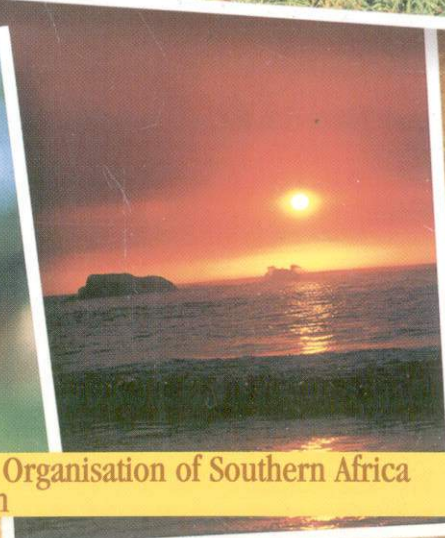
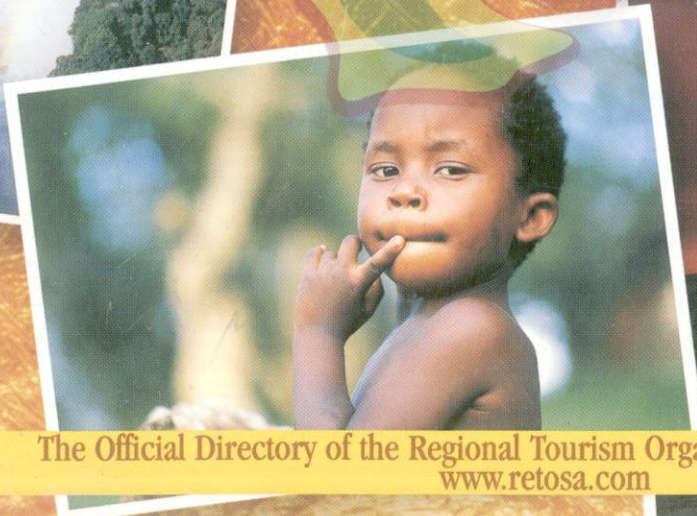
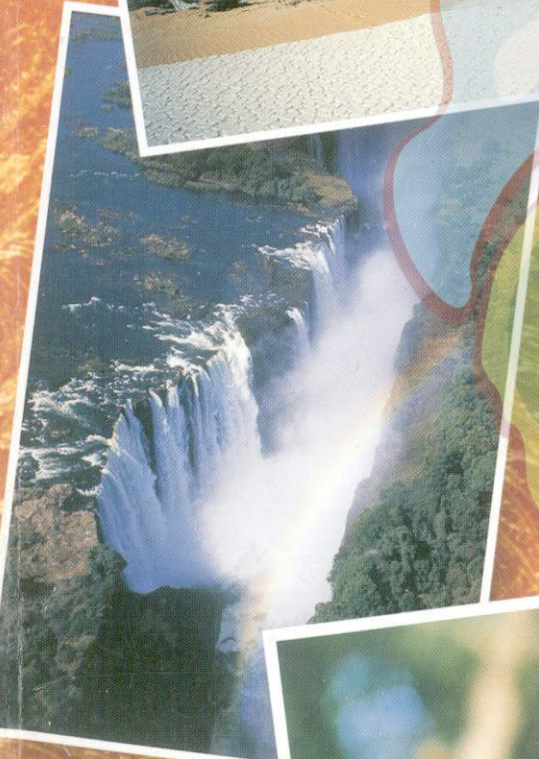


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Retosa 2001

Beyond your Wildest Dreams



The Official Directory of the Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa
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RETOSA Board Members

ANGOLA

Dr. Philippe Martins
Ministry of Hotels and Tourism,
Physical address:
Largo 4 de Fevereiro, Palacia de Vidro
Luanda
Postal address:
Largo 4 de Fevereiro, Palacia de Vidro
Luanda
Tel: (244) 2 311 175, (244) 2 310-6729
Fax: (244) 2 311 770, (244) 2 310 899

BOTSWANA

Mr. G. Kombani
Ministry of Commerce & Industry,
Physical address:
Department of Tourism, Main Mall,
Standard House
2nd Floor, Gaborone
Postal address:
Department of Tourism,
Private Bag 0047
Gaborone
Tel: (267) 360-1200
Fax: (267) 371-539

Mr. M. Mothoagae
Hotel and Tourism Association,
Botswana (HATAB)
Physical address:
Red Cross Building Plot 135,
Independence Ave. 104
Gaborone
Postal address:
Private Bag 00423
Gaborone
Tel: (267) 357 144
Fax: (267) 303 201
E-mail: modise@hatab.bw

D.R.C.

