

THE KINGDOM OF
ESWATINI
A ROYAL EXPERIENCE



TOURIST INFORMATION

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ESWATINI AT A GLANCE

Land Area: 17,373km²

Government: Monarchy with democratically elected Senate & Assembly

Languages: siSwati, English

Capital City: Mbabane

Major Towns: Manzini, Ezulwini, Hlathikhulu, Nhlngano, Big Bend, Siteki, Mhlume, Piggs Peak, Simunye.

Airport: King Mswati III International Airport

Airline: Eswatini Airlink

Population: 1.2 Million

Electricity: 220/240 volt AC; South African 'Type M' plugs

Weather: Temperate climate with summer rainfall (September - April)

Roads: Traffic drives on the left hand side of the road. Foreign driving licences are valid providing that they display a photo of the driver.

Business: Weekdays 08:00 - 17:00, Saturdays 08:00 - 13:00

Credit Cards: Most hotels and restaurants accepted.

Currency: 1 Lilangeni = 1 SA Rand.

Visa: Check with your consulate. Most nationalities do not require visas. Passport controls at all borders.

Mobile Phones: MTN Eswatini, plus Swazi Mobile launched in 2017.

Internet: WIFI at some hotels though speeds often limited. Internet cafés at major centres.

FROM SWAZILAND TO ESWATINI

During the exciting and colourful 50/50 celebrations in April 2018, in what was then Swaziland, King Mswati III made an historic announcement that the country's name would change to 'The Kingdom of Eswatini'. Meaning "place of the Swati people", Eswatini reverts to the Swazi language name for the Kingdom.

In his speech, the King said, "As we are aware, the name Swaziland was inherited from the British. If we are to give true meaning to our independence, time has come to give our country a name of its people. It must be said that this process is long overdue!"

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USING THIS BROCHURE

This brochure gives a run down of Eswatini's key tourism attractions, grouped according to its 5 Tourism Regions. Slotted in amongst the regional coverage are **Special Focus** pages that show off the country-wide Experiences that Eswatini has to offer (introduced on page 3). Towards the end of the brochure is information on more practical matters for those planning to visit, including a detailed Accommodation Directory for the whole country. Finally, a detailed map, showing the regions, attractions and accommodation, is located on a handy fold out to the back cover so that it can be viewed at all times whilst reading the brochure.

For more information on visiting Eswatini see:

www.thekingdomofeswatini.com



ESWATINI EXPERIENCES

Africa in a nutshell. It may be a cliché but there is no better way to describe Eswatini. This tiny nation – one of Africa’s last monarchies – packs in an extraordinary variety of riches. Nature lovers can track down rhinos in the wild lowveld or seek out rare birds in the rugged highveld. Historians can visit the world’s oldest known mine at Ngwenya or follow the colonial trail of the early settlers. And culture vultures can thrill to the Umhlanga and other festivals, as Eswatini celebrates its ancient traditions in spectacular style. Activities ranging from horse riding and river rafting to golf and thermal spas offer excitement and relaxation in equal measure. What’s more, Eswatini is friendly, safe and so compact that nowhere is more than two hours’ easy drive from the capital. So what are you waiting for? Africa’s most perfectly formed nation offers you a warm Swazi welcome.

CULTURE

People, tradition, and culture like nowhere else in the world, and a warm welcome guaranteed to be one of Africa’s warmest.

WILDLIFE

From the Big Five and some of the best rhino experiences in Africa, to the plant life and birds only ever seen in Eswatini.

SCENERY

This pocket sized country varies and surprises around every corner, and throughout every season. You’ll discover rolling mountains, lush bush and open plains.

ADVENTURE

From white-water rafting, canyoning and abseiling, to leisurely hikes - fully self guided and on your own terms - Eswatini is an explorer’s playground with a remarkable variety of activities.

ARTS & CRAFTS

Celebrating art, skill and talent at every opportunity, and supporting local communities. Eswatini’s high quality handicraft artists are dotted around the country.

EVENTS

Eswatini is well known for its calendar of exciting events from internationally-recognised festivals and ceremonies to sporting challenges. Time your visit right for a unique experience.

BIRDING

A “twitcher’s” paradise, Eswatini is home to numerous species and some of Africa’s most illusive; as well as having many completely unique to the the country.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Passionate about its own way of life, traditions and people, Eswatini welcomes visitors to experience its unique culture. Local community visits give a wonderful insight in the real Africa.

SAFE & EASY

A safe and small country with excellent infrastructure and always short journeys, Eswatini is a breeze to get around. Enjoy whether traveller independently or as part of a guided tour.

ESWATINI REGIONS

Eswatini has 4 administrative regions but for the purposes of tourism is more conveniently divided into 5 regions, each one offering a varied and different set of attractions and experiences. Taking the points of the compass for their titles, each of these tourism regions can also be characterised by the attractions & experiences found within – be that amazing scenery, rich cultural experiences or thrilling wildlife encounters. Whilst a focus on one particular region will allow a visitor to witness its individual character, the joy of Eswatini is that its compact size allows the regions to be ‘mixed & matched’ in any single visit, even in a single day! There is no great secret to a great Eswatini itinerary. To experience the remarkable variety of the country, it’s best to visit as many of the regions as possible (at least 3). But with no attraction more than 2 hours away from any other, it’s very easy to visit them all in any order and create a tailor-made trip to your own personal requirements without encountering any long journeys.

CENTRAL ESWATINI: *CULTURAL HEARTLAND*

Although the smallest of the tourism regions, Central Eswatini is where the country’s capital city and second largest city plus main industrial area are found. The two cities lie just 25 miles (40km) apart and are connected by a valley that has become Eswatini’s tourism hub, and the traditional Royal heartland that’s also home to the Parliament. With the country’s most easily accessible wildlife sanctuary, and another nature reserve thrown in for good measure, this is a region of great richness and a huge choice of attractions for any visitor. It’s central positioning also allows easy access to all of the other regions.

NORTH WEST ESWATINI: *HIGHLAND ADVENTURES*

Eswatini’s North-West region lies primarily in the highveld and is a stirring landscape of airy, panoramic uplands. The muscular hills and dramatic river valleys form the eastern edge of South Africa’s Drakensberg escarpment and are crowned by the nation’s two highest peaks – Emlembe (1,862m) and Ngwenya (1,829m). An area of outstanding natural beauty, visitors have a choice of exploring nature reserves (on foot, horseback, mountain bike or even sailing through the treetops on zip-wires!), investigating ancient rock art, and experiencing a re-born ghost town. The region’s attractions conveniently line up along the MR1 road, which starts just 15km west of Mbabane and extends to the South Africa border at Matsamo (30-45mins from Kruger NP). It takes only around 1 ½ hours to drive the length of the MR1.

