

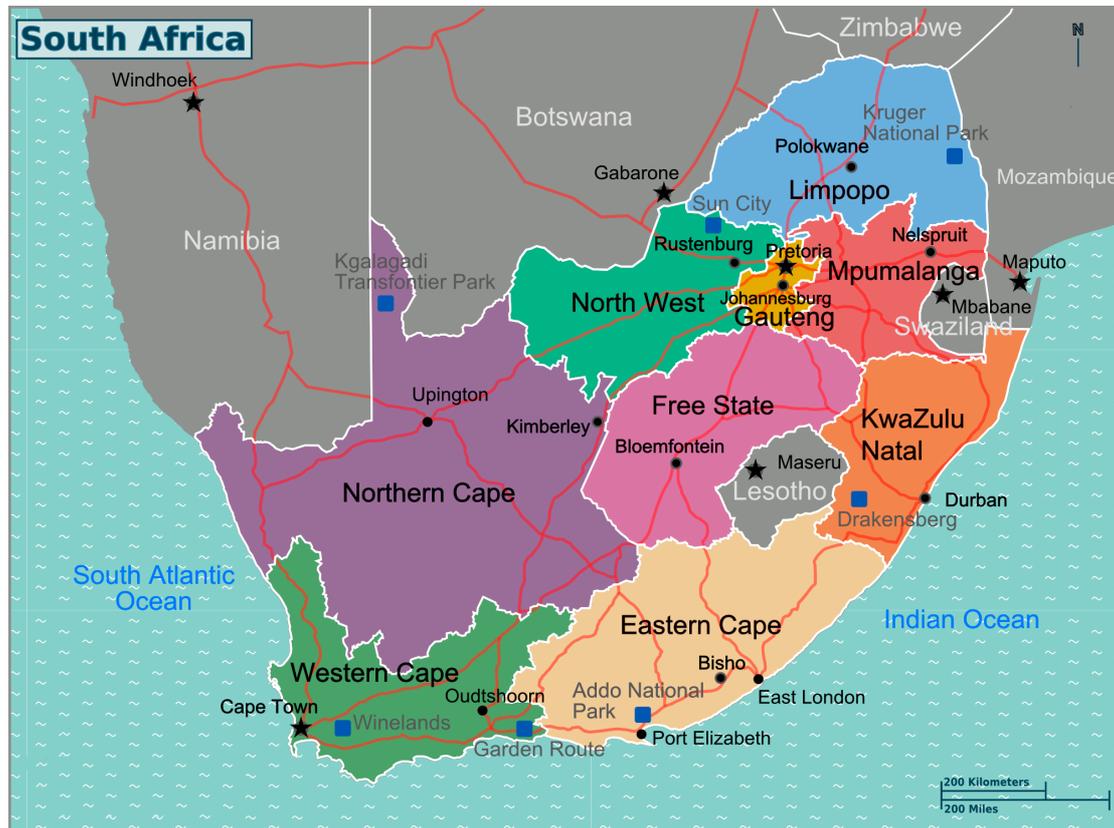
African Sojourns

Specialists in Personalised Travel

SOUTH AFRICA COUNTRY INFORMATION



In preparation for your South African Sojourn please find below some interesting facts about South Africa. For further information you can visit the official South African Tourism Authority's website: www.southafrica.net



The country:

At the southernmost tip of the African continent, flanked to the west by the Atlantic Ocean and to the south and east by the Indian Ocean, is the Republic of South Africa. This fairly new democracy, aptly called "The Rainbow Nation", is a colourful combination of ethnic cultures living in a land of scenic contrasts. South Africa occupies 1 223 410 sq. km (472659 sq. miles) and stretches from The Limpopo River in the north to Cape Agulhas in the south. It is five times the size of Britain, twice as big as France is about one eighth of the size of the United States. South Africa borders Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe to the north, and Mozambique and Swaziland to the Northeast.

Currency:

The South African Rand (ZAR) is the legal tender. You can change money at most city hotels, local banks or at the airport. Most banks and airports have ATM machines where you can use your international credit cards to obtain local currency. Visa and MasterCard are usually accepted throughout. Safari Camps will not change money so change your Rand before you arrive in the camps. We suggest you advise your bank that you are travelling in South Africa before you leave your home country.

Passports and Visas:

- *You must have a valid passport that does not expire for at least six months after your return home date.*
- *When entering South Africa, you must have at least 2 blank visa pages (not endorsement pages) to enable the entry visa to be issued.*
- *If travelling with children 17 years and younger you must bring the original birth certificates showing both parents names who are travelling.*

Power:

All electrical appliances run on 220 volts. Outlets are round 3 pin, 15-amp type. Special adapters for video cameras, chargers and hairdryers are needed and are mostly supplied by the hotels and camps. Various safari camps and lodges may not have 220 volts and may operate on solar powered or generator 12-volt electricity.

