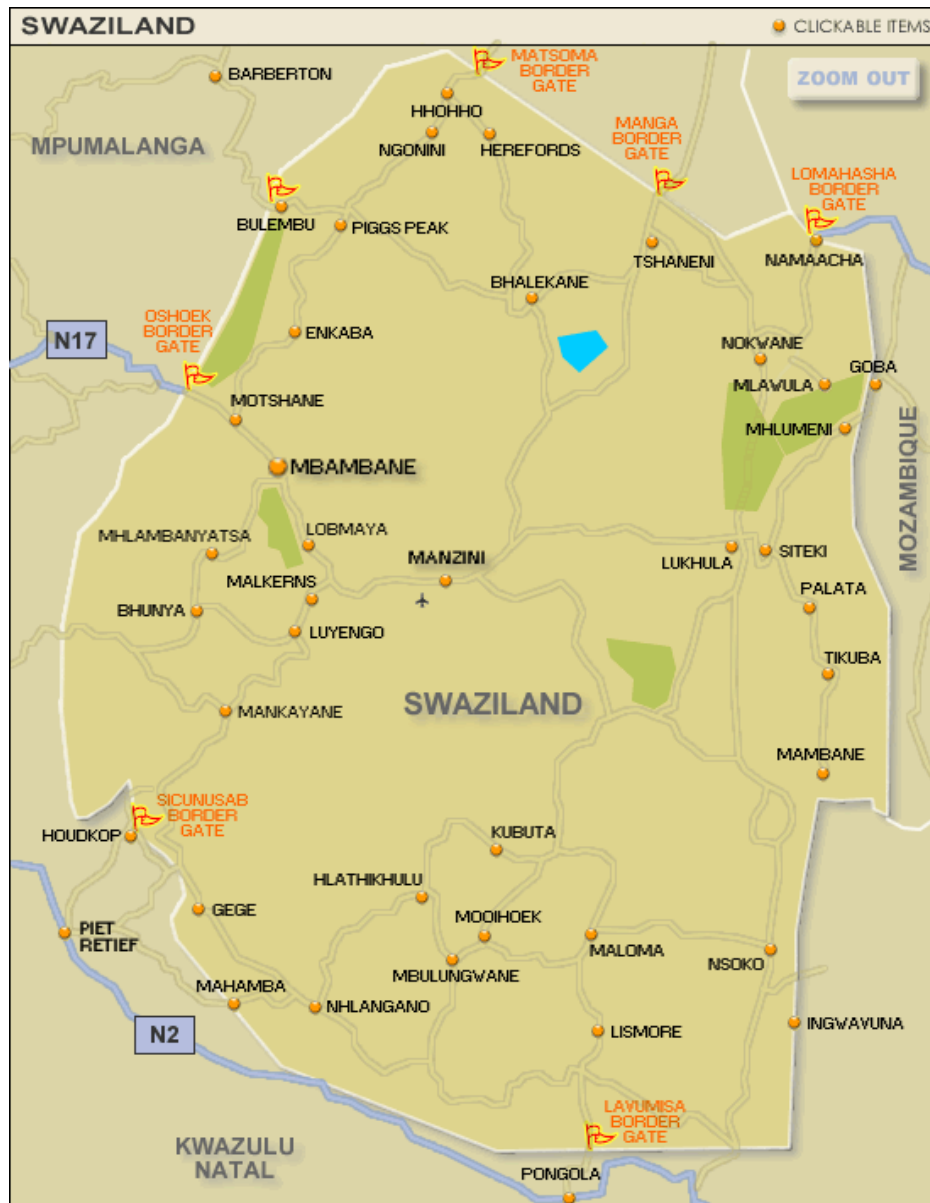


## SWAZILAND COUNTRY INFORMATION



In preparation for your Swaziland Sojourn please find below some interesting facts about Swaziland. For further information you can visit the official Swaziland Tourism Authority's website: [www.kingdomofswatini.com](http://www.kingdomofswatini.com)