NORTH EAST ESWATINI: *CONSERVATION & COMMUNITY*

North-East Eswatini lies in the lowveld - a great expanse of flat bushveld – with then a ridge of mountains rising to the east to form the border with Mozambique. It’s dominated by vast sugar estates which emerged from the 1950s and whose country clubs can be enjoyed by visitors. The wild bush areas (similar to Kruger Park in South Africa) make perfect safari country and the region is therefore home to a number of reserves (all accessed from the MR3 road) which collectively make up a Conservancy. The mountains are wild and beautiful with remote settlements, one of which offers a shining example of community tourism.

SOUTH EAST ESWATINI: *WILDLIFE UP CLOSE*

This region lies largely in the lowveld. It is home to Eswatini’s primary game reserve, where rhino experiences rival any in Africa. There is only scattered settlement but a number of sugar estates irrigated from the country’s main river, where white water rafting is available.

SOUTH WEST ESWATINI: *SCENIC SPLENDOUR*

Much of South-West Eswatini lies in the highveld – magnificent scenery of rolling uplands cut by grand rivers that have created impressive valleys and gorges. Unsurprisingly, there is great hiking on offer through little-visited wilderness areas. It’s also a region with some interesting places of historical significance - home to the country’s first church (which can still be visited), and first ceremonial capital.



CENTRAL ESWATINI CULTURAL HEARTLAND

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Sibebe Rock



Phophonyane Falls



Mbabane



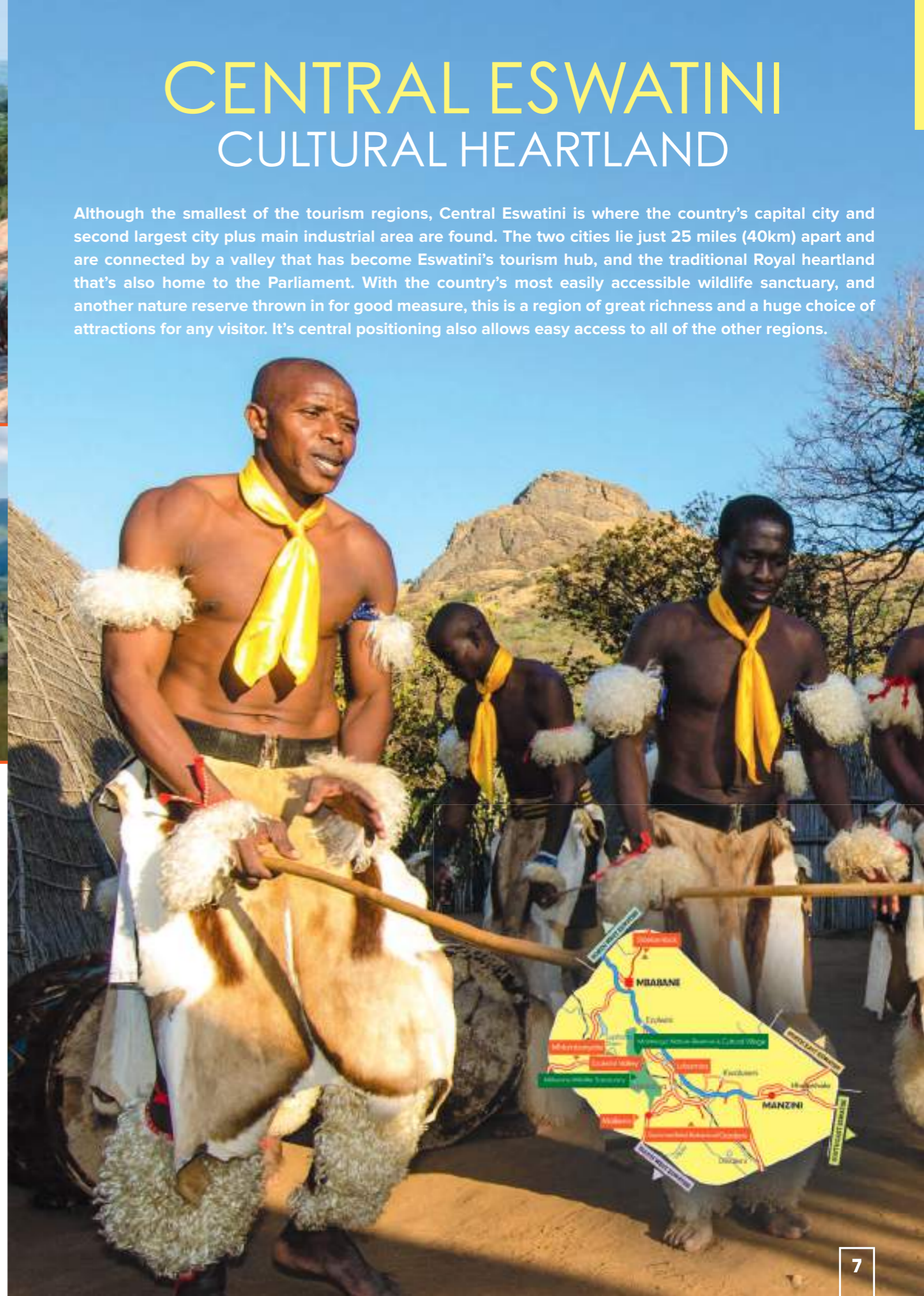
Malolotja Nature Reserve

SPECIAL FOCUS

LIE OF THE LAND

Eswatini's landscapes take you by surprise. The kingdom appears a mere postage stamp on the map, yet step inside and you'll find vast, rugged panoramas stretching away to every horizon. It owes this dramatic topography to its location, perched on southern Africa's eastern escarpment, where the central plateau slopes away east towards the Indian Ocean. The country falls into four distinct topographic regions. The western 'highveld' is a land of hills, waterfalls and ancient rock, with a moist, temperate climate. Mbabane (pictured), the capital, is located here, as is Eswatini's most impressive nature reserve, Malolotja (pictured). Descending

eastwards, the undulating middleveld is Eswatini's agricultural and cultural heartland and home to Manzini, its second largest town. Further east still, you reach the hot, dry lowveld, where the wild bush harbours Eswatini's major game reserves. Finally, along the eastern border with Mozambique, stands a rugged line of volcanic hills known as the Lubombos, home to remote communities and rare wildlife. Eswatini's rivers, including the Great Usuthu, the Nkomati and the Mbuluzi, all flow east from the highlands towards the Indian Ocean. Their wild gorges offer a siren call to any hiker who yearns to feel this wild land beneath their feet.