Mr. Lofoli Mungu Lasu
DRC Representative, Building Mayfair
Physical address:
Bld du 30 Juin, (Face a e I.N.S.S)
C/GOMBE, Kinshasa
Postal Address:
B.P. 9502
Kinshasa 1, R.D.C
Tel: (243) 880-4252
Fax: (243) 880-4252
E-mail: minaffedt@raga.net

Mrs. Matlanyane
Ministry of Tourism of Sports and
Culture Physical address:
4th Floor, Christie House,
Orpen Road,
Maseru
Postal address:
P. O. Box 52,
Maseru
Tel: (266) 310 194
Fax: (266) 313 034
E-mail: ps@tourism.gov.ls

LESOTHO

Mr. E.M. Khali
Lesotho Council for Tourism
Physical address:
Khali Hote, New Europa

Maseru,
Lesotho
Postal address:
P.O. Box 1072,
Maseru
Tel: (266) 322 822
Fax: (266) 310 501

MALAWI

Mr. M. Chitimbe
Ministry of Tourism
Physical address:
c/o Ex-French Embassy Building,
Lilongwe
Postal address:
Private Bag 326,
LILONGWE 3
Tel: (265) 772-702/ 771-073/ 771-603
Fax: (265) 780-650
E-mail: tourism@malawi.net

Mr. S. Botomani
Malawi Tourism Association
Physical address:
Aquarius House
Lilongwe
Postal address:
P.O. Box 1044
Lilongwe,
Malawi
Tel: (265) 770-010
Fax: (265) 770-131
E-mail: mta@malawi.net

MAURITIUS

Mr. S. Fowdur
Ministry of Tourism
12th Floor Air Mauritius Centre
Rue John Kennedy
Port Louis
Postal address:
12th Floor Air Mauritius Centre
Rue John Kennedy
Port Louis
Tel: (230) 211 6159
Fax: (230) 208 8776/211 8161
E-mail: mot@intnet.mu

Mr. C. Mootoosamy
Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority
(MTPA)
Physical address:
11th Floor, Air Mauritius Centre
Rue John Kennedy
Port Louis, Mauritius
Postal address:
11th Floor, Air Mauritius Centre
Rue John Kennedy
Port Louis, Mauritius
Tel: (09 230) 210 1545
Fax: (09 230) 212 5141
E-mail: mtpa@intnet.mu

Mr. S. Ramsamy
AHRIM
Physical address:
Level 7, Travel House,
Cnr. Sir William Newton & Royal Str.
Port Louis
Postal address:
Level 7, Travel House,

Cnr. Sir William Newton & Royal Str.
Port Louis
Tel: (230) 211 7359
Fax: (230) 211 9944
E-mail: ahrim@intnet.mu

MOZAMBIQUE

Dr. H. Abacar
Direccao Nacional de Turismo
Physical address:
Av.25 Setembro,
1502-3 Andar
Maputo
Postal address:
P.O. Box 614
Maputo
Tel: (258) 1 427 149
Fax: (258) 1 421 908

NAMIBIA

Mr. A. Miezé
Ministry of Environment & Tourism
Physical address:
Old Swabou Bldg
Post Street Mall
Windhoek
Postal address:
P.O. Box 11346
Windhoek
Tel: (26461) 284 2178
Fax: (26461) 221 930
E-mail: nam00044@mweb.com.na

Mr. M. Webb-Brown
Executive Officer
FENATA
Physical address:
5 Brandberg Street
Eros Park
Windhoek
Postal address:
P. O. Box 86495
Windhoek, 9970
Tel: (264) 61 248 137
Fax: (264) 61 238 707
E-mail: sandac@mweb.com.na

SEYCHELLES

Mr. T. Jones
Ministry of Tourism & Transport
Physical address:
Independence House
Victoria, Seychelles
Postal address:
P.O. Box 92, Victoria,
Seychelles
Tel: (248) 225 030
Fax: (248) 224 035
E-mail: terryj@seychelles.net

SOUTH AFRICA

Dr. P. Matlou
Dept. of Environmental Affairs
and Tourism
Physical address:
Fedsure Foreign Bldg. North Tower,
6th Floor, Room 616
315 Pretorius Street
Postal address:
P/Bag 447,
Pretoria

Tel: (012) 310 3600
Fax: (012) 322 3588
E-mail: pmatlou@ozone.pwv.gov.za

Mr. Hans Manke
SATOUR (South African Tourist Board)
Physical address:
12 Rivonia Road, Illovo
Johannesburg
Postal address:
P/Bag X 10012
Sandton, 2146
Tel: (011) 778-8000
Tel: (011) 778-8001
E-mail: satour@icon.co.za

Dr. T. Abrahams
Tourism Business Council of SA
Physical address:
245 End Avenue
Club Vies, 0157
Postal address:
P. O. Box 11655
Centurion, 0046
Tel: (012) 654 7525
Fax: (012) 654 7394
E-mail: tourism@tbcusa.org.za

SWAZILAND

Mr. M. Magongo
Ministry of Tourism and
Communication
Physical address:
2nd Floor, Income Tax Building
Feb Street, Swaziland
Postal address:
P.O. Box 2652
Mbabane
Tel: (268) 404 4556/404 6162/404 6420
Fax: (268) 404 6438/404 2774
E-mail: mintour@realnet.co.sz

