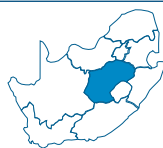


# FREE STATE

Situated on the plateau between the Vaal and Orange Rivers, the Free State is farming – and mining – country. Historic **Bloemfontein**, (also known as Mangaung), is the judicial capital of South Africa. **Welkom**, in the Goldfields, is South Africa's youngest town. Pride of the province is the beautiful **Golden Gate Highlands National Park** in the eastern Free State.



**Capital**  
Bloemfontein/  
Mangaung

**Area**  
129,825 square km

**Population**  
2,95 million

**Average per capita  
income**  
R25,618



BLOEMFONTEIN

## Visitor Information

Free State Tourism (051 403 3606)

Bloemfontein Tourist Information  
(051 447 1362)

Clarens Tourism (058 256 1542)

Northern Free State Tourism  
(016 976 0765)

Tourist Forum, Xariep (051 713 0012)

For Golden Gate reservations  
(058 255 0012)

[www.fstourism.co.za](http://www.fstourism.co.za)

[www.nfcdc.co.za](http://www.nfcdc.co.za)

[www.domemeander.co.za](http://www.domemeander.co.za)

## TOP ATTRACTIONS

- **Bloemfontein**, the stately provincial capital, is a transport, communications and trading hub, renowned for its impressive sandstone buildings and its parks and gardens. Among many historic buildings are the **Court of Appeal**, the **City Hall** and the Fourth State Republican Parliament. Also known as '**The City of Roses**' because of the 4000 rose trees planted in **King's Park**, and the annual **Rose Festival**.
- **Golden Gate Highlands National Park**, in the foothills of the Maluti Mountains, is a high-level wonderland of cliffs, crags, rocks and rolling grassland. Its 'golden' colour comes from the reflection of the sun on sandstone.
- **Clarens**, the 'jewel of the Free State' on the route to Golden Gate. An ideal country retreat, popular among artists and craftspeople.
- **Vaal River** towns in the northern Free State, including Deneyville and Oranjeville, noted for their outstanding water sport amenities.
- **Gariep Dam**, the largest in the country, offering excellent water sports, camping and fishing facilities.
- **Sterkfontein Dam**, near Harrismith, a relatively undiscovered gem, containing bird life and marvellous water sport opportunities.
- **The Vredefort Dome**, near Parys, the oldest and largest meteorite site in the world, offering unique and fascinating rock formations and panoramic views over the Vaal river valley.

## Getting there/around

### By Air

Bloemfontein has daily flights to Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and East London (**051 433 2901**).

### By Train

Services to Cape Town, Johannesburg/Pretoria and East London (**086 000 8888**).

### By Bus

Daily to Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, and Port Elizabeth.

### By Road

Bloemfontein may be reached via the N1 or the R64 from Kimberley. The N3 and N6 to East London also cut through the province.

### Useful numbers

**Vredefort Dome** (056 818 1116)

**Airport (Bloemfontein)** (051 433 2901)

**Police (Bloemfontein)** (051 448 1701)

**Hospital (Bloemfontein)** (051 405 3483)

## Did you know...

that the **Gariep Dam** (approx 5,500 million cubic metres) on the Orange River near Colesberg, is South Africa's largest dam, followed by the **Vanderkloof Dam**, near Petrusville, FS, the **Sterkfontein Dam**, near Harrismith, FS, the **Vaal Dam** near Vereeniging in Gauteng and the **Pongolapoort Dam**, near Mkuze in KwaZulu-Natal.



Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site



Siesta Guest House



Savannah Cheetah Foundation



Numanak Cultural Centre



Riemland Wine Route



Parys



Water Sports



# Fezile Dabi

District Municipality

## A region of great contrasts!

*Escape from the city rut and enjoy rustic, rural getaways in the Northern Free State. Visit the world's largest and oldest meteorite impact site, the Vredefort Dome; go wine-tasting along the Riemland Wine Route or view the hi-tech columns of the Chemical Hub of SA in Sasolburg. The region is easily accessible from anywhere in the country and is serviced by OR Tambo International Airport.*

### Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site

The Vredefort Dome near Parys was declared South Africa's seventh International World Heritage Site in 2005. Recognised as the largest and oldest meteorite impact site in the world, the area is an important research and study field for geologists from around the globe. The frost-free climate of the Dome area provides for an abundance of rich plant, bird and wildlife. Like an oasis, it is a striking contrast to the expansive flat plains of the Northern Free State and North West Province.

### Accommodation

The Vaal River, the life-giving backbone of the region, is not only the playground of water sports enthusiasts but offers a selection of beautifully-set and luxury accommodation facilities on the banks of this giant waterway. In the Parys area, the Vredefort Dome forms the perfect backdrop for up-market country lodges as well as a luxury en suite tented camp in a real bushveld setting.

The rest of the region offers a variety of accommodation options – ranging from caravan parks and camping sites, to five-star graded lodges and guests houses – to suit the most budget conscious and adventurous, as well as more laid-back guests and families. Some of the guest houses in the smaller towns are housed in traditional old sandstone buildings and offers excellent accommodation at "platteland" prices.

### Savannah Cheetah Foundation

Amongst the 21 species of game on this farm, you will find the Savannah Cheetah Foundation, a research conservation programme that is dedicated to wildlife education and awareness. Since 2001, several litters of cheetahs have been lovingly hand-reared at the Foundation. Visitors can enjoy a game drive and come up close to the Foundation's Cheetah Ambassadors, all of which have been hand-reared in captivity. The Savannah Cheetah Foundation is accredited by the Zoological Association of America and the Endangered Wildlife Trust.

### Arts and Crafts

Along the journey, visitors to the region can expect to come across numerous crafters selling traditional beadwork and other handcrafts. Visual artworks by various local and national artists are also on display at a number of art galleries and craft centres. Traditional dresses and hand-embroidered bed linen can be bought in several towns.

### Riemland Wine Route

Along the R57, near the historical town of Heilbron, lie two eco-tourism retreats offering superb accommodation and the Riemland Wine Route. Four up-market Cape cellars are nestled within the two registered conservancies, offering visitors the exciting opportunity to experience wine-tasting in true Free State character and tradition. The Wine cellars on route include Boland Wines, trading as Francolin Creek Cellar; Swartland, trading as Staderheim Cellar; Simonsig Cellar and, Van Loveren Wines, trading as Goedehoop Cellars. All of the cellars are accommodated in exquisitely renovated old sandstone buildings.

**For more information: Tel:** (016) 970 8600, (056) 615 1632, (058) 821 1355 **E-mail:** tourism@nfsdc.co.za

Visit the Northern Free State @ [www.nfsdc.co.za](http://www.nfsdc.co.za)

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