Communications:

Telephone connections in South Africa are good but it is expensive. You can hire cell phones at the airport if you prefer not to use or have international roaming on your personal cell phone. Phones are available at all hotels and restaurants. However, there are still some areas where cell phone signal is limited so if you need to have guaranteed communication you will need to rent a satellite phone in Johannesburg or Cape Town.

Access:

Domestic flights provide access to virtually every corner of the country. All major cities receive domestic flights in South Africa and there are dozens of smaller airfields that also accommodate charter flights.

If you are taking a light aircraft flight, there is a luggage restriction on these flights of 20kgs (44lbs) per person in soft-sided bags (no hard framed suitcases). If an individual weighs over 100kgs (220lbs) please ensure you have advised us due to aviation rules for safety on these flights.

Rail transport in South Africa enjoys good infrastructure with a number of offerings available to visitors wanting to explore the country this way.

If you wish to take a taxi, we recommend you ask your hotel to arrange a metered taxi with a reputable company that they know.

Driving: Car hire is readily available from every major city and South Africa has an excellent network of roads.

Rules of the roads:

- *Driving is on the left hand side of the road*
- *Gravel roads are generally well maintained however you should not exceed 80km/h to avoid skidding or losing control of the vehicle.*
- *In rural areas, it is dangerous to drive at night because of animals and people crossing.*
- *The speed limit in urban areas is usually 80km per hour reduced to 60km per hour as marked in other areas; on rural roads 100km per hour, and on freeways 120km per hour unless otherwise indicated.*
- *Wearing seat belts is compulsory.*
- *Driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious offence and traffic laws are strictly enforced.*
- *Driving licenses must be carried at all time and these should be in English and have a photograph of the driver printed on it.*
- *Official motorcades are led by police escorts and the law requires that all vehicles move to the side of the road and stop when one approaches.*
- *We strongly recommend that you carry a torch (flashlight).*
- *Many petrol stations in the cities are open on a 24-hour basis. MasterCard's, Visa and Barclay petrocards are accepted. A number of garages offer a 24-hour breakdown service.*
- *Service at petrol stations is provided by a petrol attendant. Tipping is at your discretion but we recommend R5.00. Ask the attendant to check the oil, water and tyre pressure. Leaded and unleaded fuel is available throughout South Africa.*
- *People drive very fast in South Africa, especially on the open roads. They sometimes overtake on the inside lane so be careful when changing lanes. Taxi's (minibuses) often will stop in the road, especially in towns and they do not indicate. Leave a good distance between you and the car in front.*
- *At traffic circles one should yield to cars from the right, however many South African's treat them as a "4 way" stop, where the protocol is the first car to arrive at the traffic circle goes first.*
- *On the open roads you may find people moving over to the hard shoulder (in the yellow line) to let you pass. The protocol is to flash your hazards for a few seconds to thank them. If you move over be careful to do it when you can see a long way in front of you to ensure that no one is parked or broken down in the hard shoulder.*
- *When you park your car you may find someone asking if they can look after it. Generally this is fine. You can ask their name; take note of what they look like and if everything is ok when you return you can tip them around R5.00.*

Language:

South Africa has 11 official languages: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. English however, has been declared the language of record and is therefore the main language of business. Languages such as French, German and Italian are spoken by staff members at many up-market hotels and shops. South African English is heavily influenced by Afrikaans and, to a lesser extent, by

some of the African languages. First-time visitors may have trouble understanding the South African accent, which lengthens certain vowels, clips others short, and swallows others. Below are a few phrases and words in three of the languages:

ENGLISH	ZULU	XHOSA
Good morning	Sawubona	Molo
Yes	Yebo	Ewe
No	Hayi	Hayi
Thank you	Ngiyabonga	Enkosi
Goodbye	Hamba kahle	Hamba kakuhle

Time:

South Africa is two hours in the advance of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+2). As South Africa doesn't operate daylight saving time, there's no time difference between the winter and summer months.

Economy:

The economy of South Africa is the largest in Africa and accounts for 24% of its gross domestic product in terms of purchasing power parity, and is ranked as an upper-middle income economy by the World Bank. This makes the country one of only four countries in Africa in this category (the others being Botswana, Gabon and Mauritius). According to official estimates, a quarter of the population is unemployed, however unofficial estimates put the real unemployment rate as high as 40%. A quarter of South Africans live on less than \$1.25 a day.

