

South African Immigration Information

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THE RAINBOW COUNTRY

South Africa is fondly known as the Rainbow Country because of its diversity of people, cultures and natural scenery. The South African nation comprises people of San (or Bushman), Nguni, Sotho-Tswana, Tsonga, Venda, Indian, Afrikaner and mixed origin, as well as immigrant communities from all corners of the world. Officially the population consists of more than 40 million people. Although the Government does not recruit immigrants yet, it acknowledges the fact that the immigration of highly skilled manpower and entrepreneurs is a necessity for the country's financial growth.

South Africa has the people, expertise and resources to make it a more successful country. People who intend to settle permanently in South Africa have to understand the country's unique problems, but also to appreciate the unique opportunities which it offers. It is a country where a bright future awaits anyone who is skilled and committed to hard work. For older people it is also an ideal place to retire. The favourable exchange rate, good weather and excellent medical facilities will ensure their care-free future.

PHYSICAL FEATURES OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Republic of South Africa forms the southernmost part of the African continent, stretching latitudinally from 22° to 35° S and longitudinally from 17° to 33° E. Its surface area is 1 223 201 km². It has common boundaries with Namibia, the Republics of Botswana and Zimbabwe, while the Republic of Mozambique and the Kingdom of Swaziland lie to its north-east. The Kingdom of Lesotho is completely enclosed by South African territory. To the west, south and east, South Africa borders on the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans respectively. Prince Edward Island and Marion Island lie approximately 1 920 km to the south-east of Cape Town in the South Atlantic Ocean. They were taken into possession by South Africa in 1947.

Basic statistics of the 9 provinces of South Africa

Province	Capital	Principal languages	Population (million)	Area (km ²)	% of total area	% of total GDP
Eastern Cape	Bisho	IsiXhosa 83.8% Afrikaans 9.6% English 3.7%	6.7	169 580	13.9%	7.59%
Free State	Bloemfontein	Sesotho 62.1% Afrikaans 14.5% IsiXhosa 9.4%	2.715	129 480	10.6%	6.19%
Gauteng	Johannesburg	IsiZulu 21.5% Afrikaans 16.7% English 13%	7.807	17 010	1.4%	37.73%
Kwazulu-Natal	Pietermaritzburg & Ulundi	IsiZulu 79.8% English 15.8% Afrikaans 1.6%	8.9	92 100	7.6%	14.09%
Mpumalanga	Nelspruit	SiSwati 30% IsiZulu 25.4% IsiNdebele 12.5%	3	79 490	6.5%	8.15%
Northern Cape	Kimberley	Afrikaans 69.3% Setswana 19.9% IsiXhosa 6.3%	0.875	361 830	29.7%	2.09%
Limpopo	Polokwane	Sepede 52.7% Xitsonga 22.6% Tshivenda 15.5%	5.337	123 910	10.2%	3.70%
North-West	Mafikeng	Setswana 67.2% Afrikaans 7.5% IsiXhosa 5.4%	3.562	116 320	9.5%	5.56%
Western Cape	Cape Town	Afrikaans 59.2% English 20.3% IsiXhosa 19.1%	4.2	129 370	10.6%	14.21%

LANGUAGES

According to the national census of October 1996, the five most commonly-spoken home languages are IsiZulu (22,9%), IsiXhosa (17,9%), Afrikaans (14,4%), Sepedi (9,2%) and English (8,6%). The Constitution recognises 11 languages as official languages at national level, namely the 5 above, as well as IsiNdebele, Sesotho, SiSwati, Xitsonga, Tshivenda en Setswana.

English and Afrikaans are the most commonly used languages in official circles and the business world. Immigrants should have a good knowledge of at least one of the two in order to cope with life in South Africa. All relevant documentation should be translated into English/Afrikaans by an officially registered translator before submitting it to authorities (for example when applying for residence permits or business registration). Once in South Africa, **AfriForum** will help immigrants to find professional self-study, individual or group language courses to improve their language proficiency. Please note that South Africa does not offer compulsory/sponsored/intensive language courses for immigrants. It is up to individuals to study the languages of their choice and they have to pay for tuition themselves.

CULTURE

Owing to the disparate cultural backgrounds of the various peoples of the country, there is no uniform or coherent South African culture as such. South African artists of all population groups are active locally as well as overseas in all fields: painting, sculpture, architecture, theatre, music, opera, ballet and literature (poetry, drama and prose). The differences in cultural background between black and white are most marked in the artistic expressions of the various groups. The styles and traditions of whites are generally European in origin and those of the blacks, African. In music, literature, architecture, drama, fine and graphic arts many South Africans achieve success with the symbioses of European and African elements. Interesting web sites to visit are those of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology [<http://www.dacst.gov.za>] and the South African National Gallery [<http://www.gem.co.za/sang>]. There are numerous clubs for different nationalities and interest groups in most of South Africa's cities and larger towns. Immigrants are advised to contact the nearest office of **AfriForum** for particulars about such cultural associations.

