

2023/24

OFFICIAL GUIDE TO SOUTH AFRICA

WILDERNESS
SAFARIS

Purpose is the new



TOURISM

The mandate of the Department of Tourism, as outlined in the Tourism Act of 2014, is to promote the growth and development of the tourism sector; promote quality tourism products and services; provide for the effective domestic and international marketing of South Africa as a tourist destination; enhance cooperation and coordination between all spheres of government in developing and managing tourism; and promote responsible tourism for the benefit of South Africa and for the enjoyment of all its residents and foreign visitors.

In recognition of tourism as a national priority with the potential to contribute significantly to economic development, the *1996 White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa* provides for the promotion of domestic and international tourism. The national tourism sector strategy provides a blueprint for the sector to meet the growth targets contained in the National Development Plan.

Over the medium term, the department planned to continue its efforts to protect and reignite tourism demand to ensure that the sector realises its potential in contributing to South Africa's economic growth. To do this, the department intends to focus on: enhancing and maintaining core tourism assets and infrastructure while creating work opportunities, including by supporting tourism enterprises owned by historically disadvantaged individuals; and enhancing growth and development in the sector through various incentives.

Enhancing and maintaining tourism assets and creating work opportunities

The Working for Tourism subprogramme in the Destination Development programme forms part of the expanded public works programme, which funds skills and infrastructure projects. Activities in the subprogramme are aimed at enhancing and developing tourism infrastructure through labour-intensive methods targeted at young people, women, unemployed people, people with disabilities and small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs).

To this end, the department aimed to continue implementing multiyear spatial planning and infrastructure projects that support rural and township economies, including the maintenance of infrastructure in national parks. In partnership with stakeholders in the private sector, the department plans to implement various training programmes for young people that focus on improving visitor experience. These programmes – which include training on norms and standards for safe tourism operations – are expected to reach 250 SMMEs and 3 000 young people, with the aim of creating an estimated 17 988 work opportunities either directly and indirectly.

Encouraging growth and development in the sector

The Tourism Incentive Programme subprogramme in the Tourism Sector Support Services programme provides funds for the green tourism incentive, the market access support

programme, the Tourism Grading Support Programme (TGSP), the Tourism Equity Fund and the Tourism Transformation Fund (TTF). These initiatives are intended to support greater destination competitiveness, transformation in the sector, and accelerated tourism and enterprise growth.

The Green Tourism Incentive provides financial support to encourage and help privately owned tourism enterprises adopt responsible practices by installing solutions for the sustainable management and use of electricity and water resources. The incentive is expected to reduce pressure on the national electricity grid and scarce water resources, and facilitate a reduction in operational costs for enterprises over the long term.

International arrivals

International arrivals data from Statistics South Africa have confirmed that South Africa's tourism sector continues to grow, with total arrivals reaching 8.92 million in 2024, marking an impressive 5.1% increase compared to 2023.

Africa

The African continent remains South Africa's largest source of tourists, with 6.8 million tourist arrivals in 2024, making up 76% of total arrivals. Zimbabwe remains the top source market, growing by 3.6% compared to 2023 to 2,183,260 arrivals in 2024. Ghana recorded an exceptional 149.0% increase from 2023, reaching 36,656 arrivals in 2024, largely driven by availability of airlift and the introduction of a visa waiver in November 2023.

The Americas

Tourist arrivals from the Americas saw a strong 10.9% growth from 2023, reaching 505,579 arrivals in 2024. The United States remains the top market in the region and is the top overseas market, with 372,362 tourists, reflecting a 5.2% increase from 2023 to 2024. The increase in direct air connectivity from Brazil, combined with improved marketing efforts, has contributed significantly to a 94.2% rise in arrivals from Brazil from 2023 to 2024, totalling 49,855 tourists for 2024. This consistent growth highlights South Africa's appeal among long-haul travellers and the effectiveness of strategic partnerships with airlines and trade.

Europe

Tourist arrivals from Europe reached 1,258,706 in 2024, reflecting a 1.1% increase compared to 2023. The United Kingdom remains the top European source market, with 349,883 arrivals in 2024, though this was 1.8% lower than 2023. Germany experienced strong growth of 4.0%, with 254,992 arrivals in 2024.

The Netherlands is performing better than France and saw a 0.8% increase, totalling 132,422 arrivals in 2024. While Europe's growth is slower compared to other regions, the region is

a bedrock with regard to having the most overseas arrivals and has emerged as a strong-performing market, largely due to focused marketing campaigns showcasing South Africa's culture, people and attractions.

