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Hall's Gateway on the N4 National Highway

Tel: +27 13 065 0865

E-mail: reservations@mtpa.co.za

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Postal address: Private Bag X 11338, Mbombela, 1200

<http://www.mpumalanga.com>

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TRAVEL GUIDE



Mpumalanga
TRAVEL GUIDE



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Keep Safe

In general the dangers of visiting and travelling in South Africa are exaggerated and you can look forward to a safe and memorable visit. However, as in most parts of the world, especially in countries with a large sub-economic population, awareness of what is happening around you and prudence are always advised.

- Avoid ostentatious display of expensive jewellery, cameras, laptops and other valuables. Always travel with valuables locked in the boot of your vehicle or on the floor where they cannot be seen or snatched.
- Carry a whistle to draw attention in case of an emergency
- Explore in groups rather than alone, and stick to busy, and at night, well-lit areas.
- Take roadside warnings of hijacking hotspots seriously. If you should be unlucky enough to be hijacked, avoid sudden movements and eye contact, and co-operate with the hijacker
- Park your car in well-lit busy car parks or streets.
- Always carry a map (electronic or paper). Do not advertise that you are lost, consult your map in an inconspicuous place.
- Keep your passport, plane ticket and other important documents in a safe place. Make photocopies of the documents before you leave home and keep several copies in different items of baggage.
- Use hotel security facilities.
- If in any doubt about the safety of an area, phone a police station for advice.

Tourism Information:

**Kruger Lowveld
Tourism**
Nelspruit
+27 13 755 1988

**Middelburg Visitor
Information Centre**
Middelburg
+27 13 243 2253



MPUMALANGA TRAVEL APP

Stay Healthy

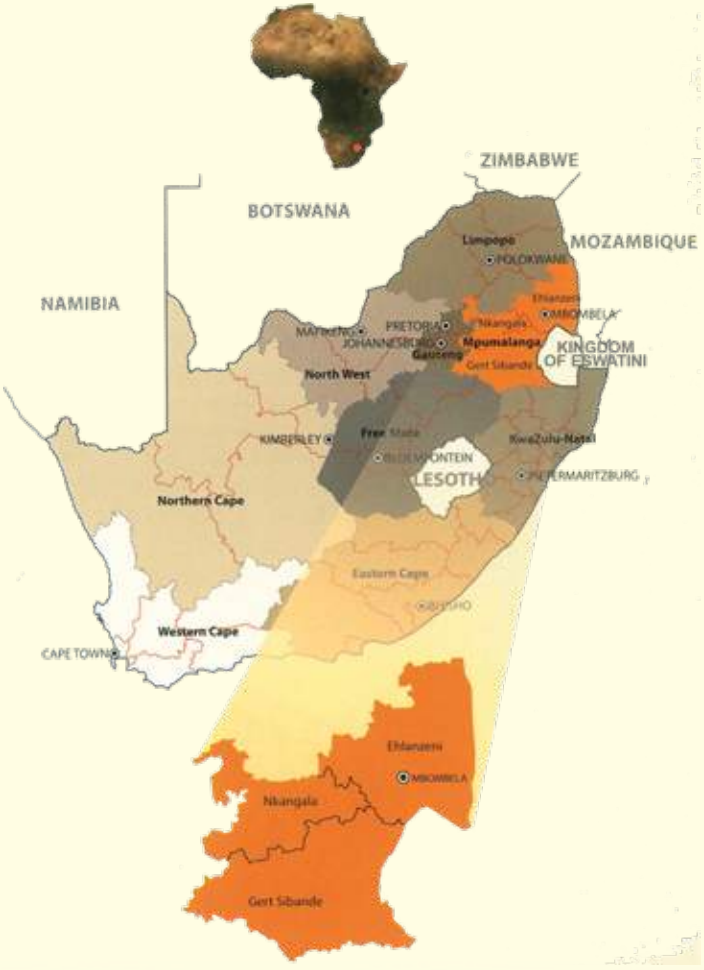
According to the South African Medical Research Council map (February 2014), malaria is prevalent in parts of the Lowveld. These include the Kruger Park and private game reserves which are classified as moderate risk, and so anti-malarial drugs are recommended. The area to the west of the private game reserves roughly as far west as White River, and northward along the foot of the escarpment is classified as low risk and only non-drug preventatives are recommended. Further west of this rough line, including the major centres of Mbombela (Nelspruit), White River, Sabie and other places westwards on the Highveld, malaria is absent. Common sense measures such as wearing long sleeved shirts and long trousers from late afternoon and before dawn, applying insect repellents, and using mosquito nets considerably reduces risk. If you have been in a malaria area and experience headaches, sweating, nausea and fatigue, seek immediate medical advice. Symptoms usually appear in 7-15 days but may take as many as 40 days (and rarely a year) after the infecting bites. The cure is simple, and recovery generally rapid provided the condition is addressed promptly.

Most water bodies in the east of the Province host bilharzia (schistosomiasis) carrying snails. If you come into contact with these water bodies, such as when kayaking or white water rafting in the Lowveld, it would be wise to test for bilharzia on your return home. Bilharzia is a chronic disease and may take months or even years to produce symptoms, however it can in the long term be severely damaging to your health. The cure is usually quick and easy. High-altitude trout waters are generally considered bilharzia-free.

