

Title:

South Africa - Basic Overview

Word Count:

436

Summary:

A quick look at South Africa.

Keywords:

tours, tour, south africa, safari, travel

Article Body:

South Africa was once divided into two British Colonies, namely the Colony of Natal and the Cape Colony, and two "Boer" Afrikaner Republics, namely the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 after 8 years of negotiations after the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 - 1902. The Republic of South Africa as it is today was form in 1961, which covers the southern tip of Africa and an area of 1,2 million square kilometers.

The country was divided into 9 provinces (states) in 1994 when we had our first democratic elections and Mr. Nelson Mandela became president. The provinces are: Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga, North West, Limpopo and Gauteng. Each province has its own capital and the country has three capital cities, namely Pretoria the administrative capital, Bloemfontein the judicial capital and Cape Town the legislative capital.

The population is about 45,3 million people and is made up of 13 different groups, namely the Zulu, Xhosa, Shangaan, Ndebele, Swazi, Pedi, South Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Khoisan, Coloured, Asian and White. To mix things up even more, we have 11 official languages of which English is the most commonly spoken. Afrikaans is mainly spoken between your white and coloured people and it is derived from Dutch, German and French.

South Africa has 6 neighbouring countries, namely Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho and unfortunately poor old Zimbabwe. Its 2700-kilometer coastline includes four of Africa's largest harbours - Durban and Richards Bay along the Indian Ocean and Cape Town and Saldanha Bay along the Atlantic Ocean.

South Africa has a moderate climate with three rainfall regions, the majority of the country has summer rainfall, the South Western Cape has a Mediterranean

climate with winter rain and a very small area along the south eastern coastline know as the "Garden Route" has all year round rainfall. Summer is basically from October to April and winter is June, July and August.

South Africa has a two tier government, a national government with a democratically elected president and each province has its own provincial legislature. Since the political change of 1994 the South African society has made great strides towards a democratic, socially more equitable and economically more globally competitive country. It has, in fact, become a leader in many spheres of international north-south relations. Recent growth of the South African economy is largely based on the tourism sector, a gradually diversifying and increasingly competitive manufacturing sector, value-adding beneficiation of mineral and agricultural raw materials and a sophisticated trading, financial and professional services sector.

Internationally South Africa can be ranked amongst "upper middle income countries" like Chile, Portugal, Korea, Malaysia, Turkey, Brazil and Poland.