Mr. R. Hussey
Private Sector Representative
Physical address:
Swazi Plaza, Mbabane
Postal address:
c/o Jumbo Publications
P.O. Box A225,
Swazi Plaza, Mbabane
Tel: (268) 4044522
Fax: (268) 4042485/4046416

TANZANIA

Mr. S. A Pamba
Directorate of Tourism
Physical address:
I.P.S. Building
Dar-Es-Salaam
Postal address:
P.O. Box 9352
Dar-Es-Salaam
Tel: (255) 222 132 302/222 114 373
Fax: (255) 222 113 082
E-mail: tourism@africaonline.co.tz

ZAMBIA

Mr. J. C. Kasongo
Ministry of Tourism
Physical address:
79 Kairo Road, Lusaka

Postal address:
P.O. Box 30575, Lusaka
Tel: (260) 1 227 645
Fax: (260) 1 221 216
E-mail: mintour@zamnet.zm

Ms. A. Seenka
Zambia National Tourist Board
Physical address:
4th Floor, Century Hse
Kairo Road , Lusaka
Postal address:
P.O. Box 30017, Lusaka
Tel: (260) 1 229 087/1 229 090
Fax: (260) 1 225 174

Mr. Bruce Chapman
Tourism Council of Zambia
Physical address:
c/o Holiday Inn Hotel
Lusaka
Postal address:
P.O. Box 30666
c/o Holiday Inn
Lusaka
Tel: (260) 1 253 529
Fax: (260) 125 1666
E-mail: tcz@zamnet.zm

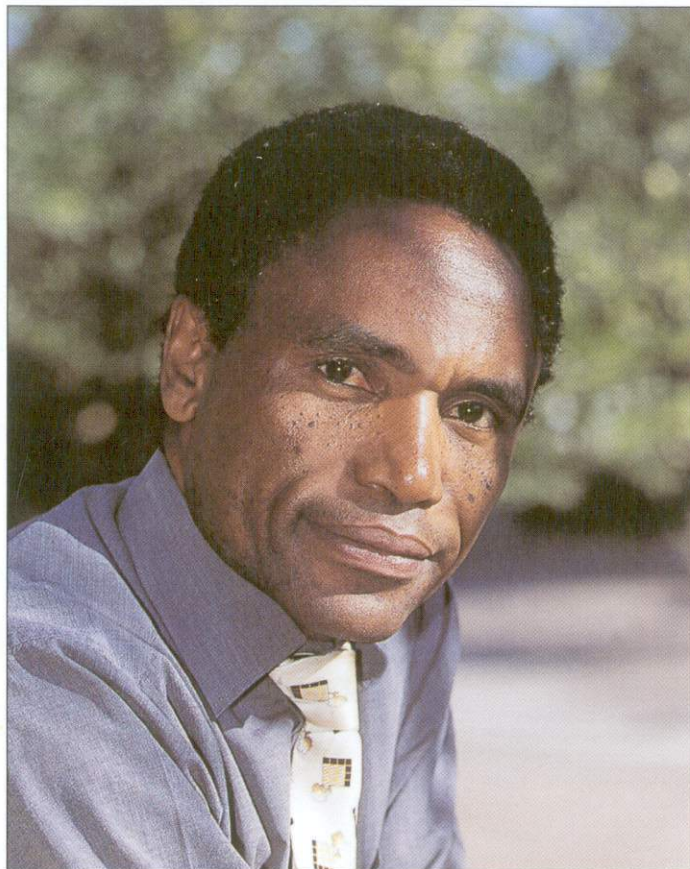
ZIMBABWE

Ms. T. Chinamora
Ministry of Environmental
Affairs and Tourism
Physical address:
4th Floor, Karigammombe Centre,
Cnr. Julius Nyerere Str. & Union Avenue
Zimbabwe
Postal address:
P.O. Box 7753
Causeway
Harare
Tel: (2634) 757 881
Fax: (2634) 755 007/757 877/794 450

Mr. J. Manjengwa
Zimbabwe Tourism Authority
Physical address:
No.1 Jason Moyo Str., Cnr. Rotten Row,
9th Floor, Kopje Plaza, Harare
Postal address:
P.O. Box CY 286, Harare
Tel: (2634) 758 730
Fax: (2634) 758 828/758 734
E-mail: manjengwa@ztazim.co.zw

Zimbabwe Council for Tourism
Physical address:
Travel House
Cnr. Third Str, & Jason Moyo
Harare, Zimbabwe
Postal address:
c/o Private Bag 7753
Harare
Tel: (2634) 708-878
Fax: (2634) 794 015
E-mail: nyakunu@zct.co.zw





The fourteen member states of SADC are endowed with a wide diversity of natural and cultural tourist attractions unparalleled anywhere else in the world. Given the World Tourism Organisation's forecast that Africa will experience the highest annual growth rate of tourist arrivals during the first ten years of this century, we need to ensure that our region takes full advantage of the anticipated growth.

The tourism industry has the potential to become the 21st Century powerhouse of economic and social development in the SADC region. The industry has experienced steady growth in recent years. For example, in 1997, the region received a total of 10,57 million tourist arrivals. That figure increased to 11,10 million in 1998, and reached 12,4 million in 1999.