Hikers run the risk of tick-bite fever (Rickettsia), a bacterial infection. Symptoms are usually mild; limited to severe headaches, rashes, and a small, black-centred ulcer (eschar) at the site of the infective bite. The infection is easily treatable using doxycycline. The disease in Africa is much less severe than in some other parts of the world such as the United States.

However we recommend that you consult a medical practitioner with experience of these diseases for up-to-date advice on risk, prevention and treatment. We also suggest that you take out medical insurance so that in the event of the need for hospitalisation you can be treated promptly at one of the many private hospitals with state-of-the-art facilities.

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MPUMALANGA
 "THE PLACE OF THE RISING SUN"
 Mpumalanga is one of the most geographically diverse and astonishingly beautiful places in South Africa.

SAFETY



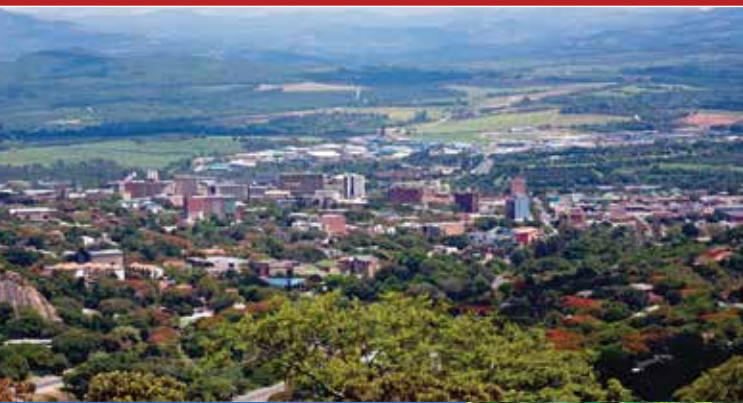
Useful Telephone Numbers

Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency	+27 13 065 0859
MTPA Information Office (KMIA)	+27 13 065 0335
Mpumalanga Parks - Reservations	+27 13 065 0865
MTPA Tourism Safety Unit	
Lowveld Area (Pfundzo Mufamadi)	+27 72 392 5622
Highveld Area (Lindiwe Mthombeni)	+27 71 257 3222
South African National Parks	+27 12 428 9111
Kruger Lowveld Tourism (Kruger Park bookings)	+27 13 755 1988
Cellular Emergencies:	
Cell C	084 148
MTN	112
Vodacom	147
Police	10111
Police Station Witbank	+27 13 655 5000
Police Station Secunda	+27 17 627 2000
Police Station Mbombela	+27 13 759 1008
Ambulance	10117
American Express	0860 119 966
Diners Club	+27 11 358 8400
Mastercard International	0800 990 418
VISA International	0800 990 475
Thomas Cook - Rennies	0800 998 175
Telkom / Telephone Enquiries	1023 (all areas)
Europ Assistance	+27 11 359 5000
Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport	+27 13 753 7500
Nelspruit Airport	+27 13 741 3557
OR Tambo International Airport	086 727 7888
Lanseria International Airport	+27 11 659 2750
Medical Rescue International	+27 11 242 0242
Nelspruit Mediclinic	+27 13 759 05 0
Nelmed Medicross, family medical centre	+27 13 755 5000
National Tourism Information & Safety Line	+27 83 123 2345
TRAC 24 Hours	+27 83 227 8191

