



South Africa Fast Facts

Population:

44,344,136 (July 2005 est.)

Capital:

Pretoria; note - Cape Town is the legislative center and Bloemfontein the judicial center

Currency:

rand (ZAR)

Religion(s):

Christian (approximately 70-80%), Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, indigenous beliefs and animist

Language(s):

11 official languages, including Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga

Major Events:

Human Rights Day – March 21

Freedom Day – April 27

Youth Day – June 16

Day of Reconciliation – December 16

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Online Resources

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The American Institute For Foreign Study

<http://www.aifsabroad.com/ays/stellenbosch/>

Study South Africa

<http://www.studysa.co.za/>

South Africa Government Online

<http://www.gov.za/>

UNISA – University of South Africa

<http://www.unisa.ac.za/>

Benjamin A. Gilman

International Scholarship Program

<http://www.iie.org/gilman>

National Security Education Program

<http://www.iie.org/NSEP>

Wikipedia – South Africa

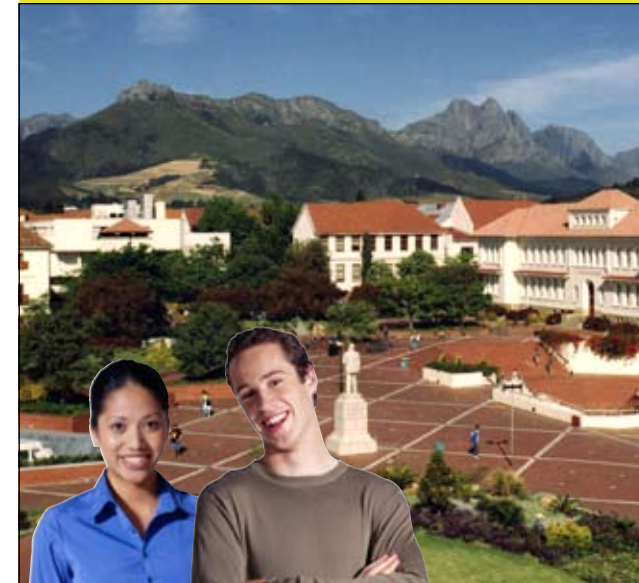
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_africa/

World InfoZone:

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South Africa at a Glance...

South Africa provides an exciting location for study in the midst of a nation that is undergoing profound changes.

The benefits to studying in South Africa are numerous. Classes taught in English make South Africa accessible to many students in many different majors. At the same time, however, it is a perfect place to learn a variety of African languages including Afrikaans, isiXhosa, and isiZulu. South Africa offers one of the best higher education systems on the African continent, and studying and living in South Africa can be very affordable for students benefiting from international exchange rates.

South Africa provides unique opportunities for study in a number of fields. Students wishing to study ecology, biology, and related subjects find South Africa's pristine wilderness areas entrancing, and with more animal species than Europe and Asia combined, there's much to study. South Africa's emerging politics and turbulent history make it an interesting venue for political science and history majors, while those interested in advanced research find it a perfect location to examine sustainable development and research both the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the epidemiology of tropical diseases. Other popular areas of study include literature and culture, multiculturalism, social change, conservation ecology, public health and policy, education, and agricultural technology.

South Africa offers some excellent universities at which to study. Stellenbosch University is known for its quality of teaching and research and for being community service oriented. The University of Cape Town is the country's oldest



university and provides a vibrant academic community known for its quality undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Rhodes University offers distinctive teaching, with its tutorial system modeled on that of Oxford and Cambridge. One of the largest English language universities is the University of Witwatersrand, which has a lively and progressive atmosphere and has built up an international reputation as a leading African research university. The University of South Africa (UNISA) is the oldest and largest in the country and after a merger with two other schools now has over 200,000 students and vast resources to meet their needs. With the goal of becoming the premier university of African Scholarship, the newly formed University of KwaZulu-Natal aims to be a truly South African university that reflects the society in which it is situated – not only in terms of race, gender, and class – but in terms of its values and priorities and its response to social needs.

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Located at the southern tip of the African continent, South Africa has a fascinating history to share. It contains some of the oldest archaeological sites in the world, several of which have contributed to the modern scientific understanding of human evolution. Ties with Europe began with the arrival of the Dutch East India Company in 1652. Perhaps the most defining characteristic of the country's modern history was the harsh system of segregation laws that are collectively known as apartheid. Through the influence of many people and organizations including Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress, South Africa began to dismantle these laws and eventually held multi-racial elections in 1994. This has resulted in many positive changes including increased acceptance of people of all races and a strong commitment to equality.

Today, South Africa faces a number of challenges including widespread poverty and a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection. However, South Africans are facing these issues with new hope, energy, and pride in the progress they have made over the last decade.

South Africa does have the largest and most well developed economy on the entire continent as well as modern infrastructure. The country is one of the world's largest producers of chromium, gold, and platinum, and has other abundant natural resources, such as coal, copper, nickel, phosphates, uranium, natural gas, and diamonds. It also has one of the 10 largest stock exchanges in the world. With all this potential, South Africa is well positioned to continue its growth and development.

South Africa is famous for its natural beauty, from its long coastline and gorgeous beaches to its sub-tropical forests and the vast austerity of the Karoo scrublands. The Western Cape has a glorious Mediterranean-like climate, which is completely different from the country's scorching deserts and open plains. Adventurous students can enjoy spectacular scenery and abundant wildlife, from diving with the great white sharks to exploring the country's renowned game and wildlife reserves.



Students can gain much from the experience of living in the country's multicultural and diverse cities. Cape Town offers the beauty of historic buildings framed by the ocean and mountains and a history of opposing apartheid, while Durban is a coastal city on the Indian Ocean known for its progressive history and international politics. Stellenbosch offers art



galleries, concerts, and festivals and easy access to South Africa's rich wine country, which centers on the Jonkershoek Valley. Johannesburg is Africa's leading commercial city. The sprawling metropolis represents the contrast between showy wealth and extreme poverty that is characteristic of the country as a whole.

Between its fascinating and friendly population, its diverse cities and landscape, and its burgeoning economy, modern infrastructure, and excellent universities, South Africa has much to offer the adventurous student.