South Africa has 12 public holidays: New Year's Day [1 January], Human Rights Day [21 March], Good Friday [6 April], Family Day [9 April], Freedom Day [27 April], Worker's Day [1 May], Youth Day [16 June], National Women's Day [9 August], Heritage Day [24 September], Day of Reconciliation [16 December], Christmas [25 December] & Day of Goodwill [26 December].

RELIGION

More than 75% of the South African population belong to Christian churches. Other major religious groups are the Hindus, Muslims and Jews. A sizable minority of South Africa's population has no religious affiliation. It can safely be said that most South Africans are religiously orientated and that religious beliefs play an important role in public affairs. Freedom of worship is guaranteed by the Constitution and the official policy is one of non-interference in religious practices. Church attendance in South Africa is favourable in both rural and urban areas.

Newcomers to South Africa have to take note of the religious diversity and bear in mind that religion is taken very seriously by the inhabitants. Disrespect on the side of a foreigner will not endear him/her to the community. Almost all church denominations have direct or indirect representation in South Africa. **AfriForum** will gladly put you in contact with the religious group of your choice.

EDUCATION

April 1994 saw South Africa gaining a democratic government, elected by all the people under a Constitution which guarantees equality and non-discrimination, cultural freedom and diversity, the right to basic education for all and equal access to educational institutions. The majority of pupils in South Africa attend government assisted schools, under a single national system which is organized and managed on the basis of nine provincial sub-systems. However, private schools run by church denominations or private enterprises are an important feature of the educational system. Private school pupils generally follow the same syllabuses as their fellow pupils in government schools. The school year commences in January and ends in December.

During his school career, the minor will probably attend the following schools:

- Pre-primary: To become compulsory between 6 and 7 in the near future.
- Primary: It is compulsory for children to start in the year they turn seven. Primary education usually takes seven years to complete.
- Secondary: This usually takes five years and most subjects can be taken on the higher or standard level (grade). Education authorities will gladly assist parents and pupils seeking sound advice on entrance requirements laid down by universities, technical colleges and teachers' colleges in this regard.
- Post-school and tertiary training are provided countrywide by numerous universities, technical colleges, numerous teacher training colleges and a number of other institutions. The University of South Africa offers correspondence courses world-wide.

Immigrants who experience trouble finding suitable educational facilities for their children, are welcome to contact **AfriForum** for free guidance and advice. Parents are advised to bring detailed reports of their children's school careers with them to South Africa, including lists of the subjects the children studied. If these reports are not in English, they have to be translated into English by a certified translator for evaluation in South Africa.

SPORT AND RECREATION

The fact that South Africa was one of the main contenders to host the 2004-Olympic Games, proves that excellent facilities for most kinds of sport are to be found in the country. The climate makes year-round outdoor sport and recreation possible throughout South Africa. The country's unique and abundant fauna and flora offers many recreational activities for lovers of outdoor life. Apart from game parks and nature reserves, the main tourist attractions are the country's healthy climate, the variety of scenic attractions (ranging from desert plains carpeted with blooms in spring, to towering mountains soaring above valleys and vineyards); the hustle and bustle of modern cities and a coastline 3 000 km in length which includes some of the world's best bathing and surfing beaches. Tourist facilities match world standards. Accommodation ranges from luxury hotels to modest inns and bed and breakfast housing. Hikers and campers will find many affordable destinations all over South Africa. All cities and towns have information centres where tourists and newcomers can obtain maps, as well as information about local places of interest.

HEALTH CARE

South Africa offers excellent health care facilities. In 1999, 29 180 medical practitioners, 4 435 dentists, 10 205 pharmacists and 173 961 nurses were registered in South Africa. Please note that no special medical services exist for immigrants. Good medical care is very expensive and a patient generally has to prove that he will be able to pay for treatment before it is administered. A simple operation, such as an appendectomy, may cost approximately R15 000. It is recommended that immigrants take out medical/life insurance upon arrival in the country. Several excellent schemes are available. Contributions are calculated according to the ages, number and medical histories of applicants. **AfriForum** offers free advice in this regard.

Malaria and bilharzia are diseases endemic to certain parts of South Africa. Before visiting the country, foreigners are advised to take precautions in this regard. According to the United Nations AIDS Report, released in June 1998, South Africa is the country with the fastest growing number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world. Approximately 8,6% of the total population is estimated to be HIV positive, with more than 1 500 new infections occurring daily. An aggressive media campaign educates society about the disease and all blood products are screened by health services to prevent accidental infection of patients. A toll-free HIV/AIDS help line exists at 0800-012-322. In general South Africa's tap/faucet-water is of a high quality, but in some areas problems were recently experienced with purification. To be 100% sure, drink bottled water which can be bought all over South Africa.