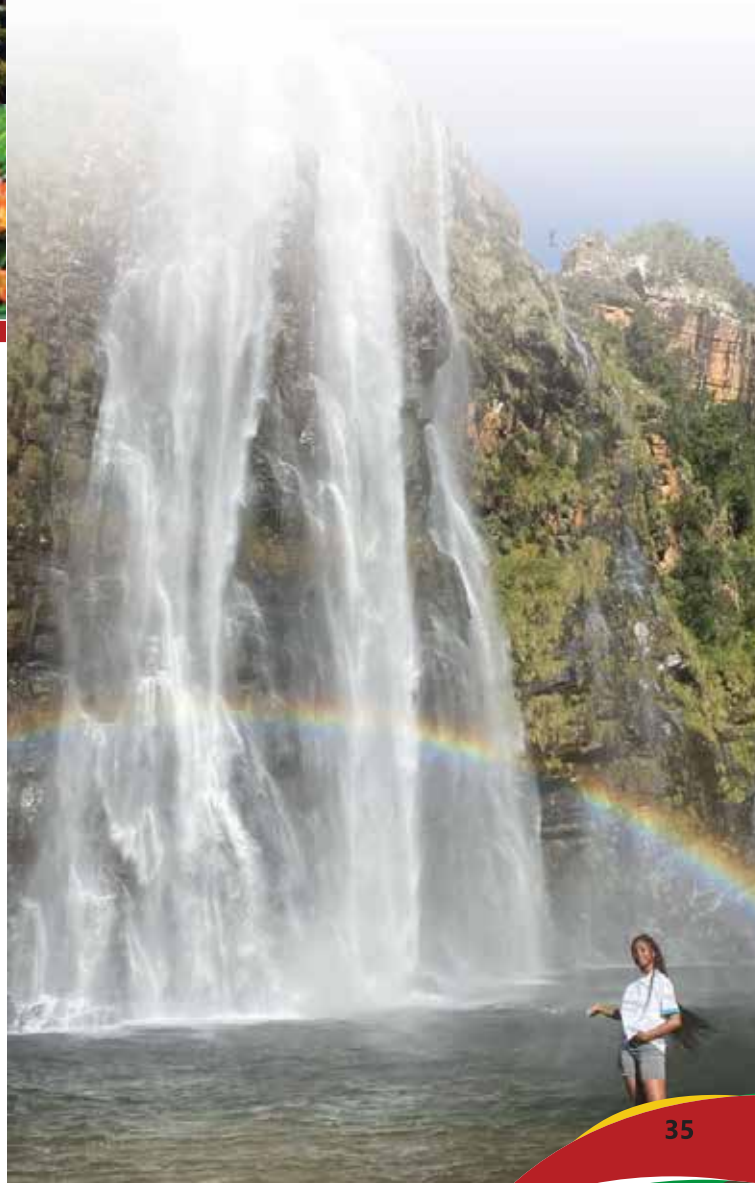
INTRODUCTION

Mpumalanga Fact File





IN CASE OF EMERGENCY



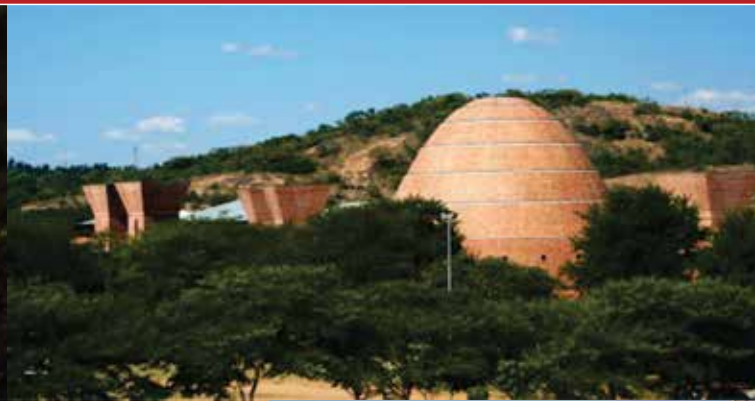
Find Mpumalanga & Find Your Soul Geography

Mpumalanga, “The place where the sun rises”, lies in north-east-ern South Africa between the province of Gauteng in the west, Limpopo province to the north, Mozambique to the east, Swaziland in the southeast, and KwaZulu-Natal to the south. It is divided into three district municipalities; Ehlanzeni, Nkangala and Gert Sibande and covers some 6.5% of South Africa.

Mpumalanga is divided by the spectacularly scenic mountains of the Drakensberg escarpment into Highveld grassland in the west and low-altitude Lowveld/bushveld in the east. Some of earth's oldest rocks, more than 3 billion years old are preserved in the mountainous and beautiful Barberton area east of Mbombela.

Fauna and Flora

The Province is home to a wide variety of fauna and flora, the base of a thriving tourism industry, some species of which are found nowhere else. A large number of nature and game reserves, both private and managed by the provincial nature conservation agency, Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), offer outstanding opportunities for tourists to enjoy the Province's extraordinary scenic splendour and rich biodiversity



Gone Fishing

Many of the dams in the Province offer angling. Most of these are stocked with bass whilst Loskop Dam Nature Reserve in Nkangala offers excellent angling opportunities for barbel, kurper and yellowfish, and there are tigerfish, some of them large, to be caught near Komatipoort in the Komati and Crocodile rivers. Although chiefly caught using bait or lures, many anglers fish for these species using artificial flies. Be wary of crocodiles.

Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is prevalent in the Lowveld and you are strongly advised to avoid skin contact with the water in Lowveld dams and rivers. Fish from a boat or wearing waders.

At higher altitudes, where the waters are cool all year round, such as at Waterval Boven, Dullstroom, Mashishing (Lydenburg) and Wakkerstroom, there is flyfishing for rainbow and in some places brown trout. Trout waters are generally considered to be bilharzia-free on account of the altitude, water temperatures and limited access to humans who may introduce the parasite to the water. Nevertheless it would be wise to test for bilharzia on your return home; the disease is easily cured.

The People

Mpumalanga is culturally very diverse, and home to Swazi, Ndebele, Tsonga, Sotho, Zulu, European and Indian peoples. There are several cultural villages that capture, and enable you to experience, traditional African culture.

Climate

The Lowveld enjoys a pleasant, generally frost free, sub-tropical climate whilst the Highveld is considerably cooler with frost and sometimes snow on the highest ground in the winter months.

Mbombela - the Capital City

Mbombela, formerly known as Nelspruit, is located in Ehlanzeni District Municipality in the Lowveld, some 350 kilometres east of Johannesburg and just a 100 kilometres from the Mozambique border. It is an ideal, malaria-free base from which to explore the scenic and biodiversity attractions of the Province, the coast of Mozambique and Swaziland. Mbombela is served by the excellent N4 toll road providing easy and rapid access from Johannesburg to Maputo. Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport is just 30 Minutes from the centre of town. The Mbombela stadium hosts football and rugby internationals as well as local events.



