



South Africa



Background	By about A.D. 500, Bantu-speaking groups settled into northeastern South Africa. Dutch traders landed at the southern tip of present-day South Africa in 1652. The British seized the Cape of Good Hope area in 1806. British and Afrikaners (Dutch descendants) ruled jointly from 1910 to 1961 in the Union of South Africa. The African National Congress (ANC) led the opposition to apartheid. The first multi-racial elections in 1994 followed the end of apartheid.
Capital	name: Pretoria (administrative capital); Cape Town (legislative capital); Bloemfontein (judicial capital)
Government type	parliamentary republic
Area	total : 1,219,090 sq km land: 1,214,470 sq km water: 4,620 sq km
Climate	mostly semiarid; subtropical along east coast; sunny days, cool nights
Natural resources	gold, chromium, antimony, coal, iron ore, manganese, nickel, phosphates, tin, rare earth elements, uranium, gem diamonds, platinum, copper, vanadium, salt, natural gas
Population	total: 60,442,647 (2024 est.)
Population growth rate	1.07% (2024 est.)
Ethnic groups	Black African 80.9%, Colored 8.8%, White 7.8%, Indian/Asian 2.6% (2021 est.)
Religions	Christian 86%, ancestral, tribal, animist, or other traditional African religions 5.4%, Muslim 1.9%, other 1.5%, nothing in particular 5.2% (2015 est.)
Languages	isiZulu or Zulu (official) 25.3%, isiXhosa or Xhosa (official) 14.8%, Afrikaans (official) 12.2%, Sepedi or Pedi (official) 10.1%, Setswana or Tswana (official) 9.1%, English (official) 8.1%, Sesotho or Sotho (official) 7.9%, Xitsonga or Tsonga (official) 3.6%, siSwati or Swati (official) 2.8%, Tshivenda or Venda (official) 2.5%, isiNdebele or Ndebele (official) 1.6%, other (includes South African sign language (official) and Khoi or Khoisan or Khoe languages) 2% (2018 est.)
Executive branch	chief of state: President Matamela Cyril RAMAPHOSA (since 19 June 2024) head of government: President Matamela Cyril RAMAPHOSA (since 19 June 2024)
Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Chargé d'Affaires Ismail ESAU (since 18 March 2025)
Diplomatic representation from the US	chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Chargé d'Affaires David J. GREENE (since March 2025)

Economic overview	upper middle-income South African economy; hard hit by COVID-19; poor utilities management; key rare earth goods exporter; high income inequality; hosts Africa's largest stock exchange; rising unemployment, especially youth; land rights changes
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$865.402 billion (2023 est.) \$859.399 billion (2022 est.) \$843.28 billion (2021 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$13,700 (2023 est.) \$13,800 (2022 est.) \$13,700 (2021 est.)
Exports	\$124.671 billion (2023 est.) \$136.01 billion (2022 est.) \$131.09 billion (2021 est.)
Exports - partners	China 19%, USA 8%, Germany 7%, India 7%, UK 6% (2023)
Exports - commodities	gold, platinum, coal, cars, iron ore (2023)
Imports	\$123.454 billion (2023 est.) \$127.669 billion (2022 est.) \$104.881 billion (2021 est.)
Imports - partners	China 21%, India 7%, USA 7%, Germany 6%, UAE 4% (2023)
Imports - commodities	refined petroleum, crude petroleum, gold, cars, broadcasting equipment (2023)