SOCIAL WELFARE

Social welfare includes the right to basic needs such as shelter, food, health care, work opportunities, security of income and all those aspects that promote the physical, social and emotional well-being of a society. In general, no provision is made for non-citizens. Immigrants who lose their income, may find themselves destitute. Before coming to South Africa please ensure that you have sufficient funds and security to provide for yourself and dependents in case of an emergency. In dire circumstances, repatriations or deportations are organized, but these are very unpleasant procedures which should never be regarded as an option when people plan to immigrate.

There are a variety of registered fund-raising organizations with welfare objectives, some of which operate nationally. They provide social care, welfare and treatment for the aged, the disabled, children, families, drug dependents, alcoholics, offenders and others in need of care and treatment. Some of these organizations also cater for the needs of immigrants. **AfriForum** will put you in touch with such bodies where necessary.

It is imperative that people should provide for their old age. Some employers include membership to a reputable pension scheme with an offer of employment. If this does not pertain to you, it is your own responsibility to make provision for your future. South African citizens with an income below subsistence level, may apply for a State pension. This however amounts to very little money which barely makes survival possible.

ECONOMY

The income tax percentages for 2006/2007 can be found at www.sars.gov.za but a summary of basic information regarding personal income tax is included below as well. A tax known as "Value added tax" or VAT is levied on goods and services in South Africa. It currently amounts to 14%.

Taxable Income (in South African Rand)		Rates of Tax (in South African Rand)	
0 – 80 000		18% of each R1	
80 000 – 130 000	14 400 +	25% of the amount above	80 000
130 001 – 180 000	26 900 +	30% of the amount above	130 000
180 001 – 230 000	41 900 +	35% of the amount above	180 000
230 001 – 300 000	59 400 +	38% of the amount above	230 000
300 001 and above	86 000 +	40% of the amount above	300 000

ASSISTANCE FOR PROSPECTIVE IMMIGRANTS

A new Immigration Act (Act 19 of 2004) was passed by Parliament. Together with new regulations, it was implemented on 1 July 2005. We recommend that individuals who intend to immigrate, should consult their nearest representative of the South African Department of Home Affairs, the head office of the Department (Private Bag X114, Pretoria, 0001, Republic of South Africa), or **AfriForum** (alana@solidariteit.co.za, annatjie@solidariteit.co.za or Box 17216, Lyttelton, 0140, RSA) for further details.

Please note that you do not need an agent or lawyer when submitting any of the above applications, or when dealing with any government department. The officials are obliged to give you whatever information you require. Should you feel that you need professional advice, you are welcome to contact **AfriForum**. It is important to remember that the onus rests on an immigrant to keep all permits valid at all times. Once a permit has expired, the Department of Home Affairs is not obliged to accept applications to renew it. To avoid becoming an illegal alien in South Africa, always renew permits at least 30 days before they expire.

South Africa is in need of highly skilled individuals such as actuaries, aeronautical engineers, astrophysicists, biological science technicians, chemical engineers, construction and civil engineers, financial market analysts, geologists, industrial engineers, jewellery designers, maths and science teachers, mechanical engineers, pasture scientists, plant pathologists, research and development pharmacologists, risk managers, silicon and microchip developers, software developers, vehicle diagnostic technicians, veterinarians and virologists, to name but a few categories. People in these fields can ask representatives of the South African Department of Home Affairs for more information re quota permits for these fields of employment. Quotas were announced by the Minister in February 2006.

AfriForum

This unique organisation is a private auxiliary service which assists immigrants on a non-profit basis. We welcome any questions regarding migration to South Africa. These questions may be directed to fax: 0027-12-6641281 or email: alana@solidariteit.co.za or annatjie@solidariteit.co.za.

PRICES OF SOME COMMODITIES

All prices are subject to change and may differ from store to store. It should give the reader a good idea of the cost of living in South Africa. The quoted prices include VAT (value added tax) of 14%, which is payable on all commodities and services, with the exception of basic foodstuffs.

Conversion table

1 kilogram (kg)	=	2.2 lbs
1 litre (l)	=	0.22 gallon
1 kilometre (km)	=	0.62 mile
1 gram (g)	=	0.035 ounce

Average exchange rates on 12 December 2006

The South African monetary unit is 100 cents per 1 Rand. Exchange rates fluctuate daily. Rates, given in Rand per foreign currency unit, are:

R 7.14	=	1 U S Dollar
R14.04	=	1 Pound Sterling
R 5.96	=	1 Swiss Franc
R 6.20	=	100 Japanese Yen
R 5.61	=	1 Australian Dollar
R 4.88	=	1 New Zealand Dollar
R 6.25	=	1 Canadian Dollar
R 0.92	=	1 Hong Kong Dollar
R 9.48	=	1 Euro Unit
R 4.63	=	1 Singapore Dollar

Basic food prices (groceries)