The private/public sector partnership that has been advocated by RETOSA in marketing and promoting our region is the key route to a sustainable, profitable tourism industry in our region. The success of RETOSA's Regional Directory is testimony to the viability of this way of marketing ourselves.

The tourism industry should be more focused on community development, and must ensure the preservation of the natural environment.

On behalf of myself and my fellow Tourism Ministers in the region, I would like to congratulate the staff of RETOSA, and the publishers, Africa Focus, for putting together a major promotional tool for our industry once again.

Chairman of the Tourism Sector:
Honourable Minister Dr Nadcoomar Bodha,
Minister of Tourism and Leisure, Mauritius

The concept of the Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (RETOSA) has proved to be a viable vehicle for marketing the combined tourist attractions of the fourteen SADC member states.

The majority of visitors to the region combine two or three countries on their trip. The RETOSA Directory has therefore acted as an ideal source of information for tour operators worldwide in preparing their itineraries as well as for general consumers planning holidays to the region. The directory is an up-to-date, one-stop-shop for both the trade and travelling public.

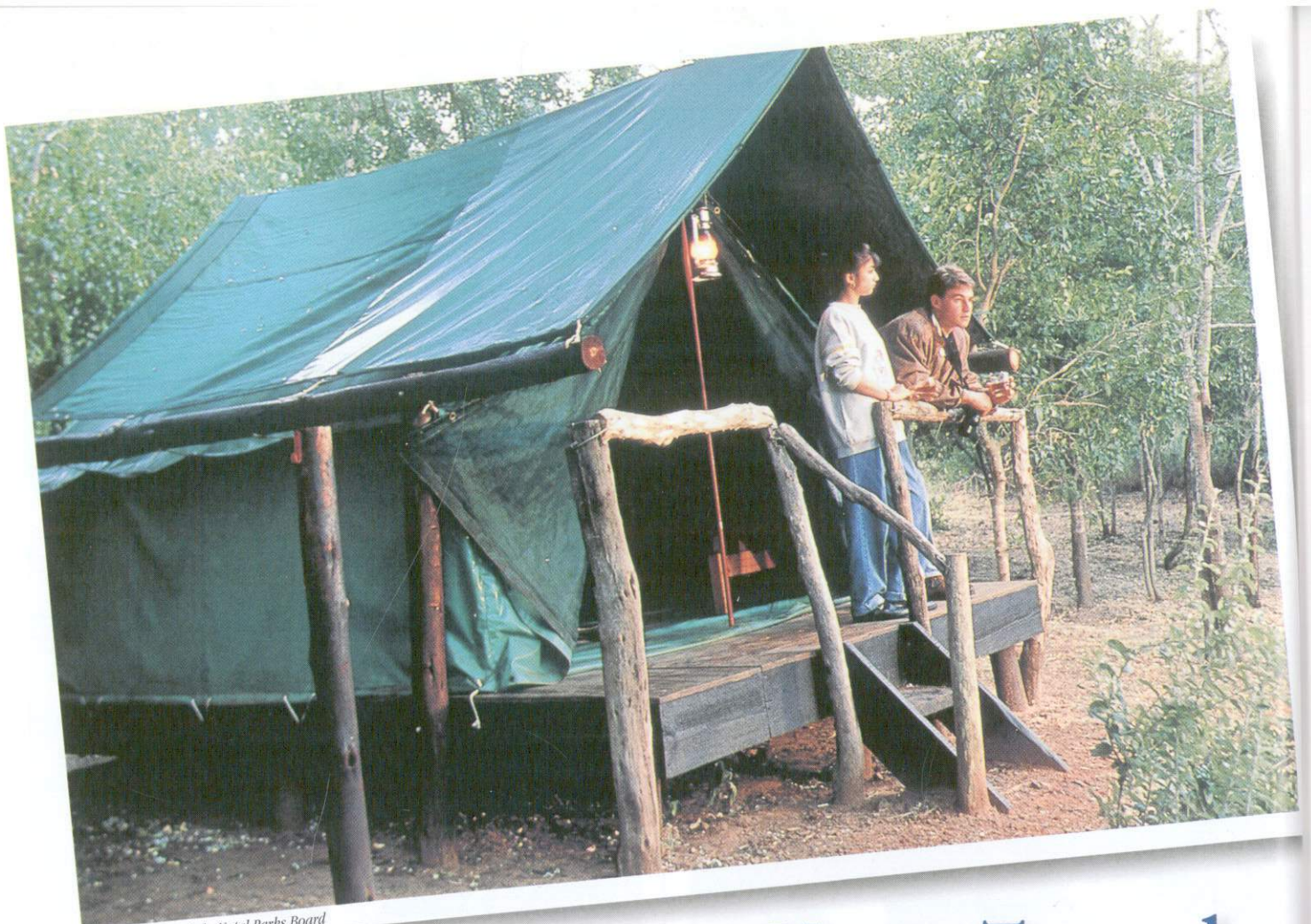
The third edition of the publication has attracted more participants from the private sector than the previous ones. This has helped to increase the range of products in the publication and hence offers the consumer a wider range of product choice within the region.

