehicles, walking, horseback, camel and canoeing safaris are becoming increasingly popular. Safaris on foot follow a network of wilderness trails in the (compulsory) company of an armed ranger. A maximum of eight people between the ages of 12 and 60 may participate per trail (which usually lasts for three nights and two days, with accommodation in designated camps). For reservations and further information, contact the South African National Parks Board (tel: (12) 343 1991 or 222 810; fax: (12) 343 0905 or 246 211; e-mail: reservations@parks-sa.co.za); or the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa (tel: (11) 486 3294; fax: 486 3369; e-mail: anneka@wessanorth.co.za).

Walking and hiking: Walking and hiking: Nature parks offer marked self-guided trails (with sleeping huts en route) or guided off-the-beaten-track trails (with an experienced, armed ranger providing information about ecology, plants and animals). Some operators also offer themed walks with a focus on, for instance, flowers (of which South Africa has nearly 24,000 species). Spectacular flower displays can be seen during August/September in the semi-desert area of Namaqualand.

Wine routes: Wine routes: South Africa's 13 major wine-producing regions have signposted wine routes, of which the best include the Stellenbosch Wine Route (the country's first, with all wineries situated within a 12-km/7.5-mile radius of Stellenbosch); the Olifants Wine Route (200km/125 miles long, passing through the Cederberg Mountains, the unspoilt West Coast and Knersvlakte); the Klein Karoo Wine Trust (a 300-km/188-mile route through the eastern Cape Winelands); the Swartland Wine Route (a 40-minute drive away from Cape Town); the Orange River Wine Trust (comprising the northern wine-making regions, irrigated by the Orange, Vaal and Riet rivers); and the Robertson Valley (2-hours' drive from Cape Town, known particularly for Chardonnay). Regional wine maps and further details are available from the South African Tourism Board (see address section).

Watersports: Watersports: South Africa has recently gained a reputation for whale watching and shark-cage diving (with great white sharks) on the Cape. Sharks migrate through the Cape's False Bay from June to August and move into the Durban area (KwaZulu-Natal) from October to January. For whale-watching fans, the Western Cape Tourism Board has established a Cape Whale Route to observe southern right whales, which usually swim very close to the shore. The

best time to spot them is from June to September, especially in Walker Bay, where a Whale Festival is held annually during the last week of September. South Africa's diving infrastructure and facilities are well developed. Reef diving is popular in Sodwana Bay (on the northern coast of KwaZulu-Natal), while wreck diving is widespread around the Cape. The Tsitsikamma Coastal Park offers excellent opportunities for underwater photography. Diving certificates are required.

Fishing: Fishing: One of the country's most popular sports, which can be practised along the coast or on the lakes and rivers in the game and nature reserves. One of the world's richest fishing grounds lies around the Cape of Good Hope, where the Atlantic and Indian Ocean currents meet and large shoals of tuna and swordfish draw increasing numbers of game fishing enthusiasts. The major trout fishing areas are the southern mountain ranges of the Western Cape and the foothills of the Drakensberg Mountains (in KwaZulu-Natal). Fly fishing is best in the mountain streams and along the coastline of the Eastern Cape. One highlight on South Africa's fishing calendar is the Sardine Run, in June, along the KwaZulu-Natal coast, where hordes of feeding game fish and sharks concentrate.

Golf: Golf: South Africa has more than 400 courses, often situated in spectacular locations. The best time to play is in the cooler months from May to September. Green fees average between £10-£20, a caddie costs around £7. Visitors are welcome on weekdays.

Steam trains: Steam trains: South Africa is one of the countries where steam locomotives are still widely used. They range from the luxury Pride of Africa to small engines on narrow gauge railways like the Midmar Steam Railway near Pietermaritzburg. For those looking for a scenic ride, the famous Outeniqua Choo-Tjoe runs along the Garden Route on a day-trip from George and Knysna and the Union Limited crosses the famous Kaaimans River Bridge, one of the most photographed railway bridges in the world.