The country's economy is reasonably diversified with key economic sectors including mining, agriculture and fisheries, vehicle manufacturing and assembly, food processing, clothing and textiles, telecommunication, energy, financial and business services, real estate, tourism, transportation, and wholesale and retail trade.

Public Holidays:

The dates of certain public holidays change from year to year. If a public holiday falls on a Sunday, then the Monday is also declared a public holiday.

01 January, 21 March, 25 March, 28 March, 27 April, 01 May, 16 June, 09 August, 24 September, 16 December, 25 December and 26 December.

The South African flag:

The flag of the Republic of South Africa was adopted on 27 April 1994, at the beginning of the 1994 general election, to replace the flag that had been used since 1928. The new national flag, designed by State Herald Frederick Brownell, was chosen to represent the new democracy.

The flag has horizontal bands of red (on the top) and blue (on the bottom), of equal width, separated by a central green band which splits into a horizontal "Y" shape, the arms of which end at the corners of the hoist side (and follow the flag's diagonals). The Y embraces a black isosceles triangle from which the arms are separated by narrow yellow bands; the red and blue bands are separated from the green band and its arms by narrow white stripes.

Three of the colours, black, green and yellow, are found in the flag of the African National Congress. The other three, red, white and blue, are used in the old Flag of Transvaal, the modern flag of the Netherlands and the flag of the United Kingdom; the colours white and blue were also found in the old flag of South Africa. Former South African President F.W. de Klerk, proclaimed the new flag on 20 April 1994.

Shopping:

A variety of shopping centres, local handicrafts markets and roadside stalls are found throughout the country. Quality gold and diamond jewellery, leather goods, wooden carvings, sculptures, paintings and local handicrafts including pottery, beadwork and woven articles are also available throughout the country. Many of the smaller boutique shops are not found in the main shopping centres so please speak to us or your hotel if you are looking for something special.

Suggested Shopping Complexes:

Cape Town

Cavendish Square Claremont (15 minutes from the city centre)

Golden Acre Adjacent to the Cape Sun Hotel

Victoria Wharf Victoria & Alfred Hotel

Johannesburg

Sandton City and Sandton Square Adjacent to the Sandton Sun Hotel

Village Walk, Sandton

Rosebank Mall Adjacent to the Park Hyatt

Sunstar Diamond Cutting Works 1147 Richard Road, Midrand (Peter) Tel 011-315-8015

Durban

Gateway Shopping Centre on the North Coast

The Pavilion Westville, near the city

Climate:

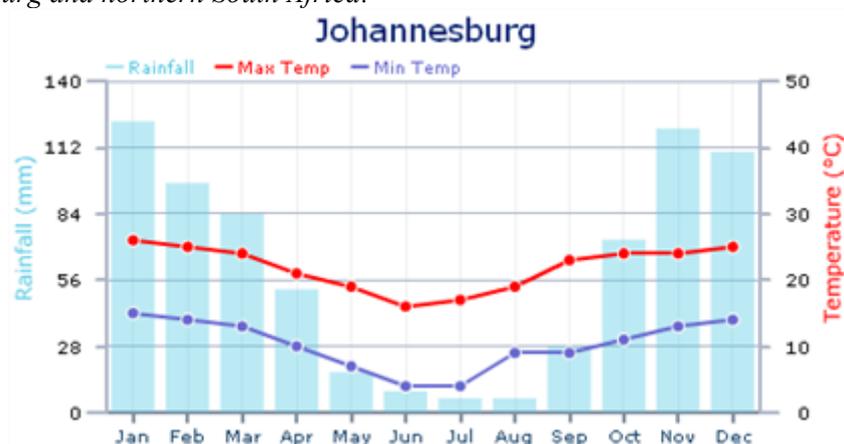
Despite regional differences, South Africa's climate is generally mild throughout the year. South Africa is a relatively dry country with a mean annual rainfall of 502mm.

Summer lasts from October until March.

Winter lasts from May to August. Snowfall is limited to the highest mountain peaks.

- KwaZulu Natal has a mostly subtropical climate with high temperatures (30 degrees C+) and high humidity in summer.
- The Gauteng region (Johannesburg and Pretoria area) enjoy hot summers (28 – 30 degrees C) with afternoon thundershowers and frosty, cold at night and cool during the day dry winters.
- Mpumalanga and the Kruger National Park (known as the Lowveld) experience very hot summers (30 degrees C+) with thunderstorms and cool to cold, dry winters.
- The Cape interior and the Free State have similar weather conditions to the Gauteng region.
- The Western Cape regions enjoys a Mediterranean climate with warm, dry summers and cool to cold, wet winters.