Economy

The agricultural sector covers almost 70% of the Province, crops include maize, wheat, sorghum, sugarcane, sub-tropical fruits, and vegetables. Livestock include beef and dairy cattle, sheep and poultry

Mining is a major economic activity with 83% of South Africa's coal extracted from the Highveld. Ninety percent of this coal is used for the generation of electricity and much of the remainder for synthetic fuel production. Other parts of the Province are important for gold, platinum group metals, zinc, silver, chromite, copper, iron, manganese, asbestos and other minerals.

Tourism is a major industry with the iconic Kruger National Park and Blyde River Canyon the greatest attractions. Wakkerstroom in the southern highveld grasslands is a world-renowned birding hotspot with more than 300 grassland and wetland bird species.

Many special events and festivals take place across the Province during the year, attracting thousands of visitors; notably the Beach Festival and Innibos Arts festival in Mbombela, the SASOL motor rally, marathon and ultra-marathon road races, mountain bike races, craft fairs, flower festivals, Dullstroom Arts festival, Wakkerstroom Music festival, Chrissiesmeer crane and frog (yes really!) festivals and the Lowveld avocado festival.

We Save the Things We Love-Wildlife Whispering

Mpumalanga is one of the few places in the world where you can interact with elephants and big cats. These magnificent animals, now so persecuted in the wild, have been rescued from culling programmes and as orphans from poached or otherwise killed parents. They have been compassionately reared and now offer the experience of a lifetime. Walk with or ride on elephants along a bush trail, take a walk with lions and cheetahs, visit wildlife rehabilitation facilities and a falconry centre. Only a few kilometres from Mbombela is a Jane Goodall Institute refuge for chimpanzees rescued from many parts of Africa. All these initiatives not only provide the traveller with an unforgettable experience but they also do a tremendous job of raising awareness of the plight of wildlife.

The Wind of Heaven Blows Between a Horse's Ears

Many areas offer trails through diverse habitats, from sweeping montane grasslands to forests and bushveld. Some facilities offer rides through big game areas or where you can ride amongst wild horses, survivors of the Anglo-Boer war and early prospecting days. Mounts are available for beginners and for experienced riders.



TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

The Province offers some of the most diverse and captivating tourist attractions: the Blyde River Canyon and its environs, Sudwala Caves; the Barberton Makhonjwa Geotrail; Mbombela's lush Lowveld Botanical Gardens; Kruger National Park and numerous game and nature reserves, and picturesque towns of historical interest.

If You Think You Can't, Then You Have To: 4x4

There are numerous off-road trails for both the novice and the expert seeking a real challenge. Some focus on negotiating an obstacle course and teaching 4x4 driving skills, whilst others are scenic, visit historic sites or travel through game areas.

Two Wheels Move The Soul-Motorcycles

The roads of the escarpment region of Mpumalanga, with their long sweeping bends and generally good surface, are world famous amongst the motorcycling community. Motorcyclists from many parts of the country enjoy exhilarating rides on these roads at weekends-but play safe and be careful.

Because it's There-Rock Climbing

World-class rock climbing can be done on the sandstone cliffs at Waterval Boven (known to climbers as the "Restaurant at the End of the Universe") with more than 700 easily accessible climbs of all grades. There are also excellent climbs at Sabie where abseiling is available under the supervision of experienced climbers.





Much More Than You Think

There are few places in the world offering the beauty and diversity of Mpumalanga, from rolling Highveld grasslands, the plunging cliffs of the Drakensberg escarpment to the wildlife-rich Lowveld; no wonder this Province is known as “Paradise Country”. There are picturesque towns of historical interest that offer comfortable and welcoming accommodation to suit all pockets; from backpackers to the five-star traveller, and which are ideal bases from which to explore the surrounding countryside and participate in a wide range of outdoor and adventure activities.

Many of these towns offer superior shopping and dining experiences. As well as the major retailers and fast-food outlets in shopping malls, there are boutique lifestyle centres that offer the opportunity to purchase a variety of high-quality, locally produced, hand-made, silks, linens and furniture; there are African crafts, antiques and collectibles. There are gourmet restaurants, delicatessens and bistros offering delectable meals reflecting the Province’s diverse ethnic composition. On some routes you can browse African crafts from many parts of the continent at roadside markets. The Province offers some of the most diverse and captivating tourist attractions: the natural wonders of the Blyde River Canyon and its environs; Sudwala Caves; The Barberton Makhonjwa

A River runs through it- Whitewater Rafting

In the summer months after rain many of the rivers in the Province are swollen with floodwater that makes for exhilarating, whitewater rafting, tubing and Kayaking. Whilst many of the routes are suitable for beginners, there are some 3-4 class rapids on the Blyde River, and after heavy rain these can be technically demanding. Bilharzia may be present in some of these waters so a bilharzia test on your return home is recommended.

Where the Tough Get Going- Mountain Biking

There are dozens of mountain-bike trails in the province, some are demanding routes that climb hundreds of metres into the mountains before launching trailists into thrilling descents, whilst others are contrasting, gentle day-trips for beginners or the less fit. There are competitions throughout the year.