Asia and Australasia

Tourist arrivals from Asia surged by 4.2%, with 207,718 tourists recorded in 2024. China saw an 11.4% increase, totalling 41,651 arrivals, driven by targeted promotions and increasing flight connectivity. India recorded 75,541 arrivals, a 5.3% decline, primarily due to visa processing backlogs and the absence of direct flights. South Africa saw a phenomenal 31.8% growth from Japan reaching 17,370 arrivals in 2024. Australia also posted steady gains, with strong travel demand from the region expected to fuel further growth in 2025.

Middle East

The Middle East saw a decline of 16.1%, with total arrivals dropping to 45,602. However, Saudi Arabia changed the trend, increasing arrivals by 12.1% to 18,333 arrivals to South Africa in 2024. The United Arab Emirates contributed 6,717 arrivals to South Africa in 2024. While the overall performance in this region faced setbacks, strategic efforts to increase connectivity and enhance trade engagement in other markets in the region will be crucial to future recovery.

Strategies for Tourism Growth

To accelerate recovery, South Africa has implemented strategic marketing and policy interventions:

- **Expanding Airlift:** Efforts are underway to restore key routes, increase airline partnerships, and improve direct access to a variety of cities in South Africa and access to the globe. On 4 December 2024, Cabinet approved the Route Development Marketing Strategy to be implemented by the Department of Tourism, SA Tourism and the private sector.
- **Targeted Market Campaigns:** Promoting unique South African experiences in key markets such as China, India and the Americas.
- **Boosting Digital and Artificial Intelligence-Powered Travel Planning:** Enhancing traveller experiences with personalized digital platforms.
- **Growing Sustainable and Cultural Tourism:** Capitalising on ecotourism, cultural and heritage-based experiences.
- **Enhancing Safety and Security Measures:** Working with law-enforcement and industry partners to enhance traveller confidence while ensuring the safety of local communities.

Township tourism

The township tourism sector is a vital one for South Africa's economy. The South African Township and Village Tourism Association is an inclusive organisation that aims to promote

authentic, indigenous world standard tourism services and experiences. It develops, represents and promotes township and village-orientated local, regional, provincial tourism association, businesses and indigents participating in the tourism sector.

It aims to foster job creation by ensuring inclusive, sustainable development and transformation of the tourism sector, especially in townships and villages.

Tourism Sector Recovery Plan (TSRP)

The TSRP is in line with the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) which was launched in November 2020. The ERRP aims to build a new economy and unlock South Africa's true economic potential. It identified tourism as one of the priority areas of intervention in the ERRP, especially with infrastructure development, mass public employment, green economy interventions, the inclusion of women and youth, and skills development.

The TSRP has three strategic themes namely: Reigniting Demand, Rejuvenating Supply and Strengthening Enabling Capability. The effective implementation of the TSRP is anchored on the following seven strategic interventions:

- Implement norms and standards for safe operation across the tourism value chain to enable safe travel and to rebuild traveller confidence;
- Stimulate domestic demand through targeted initiatives and campaigns;
- Strengthening the supply-side through resource mobilisation and investment facilitation;
- Support for the protection of core tourism infrastructure and assets;
- Execute a global marketing programme to reignite international demand;
- Tourism regional integration; and
- Review the tourism policy to provide enhanced support for sector growth and development.

Tourism Incentive Programme

The TIP was established to stimulate growth and develop the tourism sector by providing financial assistance to privately owned tourism enterprises. The Market Access Support Programme offers partial financial support towards the cost of exhibition space, return airfare, hotel accommodation to qualifying small tourism enterprises that wish to participate and exhibit at selected tourism trade platforms. The TTF offers a combination of grant funding, debt finance and equity contributions to facilitate capital investment in new and expansion projects in the tourism sector.

Tourism Equity Fund (TEF)

In support of the objectives of enterprise development and transformation, the department will aim to fast-track the piloting of the TEF, which offers for capital investment in the form of grant funding to commercially viable black-owned tourism enterprises. The TEF is intended

to fast-track transformation within the tourism sector. The facility provides a combination of debt finance and grant to facilitate equity acquisition and new project development in the tourism sector by black entrepreneurs.

The fund will also seek to develop skills and ensure that the sector is sufficiently equipped to meet increased demand and expectations by implementing capacity-building programmes such as the wine service training programme, the hospitality youth programme, and food and beverage programmes.