Item	Price
Air freshner Airoma	R 6.99
Apples 1,5kg	R 7.99
Bananas (1 kg)	R 3.99
Beans (1kg)	R 19.98
Bread (brown)	R 3.49
Bread (white)	R 3.99
Butter (500 g)	R 13.99
Cabbage (each)	R 5.45
Carrots (1 kg)	R 4.99
Country Mix Crop (frozen 1 kg)	R 12.99
Cheddar cheese (500g) Elite	R 25.99
Chicken braaicuts (per kg)	R 28.99
Coca Cola (2 l)	R 8.99
Coffee (750g)	R 21.99
Dishwashing liquid (1,5l)	R18.99
Eggs (30)	R 15.99
Fabric Softener 2 l	R 12.99
Facial Tissues (200)	R 8.99
Fish fingers (32)	R 18.99
Fish – Petite Hake fillets 400g	R 15.99
Flour - cake (2,5 kg)	R 9.69
Flour - white bread (2,5 kg)	R 9.79

Item	Price
Jam - smooth apricot (900g)	R 9.89
Jam - strawberry (900 g)	R 16.99
Lettuce (each)	R 3.99
Macaroni (500g)	R 5.99
Margarine (1 kg Tub)	R12.89
Meat - lean mince (per kg)	R 31.95
Meat – Boxed Rump steak per kg	R 55.95
Meat – Whole chicken per kg.	R 13.99
Milk Low Fat 2 liter	R 8.99
Potatoes (4 kg)	R 9.99
Peas (frozen 1 kg)	R 10.99
Onions (2 kg)	R 6.99
Rice - brown (2 kg)	R 14.49
Rice - white (2 kg)	R 12.49
Salt (1 kg)	R 4.39
Spaghetti (500g)	R 5.99
Sugar (2.5 kg)	R11 99
Sunflower oil (750 ml)	R16.49
Tea (100 bags) Joke	R14.99
Toilet paper (2 ply, 9 rolls)	R 28.89
Tomatoes (1 kg)	R 4.99
Washing powder (2 kg) Skip	R 39.99

Prices for basic garments (chain store prices)

Item	Price
<u>Man</u>	
Cotton sleep shorts	R 59-99
Denim top and pants	R 99.00
Jacket	R 500.00
Jeans	R 150.00
Knight Cross Trainer	R 179-00
Pyjamas (summer)	R 150.00
Ribbed Cardigan	R 99.00
Shirt (Golf)	R89.00
Shorts)	R139.00
Shoes (leather)	R 499.00
Slippers	R 89.00
Socks	R 29.99
Sport shoes (Adidas)	R 599.00
Suit	R 1,000.00
Sweat Tops	R 139.00
Tie	R 70.00
Trousers (long)	R 169.00
Trousers (short)	R 129.00

<u>Boy of 8</u>	
Jacket	R 179.95
Jersey	R 69.95
Pyjamas (summer)	R 69.95
Shirt (long sleeves)	R 49.99
Shirt (short sleeves)	R 39.99
Shoes	R 129.95
Socks (2)	R 24.95
Trousers (long)	R 84.95
Trousers (short)	R 39.99
Underwear (5)	R 49.95

Item	Price
<u>Woman</u>	
Dress	R 259.00
Hooded Jacket with piping detail	R 69.00
Jacket	R 450.00
Jeans	R 130.00
Knitted tunic with necktie	R 99.00
Peignoir (summer)	R 180.00
Polar Fleece Jacket	R 139.00
Pyjamas (summer)	R 160.00
Shoes	R 299.99
Skirt	R 199.95
Slippers	R 39.00
Sport shoes (Nike)	R 799.95
Sport shoes (Adidas)	R 499.95
Stockings (3 pairs)	R 25.95
Trackpant with piping detail	R 69.00

<u>Girl of 8</u>	
Blouse	R 69.99
Dress	R 89.99
Jacket	R 129.95
Pyjamas (summer)	R 60.00
Shoes	R 119.95
Skirt	R 89.95
Slacks (long)	R 94.95
Slacks (short)	R 89.00
Socks	R 8.99
Sweater	R 69.00
Underwear (5)	R 49.95

Prices of basic furniture and appliances

Item	Price
Bed (double)	R1,799.00
Bed (single)	R1,299.00
Bedroom suite	R5,999.00
Camera (Pentax) Digital	R1,599.95
Computer (Pentium 4)	R4,699.00
Computer Printer (HP 1018 mono lazer)	R899.00
Cutlery set (24 piece hanging set)	R169.99
Digital camera (Kodak)	R749.95
Dining room suite (6 seats)	R2,899.00
Dinner service (16 pieces)	R79.99
Dishwasher (12 place – Kelvinator)	R2,079.00
Deluxe Stainless Steel Pressure Cooker	R459.99
DVD Panasonic 2 Head VCR	R749-99
DVD Player LG E5518	R599.95
Electric Griller	R499.00
Fan (Floor Fan)	R399.99
Fan (4 Light Ceiling Fan)	R259.00