Adventure sports: Adventure sports: A changing range of adventure sports are available, the most famous of which probably remains bungee jumping, for which South Africa has one of the world's highest drops - the bridge over the Blaukrans River, Western Cape. At 216m (709ft), this jump is more than twice as high as the jump of the bridge linking Zambia and Zimbabwe across the Zambezi River near Victoria Falls.

Spectator sports: Spectator sports: South Africans are ardent sports enthusiasts and the success of national teams has been a source of pride and reconciliation for all sections of the community. The South African rugby team are world class, the football team is one of the best in Africa while the cricket team have proved they are the equal of any in the world. Visitors are made welcome at all these fixtures.

10 SOCIAL PROFILE

Food & Drink: A thriving agricultural sector yields excellent fresh produce, meat, fruit and wines and the long coastline produces very fresh and cheap seafood. Oysters and linefish (examples of which are Kingklip, Kabbeljou, Cob and Red Roman) are particularly good. Typical South African dishes include sosaties (a type of kebab), bobotie (a curried mince dish, of which waterbolmmetjebredie, made with a local water plant, is particularly good), bredies (meat, tomato and vegetable casseroles), crayfish (or rock lobster) and many other seafood dishes traditional to the Western Cape province. Curries and chutneys are excellent. Biltong (seasoned dried meat) is a savoury speciality. Potjiekos, a casserole cooked for hours in an iron pot, usually outside, is excellent. Stywepap or Poetoepap, a sort of polenta made with white maize, is widely eaten with meat. Although there is a wide choice of self-service restaurants, most have table

service. Drink: There are excellent local red and white wines, sherries, brandies and some unusual liqueurs. Beer is also very good. Shebeens offer Umqombothi, a home-brewed sorghum beer. Bars/cocktail lounges have bartender service. 'Liquor stores' are open 0900-1800 weekdays and close at 1300 Saturday, although alcohol is now available in supermarkets outside these hours and under certain circumstances on a Sunday. One can generally buy alcohol at shebeens at any time.

Nightlife: Cinemas show a variety of international films. In the large cities there are regular plays, operas and symphony concerts. The local music scene is thriving, and there is a unique South African 'township' jazz style, exponents of which can be seen in all large cities. There are a number of nightclubs and discotheques open until late. The large hotels usually have live music or cabaret.

Shopping: Upmarket boutiques and supermarkets generally coexist with a mass of street traders selling arts, crafts and anything else profitable. Stores are modern. Special purchases include Swakara hand-crafted gold, coats, gold, diamond and semi-precious stone jewellery, leather, suede and fur goods, ceramics and crafts, of which there are now a bewildering variety including many from the rest of the continent. Local wine, brandy and liqueur are cheap and usually excellent. Shopping hours: 0900-1800 Monday to Friday, 0900-1300 Saturday, although there is an increasing trend to open later and all weekend in major tourist spots.

Special Events: For further details, contact SATOUR (see address section). The following is a selection of events and festivals celebrated in South Africa during 2001:
Jan 2001 Cape Minstrel Carnival, Cape Town; Panasonic Duzi Canoe Race, KwaZulu-Natal. Feb Spar Nedbank World Flower Show, ICC Durban. Mar Cape Argus Pick 'n' Pay Cycle Tour, Cape Town. Apr Castle Lite Two Oceans Marathon, Cape Town. May South African Masters Games, Port Elizabeth. Jun-Nov Whale Season (Migrating whales move into West Coast bays for courting, mating and calving), Western Cape Coast. Jun Comrades Marathon, Durban; Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown. Aug-Oct Nanaqualand Wild Flower Season, Western Cape. Sep Arts Alive International Festival (includes Jazz on Zoo Lake concerts, theatre and dance events and community and street festivals), Johannesburg. Sep-Oct International Eisteddfod of South Africa (international music and dance festival), Roodepoort. Dec Million Dollar Golf Challenge, Sun City.