MBABANE & AROUND

Few people visit Eswatini without passing through its capital. Perched on the edge of the escarpment, just a short drive from the South Africa border at Ngwenya, Mbabane is both an attractive town, with all the amenities a visitor might require, and a convenient gateway to the kingdom's main visitor attractions beyond. The city's hilly streets offer accommodation, shopping and eating out, while alongside the modern malls are traditional markets, colourful street traders and art galleries. And just a few miles out of town lies the scenic grandeur of Pine Valley and the mighty Sibebe Rock.



MBABANE

Mbabane (pronounced Um-ba-ba-neh) has a magnificent setting, ringed by the craggy backdrop of the Dlangeni Hills. With an average height of 1243m, it sits firmly in the highveld, its temperate climate offering some relief during the hot season. Though only a medium-sized town by western standards with a population of some 95,000, it is nonetheless Eswatini's largest, and received 'city' status in 1992.

Mbabane's history dates back to the 1750s, when Chief Mbabane Kunene settled in the area. The town developed during colonial times and became the British colonial capital in 1903, after the Anglo-Boer war. Development saw the first post office in 1906 and the arrival of electricity in 1920 (at the British Commissioner's residence, of course). A golf course, tennis courts, cricket pitch and theatre club soon followed.

It wasn't until independence in 1968, however, that Mbabane really began to expand, with the building of the Swazi Plaza and, subsequently, the Mbabane Mall. Today this area forms the heart of town, and houses banks, shops, internet cafes, tourist information and most modern visitor amenities. Hotels and guesthouses are located mostly in the surrounding residential suburbs and hills, while an abundance of places to eat ranges from restaurants serving international cuisine to coffee shops and fast-food joints. Despite now being a fully modern town, Mbabane has a pleasantly open, relaxed feel to it.



SIBEBE ROCK & PINE VALLEY

Sibebe Rock, just north of Mbabane, is one of southern Africa's most impressive geological features. This immense, three-billion-year-old volcanic slab, which rises to 1,488m and covers some 16,500ha, is the world's largest granite dome. Only Australia's Uluru pips it to the title of 'world's largest rock'.

The best way to see it is to climb it. On top, you will find a wonderland of sculpted boulders, granite slopes and hidden forest clefts, with trails leading to caves and waterfalls. Orchids and other wild flowers carpet the grasslands October to December, and you might spot such highveld birds as jackal buzzard, ground woodpecker and – if you're lucky – a rare blue swallow.

After rains, the rock glistens silver with countless streams running down its bare face. It's a magical sight from afar, but slippery and dangerous, so take care and follow only the marked trails. The road to Sibebe passes along the attractive Pine Valley, with the rock so close to the verge that in places you must crane upwards to see it. At the end lies Sibebe Trails community project, from where a well-marked and manageable path leads to the top. Guides are available.

A few well-run and well-appointed guest houses in the area have truly amazing settings and quite wonderful scenic views across this beautiful part of the Highveld, yet lie a surprisingly close hop to the centre of the country's capital city!



MHLAMBANYATSI & FORESTERS ARMS

Among the deep, dark Usuthu forestry plantations some 25km south-west of Mbabane is the small community of Mhlambanyatsi, where the Foresters Arms hotel offers a popular retreat. Surrounded by the dense plantations and beautiful scenery, it has a European, pastoral feel, with excellent cuisine and cosy interiors, and its celebrated Sunday buffet has long been a favourite family day-out for residents of Mbabane. Country pursuits in the surrounding estate include mountain-biking, horse-riding, hiking, fly-fishing and excellent birdwatching, while tennis, squash and golf are available at the nearby Usuthu Forest Club.



MALAGWANE HILL

The main road east from Mbabane, to the Ezulwini Valley and beyond, descends the precipitous, winding Malagwane Hill, offering panoramic views of Ezulwini Valley and the twin peaks of Sheba's Breasts. However, despite now being a well-engineered, modern, dual carriageway, the steepness and sharpness of the bends mean those driving don't get much chance to enjoy those stunning views! Along the route is a selection of lovely out-of-town accommodation and also the fine Edladleni restaurant, where traditional Swazi food is served on a classy, modern menu.

EZULWINI: VALLEY OF HEAVEN

Ezulwini means ‘place of heaven’, and the panoramic valley that bears this name certainly offers its share of hedonistic delights. This is where tourism in Eswatini began, and today its attractions include hotels, restaurants, hot springs, casinos, craft markets, art galleries, riding stables, a nature reserve, a golf course and a cultural village. Most visitors pass this way, and those who spend just one night in the kingdom will probably spend it here.



PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

The Ezulwini Valley lies directly southeast of Mbabane, extending from the bottom of the Malagwane Hill to Lobamba, and runs parallel with the MR3 highway from Mbabane to Manzini. It is flanked to the west by the craggy Luphohlo/Lugogo mountains and to the east by the sacred Mdzimba mountains. Its development as a tourist centre dates back to the 1960s, when the Royal Swazi Spa Hotel opened beside some natural hot springs known as the Cuddle Puddle, bringing with it southern Africa’s first casino. By 1983, Ezulwini had become Eswatini’s Golden Mile, with a proliferation of hotels, casinos, golf courses, restaurants and other tourist honey pots.

Times have changed, however, and the valley – once famed for its colourful nightlife – is now better known for its fine family-friendly hotels, and natural and cultural attractions. And while its lights may be bright by Swazi standards, the developments are still dwarfed by their picturesque backdrop. Today visitors can still stay at top-end hotels, or choose from plentiful guesthouses, chalets and backpacker hostels. Eating out options range from the renowned Calabash Restaurant, to international cuisine at the Gables shopping centre, with no shortage of cafés and takeaways for the budget conscious.

The Cuddle Puddle is as popular as ever. Its magnesium-rich waters are now channelled into a large swimming pool that steams away gently beneath overhanging trees. Beside it stands a health and beauty studio, with attached gym.