The public/private sector partnership, which was at a nascent stage during the first edition of the directory, has grown in strength and has expanded into other areas of co-operation.

2001 has seen the launch of the RETOSA Incentive and Conference directory and the expansion and reconfiguration of the RETOSA website. Both projects have been undertaken in full partnership with the private sector of the region.

I trust the publication will again prove to be as useful a promotional tool for the region as the two editions before it.

Shepherd Nyaruwata
Retosa Executive Director



Photograph: KwaZulu Natal Parks Board

New Trends, New Opportunities

The countries making up the Southern African Development Countries (SADC) offer a number of exciting opportunities as new trends in international tourism come to the fore. International tourism trends indicate that today's traveller wants a more enriching experience than provided by the conventional 'sun and sea' vacation. The southern African region is well placed to take advantage of this trend, particularly in light of the fact that the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) predicts that the region will show impressive growth in tourism in the next decade.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), with the right policy framework, tourism in the SADC region could grow by as much as 5.9 percent in the next decade.

There are a great many opportunities for communities to engage in tourism, given their wildlife resources, landscapes and natural heritage. One of the biggest challenges – and opportunities – lies in the fact that southern Africa's wealth of wildlife, cultures and history has been largely undiscovered by world tourism.

According to 1998 world tourism figures, Africa attracted only four percent of the 626 million international tourist arrivals recorded, and received only 2.2 percent of the US\$445 billion spent globally by tourists. That share should grow considerably. Tourism is expected to become Africa's most attractive sector for foreign direct investment (FDI) during the four years 2000 to 2003, according to the 1999 World Investment Report issued by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad). Unctad bases its forecast on the results of a survey of 44 African investment promotion agencies. In 1996 to 1998, tourism was third – behind telecommunications and food and beverages – in the ranking of industries that received considerable FDI.

Tourism is the only major sector in international trade and services in which developing countries have consistently had surpluses. The positive balance in their travel account has improved from an amount of US\$6 billion in 1980 to US\$62.2 billion in 1996, according to United Nations' statistics. The World Tourism Organisation ranks Africa as one of the fastest-growing destinations for international tourists. International tourist arrivals in Africa rose 7.5 percent in 1998 to US\$24.9 million (from \$23.2 million), while receipts jumped 5.9 percent from \$9-billion in 1997 to \$9.6 billion in 1998.

Tourism organisations, tour operators, governments, hotel groups, airlines and other service providers in southern Africa are joining forces to ensure the region is put firmly on the map as one of the world's premier tourism destinations. It is a partnership which could stretch beyond Africa's borders.

"An international trend towards tourism marketing and promotion is the establishment of sustainable public/private partnerships," says Owen Leed, chief marketing officer for South African Tourism. "They have proved that, where there is close synergy, tourism subsequently thrives."

South African Tourism is currently working with a number of international organisations and governments as well as cooperating with its neighbours in order to attract international tourists to the region.

In addition to targeting its traditional markets (Europe, United Kingdom and the USA), SADC countries are also

targeting South America, the Caribbean, West Africa, the Arabian Gulf, India, China, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia for both tourists and investment.

"Bilateral agreements between countries create opportunities for promoting tourism, trade and inward investment," says tourism consultant, Peter Myles. "By working together, government agencies and the tourism industry can obtain greater exposure and have a bigger impact than they do when working in isolation."

The message is being heard. One of the first initiatives was a Peace Park programme first proposed in 1997. Officially known as "trans-frontier conservation areas", these reserves are more commonly called peace parks. Seven such areas have been identified: Kalahari (between South Africa and Botswana), Ais-Ais/Richtersveld (South Africa and Namibia), Gariiep (South Africa and Namibia, centered on the Orange River's Augrabies Falls), Pongola-Limpopo Valley (South Africa and Zimbabwe), Maputoland (South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique), Drakensburg/Maluti (South Africa and Lesotho), and the Kruger/Banhine-Zinhave/Gonarezhou (South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe).

Swaziland has also expressed an interest in leasing out two new nature conservation areas to be established: the Nsubane-Pongola Transfronteir Conservation and Resource Area (Swaziland, South Africa) and the Lubombo Conservancy-Goba Transfronteir Conservation and Resource area (Swaziland, Mozambique).

The concept of trans-frontier conservation areas has the support of the World Wildlife Fund, the World Bank and the Global Environmental Facility – a fund created at the 1992 World Summit to promote the international conservation of biological diversity.

Democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 opened the way for tour operators, hotel groups and service providers like airlines, car hire companies and rail operators to ignore political borders when marketing the region. South Africa's famed luxury Blue Train and Rovos Rail takes passengers to the Victoria Falls and Hwange Game Reserve in Zimbabwe, while airlines are co-operating to improve links between the region's international gateways and the main tourist destinations. Hotel groups like Sun International, which have resorts in Victoria Falls, Livingstone, the Lost City, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, are also marketing the region as a whole, while most of the major tour operators in the area offer cross-border packages.