Social Conventions: Handshaking is the usual form of greeting. Normal courtesies should be shown when visiting someone's home. Casual wear is widely acceptable. Formal social functions often call for a dinner jacket and black tie for men and full-length dresses for women; this will be specified on the invitation. Smoking is prohibited during cinema and theatre performances. Tipping: Normally 10% if service is not included. It is customary to tip porters, waiters, taxi drivers, caddies and room service. By law, hotel rates do not include a service charge.

11 BUSINESS PROFILE

Economy: South Africa has one of the world's largest economies and dominates the southern part of the African continent. Agriculture is strong enough to allow South Africa virtual self-sufficiency in foodstuffs: livestock is reared extensively, and sugar, maize and cereals are produced in large quantities. The foundation of the modern South African economy, however, is mining. The country has considerable deposits of common minerals such as coal, but also of valuable ores which are in high demand but are scarce everywhere else bar Russia: chromium, manganese, vanadium and platinum appear in the largest concentrations of anywhere in the world. Its most valuable minerals, however, are gold and diamonds, and South Africa has long

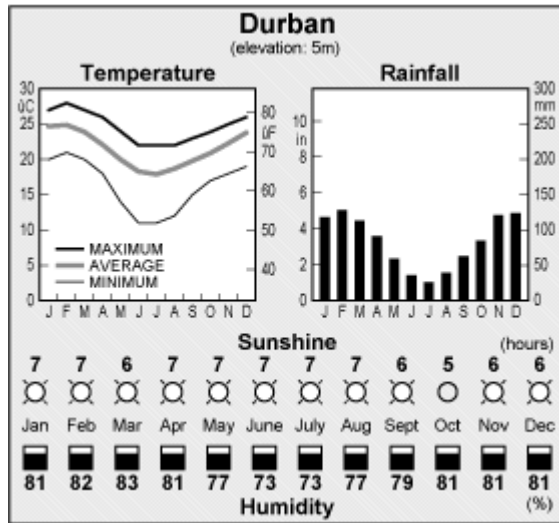
been the world's largest producer and exporter of both. The only key mineral that South Africa lacks is oil. Despite the importance of mining, manufacturing is the largest sector of the economy. Metal industries include steel and heavy engineering, producing machinery and transport equipment. Advanced technological and service industries have emerged in recent years, but have yet to compete in scale or sophistication with their counterparts in Europe, North America or Japan. The Mandela government initially committed itself to a gradual economic transition through its Reconstruction and Development Programme whose principal aim was to tackle the gross inequalities inherited from the apartheid regime. Progress was tempered, however, as the Government, influenced by the international financial community, also insisted on stringent fiscal restraint: this is felt in many quarters to have hindered development. Although inflation has been reduced to 7%, the economy is static. However, several important economic indicators have remained intractable: the large external debt, the continuing weakness of the Rand on international markets, and - most importantly - the chronically high level of unemployment (currently about 40%). The Government, in partnership with business and trade unions, has identified tourism as a potential source of new jobs and is directing substantial investment towards that sector. South Africa is the dominant member of the local Southern African Customs Union (with Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland); it has also recently joined the Southern African Development Community and the Organisation of African Unity. The USA, the UK, Germany and Japan are South Africa's main trading partners.

Business: Suits are generally expected to be worn for meetings. Appointments are generally necessary and punctuality is expected. Business cards are widely used. Office hours: 0830-1630 Monday to Friday.

Commercial Information: The following organisations can offer advice: South African Chamber of Business (SACOB), PO Box 91267, Auckland Park 2006 (tel: (11) 358 9700; fax: (11) 358 9773/4; e-mail: urie@sacob.co.za); or South African Foreign Trade Organisation (SAFTO), PO Box 782706, Sandton 2146 (tel: (11) 883 3737; fax: (11) 883 6569).