TEA BREAK

The visitor with a morning to spare could make an excursion along the Tea Road, northeast of Ezulwini. The tea plantations established here during the 1960s, for which the road is named, failed to survive the fierce highveld frosts. Today this rural meander into the sacred Mdzimba mountains – the location of secret royal burial caves – offers panoramic views across the Ezulwini Valley, the royal parade grounds of Lobamba (see page 16) and the twin peaks of ‘Sheba’s Breasts’ – the latter said to have inspired the setting for Rider Haggard’s 1885 classic King Solomon’s Mines. The route can be extended into a circuit via Manzini. Though mostly gravel, it is navigable in a normal car.



SHOPPING

The Ezulwini Valley offers a wealth of options for that quintessential Swazi gift. At the Ezulwini Craft Market – Eswatini’s largest, with some 126 different stalls - you will find everything from wooden carvings, plates and beadwork to jewellery, textiles and traditional garments. The Mantenga Craft and Lifestyle Centre nearby offers similar fare, plus an opportunity to nip round the back and watch the artists in action. African Queen, an upmarket gift shop set in the Royal Swazi complex, stocks local crafts, including pottery and jewellery, plus an excellent selection of books. Gables provides standard ‘mall shops’.



ENTERTAINMENT & ACTIVITIES

The casinos at the Royal Swazi Sun and Happy Valley hotel are still going strong, while the larger hotels stage regular live performances, from cabaret nights to fashion shows, and House on Fire (see page 20) is only 15 minutes’ drive away. Those in search of more active pursuits will find swimming pools and tennis courts at the larger hotels. The jewel in the valley’s sporting crown, however, is undoubtedly the 18-hole, championship-standard golf course at the Royal Swazi, one of the most impressive and scenic in southern Africa.

Other activities include horse-riding at Hoofbeat Safaris, with outrides of different lengths across the valley, and quad biking at The Devil’s Cauldron, the site of an old tin mine behind the Royal Swazi. The more limber can also get beneath the surface of Eswatini, literally, with adventure caving – a guided activity that explores a unique cave system underneath the Malagwane Hill. These last two activities, and many more, are the brainchildren of Swazi Trails. They and All Out Africa, are the country’s top adventure tour operators, offering cultural and wildlife excursions as well as adventure activities. Swazi Trails runs an excellent tourist information office beside the Mantenga Craft and Lifestyle Centre, where you will find all the maps and information you might need to plan your own travels. The office is open seven days a week. All Out Africa runs a similar office at Lidwala Lodge, a little way up the valley and the start point for the Sheba’s Breast Hiking Trail. See Activity & Adventure (see page 44) and Listings (see page 46) for further details of activities and operators.



SPECIAL FOCUS

CULTURE & TRADITIONS

Eswatini's traditional culture fascinates visitors. The appeal is self-evident: this tiny Kingdom has managed to retain traditions that date back to pre-colonial times and that, despite all the challenges of modernity, remain fundamental to its cultural life. At its heart lies the monarchy, which binds the nation together in festivals and celebration. The kingdom is not a living museum,

of course, but what you will see – the colour, costume and pageantry – is the real deal, not some contrivance for the tourist industry. And such ritual ceremonies as the Umhlanga, or Reed Dance, are among the most spectacular of their kind on the continent. Look out for the red feathers of the ligwalala, or purple-crested turaco, which denote the royal status of the wearer.

SPECIAL FOCUS

ARTS & CRAFTS

Eswatini has a fine artisanal culture. Some crafts, such as grass waving, woodcarving and beadwork, are rooted in local tradition; others, such as glass blowing and candle making, are imported but have acquired a distinct Swazi flavour in the hands of skilled local workers. There are numerous markets around the country, where you can admire and purchase this work. Some of it may seem familiar: you will probably have seen Swazi candles,

mohair blankets and grass mats adorning ethnic boutiques overseas. But a visit to the kingdom allows you to watch the artists and craftspeople in action, and learn something about their techniques and traditions - even have a go yourself! And at socially responsible outlets you can meet the women for whom the work provides both income and empowerment in rural communities.

MANTENGA & MLILWANE

A few minutes drive from the Ezulwini Valley, midway between Mbabane and Manzini, are two small, adjoining nature reserves. Mlilwane is effectively where conservation in Eswatini began. It has a good selection of wildlife, plenty of outdoor activities, and is popular with locals and visitors alike. Mantenga is a Eswatini National Trust Commission property. It centres upon the picturesque Mantenga Falls and incorporates a cultural village, where Swazi history, culture and tradition are brought alive for visitors. The entrances to both reserves lie midway between Mbabane and Manzini, and are just a few minutes' drive from the hotspots of the Ezulwini Valley.



MANTENGA CULTURAL VILLAGE

Set against the scenic backdrop of Nyonyane mountain, this replica mid-19th Century Swazi village has been constructed using authentic materials and techniques is one of the country's most popular attractions. For a modest fee, visitors may wander the village at leisure. A guided tour will reveal much more, from how the huts are built and what each is used for, to the role played by the *sangoma*, or traditional healer. Among the huts you will meet the villagers, including women preparing food, plaiting grass and making traditional beadwork, all for sale. At a small showground behind the village a dance troop performs traditional *sibhaca* routines twice daily. It's a lively show, comprising vigorous high-kicking, pulsating drumming and some rousing singing. After a couple of hours wandering around the village and watching the dancing, the drinks and refreshments at the Swazi River Café are very welcome.

MANTENGA NATURE RESERVE

This small reserve protects a tract of unspoilt woodland along the Lushushwane river. As well as the Cultural Village at its entrance, the reserve's prime attraction is Mantenga Falls, Eswatini's largest waterfall by volume. The river tumbles over a rock shelf before cascading via a series of pools along the reserve's southern boundary with Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary. Visitors can explore a series of short trails that lead to a picnic spot at the falls. Wildlife in the area includes baboon, duiker, rock hyrax, porcupine, bushpig, nyala and klipspinger, although you are most likely to see the vervet monkeys that hang around the lodge, hoping for handouts. Look out too for rare southern bald ibis, which often roost on the cliffs above the falls. The reserve – together with its cultural village and restaurant – makes for a perfect half-day trip. A cosy lodge within the reserve also caters to over-nighters.