Tourism Grading Support Programme

The TGSP was introduced to encourage wider participation in the tourism grading system and to reduce the cost burden of grading on small tourism enterprises. The programme also aims to stimulate an increase in conformity to quality standards in tourism which in turn will enhance the overall visitor experience and improve South Africa's competitiveness as a tourism destination.

The TGSP offers discounts of between 80% and 90% on the cost of star grading assessment fees for accommodation establishments and meeting venues. The programme is administered by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa on behalf of the NDT.

Green Tourism Incentive Programme

The GTIP is a resource efficiency incentive programme of the NDT whose objective is to encourage and support private sector tourism enterprises to adopt responsible tourism practices by moving towards the sustainable management and usage of energy and water resources. The GTIP was launched in 2017 and through grant funding, assists private sector tourism enterprises in reducing the cost of investing in energy and water efficient solutions.

Implementing GTIP funded interventions and identified solutions will not only ensure more responsible operations and environmental benefits, but after the projected payback period, the savings will continue to reduce the overall operational cost of the enterprise with direct and sustained benefits in terms of profitability and improved competitiveness. The programme is managed by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) on behalf of the NDT and all applications and approvals are managed by the IDC.

The GTIP broadly offers the following benefits to qualifying tourism enterprises:

- The full cost for a new resource efficiency audit or the full cost for reviewing an existing resource efficiency audit;
- Grant funding to qualifying small and micro enterprises on a sliding scale from 50% to 90% of the total cost of implementing resource efficiency interventions, which is capped at R1 million; and

- Qualifying enterprises may implement projects in phases to better manage their cash flow over a two-year project implementation period.

South African Tourism

The Tourism Act of 2014 mandates South African Tourism to market South Africa internationally and domestically as a preferred tourism and business events destination while monitoring the performance of the tourism sector. In support of this, over the medium term, the entity will continue to prioritise marketing South Africa to domestic, regional and international markets as a tourist destination for business and leisure.

The entity will focus on driving business tourism over the period ahead by bidding to host events such as business meetings, conferences and exhibitions in all provinces, including in rural areas and small towns. These efforts are intended to boost tourism in numerous sectors such as mining and minerals, manufacturing, agriculture, finance, and wholesale and retail trade, as well as leisure travel.

As such, the entity planned to support bids to host 93 international and regional business events over the period ahead and participate in key strategic events. Ensuring that visitors enjoy their experience is a key component of the entity's work. To achieve this, over the MTEF period, the entity planned to assess the quality of tourism establishments.

TOURISM IN THE PROVINCES

WESTERN CAPE

With several local attractions and venues, the Western Cape is one of the domestic travel destinations in South Africa preferred by foreign tourists. The province is bordered by two oceans – the Indian Ocean to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. It is also well known for its scenic beauty and a wealth of flora and fauna. With an abundance of hiking trails, you have a choice between coastal or mountain hikes.

Key attractions:

- Table Mountain, which forms part of the Table Mountain National Park, is one of the official New Seven Wonders of Nature, following a lengthy international public voting process. A modern cableway takes visitors to the top of the mountain, providing spectacular views.
- The Victoria and Alfred (V&A) Waterfront, the Company's Gardens, the District Six Museum, the houses of Parliament and the South African National Gallery.
- The Nelson Mandela Gateway to Robben Island is in the Clock Tower Precinct at the V&A Waterfront. It houses interactive multimedia exhibitions, an auditorium, boardrooms, the Robben Island Museum and a restaurant.

- The South African Rugby Museum in Newlands reflects the history of the sport as far back as 1891.
- Jazz is popular in Cape Town, ranging from traditional blues to African jazz. The top jazz event in the Western Cape is the annual Cape Town International Jazz Festival, affectionately referred to as “Africa’s Grandest Gathering”.
- There are six very diverse regions, each offering a unique experience:

1. Cape Winelands

The Cape Winelands is known for some of the best wine in the world. It includes the towns of Stellenbosch, Franschhoek, Worcester, Robertson and Ceres.

2. The Karoo

The Karoo is distinctively divided into the Great Karoo and the Little Karoo by the Swartberg Mountain Range, which runs east-west, parallel to the southern coastline, but is separated from the sea by another east-west range called the Outeniqua–Langeberg Mountains. The Great Karoo lies to the north of the Swartberg range; the Little Karoo is to the south of it.

The Central Karoo features a semi-desert landscape in the centre of the province. It includes the towns of Prince Albert, Beaufort West, and Matjiesfontein; a town that’s a national monument due to the preservation of its Victorian Buildings. The Little Karoo’s fascinating landscape is fashioned almost entirely by water. Its vegetation ranges from lush greenery in the fertile river valleys to short, rugged Karoo plants in the veld. Gorges feature rivers that cut through towering mountains, while breathtakingly steep passes cross imposing terrain. The region is also home to the world’s largest bird – the ostrich.