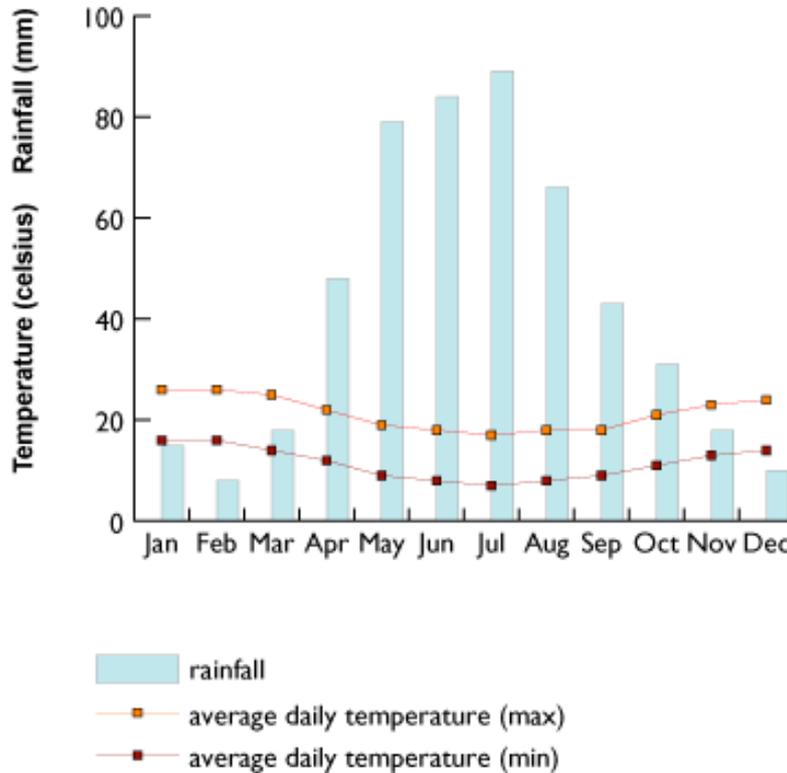
Johannesburg and northern South Africa:



African Sojourns

Specialists in Personalised Travel

Cape Town:



Recommended reading (in no particular order):

There has been an explosion of new authors and books on South and Southern Africa in the last few years. Below is just a small selection of some of the latest books that have been released. They can be ordered through Amazon if you cannot get them at your local store:

- *Long Walk to Freedom; Nelson Mandela*
- *My Traitor's Heart (1990): by Rian Malan: A South African Exile Returns to Face His Country, His Tribe, and His Conscience*
- *Burger's Daughter (1979) by Nadine Gordimer: Set in the 1970's the political and historical novel follows the life of Rosa Burger, as she comes to terms with her father Lionel Burger's legacy as an anti-apartheid activist in the South African Communist Party.*
- *The Power of One (1989) by Bryce Courtenay: Set in 1930's South Africa tells the story of a young English boy who is raised by his Zulu nurse, is eventually sent to an Afrikaans boarding school and his journey into adulthood.*
- *Jock of the Bushveld (1907) by Sir James Percy Fitzpatrick: This is a much loved children's classic based on the life of Percy Fitzpatrick and his faithful dog, Jack, who accompanied him on his travels as a transport rider during the South African gold rush.*

African Sojourns

Specialists in Personalised Travel

- *Coconut (207) by Kopano Matlwa: A provocative novel which focuses on black youth of South Africa and their search for identity and culture in a Westernized society.*
- *Beyond the Miracle - Inside the New South Africa (2002) by Allister Spark: Covering both the new regime's proud achievements and its disappointing failures,*
- *Jann Turner; Southern Cross*
- *Pamela Jooste; People Like Ourselves ; Frieda and Min*
- *Christopher Hope; White Boy Running*
- *Jonty Driver; Shades of Darkness*
- *Rayda Jacobs; Postcards from South Africa*
- *Saturday is for Funerals; Max Essex*
- *Coconut (207) by Kopano Matlwa: A provocative novel which focuses on black youth of South Africa and their search for identity and culture in a Westernized society.*
- *Beyond the Miracle - Inside the New South Africa (2002) by Allister Spark: Covering both the new regime's proud achievements and its disappointing failures,*
- *Jann Turner; Southern Cross*
- *Pamela Jooste; People Like Ourselves ; Frieda and Min*
- *Christopher Hope; White Boy Running*
- *Jonty Driver; Shades of Darkness*
- *Rayda Jacobs; Postcards from South Africa*
- *Saturday is for Funerals; Max Essex*

African Sojourns wishes you a wonderful and exciting holiday!