MLILWANE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Mlilwane is Eswatini's best-known nature reserve. It was here in 1961 that Ted Reilly – whose father had settled the property in 1906 - first took action to save what remained of the kingdom's wildlife, converting it into a sanctuary and rounding up animals from elsewhere around the country before they were hunted out. Although Big Game Parks – the independent conservation trust that Reilly subsequently founded – has since acquired the management of the larger reserves of Hlane and Mkhaya, Mlilwane remains its spiritual home.

Mlilwane is just a 15-minute drive from the Ezulwini Valley and its landscape is dominated by Nyonyane mountain, visible from afar. This dramatic peak is known as Execution Rock from the grisly fate that once befell the condemned folk led to its summit. The reserve is not 'Big Five' country, and indeed the proximity of busy Ezulwini Valley, together with the stands of alien gum trees and old tin mine workings, mean that it cannot be considered a pristine wilderness. Nonetheless, it is a beautifully scenic and wonderful oasis for wildlife, with a lovely relaxed ambience.

Accommodation and activities are based in the reserve's southern sector, with the northern sector set aside as a wilderness area. Wildlife is easy to find: zebra, blesbok, impala,

blue wildebeest and warthog graze the open grasslands, while kudu and nyala browse the thickets. Rare antelope, such as roan and oribi, are protected in an enclosed area and can be viewed on a guided tour, and a pod of hippos frequents the main dam, sometimes visiting the waterhole at Rest Camp. Vervet monkeys and baboons are common, while the rich birdlife includes a noisy heron colony at Rest Camp, and both black and crowned eagles in the hills. Crocodiles lurk in the Dam.

Mlilwane offers a variety of accommodation, from self-catering cottages to beehive huts and a backpackers lodge – or you can splash out on the colonial comforts of Reilly's Rock, the old family home, where bushbabies visit the verandah every evening. Many visitors, however, come just for a family day-out in the mellow environs of Rest Camp, where you can fire up the barbeque take a dip in the pool and commune with the wandering warthogs. The reserve's public roads are perfect for self-drive wildlife spotting – or you can book a guided game drive in an open Land Rover. Other activities include walking trails, mountain-biking and horse-riding. The last of these caters for all levels and offers an excellent way to approach wildlife and explore the mountains on hourly and multi-day trails. Longer riding trails feature a night spent in a hidden cave beneath Nyonyane, complete with traditional open fire dinner.

LOBAMBA: ROYAL HEARTLAND

Eswatini's spiritual, cultural and political heart lies at Lobamba, just east of the Ezulwini Valley. This area has been playing host to Eswatini's royalty for over 200 years and it is on the surrounding plains that the nation still gathers for the annual Incwala and Umhlanga ceremonies, against the imposing backdrop of the sacred Mdzimba mountains. To the north of the road the visitor will find Parliament, the National Museum, National Stadium and King Sobhuza II Memorial Park. To the south, beyond the cluster of Lobamba village, lies Ludzidzini and the royal kraal. There is plenty to see at all times of year, but a visit is undoubtedly most exciting during the festivities of the Umhlanga and Incwala.



NATIONAL MUSEUM

Eswatini's national museum, known in siSwati as Umsamo Wesive was built in 1972 and sits just behind parliament. It serves as the HQ of the Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC), custodians of the nation's heritage and cultural archives, and contains exhibits on Eswatini's culture, history and natural history. The ENTC arranges visits for school children to ensure that each successive generation grasps the importance of its heritage. In the natural history section you will find several impressive dioramas illustrating Eswatini's various different habitats, complete with mounted animals – including a pride of lions chasing down a zebra. The recently revamped history and culture section, meanwhile, offers an excellent introduction to the way in which people have lived in Eswatini since prehistoric times. A chronological sequence of displays guides the visitor from the earliest hunter-gatherers right through to independence, with exhibits on everything from beadwork to missionaries. Artefacts include a 75–80,000-year-old stone spear. There is also a wonderful frieze of archive photographs depicting the colonial era and an interesting exhibition of contemporary Swazi painting.



KING SOBHUZA II MEMORIAL PARK

This formal garden stands immediately opposite the museum, and was built in 1982 after the death of King Sobhuza II at the site where his body lay in state. Sobhuza – father of today's King Mswati III - enjoys an almost defied status in contemporary Eswatini as the father of the modern-day Eswatini. His various celebrated utterances trotted out like the wisdom of Solomon. 'Anginasitsa' ('I have no enemies') is the motto emblazoned on the large brass statue of the monarch that stands at the centre. The hexagonal layout has various symbolic resonances, with Sobhuza's statue facing east towards his father's burial site in the Mdzimba mountains. A glass mausoleum that preserves the very spot where the body lay is guarded day and night, with photographs strictly forbidden; a flame is lit for important occasions. The small museum display documents the King's long life with archive photographs and some fascinating nuggets of information. The spacious gardens of the Memorial Park contribute to the overall feeling of Lobamba - that of being open and relaxed. Despite there being a concentration of places of national importance, Lobamba is rarely busy, and is very easy to simply 'wander' around. There is a walking tour on offer that includes sampling local beer in the village.



ROYAL KRAAL

Just east of Lobamba the countryside opens out into broad, cattle-cropped plains. At the end of a palm-lined avenue to the south is eLudzidzini, where the Queen Mother's royal kraal sits among the clustered dwellings of the royal village, its walls symbolically reinforced with reeds during the annual Umhlanga Reed Dance (see page 18). In front is a parade ground, where the concluding ceremonies of the Umhlanga take place. During the Umhlanga and Incwala, the surrounding plains swarm with people in traditional dress, either joining the festivities or commuting back and forth. With the Mdzimba mountains behind, it makes for a spectacular sight.

PARLIAMENT

Eswatini's parliament, or Libandla, sits – literally – next to the national museum. It opened in 1969 as a post-independence gift from the departing British. Beneath its hexagonal roof, topped with a brass dome, are the two houses: the Senate, or Upper Chamber, and the House of Assembly. Guided tours are available: look out for the large stuffed lion and hippo, both shot in the lowveld and presented to Sobhuza. Visitors may watch from the public gallery when the House of Assembly is sitting.



SOMHLOLO STADIUM

The 20,000-capacity national stadium is named after Eswatini's King Sobhuza I (1805–1839), also known as Somhlolo, the founding father of the Swazi nation. It was built for Eswatini's independence in 1968 and was used for the coronation of Mswati III on 25 April 1986. In former years, when sanctions against apartheid kept performers away from neighbouring South Africa, it staged everything from concerts by Percy Sledge to exhibition matches by Manchester United. Today it serves as a football ground for the national team and hosts occasional national events such as the 40/40 celebrations in 2008 when King Mswati and Eswatini itself both celebrated 40th Birthdays.