Key attractions:

- Excellent wines and port are produced in the Calitzdorp and De Rust areas.
- The Swartberg Nature Reserve and Pass with their gravel roads are also worth a visit.
- The Little Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (National Arts Festival) is held in Oudtshoorn annually.
- The Cango Caves, a series of 30 subterranean limestone caves, bear evidence of early San habitation and features magnificent dripstone formations.
- Amalienstein and Zoar are historic mission stations midway between Ladysmith and Calitzdorp. Visitors can go on donkey-cart and hiking trails through orchards and vineyards. The Seweweekspoort is ideal for mountain biking, hiking, and protea and fynbos admirers.

3. City of Cape Town Metropolitan area

The City of Cape Town is best known as the Mother City and it is the provincial capital and main city of the province.

4. Garden Route

The Garden Route stretches along the southern coast of the Western Cape. It includes Tsitsikamma National Park, Nature's Valley, Knysna, Plettenberg Bay and Oudtshoorn.

Key attractions:

- Attequas Kloof Pass, South African/Anglo-Boer War blockhouses and the Bartolomeu Dias complex. Great Brak River offers a historic village with many opportunities for whale and dolphin-watching along the extensive coast. The Slave Tree in George, located just outside the Old Library, was planted in 1811. It is known to be the biggest English oak in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Bungee-jumping at the Gouritz River Gorge, hiking, mountain-biking and angling are popular pastimes.
- The Point in Mossel Bay is popular among surfers and its natural pool formed by rock is also a favourite swimming spot at low tide.
- Genadendal is the oldest Moravian village in Africa, with church buildings and a school dating back to 1738. The Genadendal Mission and Museum complex documents the first mission station in South Africa.
- Villiersdorp houses the Dagbreek Museum that dates back to 1845. The historical home, Oude Radyn, is possibly the only building in the Western Cape to have Batavian wooden gutters and down pipes.

5. Overberg

The Overberg is one of the best places in Africa to watch the southern right whale, one of South Africa's marine big five. The towns in this region include Hermanus, Cape Agulhas and Bredasdorp.

6. West Coast

The West Coast stretches along the Atlantic coast of the Western Cape. The West Coast is where you will find the Cederberg Wilderness Area. Towns in the area include Clanwilliam, Langebaan and Citrusdal.

NORTHERN CAPE

The Northern Cape is an excellent sandboarding destination, and several local operators offer sandboarding lessons and tours. The dunes near Kakamas and Witsand are very popular and expert boarders and novices are more than welcome – boards can be rented on arrival. Adventure-tour companies specialising in dune boarding in South Africa advise you to bring: a camera to record the inevitable antics, lots of sunscreen and a sense of humour. Some of the more enterprising companies turn it into a fun day, complete with children's dune boarding and picnics. This is a fun sport that will satisfy most peoples' need for speed.

Key attractions:

- The Big Hole in Kimberley is the largest hand-dug excavation in the world. In 1871, diamonds were discovered at the site and mined manually by prospectors.
- The house where Sol Plaatje (African National Congress founding member and human rights activist) lived in Kimberley, has a library of Plaatje’s and other black South African writers’ works, and several displays, including a portrayal of black involvement in the South African/Anglo- Boer War.
- Known as the “Oasis of the Kalahari”, Kuruman is blessed with a permanent and abundant source of water that flows from Gasegonyana (Setswana for “the little water calabash”) – commonly called the “Eye of Kuruman” – which yields 20 million litres of water a day. The Wonderwerk Cave at Kuruman features extensive San paintings that may be viewed by appointment.
- The Kalahari Raptor Centre cares for injured birds. Many of these majestic creatures can be seen at close quarters.
- Upington is the commercial, educational and social centre of the Green Kalahari, owing its prosperity to agriculture and its irrigated lands along the Orange River. A camel-and-rider statue in front of the town’s police station pays tribute to the “mounties”, who patrolled the harsh desert territory on camels.
- Namaqualand is famous for a spectacular annual show in spring when an abundance of wildflowers covers vast tracts of desert.
- Namaqualand is also home to the Ais-Ais/Richtersveld National Park. It is managed jointly by the local Nama people and SANParks.
- De Aar is the most important railway junction in South Africa. The author Olive Schreiner lived in the town for many years. Visitors can dine in her former house, which has been converted into a restaurant.
- Hanover is known for its handmade shoes and articles made mostly from sheepskin and leather.
- Mattanu Private Game Reserve offers the ultimate Kalahari game experience – there are roan, sable, buffalo, golden oryx, golden gnu and many other types of antelope and wild animals. One can view the animals on a quad bike, safari vehicle or even by helicopter.