**The country:**

*Swaziland, officially the Kingdom of Swaziland (Swazi: Umbuso weSwatini) and now called Eswatini is a landlocked country in southern Africa, bordered to the north, south and west by South Africa, and to the east by Mozambique. The nation, as well as its people, are named after the 19th-century king Mswati II.*

*Swaziland is a small country, no more than 200 kilometers (120 mi) north to south and 130 kilometers (81 mi) east to west. The western half is mountainous, descending to a Lowveld region to the east. The eastern border with Mozambique and South Africa is dominated by the escarpment of the Lebombo Mountains.*

*In 1899, as a result of the Anglo-Boer war, Britain transformed this small country into a protectorate under its direct control. Subsequently, throughout the colonial period, Swaziland was governed by a resident administrator, one that ruled according to legal orders issued by the British High Commissioner for South Africa. Swaziland gained its independence in 1968*

**Currency**

*The lilangeni (plural: emalangeni, code: SZL) is the currency of Swaziland and is subdivided into 100 cents. The South African Rand is also accepted in Swaziland but Emalangeni is not accepted in South Africa.*

*Visa and Mastercards are accepted at most hotels but the new pin/chip cards do not always work. Cash is the preferred method of payment. There are ATM machines in the major centres where you can draw cash.*

*Payment for fuel can be made by cash or Visa card.*

**Visas:**

*All visitors to Swaziland require a valid passport. Citizens of the United Kingdom and most British Commonwealth countries, including African states, do not require visas. However, please check with us or your nearest Embassy prior to arrival.*

**Power:**

*Electricity is supplied at 220/240v with 3 pin round plugs. International adaptors are mostly available at the hotels and lodges). In camps where there is no electricity power maybe supplied by generator.*

**Water:**

*It is not advisable to drink the tap water. If you are unsure always ask.*

**Communications:**

*Land telephones are available throughout the country. There is only one mobile service provider but coverage is good, particularly in the urban areas and between the main towns. Internet services include Broadband and Wireless Internet, and are widely available.*

## **Access:**

The national airline is Swaziland Airlink; <sup>[1]</sup> which operates regular services to and from Johannesburg, connecting with intercontinental <sup>[1]</sup> flights from all over the world.

Access into to country by road is through 13 border posts, two with Mozambique and 11 with South Africa. All are all are open seven days a week and operate at <sup>[1]</sup> varying hours.

## **Border Hours<sup>[1]</sup>**

- Bulembu/Josefdal 08.00 – 16.00 <sup>[1]</sup>
- Gege/Bothashoop 08.00 – 16.00 <sup>[1]</sup>
- Lavumisa/Golela 24 hours
- Lomahasha>Namaacha 07.00 – 20.00 <sup>[1]</sup>
- Lundzi/Waverley 07.00 – 16.00 <sup>[1]</sup>
- Mahamba 07.00 – 22.00 <sup>[1]</sup>
- Mananga 08.00 – 18.00 <sup>[1]</sup>
- Matsamo/Jeppe's Reef 08.00 – 20.00 <sup>[1]</sup>
- Mhlumeni/Goba 7.00 - 20.00 <sup>[1]</sup>
- Ngwenya/Oshoek 07.00 – 22.00
- Salitje/Onverwacht 08.00 – 18.00 <sup>[1]</sup>
- Sandlane/Nerston 08.00 – 18.00 <sup>[1]</sup>
- Sicunusa/Houdkop 08.00 – 18.00

There is a good network of roads throughout the country but do watch out for people and animals all along side the roads. Please try not to drive at night for this reason.

## **Rules of the road:**

- Driving is on the left hand side of the road
- An excellent network links the largest metropolitan areas with the smallest villages.
- 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.
- Seat belts must be worn at all times.
- We strongly recommend that you carry a torch (flashlight).

## **Language:**

English and siSwati are the official languages. Most Swazis speak English, <sup>[1]</sup> particularly in the main centres and tourist areas.