One of the inhibiting factors to tourism growth could be a lack of capacity to handle more tourists. The region needs more of just about everything related to the tourism industry – hotels, luxury buses, tour guides, car hire and air charter operators. Tour operators need to be offered greater incentives to arrange packages to the region and air capacity needs to be increased.

Countries such as Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Namibia all need development in the accommodation arena, particularly in the mid-market offering. Other countries such as Swaziland require additional conference facilities.



Photograph: Artbur Bozas

The region has opened up significantly in the past seven years, making it that much easier for investors. Most Retosa member states have a central investment center which provides advice to prospective investors. In addition, many governments within the region are making an effort to liberalise the investment procedure. Some countries, such as Mozambique, have even introduced tax incentives to encourage investment.

With the focus firmly on the wealthier foreign traveller rather than cheap charters, the potential returns are very attractive.

Lubombo Initiative

The Lubombo tourism corridor is the result of a historic trilateral agreement between South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique. The Greater St Lucia Wetland Park – now a World Heritage site – is the lead project in the corridor. Andrew Zaloumis, project manager of the Lubombo spatial development initiative (SDI), says the declaration of Greater St Lucia as a World Heritage site should be viewed in the context of an integrated development to unlock the enormous economic potential of the region while ensuring that its outstanding natural and cultural values are conserved.

Government, through the Lubombo initiative, will convert the park from a loss-making conservation area into an economic engine, with the potential to create 4 000 jobs in five years and 7 000 new beds for tourists over 10 years. The South African government has committed itself to improving roads in the area.

Swaziland, for its part, is combining five game parks in the Lubombo region of the Kingdom into a single reserve.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The vast Democratic Republic of Congo straddles the equator where its steaming jungles and mist-covered volcanoes are home to diverse communities such as the Twa pygmies and the mountain gorillas.

Located in central Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo is 2 345 410km² in extent and is bordered by Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, and Zambia. It consists of a vast central plateau rising to volcanoes and mountains in the east and is traversed by numerous rivers, the Congo River being the largest. More than half the country is covered by dense rain forest. Its climate is tropical and temperatures are hot and humid in the central region, becoming cooler and drier in the southern highlands and cooler and wetter in the eastern mountain areas.

PLACES OF INTEREST

History's rule

The original inhabitants of this massive country were hunter-gatherer communities who lived in the dense forest regions. They were joined in the 14th century by Bantu and Nilotic tribes from the north and various kingdoms were

established, the most important being the kingdom of the Congo people.

During the 15th and 16th centuries, the Portuguese were attracted to the region for its gold, ivory and slaves, and a brisk trade developed with the interior. It was British journalist Henry Stanley, however, who, in his search for David Livingstone, travelled up the Congo River in the late 19th century and opened the gates for colonisation by European powers.

In 1885, King Leopold II of Belgium claimed the country as a personal possession, handing it over in 1908 to the Belgian government for administration. From this period, until they were granted independence in June 1960, the inhabitants were subjected to a particularly restrictive colonialism. On independence, the country was called the Democratic Republic of Congo, but the political parties were ill-prepared for independence and political and economic problems abounded.

The powerful army commander, Joseph Mobutu, staged a military coup in 1965 and renamed the country Zaire. He stayed in power for 32 years until 1997 when he was ousted from power by a military coup led by General Laurent Kabila. The country was renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo and, for a short period, peace prevailed until 1988, when rebel activity surfaced and once again plunged the country into turmoil. On his death in 2001, General Laurent Kabila was succeeded by his son, General Joseph Kabila, as leader of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Waterways

The country is covered by some 77 810km² of waterways. These river and lake systems dominate life in the area. The Great Lakes region includes Lakes Tanganyika, Edward Albert and Kivu. The Congo and Kasai rivers have for centuries provided countless communities with important access and trade routes with other centres. Numerous boats, barges and ferries ply these waters and it is possible to experience a unique African journey on one of these vessels.

Jungle wilderness

The Democratic Republic of Congo has magnificent and varied scenery and unique wildlife. Should its political turmoil abate and the area stabilise, its many natural attractions will once again, lure the more adventurous visitors.

The National Parks preserve a variety of habitats, the most notable being the rainforest terrain of the lowland gorilla and the mountain gorilla. The Parc National De Kahuzi-Biéga, situated between the towns of Bukavu and Goma, covers an

Photograph: Image bank

area of 6000km², where dense forest habitats. gorillas, are included. There is an additional hard currency in all n advance through the I la Nature which is loc

The gorillas can l although it can take m signs of the animals, v leaving broken branch the forest. There are few groups are used t

The Parc National borders Uganda and l one to a seven-day pe of the park. Trips to further US\$125 per chimpanzees costs U are included in the mountain gorilla fare and a visit is well w relatives of the mo popularised in vario them at close hand sl

Volcanic Splende

The Nyiragongo and but difficult hiking. v summits. The forme days, offering the o volcanoes support va In fact, the lush veg extremely fertile soil resident wildlife is

Did you know

The Democratic Republic of Congo is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa and more than half of it is covered by tropical rain forests.