FREE STATE

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

Key attractions:

- With its King’s Park Rose Garden containing more than 4 000 rose bushes, the Free State’s major city, Bloemfontein, has rightfully earned the nickname “City of Roses.” The city also hosts an annual rose festival.
- Bloemfontein has a busy cultural and social-events calendar. One of the annual events is

the Mangaung African Cultural Festival, popularly known as the Macufe Arts Festival, in September.

- The National Women’s Memorial commemorates the women and children who died in concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer/South African War.
- The Gariep Dam, more than 100-km long and 15-km wide, is part of the Orange River Water Scheme, the largest inland expanse of water in South Africa. The Gariep Dam Nature Reserve lies between the dam and Bethulie.
- Clocolan is known for the beauty of its cherry trees when they are in full bloom in spring. San rock paintings and engravings are also found in the area.
- The Llandaff Oratory in the nearby village of Van Reenen is believed to be the smallest Roman Catholic church in the world.
- At Harrismith, there are various memorials in honour of those who fought in the Anglo-Boer/South African War and World War I. Of particular interest is a memorial for the Scots Guards and Grenadier Guards.
- The Golden Gate Highlands National Park outside Clarens has beautiful sandstone rock formations.
- The Vredefort Dome, a World Heritage Site, is the oldest and largest meteorite impact site in the world. It was formed about two billion years ago when a giant meteorite hit Earth.

EASTERN CAPE

The Eastern Cape boasts a magnificent coastline that is complemented by more than 60 state-owned game reserves and over 30 private game farms, which collectively cover an area greater than the Kruger National Park.

Key attractions:

- Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth) has some beautiful parks with well-landscaped gardens, including St George’s Park, which covers 73 ha.
- To the north-west of Graaff-Reinet lies the Valley of Desolation, which is a national monument within the Karoo Nature Reserve that was formed millions of years ago by weathering erosion.
- Varied game reserves, including the Addo Elephant, Mountain Zebra and Mkambati parks.
- South Africa’s first marine park, the Tsitsikamma National Park extends along a rocky coastline of 50 km, and 3 km out to sea.
- Southern right and humpback whales and their calves are regularly spotted from the high dunes, usually between May and November, while common and bottlenose dolphins are often seen close to shore.
- The Camdeboo National Park, near Graaff-Reinet, was proclaimed as South Africa’s 22nd National Park.

LIMPOPO

The Limpopo landscape is made up of dramatic contrasts characterised by hot savanna plains and mist-clad mountains, age-old indigenous forests and cycads alongside modern plantations, and ancient mountain fortresses and the luxury of contemporary infrastructure and modern-day facilities.

Key attractions:

- The Marakele National Park is home to some rare yellowwood and cedar trees and the world's largest colony of Cape vultures. It is also a leader in the conservation of the black rhino.
- Polokwane is considered the premier game-hunting destination in South Africa.
- The Mapungubwe Archaeological Site, about 80 km west of Musina, lies within the boundaries of the Mapungubwe National Park. It is one of the richest of its kind in Africa and a world heritage site. Excavations in the 1930s uncovered a royal graveyard, which included a number of golden artefacts, including the famous gold foil rhinoceros.
- The Kruger National Park (northern section) is one of South Africa's major tourist attractions. The park is home to a large number and wide variety of amphibians, reptiles and birds, as well as 147 mammal species, including the Big Five (African lion, African elephant, Cape buffalo, African leopard and black rhinoceros).

NORTH WEST

North West has several cultural villages that entertain and attract visitors. A number of excellent game reserves have been established, including the Pilanesberg National Park.

Key attractions:

- The historic route of Mahikeng includes an South African/Anglo-Boer War siege site, the Molema House where Sol Plaatje lived while writing his Mafikeng Diary, and the Mahikeng Museum.
- The Groot Marico region is known as mampoer country and visitors can explore the Mampoer Route. The Kortkloof Cultural Village is dedicated to the Tswana people.
- Ottosdal is the only place in South Africa where the unique "wonderstone" or pyrophyllite, is found and mined.
- San rock engravings, Stone Age implements and structures are found on farms such as Witpoort, Gestoptefontein, Driekuil and Korannafontein.