Item	Price
Mini Hi Fi System LG	R989.00
Iron Panasonic	R139.95
7 Piece Patio set	R2,399.00
Kettle (Philips – Stainless steel)	R349.95
Lounge suite (5 seats)	R5,699.00
Microwave oven (LG) 20L	R499.00
3 Piece Casserole set	R99.00
Pots (7 Piece stainless steel)	R199.00
Radio/Cassette and CD Player	R299.99
Sandwich Press	R229.99
Stove (Defy 4 plate Kitchenaire)	R2,599.00
Television Telefunken 54cm	R1,199.00
Toaster	R449.99
Tumble drier (5 kg) Defy	R1,799.00
Vacuum cleaner (Hoover)	R 699.95
Video cassette player (VCR)	R 699.00
Washing machine (Front Load)	R 1 899.00

Prices of vehicles and fuel

Prices given are the latest as for December 2006 but are subject to change.

Vehicle	Price
Alfa Romeo ST 3.2 V6	R 329,000.00
Audi A4 Sedan 2.0 multi	R 247,500.00
Audi A6 3.2 multitronic FS1	R 437,000.00
BMW 116i standard	R 205,000.00
BMW 530i standard	R 473,500.00
BMW M5 Sedan	R 992,500.00
Chevrolet Optra 1.6	R 141,700.00
Citroen C21.4HD	R 134,995.00
Daihatsu Charade CX	R 71,995.00
Fiat Palio 111.2EL 5dr	R 104,400.00
Fiat Strade 1.2 EL	R 79,900.00
Ford Fiesta (3 doors) Trend	R 120,450.00
Ford Focus-sedan 2.0 Trend Outo	R 200,900.00
Honda Civic 1.8i VTEC LXi	R 165,900.00
Honda Accord 2.4 Executive	R 255,000.00
Jaguar S Type 3.0 V6 SE	R 443,500.00
Lexus LS430 (sunroof)	R 737,780.00
Mazda 3 1.6 Original	R 159,990.00
Mazda 2.0 Elegant	R 197,700.00

Vehicle	Price
Mercedes-Benz A170	R 187,000.00
Mercedes-Benz E350 Elagance	R 472,000.00
Mini Cooper	R 175,900.00
Nissan Tilda-sedan Visia 1.6	R 129,900.00
Nissan Micra 1.4 Visia	R 124,500.00
Opel Corsa Lite 1.4	R 69,990.00
Opel Astra 1.6 Enjoy 5Dr	R 195,470.00
Peugeot 206 XS 1.6 5Dr	R 143,400.00
Peugeot 407 ST Sport 2.2	R 249,900.00
Porsche 911 Carrera	R 895,000.00
Renault Clio 1.2 Va Va Voom	R 99,995.00
Smart Two Koepee Pulse	R 132,000.00
Subaru Legacy Sedan 2.0	R 227,000.00
Toyota Run X 140 RT	R139 250.00
Toyota Avanza 1.5 SX	R 122,900.00
Volkswagen Citi Chico 1.4	R 68,460.00
Volkswagen Golf 2.0 Gti	R 244,800.00
Volkswagen Jetta 1.6 Comfort	R 206,170.00
Volvo V70 2.0T	R 278,000.00

The petrol/fuel/gasoline price is determined by the State on a monthly basis. On the first Wednesday of every month, a new price is implemented. It is influenced by the international oil price, the exchange rate of South African currency and the condition of the South African road fund. South Africans refer to fuel for passenger vehicles as “petrol”. Petrol prices are also cheaper in coastal regions than inland. In December 2006, the inland price for a litre of 95 octane unleaded petrol is R5.90.

Accommodation

For affordable temporary or holiday accommodation, bid at www.auxion.co.za, www.bargainbid.co.za or www.bid2stay.co.za. General information on such accommodation can also be found at w.beststay.co.za or www.aatravel.co.za.

An easy way to search for more permanent accommodation, is to visit web sites. It will also help the prospective buyer or tenant to see what accommodation in South Africa looks like. It is possible to purchase property privately, but the use of a reliable, registered agent is recommended for your own protection. The following sites are most useful:

www.era.co.za	www.maxprop.co.za
www.devmark.co.za	www.seeff.co.za
www.pamgolding.co.za	www.durrestates.co.za
www.realty1elk.co.za	www.remax.co.za
www.homenet.co.za	www.everitt.co.za
www.aida.co.za	www.thepropertymall.com
www.e-prop.co.za	www.privateproperty.co.za
www.Property24.com	www.e-landlord.co.za

Most immigrants prefer to make use of rental accommodation or to stay in hotels or bed-and-breakfast establishments until they can buy property. A night in the most basic hotel will cost approximately R500-00 per person. All daily newspapers advertise accommodation to let. A large number of agencies also manage such accommodation. Usually the tenant will have to rent the accommodation for a minimum of six months. A deposit equal to one month's rent is normally required as security against damage to the property. Unfurnished bachelor apartments will cost a minimum of R1200-00 per month. This excludes electricity fees, but includes water. Furnished rental accommodation is rare and expensive.