FESTIVALS & CEREMONIES

Eswatini's traditional culture finds its most spectacular expression in a number of ritual ceremonies through the year conducted on an impressive scale. These are living cultural events that, bar the odd pair of sunglasses and mobile phone, have hardly changed in two centuries. Visitors are welcome (though some parts remain private) but the ceremonies make little

concession to tourism. During festival time, a mood of celebration sweeps the nation and bands of warriors or maidens decked out in full regalia are often seen heading to or from the festivities. Not to be outdone, the current generation has created a modern new, vibrant music & arts festival that has fast established an excellent international reputation.

REED DANCE

The most colourful and best known of Eswatini's cultural events is the Umhlanga, or Reed Dance, a sacred celebration of chastity held in late August/early September at the Royal Kraal in Lobamaba (pageXX). In this eight-day ceremony, young girls cut reeds, present them to the Queen Mother (Indlovukazi) – ostensibly to repair the windbreak around her royal residence – and then dance in celebration before the King. Up to 40,000 girls take part, dressed up in brightly coloured attire - making it one of the biggest and most spectacular cultural events in Africa. It is largely private, but has two days of amazing public spectacle (Days 6 and 7). Dates for the event are announced relatively close to the time as the precise timing of the event is determined using ancestral astrology.



BUSHFIRE FESTIVAL

The annual Bushfire festival is Eswatini's answer to Glastonbury: an explosion of performing arts – including music, theatre, poetry and dance – that is now one of the top cultural events in Africa. It takes place on multiple stages within and around the unique House on Fire venue. Major artists from across the region and from further afield gather to perform, drawing up to 20,000 visitors over three days in May. You will also find film, workshops and a global food fair. The festival has become a platform for the arts in Eswatini and raises vital funds for local charities.



INCWALA FESTIVAL

The Incwala Festival is Eswatini's most important cultural event. A ceremony that has lasted for hundreds of years, it is one of the last remaining examples of what was previously common practice in many African countries. It has a spiritual power that is largely lost on outsiders, and many of its inner workings remain secret. Although often translated as 'first fruits festival', the tasting of the first of the season's bounty is only a part of this long rite. Royal regiments collect water from the Indian Ocean while boys collect branches to rebuild the Royal Kraal. Essentially this is about cleansing and renewal, and – above all – celebrating kingship. Although not a tourism event, visitors with an interest in Eswatini culture are welcomed. It takes place at the end of the year or early January with dates confirmed closer to the time.



MARULA FESTIVAL

Each year King Mswati III and Her Majesty the Indlovukazi, the Queen Mother, visit various regions of the Kingdom to celebrate the Marula harvest. The largest of these festivals is at the royal residence at Ebuhleni, where the royal family join the nation in song and dance. Seen by the Swazi nation as much more than a food source, the Marula is rather regarded as a magical healing ingredient, with huge fertility properties. The King and Queen mother are presented with Marula gifts and only after the royal family has had some of the beer is the rest of the nation permitted to join in and drink as well. The Marula season begins in mid-February and continues until May.

ESWATINI CALENDAR

Eswatini's internationally recognised festivals and ceremonies take place all year round and form a large part of the country's annual events calendar. Take a look at the list below for a selection of the many events held across the Kingdom. Though precise dates can change, the listed events are usually annual.

FEBRUARY/MARCH
MARULA FESTIVAL BEGINS
APRIL
KING'S BIRTHDAY
NATIONAL FLAG DAY
MAY
MTN BUSHFIRE FESTIVAL
JUNE
IMVELO MTB CLASSIC
GALP CLASSIC CAR RALLY
MAGADZAVANE CHALLENGE WALK
JULY
NGWENYA GLASS MTB CHALLENGE
EPILEPSY GOLF
FESTIVAL XPLOSION
AUGUST
LUJU FOOD & LIFESTYLE FESTIVAL
ESWATINI INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL
SIBEBE SURVIVOR
SWAZI RALLY
GREEN LIFESTYLE FESTIVAL
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER
UMHLANGA REED DANCE
<i>Confirmed closer to the time. Can fall across end of August or start of September.</i>
ESWATINI INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR
SEPTEMBER
SOMHLOLO DAY
SWAZI 3 RESERVES MTB RACE
OCTOBER
INYATSI SWAZI FRONTIER
KING'S GOLF CUP
NOVEMBER
FNB SMOOTHFEST
DECEMBER/JANUARY
INCWALA FESTIVAL
<i>Confirmed closer to the time. Can fall across end of December or start of January.</i>

MALKERNS & MANZINI

The Malkerns Valley lies at the heart of the middleveld, midway between Ezulwini and Manzini. This large, fertile expanse of farmland, bristling with the spiky grey-green leaves of the pineapple estates, is Eswatini's breadbasket. Among the fields of surrounding the small settlement of Malkerns are some excellent craft markets and workshops, guest houses, a riding stables and the Mandela's complex - one of Eswatini's premier tourist spots. Although not the capital, Manzini is the country's busiest city, with plenty of hustle & bustle, including a lively market. Nearby Matsapha is Eswatini's industrial heartland.



MALANDELA'S & HOUSE ON FIRE

This tourist hotspot lies just 1km from Mahlanya on the road to Malkerns. Originating in a market stall on a family farm, it now comprises a cluster of buildings, all moulded from local earth in the contours and ochre hues of a traditional African settlement. At its heart is an excellent restaurant. Around this is an internet café and information centre, the funky Zoggs boutique, a gorgeous botanical garden and a boutique B&B, while next door are the major enterprises of Gone Rural and House on Fire. The sweeping lawns, sculpture gardens, blossom and birdsong create a unique mellow vibe. House on Fire is part outdoor performance arena and part art gallery. This extraordinary creation centres upon a sunken 'Afro-Shakespearian Globe Theatre', around which are creative spaces on multiple levels for exhibitions, performances and other creative activities. Constructed in an eclectic fantasy style, it is embellished with mosaics and sculptures from numerous artists, and crammed with original work. The stage hosts everything from reggae bands to performance poets and every May the annual Bushfire festival - Eswatini's answer to Glastonbury. This is an explosion of performing arts - including music, theatre, poetry and dance that is now one of the top cultural events in Africa (see page 18).