MPUMALANGA

Mpumalanga means "the place where the sun rises" in the Nguni languages. The climate and topography vary from cool highland grasslands at 1 600 m above sea level, through the middleveld and escarpment, to the subtropical Lowveld towards the Kruger National Park and many private game reserves. Scenic beauty, climate and wildlife, voted the most attractive features of South Africa, are found in abundance in this province.

Key attractions:

- Barberton features many reminders of the early gold-rush era. Museums include Belhaven, Fernlea House and Stopforth House. The only known verdite deposits in the world are found in the rocks of the Barberton district. The annual Diggers Festival is held in September every year.
- The spectacular Blyde River Canyon is a 26-km-long gorge carved out of the face of the escarpment and is one of the natural wonders of Africa. God's Window provides a magnificent panoramic view across miles of densely forested mountains, the green Lowveld and the canyon.
- Sabie is the centre of the largest man-made forest in South Africa and a popular destination among mountain bikers. The Cultural Historical Forestry Museum depicts various aspects of the country's forestry industry.
- The Bridal Veil, Horseshoe and Lone Creek waterfalls, and Mac Mac pools and falls just outside Sabie are well worth a visit. At the Montrose Falls in Schoemanskloof, the Crocodile River cascades into a series of rock pools.
- The region also holds rich historical sentiments centred on the monument of the late Mozambican President Samora Machel, constructed in the village of Mbuzini.
- The World Heritage Site, the Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains, comprises 40% of the Barberton Greenstone Belt, one of the world's oldest geological structures.

GAUTENG

'Gauteng' is a Sesotho word meaning "place of gold". It is the smallest province of South Africa and also the most populous and urbanized. It is characterised by a cosmopolitan mix of people from all walks of life.

Key attractions:

- Natural areas include the Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve (Heidelberg); Braamfontein Spruit Trust, The Wilds on Houghton and the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve in Johannesburg; the Kloofendal Nature Reserve and Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens (in Roodepoort); and the National Botanical Garden, Smuts House Museum, and Freedom Park in Pretoria; as well as the Tswaing Crater.
- The Sterkfontein caves near Krugersdorp are the site of the discovery of the skull of the famous Mrs Ples, an estimated 2,5-million-year-old hominid fossil; and Little Foot, an almost complete hominid skeleton of more than 3,3 million years old.
- The Constitution Hill Precinct is set to become one of South Africa's most popular landmarks.
- A guided tour of Soweto leaves a lasting impression of this vast community's life and struggle against apartheid.
- The Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg tells the story of the legacy of apartheid through photographs, film and artefacts.

- The Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory opened its doors to the public following the death of former President Nelson Mandela in December 2013.
- The Union Buildings celebrated its centenary in 2013. Designed by Sir Herbert Baker, construction started in 1910 and was completed in 1913. It has since been the setting for presidential inaugurations. It is also the setting of many national celebrations, including Women's Day and Freedom Day. In December 2013, a bronze statue of former President Mandela was unveiled at the Union Buildings.
- The National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria is considered one of the 10 best in the world.
- The old mining town of Cullinan is where the world's biggest diamond, the 3 106-carat Cullinan diamond, was found.

KWAZULU-NATAL

One of the country's most popular tourist destinations, the province stretches from Port Edward in the south to the borders of Eswatini and Mozambique to the north.

Key attractions:

- The Durban area has a significant number of reserves, developed parks and specialised gardens, the most renowned being the Municipal Botanical Garden.
- Annual events in and around the city include the popular Comrades Marathon between Durban and Pietermaritzburg, an international surfing competition, the Duzi canoe marathon, the Midmar Mile, Dolphin Mile open water swimming events and the Durban July Handicap horse race.
- The Weza State Forest in East Griqualand runs through indigenous forests and commercial plantations. The forest is home to several antelope species and a huge variety of birds.
- St Lucia and its surroundings comprise the iSimangaliso Wetland Park that have five separate ecosystems. It is a fishing and bird watching paradise. Boat trips on the lake offer opportunities for crocodile and hippo sightings. The Kosi Bay Nature Reserve is part of the Coastal Forest Reserve between Mozambique and Sodwana Bay.
- The Hluhluwe-Umfolozozi Park, one of the largest game parks in South Africa, is home to the Big Five, as well as cheetah and wild dogs.
- The Battlefields Route in northern KwaZulu-Natal has the highest concentration of battlefields and related military sites in South Africa.
- The Midlands Meander is a scenic drive between Hilton and Mooi River, with some art studios, potters and painters, to herb gardens and cheese makers.
- Midmar Dam is zoned for yachting and power-boating while the 1 000-ha Midmar Game Park has rhino, zebra, a wide variety of antelope species and waterfowl.