If buying property, proof of the buyer's previous credit record as well as proof of other fixed assets and life insurance will come in useful. **AfriForum** can give general advice about areas, agents and attorneys. Please note that houses are generally sold unfurnished in South Africa and that the current average mortgage rate is 11,5%. Nominal year-to-year growth of 14,5% in South African house prices was recorded in the first 3 months of 2006. A lower growth rate is projected for the rest of 2006.

The following are average house/apartment prices for different provinces in South Africa. Obviously the price for a home in an exclusive, up-market area will be much more than the average, while cheaper homes in less desirable suburbs will also be found. Houses exceeding R2 200 000 have been excluded from the calculations. Improvements such as fences and pools are included in the prices.

Region	Homes 80-140m ²	Homes 141-220m ²	Homes 221-400m ²
Gauteng (Johannesburg)	R 531 032	R 819 388	R1 200 074
Gauteng (Pretoria)	R 529 128	R834 813	R 1 277 467
Gauteng (Central & South of Johannesburg)	R 440 661	R 797 855	R 1 217 873
Mpumalanga	R 558.275	R 648 426	R 884 733
Limpopo	R 464 281	R 687 772	R 894 504
North West	R 454 381	R 592 710	R 861 198
Free State (Bloemfontein)	R 439 242	R 688 534	R1 011 721
Northern Cape	R 493 946	R 545 789	R 721 310

Western Cape (Cape Town metro)	R 728 903	R 982 789	R 1 472 555
Eastern Cape (PE/Uitenhage metro)	R 522 920	R 745 647	R1 187 557
KwaZulu-Natal (Durban metro)	R 439 588	R 921 311	R 1 254 390

In the first quarter of 2006 it was on average 1,5% cheaper to buy an existing home than to build a new one. When buying property in South Africa, a non-refundable transfer cost is levied. Transfer duty on property has been lowered once again as many South Africans find it very difficult to enter the property market for the first time. Exemption has been changed from R190 000 to R500 000. The second level been changed from R330 000 to R1-million. No transfer duty will be levied on a property sale of R500 000 or less. A duty of 5% will be levied on property sales of between R500 000 and R1-million. This increases to 8% for sales above R1-million.

Value of property	Transfer cost applicable
R0 - R500 000	0%
R500 001 - R1-million	5%
R1-million and above	8%

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR IMMIGRANTS

Customs and Excise

Immigrants are allowed to bring household goods and used equipment necessary for the practicing of their professions into South Africa duty-free. The required application forms can be obtained from www.sars.gov.za. When asking transport firms for a quote for these goods, please ensure that all costs (also wharfage in South Africa) are included. The importation of a vehicle is subject to more conditions, taxes and provisions. Here it is strongly recommended that you make use of a customs clearing agent's services. To import a foreign vehicle into South Africa, you will also need permission from the South African Bureau of Standards. Contact Mr. Alan Cohen at 0027-12-4287911 (telephone), or cohenag@sabs.co.za for information about such clearance.

Communications

In South Africa the telephone dialling code is a monotonous purr-sound. A beep-tone of a half second repeated every half second signals number engaged. A very long beep-tone of 2,5 seconds repeated at half second intervals signals that the number you have dialled no longer exists. Only one company provides land-line telephone services in South Africa, namely Telkom SA (Ltd). They have offices all over the country. Public telephones use either coins or phone-cards, which may be purchased from post-offices, stationery shops or cafés. Three cellular telephone companies (Vodacom, MTN and Cell C) are also represented in South Africa and offer various contracts to suit individuals.

Air mail postage rates to countries outside Southern Africa are:

Aerograms	R 2-85
Postcards	R 3-80
Small letters (50g or less)	R 4-40
Medium letters (250g or less)	R14-70
Large letters (300g or less)	R25-00
Small parcels (2kg or less)	R19-00 per 100 grams.

Stamps can be bought from post offices or most stationers. An independent postage service is offered by a group of stores known as Postnet. They have slightly cheaper rates for overseas mail. Within South Africa a postcard or DL-sized letter will cost R1-85, a B5-envelope R3-75 and a B4-envelope R4-70. For general postal information, call the Post Office Customer Care Line toll-free at 0860-111-502.

Transport

Major South African centra are linked by reliable air, rail and road transport services. Public transport services within towns and cities are irregular though. Taxis are extremely expensive and most South Africans therefore have to depend on their own means of transport. When making use of taxi transport, we recommend that you use your hotel to book a taxi for you in order to be sure that it is officially registered.

South Africans drive on the left-hand side of the road. Be careful if driving here yourself - many tourists from right-hand driving countries get confused and are involved in serious accidents in South Africa. In rural areas, game or livestock often cross the road, so keep alert.