Life is Too Short For Traffic- Quad Biking

Many Tourism operators in the Province offer quad bike trails over very varied terrain. As for mountain biking, the trails are graded for every experience level from novice to experienced riders. Generally drivers need to be at least 16 yrs old but youngsters can travel as passengers. Safety equipment is provided.



Adventure Unlimited

Our province abounds in opportunities to enjoy adventure and outdoor experiences like nowhere else – nowhere does it better-love life and live it in Mpumalanga. Here are just a few of the experiences waiting for you to discover.

Boots are Made for Walking- Hiking Trails

There are hiking trails in all three of our districts. Many are no more than short and easy walks of a few kilometres, whilst others are mountain hikes extending over one or more days on the trail. All of them will take you deep into nature. There are also guided hikes in wildlife areas including the Kruger Park.

Hanging by a Thread-Cables, Bungees & Swings

Mpumalanga's longest aerial trail takes you on a cable ride above and through the forest canopy in the Sabie River Valley. See the forest from a different perspective. If you are an adrenaline junkie whose idea of adventure requires "breathless" and "heart-stopping" then try the gorge swing in Graskop with its 68 metre freefall.

Geotrail; Mbombela's lush Lowveld Botanical Gardens, Kruger National Park and numerous other game and nature reserves that include some of the finest in Africa. Each district municipality has something special to offer the traveller and has designated recommended routes to ensure enjoyment of the best the district has to offer

Panorama Route

In Ehlanzeni, the Panorama Route takes the traveller through some of the most spectacular scenery in Africa, along the Blyde River Canyon and the escarpment. Other highlights include waterfalls in the Sabie and Graskop area and echoes of the first gold strike in South Africa in 1873, in the well preserved gold rush town of Pilgrim's Rest.

Highlands Meander

The Highlands Meander lies between the Panorama Route and the Cultural Heartland Rout, winding through the highveld grasslands and towns of Dullstroom, Belfast, Mashishing (Lydenburg), Machadodorp and Waterval Boven. On the Long Tom pass is the Long Tom cannon, a relic of the Anglo-Boer War. This route is one for nature lovers as well as adventurers. The region is a mecca for trout anglers with the charming village of Dullstroom and its restaurants, boutiques and craft shops at the hub.



Wild Frontier

In the east of the Province, the Wild Frontier Route takes the visitor to the Lowveld south of Kruger National Park and through the Towns of Kaapmuiden, Malalane, Komatipoort and Barberton. There are many private game reserves and lodges in this area. On the road between Barberton and Kaapmuiden near Revolver Creek is the painted rock garden made by Mpumalanga's outsider artist Nukain Mabuza who died in 1981. At Mbusuzi, on the Mozambique border, is a memorial near the site of the plane crash in which Mozambique's President Samora Machel died.

Genesis Route

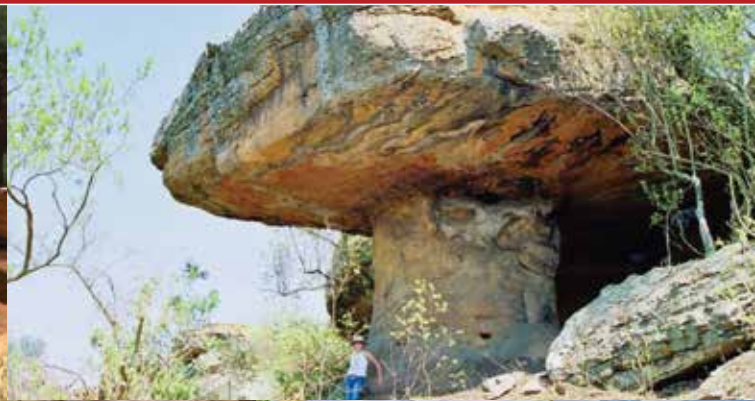
The Genesis Route takes a winding and spectacular figure-of-eight path along the Barberton Makhonjwa Geotrail from Barberton to Badplaas through some of the Earth's most ancient mountains.

Lowveld Legogote Route

The Lowveld Legogote Route is centred on Mbombela, the Provincial capital. The route takes in the 240 million-year-old Sudwala Caves, Mbombela and the Lowveld Botanical Gardens, White River with its quaint boutiques and restaurants, and the village of Kaapsehoop and its wild horses, high above the Lowveld, once a hive of gold prospecting activity but now a popular tourist destination.

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES





Heart and Soul

Shangaan/Tsonga

King Shaka of the Zulus, sent Soshangana (Manukosi) to conquer the Tsonga people in what is today, Mozambique. Soshangana found a fertile land inhabited by scattered communities of peace-loving people, and he decided to make it his home.

He imposed and maintained traditional Zulu culture, from military tradition to architecture. It was Soshangana from whom the Shangaan are named.

Internal disputes split the people, some of whom dispersed north as far as the Congo. The Shangaan traded freely with the Portuguese traders of Southern Africa and later moved to the gold mines of the Witwatersrand where they maintained their traditions and became famous for their vigorous dance routines.

Today the Shangaan live principally in areas between the Kruger National Park and the Drakensberg escarpment, in Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces where their traditions are preserved in cultural villages.

The grasslands here are one of the few places where you may see the elusive blue swallow.