Top-10 reasons to visit South Africa:

- **Affordable** – In South Africa, you can even afford luxury and have spending money for shopping and other treats.
- **Natural beauty** – South Africa’s scenic wonders are legendary. From Table Mountain to God’s Window, the mountains, forests, coasts and deserts will sooth your soul and delight you.
- **World-class facilities** – You will find it easy to get around, find a comfortable place to stay and have a great meal.
- **Adventure** – South Africa is the adventure capital of the world. With over 130 adventures, there is something for everyone from mountain walks to shark-cage diving.
- **Good weather** – In sunny South Africa with a great weather, you can enjoy the outdoors, play golf year-round and take advantage of the nearly 3 000 km coastline.
- **Rainbow Nation** – The Rainbow Nation celebrates all its African and immigrant cultures. South Africans are known for their friendliness and hospitality.
- **Diverse experiences** – Go almost anywhere in South Africa and experience the ultimate combination of nature, wildlife, culture, adventure, heritage and good vibe.
- **Wildlife** – The abundant and diverse wildlife include the Big Five (African lion, African elephant, Cape buffalo, African leopard and black rhinoceros).
- **Freedom Struggle** – Discover a nation’s struggle for freedom whilst following the footsteps of Nelson Mandela, Hector Pieteron and many other celebrated revolutionaries.
- **Responsible tourism** – In South Africa you can travel with care as you explore protected areas, contribute to social and conservation projects, and collect arts and crafts.

Traveller’s Guide:

Any person travelling in or out of the Republic of South Africa should unreservedly declare:

- All goods (including goods of another person) upon his person or in his possession which were purchased or otherwise acquired abroad or on any ship, vehicle or in any shop selling goods on which duty has not been paid; were remodelled, processed or repaired abroad, on arrival.
- Goods that are prohibited, restricted or controlled under any law;
- Goods that were required to be declared before leaving the Republic.

Before leaving, all goods which a traveller is taking with them beyond the borders of the Republic, including goods which are:

- Carried on behalf of another person;
- Intended for remodel, process or repair abroad;
- Prohibited, restricted or controlled under any law;
- Goods that a person, who temporarily entered the Republic, was required to declare upon entering the Republic.

Travellers must, upon request by a Customs Officer, provide the officer with full particulars related to the goods such as invoices, transport documents, proof of payment to supplier,

letter of authority and any permits applicable to such goods. Further, travellers must answer fully and truthfully all questions put to him by such officer and, if required by such officer to do so, produce and open such goods for inspection by the said officer, and shall pay the duty and taxes assessed by such officer, if any.

What are your Duty-Free allowances?

The duty-free allowance only apply to goods for personal use or to dispose of as gifts in accompanied travellers' baggage declared by returning residents and non-residents visiting the Republic.

The following imported goods declared by travellers in their accompanied baggage may be exempted from paying any import duties and Value-Added Tax (VAT):

- New or used goods of a total value not exceeding R5 000 per person;
- Wine not exceeding 2 litres per person;
- Spirituous and other alcoholic beverages, a total quantity not exceeding 1 litre per person;
- Cigarettes not exceeding 200 and cigars not exceeding 20 per person;
- 250 g cigarette or pipe tobacco per person;
- Perfumery not exceeding 50 ml and eau de toilette not exceeding 250 ml per person.

Wine, spirituous and other alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and perfumery imported more than the quantities specified must be cleared at the rates of duty specified in Schedule No.1 ("Tariff") to the Customs and Excise Act No.91 of 1964.

The goods are commonly referred to as consumables or luxury goods and the rate of duty can be considerably high if travellers exceed the above quantities and must clear those excess quantities and pay the import duties at the rates of duty specified in the tariff. Even if goods are bought at an inbound duty-free shop, the duty-free allowance still applies upon arrival.

Note: The duty-free allowance applicable to new or used goods to the value of R5 000 person, is applicable in addition to the duty-free allowance applicable to consumable goods.

What is your flat-rate assessment allowance?

- If you have goods in excess of the R5 000 duty-free allowance but not exceeding R20 000, you may elect to pay customs duty at a rate of full duty less 20% (flat rate) with VAT exempted instead of clearing the goods at the rates of duty specified in Schedule No. 1 ("tariff") to the Customs and Excise Act of 1964;
- Goods more than the R20 000 flat-rate assessment threshold, pay import duties and VAT in accordance with the Harmonised System description and originating status of goods.