SWAZI CANDLES CENTRE

This popular tourist spot, the Malkerns Valley, consists of a cluster of handicraft outlets around the showroom and workshop of Swazi Candles, a successful local enterprise that today exports candles worldwide. Inside the workshop you can watch the candle-makers shaping and colouring their creations. Their technique, known as millefiore ('thousand flowers'), was developed centuries ago by Venetian glass blowers and has transferred seamlessly to wax. A hard veneer means that the lit candles melt only on the inside, creating a translucent stained-glass window effect for the luminous colours. Numerous products are for sale.

Products at the other shops include woven mohair garments, batiks and hand-crafted bags, all produced by local women, plus jewellery, chilli sauces, clothing, soaps, African artefacts and the varied works of contemporary Swazi artists. There are outlets of Rosecraft Weaving, Baobab Batik, Black Mamba Chilli and Yebo Art & Design, amongst others. Under the huge jacarandas you will also find an open-air handicraft market including wood-carver stalls, a children's playground, and the friendly Sambane Café, where you can enjoy excellent coffee and cake. The complex is open seven days a week between 8 am and 5 pm and is a real gem.

MANZINI

Having re-emerged from the British colonial HQ (Bremersdorp) razed to the ground at the end of the 2nd Anglo-Boer War, Manzini became the country's commercial, agricultural and transportation heart. Just 30 minutes from Mbabane on the main east-west MR3 highway, it is the gateway to the south and east. Its centre is compact: you can walk from one end to the other in 15 minutes, passing the main bus rank, the bustling Bhunu Mall, the Catholic cathedral and Manzini Market - the busiest in the country. Tourists are, in general, a rarer sight in Manzini than in Mbabane or Ezulwini. There are plenty of places to stay in town, although many cater more to the business traveller than to the tourist. Eateries run from fast-food outlets and cafés to a handful of more upmarket restaurants. Eswatini's largest and liveliest market is sprawled across the eastern end of Mancishane Street. It is noisy, crowded and completely authentic. Thursday is the day to go, when buyers and sellers arrive from all over the region. You can find pretty much anything here, from the usual arts and crafts, fruits, veg and clothing to traditional dress and some fascinating traditional healer stalls. Matsapha, a western suburb of Manzini, is the country's primary industrial area. It used to be home to Eswatini's only airport, though this is no longer used and all public flights are run from the new airport in the lowveld (see page 33).

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Summerfield Botanical Gardens is the brainchild of local businessman John Carmichael, it began life as a botanical garden, with the restaurants and accommodation following by popular demand. The 100ha property was landscaped from an industrial wasteland and is now a designated National Conservancy, with Eswatini's largest collection of plants including indigenous trees, cycads, palms, succulents and fruit trees all in separate collections.

Tsandza Weaving is a social enterprise that produces high quality products, handwoven in pure natural fibres by talented Artisans in rural Eswatini. Their workshop is in a setting that matches the beauty of their products, near the Usuthu River, and offers the opportunity to see the artisans at work, learn about the weaving process, and even have a go for yourself!

Baobab Batik produces a range of patterned fabrics using melted wax and dyes, and sells its products at outlets across Eswatini. At Under African Skies, their workshop, at the southern tip of Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary, you can watch the batiks being made. Live demonstrations are sometimes held in the Baobab Batiks shop at Mandela's, just up the road.



NORTH WEST ESWATINI HIGHLAND ADVENTURES

Eswatini's North West region is a stirring landscape of airy, panoramic uplands. The muscular hills and dramatic river valleys form the eastern edge of South Africa's Drakensberg escarpment and are crowned by the nation's two highest peaks – Emlembe (1,862m) and Ngwenya (1,829m). An area of outstanding natural beauty, visitors have a choice of exploring nature reserves (on foot, horseback, mountain bike or even sailing through the treetops on zip-wires!), investigating ancient rock art, and experiencing a re-born ghost town. The region's attractions conveniently line up along the MR1 road, which starts just 15km west of Mbanane and extends to the South Africa border at Matsamo (30-45mins from Kruger NP). It takes only around 1 ½ hours to drive the length of the MR1.



SPECIAL FOCUS

SCENIC ESWATINI

Eswatini is a small land with very big horizons. From the muscular uplands of the western highveld to the wild ridges of the eastern Lubombos, there is no bend in the road that does not offer another impressive vista. And with statuesque rock formations, picturesque villages and wide meandering rivers to fill the viewfinder, the photographer is spoilt for choice. The light is constantly

changing, especially during the rainy season, when towering thunderheads pile up into menacing storm clouds then, after the downpour, leave the sky a pristine blue. Any visitor to the Kingdom could do worse than simply wander the hills and valleys and enjoy the ever-changing views of beautiful scenery and genuine wilderness.

MALOLOTJA & NGWENYA

Eswatini's North West region is a stirring landscape of airy, panoramic uplands. The muscular hills and dramatic river valleys form the eastern edge of South Africa's Drakensberg escarpment and are crowned by the nation's highest peaks. Winter nights are chilly and mist often cloaks the high ground. Among the region's attractions are the stunning Malolotja Nature Reserve, Eswatini's greatest wilderness, and Ngwenya, with its ancient mine and glass factory. Both are easily reached from Mbabane, just to the south, or from the South African side via one of three road borders.



MALOLTJA NATURE RESERVE

Malolotja is one of the very best highland reserves in southern Africa, its 18,000ha wilderness of high rolling hills and deep forested river gorges offering a genuine wilderness in which hikers can lose themselves for days. The Malolotja river rises in the reserve, plunging over the 95m Malolotja Falls on its way to the Nkomati river, which cuts east towards the Indian Ocean. The rocks beneath Malolotja are among the oldest in the world – some, known as the Eswatini Supergroup, having been laid down as ocean sediment over 3.5 billion years ago, before metamorphosing under heat and pressure into the shales and quartzites we see today. The reserve entrance is just a 30-minute drive from either Mbabane or Piggs Peak. Visitors can stay at the campsite or in self-catering log cabins. Alternatively they can stay in traditional beehive chalets – complete with modern interiors – at nearby Hawane resort, which runs activities into and around the reserve, including horse-riding. A small dam at Hawane is good for bird watching and fishing.