Conferences/Conventions: There are roughly 815 conference venues in South Africa. The main conference venues are in Pretoria and Johannesburg though facilities exist in all other major towns, provided mainly by hotels and universities. The Conference and Incentive Promotions Division of SATOUR exists to promote South African venues and to ensure high standards of service and facilities for conference organisers. Contact SATOUR for details (see address section); or Southern African Association for the Conference Industry (SAACI), PO Box 36715, Menlo Park 0102, Pretoria (tel: (12) 804 8110; fax: (12) 804 8447; e-mail: contact@contactpub.co.za); web site: <http://www.saaci.co.za>); or Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 19 Louis Gradner Street, Foreshore, PO Box 204, 8000 Cape Town (tel: (21) 418 4300; fax: (21) 418 1800; e-mail: info@capechamber.co.za; web site: <http://www.capechamber.co.za>).

12 CLIMATE



South Africa's climate is generally sunny and pleasant. Winters are usually mild, although snow falls on the mountain ranges of the Cape and Natal and occasionally in lower-lying areas, when a brief cold spell can be expected throughout the country.

Required clothing: Lightweight cottons and linens and rainwear. Warmer clothes are needed for winter.

13 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: Evidence for human and humanoid occupation of South Africa extends back two million years. Stone Age artefacts date from 40,000 years ago, from which time there appears to have been a continuous human culture. This culture has been identified as being related to that of the Khoisan peoples and it lasted until the arrival of the Europeans and the Bantus - who largely absorbed them. The Bantu population of the region arrived as a result of the great southward migrations of Bantu peoples across central and southern Africa which occurred during the early and middle parts of this millennium. This largely displaced the Bushmen (whose aboriginal culture - still surviving in the Kalahari - is rivaled only in Australia) and the Khoiknoi ('Hottentots'). The European discovery of South Africa was roughly contemporaneous - the Portuguese navigator Bartholomeo Dias 'discovered' the Cape of Good Hope in 1488. In 1652 Dutch settlers, under Commander Jan van Riebeeck, arrived to start a victualling station for the Dutch East India Company. Numbers were swelled by French Huguenots in 1688 and again in 1820 by British settlers, after the British occupation of the Cape. During the 18th and 19th centuries, British and Boer settlers fought a series of wars with the local tribes. Control of the Cape region was also a matter of dispute - between the Dutch and the British. The latter finally gained control in 1806 and, dissatisfied with their new rulers, the Boer pioneers, or Voortrekkers, moved northwards to establish the independent republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, bringing them into contact (and sometimes conflict) with the indigenous Africans, in particular, members of the Sotho and Nguni groups. In 1869, diamonds (and later gold) were discovered in the Transvaal, attracting huge numbers of fortune hunters, many of them British. President Paul Kruger of the Transvaal, fearing British domination, invoked strict franchise requirements. Britain's attempts at intervention resulted in the Anglo-Boer War, and the British victory in 1902 eventually resulted in