Drivers' licenses fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport, but local governments (municipalities) do the evaluation and exchange of foreign licenses for South African equivalents. Please note that your license must be translated into one of the official languages of South Africa and that you must have a permanent residence permit to qualify for a South African driver's license. This license has to be carried on the person of drivers at all times. Local authorities cannot re-instate your original license, should you decide to return to the country you emigrated from. This will have to be finalized abroad. Generally the speed limits range from 60km/h in residential areas to a maximum of 120km/h on national highways. Pay attention to the signs in this regard.

Rental vehicles are available in all major South African centra. This includes well-known international companies such as Hertz (tel: 0861600136) and Avis (tel: 0861021111).

The media

The South African Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of expression and press freedom is actively promoted by both the Government and the private sector. More than 80 community radio stations broadcast in South Africa and the programmes of 3 national and 1 independent television channel, plus some pay and satellite channels can be enjoyed.

The country has 17 daily and 8 major weekly newspapers, as well as more than 200 regional papers. Some English South African papers are *The Star*, *Mail & Guardian*, *Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Independent*. They all provide web-site facilities. Approximately 300 consumer magazines and more than 500 trade, technical and professional magazines are registered in South Africa. The latest South African news is available from www.news24.co.za.

Citizenship

Immigrants may become citizens after living in South Africa as permanent residents for a minimum of five years. Ask **AfriForum** for advice and assistance. South African citizens are allowed to have dual citizenship and may make use of passports of more than one country, providing that they apply for the Department of Home Affairs' written permission to do so. Children born in South Africa do not automatically become citizens of this country. Parents-to-be have to take note of this fact, please.

Safety

Safety has become an important issue throughout the world. The Tourism Safety Task Group of South Africa has compiled the following tips for tourists and migrants who come to the country:

At a hotel

- Never leave your luggage unattended
- Store valuables in the hotel's safety deposit box.
- Keep your room locked, whether you're in it or not.
- If someone knocks, check who it is before opening the door.
- Leave your keys at the reception desk when leaving the hotel.

In the street

- Avoid ostentatious displays of expensive jewellery, cameras and other valuables.
- It's definitely not advisable to carry large sums of money around.
- At night, steer clear of dark, isolated areas.
- It's better to explore in groups and to stick to well-lit, busy streets.
- Plan your route beforehand.
- A Policeman or traffic officer will be glad to direct you if you get lost.
- If you want to call a taxi, your hotel or the nearest tourism information office can recommend a reliable service.

In a car

- Plan your route in advance.
- Keep the car doors locked at all times and wind the windows up.
- Lock valuable items in the boot (trunk).
- At night, park in well-lit areas.
- Never pick up strangers.
- If in doubt about the safety of an area, phone a police station for advice.

In general we advise people to carry a reliable map with them at all times and to keep a certified copy of passports and other important documentation such as flight tickets in a safe place such as a bank or hotel's safety deposit box.

Employment

South Africa has very strict labour legislation and most kinds of employment are subject to minimum wage requirements. This even applies to domestic workers. Useful information and samples of contracts can be found at www.labour.gov.za.

General advice

Illegal immigration increases South Africa's levels of unemployment and crime. People are therefore weary of foreigners, including legal immigrants. An arrogant attitude on the immigrant's side will not improve this situation. Immigrants have to respect South African traditions, customs and laws, even though some of it may seem strange to them. In general, the society is still conservative. Formal clothing is an unwritten requirement at job-interviews.

South Africa is a land of opportunity, not of milk and honey. Immigrants often fall prey to "get rich soon" schemes. Be careful of such projects and contact a reputable person such as a bank manager for advice before investing in any scheme. The same advice goes when purchasing property or a business.

All employees are protected by the South African labour law. Please ensure that you have a written contract with your employer if coming to South Africa to work here. The Department of Labour can be contacted for further information about legal protection.

Remember, South Africa is a drought-stricken country. Always close taps/faucets after use.

Emergencies

Should you have any emergency in South Africa, the numbers to call to reach ambulance, fire, electricity or similar services can be found on the second or third page of the local telephone directory. The police's rapid response emergency number is 10111.

For Internet surfers

There are literally thousands of South African web sites available. Reliable South African **search engines** are www.ananzi.co.za and www.aardvark.co.za. Other interesting sites are:

South Africa in general: www.safrica.info;
 Nelson Mandela Children's Fund: www.mweb.co.za/mandela/children;
 Information on the South African Government: www.gov.za;
 Information on the South African Parliament: www.parliament.gov.za;
 Information on South African Legislation: www.acts.co.za;
 Official Statistics: www.statssa.gov.za;
 Truth and Reconciliation Commission: www.truth.org.za;
 Human Rights Commission: www.sahrc.org.za;
 Investment in South Africa: www.isa.org.za; Business in South Africa: www.sacob.co.za;
 South African churches: www.churchnet.co.za;
 Some South African newspapers: www.news24.co.za; www.bday.co.za; www.fm.co.za;
www.suntimes.co.za; www.mg.co.za; www.star.co.za;
 Tourism: www.africa.com/captour/; www.parks-sa.co.za;
 Accommodation: www.aatravel.co.za;
 English/Afrikaans dictionary: www.dictionaries.travling.com;
 Immigration: www.cfi.org.za; www.home-affairs.gov.za.