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Photograph: Image Bank



area of 6000km², where the lowland gorilla can be found in dense forest habitats. Guides and trackers, who locate the gorillas, are included in the entry fee of US\$125 per person. There is an additional photography fee. Fees must be paid in hard currency in all national parks. It is essential to book in advance through the Institut Zairoise pour la Conservation de la Nature which is located in Bakavu.

The gorillas can be located in as little as two hours, although it can take much longer. The guides look for recent signs of the animals, which browse lazily throughout the day, leaving broken branches behind them as they move through the forest. There are twenty gorilla families here, but only a few groups are used to humans.

The Parc National Des Virunga is 8000km in extent and borders Uganda and Rwanda. An entry fee of US\$45 entitles one to a seven-day permit, allowing time to cover all sections of the park. Trips to the Bukima and Djoma gorillas cost a further US\$125 per person, and a visit to the Tongo chimpanzees costs US\$65 per person. Guides and trackers are included in the fee. There are several habituated mountain gorilla families on the Bukima mountain slopes and a visit is well worth the trouble. The plight of these relatives of the more endangered plains gorilla has been popularised in various films, but the experience of viewing them at close hand should not be missed.

Volcanic Splendour

The Nyiragongo and Nyamulgira volcanoes offer spectacular, but difficult hiking. Warm clothing is recommended for the summits. The former is a two-day hike and the latter three days, offering the opportunity to see how lava flows. Both volcanoes support varied vegetation and fascinating bird life. In fact, the lush vegetation exists simply as a result of the extremely fertile soil created from volcanic ash and lava. The resident wildlife is equally dependent on this fertility,

although always at the mercy of possible volcanic eruptions – an example of life on the edge.

The Nyiragongo crater is still smoking and, when the grasses and smoke clear, it offers an interesting view into the crater. From the Nyamulgira crater rim there is a magnificent view across the valley into neighbouring Rwanda.

Mountain Hikes

The magnificent Ruwenzori Mountain range, which is almost continually covered in mist, is some 120km long and 48km wide. These challenging peaks have not been climbed from the Democratic Republic of Congo's side for many years, as visitors prefer to tackle the easier climb from the Ugandan side. Nevertheless, they make a truly awesome sight, even for visitors who are not prepared to brace the ascent.

The Rwindl and Vitshumbi sections of the park have abundant game, including lion, buffalo, giraffe and many species of antelope which roam the park's extensive grasslands. Elephants occur in the Vitshumbi section of the park, Vitshumbi itself being a little fishing village.

GETTING THERE

Transport Services

There is no national airline. Several West and East African airlines operate here, as well as European Airline, Sabena and Air France.

Private airlines operate small planes, both regionally and nationally. An international airport is situated in Kinshasa and there are 215 local airports, 104 of which have paved runways.

There are 11 ports and harbours, among them Kinshasa, Goma and KiSangali. The rail system is limited and the estimated 5 138km of railways have been devastated by the civil war. The road system is in a very poor condition, becoming impassable in the wet season.



10 Best reasons to visit

1. A trip to the Parc National de Kabuzi-Biéga to see the lowland gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla graueri*).
2. A trip to the Parc National des Virunga to view the mountain gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*).
3. A trip to the Tongo Chimpanzee Sanctuary, part of the Parc National des Virunga where the shy colobus monkey can be seen.
4. A three-day bike up the Nyamulgira volcano, 3056m in height, and the magnificent view from the crater rim into Rwanda.
5. A two-day bike up the Nyiragongo volcano, 3470m in height, to look down into its smoking crater.
6. The Rwindl and Vitshumbi sections of the Parc National des Virunga for abundant game, including lion, buffalo and elephant.
7. The spectacular views of the mist-covered Ruwenzoris Mountain range.
8. The varied birdlife, flora and fauna in the dense tropical rain forests and on the mountain slopes.
9. The vibrant mix of over 200 different ethnic groups.
10. The sheer vastness of this sparsely populated country.

Lesotho

The mountain Kingdom of Lesotho possesses natural magic. Whether you explore the lowlands, or bike through high mountain peaks, the landscape will inspire you with its glory.

Completely surrounded by neighbouring South Africa, Lesotho is a small country of some 30 355km². Most of its population lives in the low-lying country in the west, where the majority of the towns are situated. Villages are scattered around the more remote parts of Lesotho. The country is almost deserted in places where sheer mountain cliffs dominate the landscape. Its main attractions are the rugged remoteness of the massive Drakensberg and Maloti mountain ranges in the centre and in the east, which provide a feast of splendour for nature lovers, outdoor enthusiasts and general tourists alike.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Maseru, the capital, is the largest town and the centre of the economy. Although it is a developing city, its hotels and restaurants are of an international standard. There are nine hotels and lodges, including two Sun International hotels. A variety of culinary tastes are catered for, including halaal, French, Italian and Chinese. A favourite is freshwater fish and there is a good choice of beer, wine and spirits. For a more local eating experience, the street stalls in Kingsway Road sell typical African fare which includes tasty grilled meat.