the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. In 1948 the National Party came to power and cemented the policy of apartheid: officially the separate development of all racial groups, but effectively the creation of semi-autonomous 'homelands' for non-whites and the preservation of white supremacy elsewhere. Four 'homelands' (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei) were created comprising 13% of all land in the country. Though officially styled 'independent', the 'homelands' were not recognised internationally and were entirely dependent politically and economically on South Africa. The principal black opposition movement was the African National Congress (ANC). The bulk of the ANC's organisation and resources, including its military wing Umkhonto we Sizwe, ('Spear of the Nation') worked in exile. The most important black political force outside the ANC has been Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha movement, with a power base in the Zulu areas in the southeast of the country. Successive governments dealt with black opposition with simple and brutal repression. Although, in public at least, the international community reacted strongly against apartheid and maintained economic sanctions against South Africa, there was simultaneously extensive and largely clandestine support from the West for the South African government and its economy. The problems for the South Africans started in the mid- to late 1980s. There was growing opposition to the Government among whites from two distinct quarters: right-wing Afrikaners such as the Conservative Party and the quasi-paramilitary AWB (Afrikaner Resistance Movement); and, more crucially for the Government, from the business community. However, the continuing presence of State President P W Botha - 'The Crocodile' to South African columnists and a staunch advocate of apartheid - seemed to preclude any significant shift in government attitudes. Then in February 1989, ill health suddenly forced him from office and the Education Minister, F W de Klerk, replaced him. Despite a reputation as a hard-liner, de Klerk was more flexible and imaginative. His accession coincided with massive agitation from the dispossessed black majority in South Africa as well as economic pressure which proved to be the decisive factor in forcing changes upon the regime. The economy had been in near-crisis for some time and South Africa's foreign creditors - multi-national banks, for the most part - refused to reschedule overdue loan repayments without a major change in domestic policies. It was made quite clear to Pretoria that the banks had the full backing of all major Western governments in taking this line. The South Africans, rapidly running out of money, had little choice and promptly set about considering a series of conciliatory measures. Among these were the peace settlement in Namibia, and the release of seven leading members of the African National Congress. On February 2 1990, de Klerk announced: the 'un-banning' of the ANC, the South African Communist Party and 30 other anti-apartheid groups; the relaxation of the state of emergency; and the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela. Mandela and his ANC colleagues quickly started negotiating a final political settlement with the white Government. The ANC is not a unitary movement, but a coalition of numerous diverse interests: Mandela has described it as 'an African parliament'. More significant was the deep schism which emerged between the ANC and Inkatha, which frequently exploded into violence - several thousand died - and was exploited and partially provoked by the white government in the latter stages of its rule, to try to discredit the ANC. Talks between the ANC and the Government went ahead nonetheless and led, at the end of November 1991, to a Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) signed by all the main interested parties and setting down basic parameters for political transition. CODESA provided the forum which defined the country's new constitutional structure. De Klerk called a snap referendum for March 1992 to secure white endorsement for the constitutional changes. The outcome was a larger than expected majority in favour of the reform process, effectively neutralising all but the violent fringe of the white right. The AWB was finished off following a bizarre attempt to intervene in the chaotic politics of the 'homeland' of Bophuthatswana which left several right-wingers dead and the remainder humiliatingly escorted out by the South African army. There remained a deep and lasting antagonism between the ANC and Inkatha, that continued to dominate the political situation for a while. Inkatha's leader, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, pulled out of the constitutional talks in July 1993, and Inkatha's non-appearance seemed at one stage to threaten the entire process. But in April 1994, Inkatha was persuaded to take part in the National Assembly and regional elections proposed by CODESA.

These went ahead at the end of that month. The ANC won 63% of the poll, the National Party 20% and Inkatha 11%. The ANC thus narrowly failed to achieve the two-thirds majority allowing it to effect its own constitutional changes. Nelson Mandela became the country's President with Thabo Mbeki (ANC) and De Klerk as Deputy Presidents. A Cabinet of National Unity was made up of 18 ANC representatives, six from the NP, and three from the IFP; later in May the provincial legislatures chose a 90-member Senate, dominated by the ANC, which thereby held a slightly higher majority in the Constitutional Assembly than in the National Assembly. The priorities for the new Government were essentially simple: to provide decent standards of housing, education, health and other basic services for the great majority of the population whose needs were ignored under apartheid. Given the residual inequalities in the economy and at every level of society, any new administration faces a monumental task. The practical necessity of not alienating domestic industrialists and international financiers means that the Government has not been able to move as quickly as it might like. The ANC-led Government has also inevitably experienced some difficulty in adjusting from running a liberation movement to running a Government. A key move was the creation of a 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission', in order to consider violations of human rights perpetrated under the apartheid regime. While it met with considerable obstruction, the Commission did manage to uncover much detail about the murkier aspects of the apartheid era. It is as yet too early to assess fairly its contribution towards national reconciliation. The domestic situation has been marred on several occasions by violence in KwaZulu-Natal, but as the national and provincial governments have found their feet, these outbreaks have diminished. Outside Kwazulu-Natal, the ANC continues to dominate the political scene. After lengthy negotiations a new constitution was finally passed in October 1996. Immediately after his party's endorsement of the Constitution, De Klerk withdrew the NP from the Government of National Unity to form the parliamentary opposition. The following year, Mandela announced that he would not stand for re-election as president in 1999 and, a few months later, resigned as leader of the ANC. Mbeki, his heir apparent, took over the leadership of the party. Mbeki's first test came with the elections in June 1999. The ANC won a comfortable victory, slightly increasing its majority in the National Assembly. The opposition democratic party, Inkatha and the rump of the old National Party were all confined to less than 10% of the vote. Abroad, the new Government has pursued an independent foreign policy, dealing with a number of regimes that are out of favour with the West, but whose support for the ANC during apartheid has not been forgotten (Iran, Cuba, Libya). Relations with the USA and the West are nonetheless stable. However, in southern Africa, the Government has shown an sometimes uncertain step: despite its blundering intervention in neighbouring Lesotho in 1998 at the request of the embattled government which faced a military uprising. Recent interventions in both Angola and the Republic of Congo have come to little or nought. Much of the goodwill which South Africa attracted in the early stages of majority rule has dissipated, especially following the departure of Mandela. Nonetheless, the prospective involvement of Cyril Ramphosa - a senior ANC figure - in the Northern Ireland peace process shows that South Africa still carries clout on the international stage.