For great shopping, you can try:

Books, etcetera: www.kalahari.net;
 CDs: www.cdzone.co.za or www.musica.co.za;
 Flowers: www.netflorist.co.za or www.virtualflorist.co.za;
 Vehicles: www.autonet.co.za or www.autotrader.co.za;
 Jewellery: www.jennaclifford.co.za or www.arthurkaplan.co.za;
 Gifts: www.junglemoo.co.za;
 Unique South African adrenalin trips or holidays: www.experiencethis.co.za.

Especially for South Africans abroad:

South Africans World-Wide (www.saw.co.za) is a community-based website that appeals to both South Africans living in our glorious country, as well as those who are either temporarily or permanently living somewhere else. Containing eclectic articles and columns, legal advice, recipes, a weekly newsletter and much, much more, SAW is a great way to keep in touch with your roots. Pay them a visit today!

Bringing pets to South Africa

For all application forms for animal importation permits and information about costs and quarantine requirements, visit the South African State Veterinary Services' web site at: www.nda.agric.za/vetweb. Click on "Import" buttons. Alternatively contact **AfriForum** for such information and details of pet transport companies.

Removals

Are you planning on relocating to South Africa? Let a "Proudly South African" removal company which we recommend, arrange your entire removal for you from anywhere in the world. **Elliott International** is one of the largest Removal Companies in South Africa, with a worldwide reputation for service excellence. Through their extensive worldwide partner network they are able to undertake door-to-door removal services from any city in the world, and deliver consignments in South Africa as well as Botswana, Zambia, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Mozambique en Lesotho via their own branch network, truck and crew.

They provide a fully guaranteed residence to residence removal service including packing, transportation by either sea and air, insurance cover, customs clearance, storage and delivery to exacting ISO 9000 standards.

Payment for services rendered by them can be arranged in South Africa in Rand, or in foreign currency if required. Should you wish to know more about this company and the services they offer, log onto their website at www.elliott.co.za.

A free quotation for your move to South Africa can be obtained from them by contacting Amanda-Lee Henry at amandalh@elliott.co.za.

Various notes, pamphlets, newspapers, brochures, magazines, empirical research, as well as the official publication *South Africa Yearbook* were consulted for the compilation of this booklet. Information about financial aspects was kindly provided to us by ABSA, *Rapport* and *Beeld*. We would like to thank the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the South African Communication Services, South African Post Office and Tourism Safety Task Group for their assistance.

REPRODUCTION OF THIS INFORMATION

As a result of various requests and the fact that we do not have the means to translate this brochure into other languages, permission is granted to staff-members of the Departments of Home and Foreign Affairs to translate it, or parts thereof, with due acknowledgement. Interested parties are welcome to reproduce the brochure or to contact **AfriForum** for further details.

Immigration Information is reviewed on a quarterly basis. The next issue is due in March 2007.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA

(In no specific order

- South Africa has the longest wine route in the world, namely Route 62 between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.
- One South African street produced two Nobel Prize winners – both Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu lived in Bhacela Street in Soweto.
- There are more plant species per hectare in the Cape Peninsula than anywhere else in the world.
- The first successful heart transplant in the world was done in South Africa by Chris Barnard.
- Africa's first astronaut is a South African, Mark Shuttleworth.
- The Kreepy Krauly automatic pool cleaner was invented in South Africa.
- South Africa has the cheapest electricity in the world.
- South Africa is the ninth largest Internet user in the world.
- The eleventh busiest flight route between two cities in the world, is between Cape Town and Johannesburg.
- South Africa has an annual average of 7,5 to 9,4 cloud-free hours per day.
- The world's largest number of tortoise species are found in the Western Cape.
- Pinotage is South Africa's very own wine variety.
- Two CNN-anchors, Tumi Makgabo and Anant Naidoo, are South Africans, as are Hollywood stars Charlize Theron and Arnold Vosloo.
- The South African movie *Tsotsi* won an Oscar for the best foreign movie in 2006.
- J.R. Tolkien (*Lord of the Rings*) was born in Bloemfontein, South Africa.
- South Africa accounts for almost 45 per cent of Africa's gross domestic product (goods and services produced).
- South Africa is the first country to protect the great white shark.
- Afrikaans is the youngest official language in the world.
- Stellenbosch University was the first university in the world to design and launch a microsatellite.
- South Africa is the only country to manufacture nuclear weapons then voluntarily terminate the programme.
- Since 1994, tourism to South Africa has more than doubled.