**Photography:**

*It is prohibited to take photographs of the Royal family, uniformed police, army personnel vehicles or aircraft. Permission is required to take photographs of individuals or homesteads.*

**Time:**

*Swaziland is two hours in the advance of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+2).*

**Economy:**

*Swaziland's economy is diversified, with agriculture, forestry and mining accounting for about 13% of GDP, manufacturing (textiles and sugar-related processing) representing 37% of GDP and services – with government services in the lead – constituting 50% of GDP. The majority of the population, about 75%, is employed in subsistence agriculture on Swazi Nation Land (SNL), which, in contrast to the small commercial farming, suffers from low productivity and investment. This dual nature of the Swazi economy, with high productivity in textile manufacturing and in the industrialized agricultural TDLs on the one hand, and declining productivity subsistence agriculture (on SNL) on the other, may well explain the country's overall low growth, high inequality and unemployment.*

**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. Muslim festivals may also be celebrated in some areas.*

*01 January, March/April: Good Friday, Easter Monday. 19 April, 25 April, 01 May, 17 May, 22 July, 06 September, 25 December and 26 December.*

**The Swaziland flag:**

*The flag of Swaziland was adopted on October 1, 1968. The red stands for past battles, the blue for peace and stability, and the yellow for the resources of Swaziland. The central focus of the flag is a shield and two spears, symbolizing protection from the country's enemies. Its color is meant to show that white and black people live in peaceful coexistence in Swaziland. The flag is based on one given by King Sobhuza II to the Swazi Pioneer Corps in 1941. On it is an Emasotsha shield, laid horizontally. The shield is reinforced by a staff from which hangs injobo tassels-bunches of feathers of the widowbird and the lourie. They also decorate the shield. Above the staff are two assegais-local spears.*

**Shopping:**

*There are a wide variety of places to buy very good quality arts and crafts.*

*Peak Craft Centre just north of Orion Piggs Peak Hotel & Casino is where you will find Likhwetzi Kraft, a branch of Tintsaba Crafts, which sells sisal baskets, jewelry and many other Swazi crafts. There are also numerous craft vendors along the road up from Mbabane.*

*Near Mbabane in the Malkerns Valley is the Swazi Craft Center, situated 7km south of the MR103 turn-off for Malkerns. This houses several interesting sites including the infamous Swazi Candle shop.*

*The place to go for good quality produce, baskets, mats and traditional clay pots made by groups of local women is Mandela's B&B in Malkerns.*

*The Ngwenya Glass making factory just over the border from South Africa at Ngwenga/Oshoek is an interesting place to visit and here you can buy beautiful glass artefacts.*

***Climate:***

*The seasons are the reverse of those in the Northern Hemisphere with December being mid-summer and June mid-winter. Generally speaking, rain falls mostly during the summer months, often in the form of thunderstorms. Winter is the dry season. Annual rainfall is highest on the Highveld in the West, between 1,000 and 2,000 mm (39.4 and 78.7 in) depending on the year. The further East, the less rain, with the Lowveld recording 500 to 900 mm (19.7 to 35.4 in) per annum. Variations in temperature are also related to the altitude of the different regions. The Highveld temperature is temperate and, seldom, uncomfortably hot while the Lowveld may record temperatures around 40 °C (104 °F) in summer.*

***Recommended reading (in no particular order):***

- *Southern Africa – Traveller’s Wildlife Guides; William Branch, Chris Stuart and Tilde Stuart*
- *All the King’s Animals: The return of endangered Wildlife to Swaziland – Cristina Kessler*
- *A History of Swaziland; Matsebula*
- *Swaziland – Enchantment of the World; Ettagle Blauer and Jason Laure*
- *The Swazi, a South African Kingdom; Hilda Kuper*
- *Sobhuza II, Ngwenyama and King of Swaziland: The Story of an Hereditary Ruler and his county; Hilda Kuper*
- *Adventures in Swaziland; Owen Rowe O’Neil*
- *Dawn in Swaziland; Christopher Charles Watts*

***African Sojourns wishes you a wonderful and exciting holiday!***