Highveld Heritage Route

The Gert Sibande District Municipality lies in the extreme south-east, hard against Swaziland, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. The route takes you through the tranquil grasslands of the district to the resort town of Badplaas with its hot springs, and on to Crissiesmeer in South Africa's "Lake District" with nearly 300 shimmering lakes and pans that every summer, lure flamingos in their thousands. Piet Retief and Volksrust have historical and cultural sites, many recalling the Anglo-Boer War. In the far south of the route lies Wakkerstroom, a village famous for its wetlands and variety of birds, many of which are rare and endangered. The village attracts birdwatchers from around the world. There is a profusion of outdoor activities, accommodation, delightful restaurants, bistros and pubs.

Cultural Heartland Route

This route takes you through Nkangala District Municipality, made famous by the Ndebele people and their colourful and dazzling geometric artwork. Highlights are the cultural villages at Siyabuswa and Botshabelo where you can delight in colourful Ndebele arts and culture, crafts and curios, and experience the warm and friendly spirit of Africa.



Where Nature Is real

Mpumalanga's numerous game and nature reserves, both private as well as government-owned and administered, include some of the finest in Africa. Most of the game reserves are found in the Lowveld between about 150 metres and 600 metres altitude. The vegetation here is Savanna, a mix of hardy, drought-resistant trees, shrubs and grasses with many scattered, rocky granite outcrops; the Africa of tourist brochures. Much of the natural savannah has been transformed by agriculture, but large areas, rich in game and birds remain. It is here that most of the game reserves lie and where you will find the "Big Five".

Kruger National Park

Kruger Park is the iconic game reserve in South Africa. It extends for 360 kilometres north to south and averages 40 kilometres wide- about the size of Belgium. The park was established in 1898 as the Sabi Game Reserve but thanks to the tireless efforts of James Stevenson-Hamilton, first warden of the Park, the Sabi Game Reserve was united with the Shingwedzi Game Reserve to the north, founded in 1903, and 1926 the Kruger National Park was proclaimed. Along its boundaries are some of Africa's finest private game reserves, most of which are contiguous with The Kruger Park, allowing animals to freely cross the boundaries.

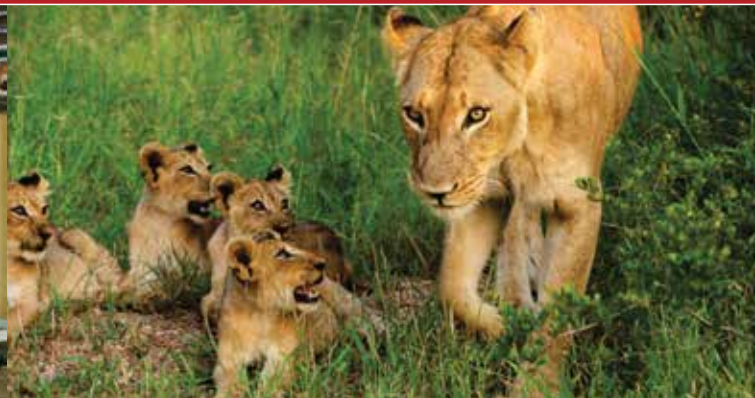
Roots

Swazi

The Swazi people migrated from East Africa into Mozambique in about the 15 century. Although their roots are of Nguni origin, Sotho and Tsonga have been absorbed into the nation.

In the early 17 century the Swazi people moved into present-day Kingdom of Eswatini and settled along the Pongola River where it cuts its way through the Lubombo Mountains, formed some 180 million years ago when the supercontinent of Gondwana began to break apart.

The Kings of Kingdom of Eswatini date back some considerable time to when the royal line of Dlamini lived in the vicinity of Delagoa Bay (Maputo). The Swazi people as a nation were originally formed by 15 clans known as bemdzabuko ("true Swazi") who accompanied the Dlamini kings in the early days. The Swazi people are found chiefly in the east of the Province and there are several cultural villages in Mpumalanga that preserve their rich traditions-Matsamo village at Embhoyeni and Ebutsini village close to the Oshoek border gate into Kingdom of Eswatini are two.



Origins

Ndebele

The Ndebele people belong to the Nguni ethnic group that includes, Zulu, Xhosa and Swazi peoples. The Ndebele are thought to have originated in what is now known KwaZulu-Natal before moving into the old Transvaal and settling near present-day Tshwane (Pretoria) in the 1600's.

Later the group fragmented as a result of disputes over the Chieftainship, with branches moving further north, west and back to KwaZulu-Natal. Later, groups moved even further Northward into southern Zimbabwe.

The women of the Ndebele are considered custodians of the heritage; traditions and practices (isikhethu- "that which is ours"). The people are world renowned for beautiful beadwork and elaborately painted houses most highly developed in Nkangala District Municipality in the Kghodwana cultural village at Siyabuswa and the beautifully restored 19th century Mission station at nearby Botshabelo.

This enormous, ecologically diverse area is home to over 500 bird species and more than 145 species of mammals.