Government: Under the terms of the new Constitution, which was adopted on 8 May 1996 and entered into force on 4 February 1997, legislative power is vested in a bicameral Parliament, comprising a National Assembly and a National Council of Provinces (formerly the Senate). The National Assembly is elected by universal adult suffrage under a system of proportional representation and has between 350 and 400 members. The 90-member National Council of Provinces comprises six permanent delegates and four special delegates from each of the provincial legislatures. The President, who is elected by the National Assembly from among its members, exercises executive power in consultation with the other members of the Cabinet. The Constitution provides for an interim Government of National Unity (to be in place until 1999). The Republic of South Africa lies at the southern end of the African continent. It is bounded by the Indian Ocean to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west, and is bordered to the north by Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland and totally encloses Lesotho.

The discovery of gold near Johannesburg in 1886 turned a small shanty town into the bustling modern city that it is today. Indeed the whole area contains the richest gold reef in the world. The man-made lakes scattered along the reef provide facilities for boating, fishing and birdwatching.

Pretoria is the administrative capital of the country with many parks and gardens. It is known as the 'Jacaranda City' because of the flowering trees lining its streets in late spring. Church Street is 26km (16 miles) long and is one of the world's longest straightest streets.

Cape Town, South Africa's legislative capital, is situated at the foot of Table Mountain looking out onto the Atlantic Ocean. Places of interest include the Castle of Good Hope in Darling Street, the old Malay quarter and the Old Townhouse on Greenmarket Square, housing a fine collection of 17th century Dutch and Flemish paintings.

Durban is South Africa's third-biggest city and reflects a mix of cultures, including a large Indian community and a new influx of Africans from countries to the north. Because of its subtropical climate, it is possible to swim and sunbathe all year round.

Typical South African dishes include sosaties (a type of kebab) and bobotie (a curried mince dish).

14 OVERVIEW

Country Overview: Covering a huge swathe of land, washed by the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, South Africa has enormous wealth above and below ground, making it one of the richest natural storehouses on the planet. With staggeringly beautiful rural areas such as the Cape Winelands, the towering dunes of the Wild Coast, the magnificent game parks of Kruger and Zululand, and the Kalahari and Karoo Deserts, barren for much of the year but a carpet of flowers in spring, the possibilities for tourists are endless. Alternatively visit sophisticated cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town, or charming historic towns like Stellenbosch or Pietermaritzburg. Even once infamous townships such as Soweto are now growing into vibrant cities in their own right.

South Africa is a 'rainbow nation' of many colours and cultures, encompassing Zulu, Tswana, Khosa, Sotho, Indian, Afrikaans and those of British origin. The scars left by the apartheid years are slowly healing, but have left huge inequalities between rich and poor. Despite this, the people are charming hosts, most speak English and all have a fascinating story to tell. The crime rate is still far too high, but with a little common sense, travellers can have a perfect, safe holiday.

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