The two major international hotels have casinos and there are several cinemas in Maseru. Shopping is limited, apart from a number of arts and crafts shops which sell Basotho basketware, mohair rugs, tapestries, wool and ethnic jewellery. The distinctive Basotho blankets with traditional patterns and bright colours make an interesting purchase to take home.

King's Palace

There are several sites of historical interest in and around Maseru. The city has an old cemetery, and both the King's Palace and the Prime Minister's residence are attractive buildings. It is not permitted to take photographs of the palace or of police and government offices. There are also a number of interesting day trips available to visitors, starting in Maseru.

Some 5.5km along the gravel road north of the Kingsway Mountain Road, and 39km east of Maseru, is a vantage point over the Liphiring Stream facing an overhanging rock shelter known as Ha Baroana – the home of the Bushmen. Here the Bushmen have left a magnificent gallery of paintings of animals including leopard, lion and eland, as well as blue crane and guinea fowl. There are also fine paintings of Bushmen featuring hunting, dancing, and people in huts.

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main vantage point, a trail zigzags down past the curator's hut to the stream, which visitors have to cross to gain access to the location of the paintings.

South of the city lies the museum and archives in the town of Morija, about 40km away. Well worth a visit, they are open to the public from 08H30 to 16H30 on weekdays and Saturdays.

Thabo Bosiu, the mountain stronghold of King Moshoshoe I, lies east of Maseru. This flat-topped hill is where the Basotho made a last heroic stand against the Boers and remains of the fortifications and the graves of Moshoshoe and other chiefs can be seen there. An information centre at the base of the mountain has maps and other items and there are guides to take you on informative tours around the site.

Shepherd's craft

The town of Teyateyaneng, north of Maseru, is renowned for its arts and crafts, especially Lesotho's famous wool and mohair rugs and tapestries. There, you can also watch the women weavers as they work. The Basotho word Teyateyaneng means "the place of quick sands". Just outside the town, you can buy some of the best tapestries in the country from the St Agnes Mission.

Pony trekking

Basothos have used their ponies as a means of transport for centuries in remote regions and, in many areas, hiking and pony trekking are the only ways of seeing the countryside. The ponies have developed a unique toughness and agility to help them traverse the steep terrain.

In an effort to preserve the bloodlines of these ponies, the Lesotho government has initiated The Basotho Pony Project. The project has stables at the top of the Molimo Nkhuse (God Help Me Pass) and this centre, as well as Semonkong Lodge, Malealea Lodge and Outward Bound, offer a variety of pony treks.

Before booking a package, establish whether food, accommodation, guides and packhorses are included.

More information can be obtained from the Tourist Office in Kingsway Road, Maseru (telephone: +266 31 2896, fax; +266 32 3638) or Outward Bound Association, PO Box 367, Leribe 300 (phone: +266 40 0543).

4x4 country

Other popular pursuits in the mountains include excursions by 4x4 vehicles or mountain bikes. The Sani Pass, which lies on the eastern side of the country and runs between Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, and traversing the Drakensberg Mountains, provides good opportunities to test your off-road abilities.

The Sani Top Chalet at the top of the pass has rudimentary

accommodation, but is an ideal base to undertake the long and difficult hike to Thabana-Ntlenyana, the highest peak in Southern Africa at an impressive 3 482m.

Another exciting option is the Roof of Africa Scenic Route, which was launched by Lesotho in conjunction with KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State in South Africa. This permits some adventurous trailblazing through virgin territory in the landscapes of the Maluti and Drakensberg mountain ranges.

Walking

Walking tours can be started from most of the mountain lodges, or a driver can take you into the mountains to a suitable point and pick you up at the end of the day. Ask for a local guide if you are going long distances. As in mountainous terrain throughout the world, you will need warm, waterproof clothing, stout walking shoes or boots, and a compass, torch and other emergency equipment.

Hiker's paradise

While the country has no organised hiking trails, the entire kingdom is criss-crossed by a network of bridle and footpaths. There are no fences in the mountains, giving hikers total freedom of access.

Serious hikers should have some hiking experience and good map reading abilities. Do not attempt any hike without the relevant 1:50 000 maps, available from the map office in Maseru.



10 Best reasons to visit

1. The scenic beauty of Lesotho's ravines and valleys.
2. Experiencing traditional Basotho life in remote mountain villages.
3. The spectacular Drakensberg and Maluti Mountain Ranges.
4. Pony trekking on the unique Basotho ponies.
5. Mountain climbing and hiking in the mountains.
6. The opportunity to experience the outdoors first-hand.
7. Unique, handmade wool and mohair rugs and tapestries.
8. The Basotho's distinctive dress of conical grass hats and bright ethnic blankets.
9. A visit to the massive Katse Dam wall, part of the Highlands Water Project.
10. Good fishing in Lesotho's lakes and dams.