Conditions for duty free allowances:

- The duty-free allowances related to new or used goods is only allowed once per person during a period of 30 days, following an absence of not less than 48 hours from South Africa;
- The flat rate assessment allowance is only allowed during a period of 30 days and shall not apply to goods imported by persons returning after an absence of less than 48 hours;
- The duty-free allowances related to wine, spirituous and other alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and perfumery is only allowed once per person during a period of 30 days, following an absence of not less than 48 hours from South Africa;
- The goods must be carried as accompanied baggage;
- The tobacco or alcoholic beverage allowance is not applicable to persons under the age of 18 years.

What about handmade articles?

- Travellers can import handmade articles of leather, wood, plastic, stone or glass of up to 25kg for commercial purposes without paying duties or taxes.

What about goods coming in temporarily?

- You may be required to lodge a cash deposit as security to cover potential import duty or VAT on certain articles imported temporarily. Your refund will be paid after confirmation that the goods have left the country.

To access the Customs external Policy Traveller Processing SC-PA-01-11 visit the Customs page on the SARS website www.sars.gov.za.

Prohibited and restricted goods

- SARS administers certain prohibitions and restrictions on behalf of several government departments, institutions and bodies.
- Prohibited means the goods are not allowed to enter or exit South Africa.
- Restricted means goods are allowed to enter or exit South Africa under certain conditions e.g. permit or certificate is required.

To access a list of “Prohibited and restricted goods SC-CC-32”, visit the Customs page on the SARS website www.sars.gov.za.

Note: Traders and Travellers must be aware of the Counterfeit Goods Act No. 37 of 1997, which states that goods of inferior quality made or sold under another brand, without the brand owners authorisation, is an infringement upon which civil and/or criminal proceedings may be taken against the offender.

Cash restrictions

- A traveller is allowed to declare and carry a maximum of R25 000/unlimited foreign currency, whether leaving or entering;
- A traveller shall declare whether or not he has with him any banknotes, gold, securities or foreign currency; and produce any bank notes, gold, securities or foreign currency which he has with him;
- The South African bank notes is unlimited if the traveller is going to/coming from a country within the Common Monetary Area;
- Travellers are advised to contact the South African Reserve Bank to obtain approval prior to taking cash across the borders of South Africa;
- Although there's technically no legal limit on how much money you can carry on a plane, if you are traveling internationally, you must declare amounts of more than US\$10,000 on your customs form, and be prepared for possible interviews with customs or law enforcement to explain the amount of money you have with you.

Southern African Customs Union (SACU)

The countries that fall under the SACU are Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Botswana and Eswatini. Travellers from SACU member countries do not pay customs import duties and are entitled to a VAT exemption on goods up to a value of R5 000.

When do I register for a customs code?

- Before goods can be imported or exported, SARS may require a person or entity to formally license or register prior to conducting any activity regulated by the Act
- A person, including a traveller, who imports or exports goods of which the total value required to be declared is less than R150 000 during any calendar year is excluded from formal registration requirements.

Persons excluded from formal registration requirements may make use of the registration code 70707070 subject to the following conditions:

- He/she is a natural person;
- Enters the goods for home consumption, temporary export or export;
- Reflects in the field provided on the bill of entry or declaration form his or her:
 - o South African Revenue Service taxpayer reference number; or
 - o South African identity document number, in the case of a South African citizen or a permanent resident of the Republic, or passport document number in the case of a person who is not a South African citizen nor a permanent resident.

To register for a customs code

- You must complete the DA 185: Application form: Registration/Licensing of Customs and Excise clients, together with the relevant supporting annexure to the DA 185; or

- Use the Electronic Registration System and complete the online version DA185 and the relevant online supporting Annexure.
- Please refer to the following External Policies on www.sars.gov.za:
 - Customs Registration, Licensing and Designation SC-CF-19.
 - Excise Licensing and Registration SE-LR-02.

Refund of tax on visitor's purchases

VAT at a rate of 15% is levied on the purchase of most goods in South Africa. Tourists and foreign visitors to South Africa may make application at departure points for a refund of the VAT paid. The tax invoices/proof of payment for the purchases and the goods must be presented for inspection at the port of exit.

What happens if I have not complied with customs requirements?

SARS endeavours to educate and inform traders of their tax/duty obligations through various interventions, to help you to keep your tax affairs in order. Traders who are found to be non-compliant will be subjected to the Penal Provisions of the Customs and Excise Act of 1964, which includes a fine or criminal prosecution.