Kruger National Park Gate Times

	Entrance Gates		Camp Gates	
	Open	Close	Open	Close
January	05h30	18h30	04h30	18h30
February	05h30	18h30	05h30	18h30
March	05h30	18h00	05h30	18h00
April	06h00	18h00	05h30	18h00
May	06h00	17h30	06h00	17h30
June	06h00	17h30	06h00	17h30
July	06h00	17h30	06h00	17h30
August	06h00	18h00	06h00	18h00
September	06h00	18h00	06h00	18h00
October	05h30	18h00	05h30	18h00
November	05h30	18h30	04h30	18h30
December	05h30	18h30	04h30	18h30



Our Parks-Naturally Yours

Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency
Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency is custodian of 13 protected areas spread across the three district municipalities:

EHLANZENI

Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve
Mahushe Shongwe Nature Reserve
Mthethomusha Game Reserve
Barberton Nature Reserve
Ohrigstad Dam Nature Reserve
Verlorenvallei Nature Reserve

GERT SIBANDE

Nooitgedacht Dam Nature Reserve
Songimvelo Nature Reserve

NKANGALA

Mdala Game Reserve
Mkhombo Nature Reserve
S.S. Skosana Nature Reserve
Mabusa Nature Reserve
Loskop Dam Nature Reserve

Caverns Measureless to Man- Sudwala Caves

South Africa was once submerged beneath a vast, ancient ocean which, when it drained, left behind dolomite rocks that have given rise to numerous and extensive cave systems. The illuminated, stalagmite and stalactite-rich, Sudwala caves, just a few kilometres from Mbombela, offer a safe and enthralling Experience. The caves are possibly the oldest dolomitic caves on earth, formed 240 million years ago, and so extensive that they have not been fully explored. The largest chamber is some 70 metres in diameter and 37 metres high. The adventurous can take the five- hour Crystal Tour that travels some 2 000 metres through the cave system. The caves were once a fortress during the war for the Swazi kingship in the mid 19th century.

Nearby are fossilised stromatolites, remains of structures built by the microbes that gave Earth its oxygen around 2.5 billion years ago, and a dinosaur park with life-size models of the giants that roamed the Earth more than 65 million years in the past.

Voices from the Past- Lost Cities, Ancient Sculptures the history of the early people of the region is preserved as stone tools, ochre workings, stone circles, perhaps ruins of a lost empire, and the mysterious Lydenburg heads; Earthenware sculptures buried around 500 A.D.- the oldest known African artworks south of the equator



Time Travel – Geology/Prehistory

Journey into the abyss of time- The Geotrail

The geology of Mpumalanga is a record of an enormous time-span in the very distant past. Some of the rocks capture a unique and well preserved 350 million-year-long slice of Earth from 3.25 billion to 3.5 billion years ago at the very dawn of life -an incomprehensible abyss of time.

The Barberton Makhonjwa Geotrail is a 37 kilometres out-and- return road trip through the Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains. A series of stopping points, well-illustrated by interpretation panels, guide visitors along this spectacularly scenic trail and illustrate what the Earth may have looked like so very long ago. This whole area, known as the Barberton Greenstone Belt to Geologists, is home to rare plants and butterflies some of which are found nowhere else. The region has been nominated for World Heritage Site status and has been compared in geological importance to the Grand Canyon. Plan a half-day outing and take a picnic. Fires for braais (barbecues) are permitted at each end of the trail.

Once Is Not Enough

Private Reserves

Spending time surrounded by unspoiled nature in one of the superb lodges in the Province, whether a game lodge in the Lowveld or a cosy Highveld-grassland bed-and-breakfast, will be experiences you will want to repeat.

There are dozens of private game reserves, resorts and lodges in Mpumalanga. Many of these are found in the Lowveld along the western boundary of the Kruger Park in the Sabi Sand Game Reserve and surrounding area, and also along the Crocodile River on the southern boundary of the Kruger Park. Although the focal point of these lodges is wildlife in and around the Kruger Park, there are many that offer a peaceful retreat in other, very different, scenic natural environments throughout the Province.

Most lodges offer game viewing from an open game drive vehicle, guided by highly experienced and qualified guides that ensure the safety of guests. Standards range from self-catering budget accommodation to award-winning five-star establishments for the discerning traveller. All strive to provide from comfortable to luxurious accommodation and a safe and memorable experience for their guests.



Incredible Connections

Twin Treasures- Grasslands and Wetlands

Although the focus of tourists tend to be on the wildlife of the Lowveld there is much to see and enjoy outside the main wildlife areas. There are private lodges and nature reserves in all three district municipalities each with its own special charm and, away from the Lowveld up in the rolling grasslands of the Highveld, a completely different environment. In the southeast of the Province in the Gert Sibande District the emphasis is on open grassland landscapes, spring and summer wild flowers, many of which are rare, big skies and fresh country air, wetlands and birds.

Grasslands are perhaps the most endangered vegetation type in Mpumalanga, threatened by afforestation, agriculture and development. Strenuous efforts are being made by the provincial government to conserve these. Not only are they important as habitat for many species of plants and animals but they are also sponges capturing rainfall for slow release into the main rivers and wetlands of Mpumalanga, some of which flow into neighbouring provinces and countries. More than half the birds endemic to South Africa can be found in the grasslands and 12 of these are found only in the grasslands of South Africa.

Further north, but still only a short drive away, are the Mac-Mac pools where you can cool off on a hot day and enjoy a picnic or braai (barbecue). A short distance further north are the Mac- Mac Falls, where you can also buy African crafts from local vendors. Still further north are the Lisbon Falls, highest and possibly most beautiful waterfall in the area, cascading some 90 metres into the gorge. Last on your tour will be Berlin Falls where you can enjoy the picnic lunch you must surely have brought along.

There is also a spectacular 70 metre waterfall a short walk from The N4 highway, on the Elands River at Waterval Boven.

Keep in mind that the water flows may vary greatly according to the time of year and rainfall. The falls are at their best during the summer months following rain.

If you are a serious photographer planning to take photographs of the waterfalls, then use the light to your advantage, best lighting conditions are experienced during the morning



Tumbling Torrents, Savour Slowly

The Waterfalls

The Sabie Waterfalls Route in Mpumalanga is a hidden gem and one of South Africa's best-kept-secrets.

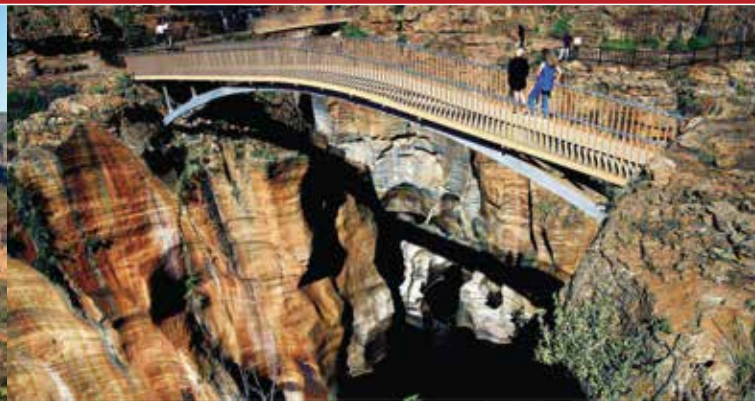
There are more waterfalls in the Sabie/Graskop area than anywhere else of comparable size in Southern Africa, diverse and all beautiful. There's more to a visit to Mpumalanga than the "Big Five". When you are travelling in the area to see the awe-inspiring Blyde River Canyon, set a leisurely morning aside to discover these magnificent waterfalls.

Close to Sabie on the road north are the clearly signposted Horseshoe, Lone Creek and Bridal Veil Falls. The highest of these three is Lone Creek that plunges some 70 metres into the forest, but perhaps the most beautiful is Bridal Veil where the spray is wafted like a veil by the wind.

Grasslands are also home to butterflies and several species of amphibians and reptiles found nowhere else.

Wetlands are vitally important, they moderate floods, store water, recharge groundwater and purify water supplies. Wetland plants have been used for housing and craftwork. In South Africa it is estimated that half of our wetlands have been lost, but in the grasslands of Mpumalanga, are found some of the most important of those that remain; they are vitally important to a variety of fauna and flora. Some of these Wetlands, at Wakkerstroom and VerlorenVallei near Dullstroom, have been internationally recognised through the Ramsar Wetlands and United Nations World Heritage Site programmes as vitally important areas of birds, including all three species of South Africa's cranes, migrant wading birds, rare frogs (the world's most endangered vertebrates) and other species of animals and plants. There is more life in a hectare of healthy wetland than in almost any other habitat.

Plan a few extra days after your safari to explore the road less travelled into some of the lesser known parts of Mpumalanga you'll see there's even more to our province than the awesome "Big Five" – and you'll be amazed at what you find.



Explore, Experience, Enjoy

The Views- Take Your Breath Away

The Drakensberg escarpment and the Blyde River Canyon, with its montane forest patches, at times wreathed in mist as warm damp air from the Indian ocean rises and condenses along its edge, and the impossibly ancient Barberton Mountainland that takes you back through the mists of time to the Earth of 3.5 billion years ago, are as spectacularly beautiful as anywhere in this country of ours – vistas on a clear day that extend over 100 kilometres; cliffs plunging 1000 metres and more from mountain tops to the Lowveld; mountain ridges, one after another fading into the hazy, blue distance, waterfalls pouring over precipitous rock faces, tumbling 150 meters before bursting into spray and rainbows on the wind.

The Blyde River Canyon is one of the world's most spectacular, outdone only by the Grand Canyon in the USA and the Fish River Canyon in Namibia, but it may be the world's largest "green" canyon, clothed as it is with lush sub-tropical vegetation. The Canyon is some 25 kilometres long and in places, the cliffs tower 1300 metres above the Lowveld. There are several viewing points that offer awe-inspiring panoramas, from the Pinnacle in the south, to possibly the finest views, in the north at the Three Rondavels. The best views of the Blyde River Canyon, and

best lighting conditions for photography are in the afternoon.

Bourke's Luck Potholes

Bourke's Luck Potholes at the confluence of the Blyde and Treur Rivers marks the beginning of the Blyde River Canyon. The cylindrical potholes were formed over eons by gravel and pebbles swirled in the turbulent waters of the confluence. These huge potholes have captured deposits of this stony mix and it was here that an early prospector, Tom Bourke, expected to find gold; however, although the rivers pass through a gold-rich area, not an ounce was ever recovered from the potholes.

There is a visitor centre and an easy 700 metre walk around the potholes and across the ravine which offers excellent opportunities for photography

Come on, you know this is what you've been looking for!