The Malolotja wildlife experience is more about quality than quantity. You won't see as many species as on the lowveld

reserves, but you might see one or two more unusual ones. Among the larger mammals are grazers such as blesbok, zebra, blue wildebeest and the rare black wildebeest. Smaller antelope include grey rhebok, mountain reedbuck and oribi. A few shy leopard roam the hills and gorges, while serval and aardwolf stalk the grasslands and baboons patrol the ridges. Look out for aardvark diggings and the scattered quills of porcupines. Malolotja has many treats for birders. The main drawcard is the endangered blue swallow. Other specials include Gurney's sugarbird, ground woodpecker, Denham's bustard and southern bald ibis – the last of these breeding on the cliffs above the falls.

Malolotja is also home to localised reptiles, such as the Swazi thick-tailed rock gecko.

Fabulous displays of wild flowers thrive during the spring months (October & November), with lilies, orchids and red-hot poker,



Black Wilderbeest

while the valley floors support two threatened species of cycad. Malolotja's 200km of trails offer some of the finest hiking in southern Africa, from gentle morning walks to multi-day wilderness hikes. Malolotja's climate is highly variable, and hikers should come prepared for all weather. A limited network of rough roads is not really designed for game viewing but serves to reach the trailheads. Mountain bikes can be hired at the entrance gate. For a more adrenalin-charged experience, the Malolotja Canopy Tour comprises a 50m suspension bridge and 11 wooden platforms ingeniously affixed to the steep sides of Silotshwane Gorge. Participants zip-line from platform to platform on a steel cable high above the forest canopy and Majolomba river.

While visiting Malolotja, don't miss the stone-carver stalls near the entrance. Their products are among the best of their kind in Eswatini. Made mostly of soapstone, an easily workable local rock, their natural grey-green colour is enhanced by oiling or darkened with shoe polish.

Without doubt, Malolotja should be on the itinerary of every adventure-seeker or scenery-lover visiting southern Africa.

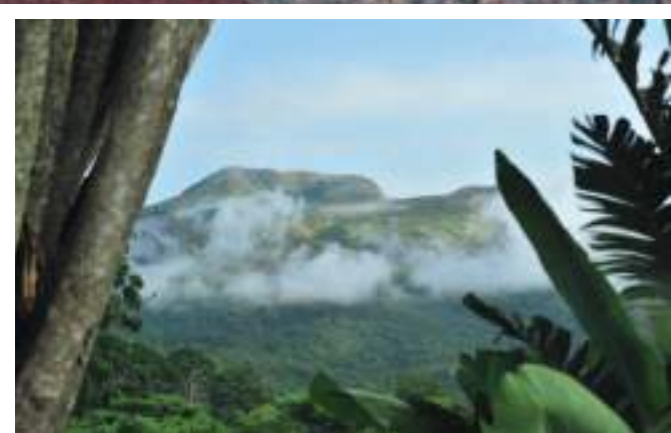
NGWENYA GLASS & NGWENYA MINE

Ngwenya Glass, a popular tourist stop near the Ngwenya border post, comprises the famous glass-blowing factory, plus a cluster of smaller handicraft outlets. Ngwenya Glass grew from a Swedish aid project with Swazi trainees sent to study at the celebrated Kosta Boda glassworks. Today the factory's figurines, vases and tableware are exported worldwide. All these products are made from 100% recycled glass – primarily old soft-drinks bottles collected from around Eswatini – and the factory employs a series of eco-friendly practices throughout the production process. On weekdays you can watch from a balcony as the glassblowers work their magic at the glowing furnaces. The adjoining showroom has an impressive array of products.

Ngwenya, which means crocodile, describes the shape of Eswatini's second-highest mountain, looming above the Ngwenya border post. On its southern flank is the oldest mine in the world – an iron ore mine dated by archaeologists to at least 43,000 years ago. The mineral mined here was specularite, an ore with a glittering sheen that was traditionally worn by chiefs as body paint for ceremonial occasions. All that remains today of the ancient mine is a modest hole in the hillside, known as Lion Cavern – not to be confused with the much larger flooded quarry nearby, left by more modern mining operations. You can visit the mine on a guided tour from the nearby visitor centre, which displays samples of various mineral deposits and a life-size diorama of an iron-age smelter at work, among other fascinating exhibits.

FAR NORTH WEST

North of Malolotja, the MR1 highway from Mbabane winds steeply down into a spectacular valley, where the Nkomati river – Eswatini’s second largest – carves its winding way east across the top corner of the country towards the Indian Ocean. The small town of Piggs Peak sits among cool forestry plantations on the northern side, offering a convenient pit-stop between Mbabane and the Kruger Park. Scattered around the picturesque surrounding countryside are a number of visitor attractions. These include the wide waters of Maguga Dam, the ancient rock art at Nsangwini, the natural haven of Phophonyane Falls and the rehabilitated mountain mining town of Bulembu.



PIGGS PEAK

Piggs Peak is the only settlement of any size in North West Eswatini. The town’s name derives from French prospector William Pigg, who made his fortune in gold, after discovering a reef in the nearby hills in 1884. The gold mine was once the most important in Eswatini. By the time it was exhausted in 1954, however, it had already been surpassed by the more profitable Havelock asbestos mine at Bulembu. Today forestry has long since eclipsed mining as the main local industry. The town is also known for its large hotel and casino, splendidly situated on the crest of a ridge 10km north of town.

The Peak Fine Craft Centre, just to north of the hotel, is indisputably Eswatini’s most scenic handicrafts outlet. It centres upon the workshop and boutique of Coral Stephens Hand Weaving, an impressive family enterprise, whose mohair curtains, carpets and other products are exported worldwide. Other craft outlets include sisal-weaving, jewellery, ceramics and stone-carving. The craft centre has a restaurant offering spectacular views over the surrounding area.



PHOPHONYANE FALLS

This private nature reserve lies about 10km north of Piggs Peak and nestles in a forested hillside above the tumbling Phophonyane river, incorporating the attractive Phophonyane Falls. The gorgeous lodge has a beguiling natural ambience, with its cluster of buildings, all painted in African ochres and adorned with hangings and frescoes, smuggled discreetly into the lush subtropical vegetation. Nature runs rampant, with birdsong blending into the ubiquitous trickle of running water. Accommodation ranges from rustic cottages to safari tents and upgraded beehive huts. Day visitors can enjoy the restaurant, trails and natural rock swimming pool.

Phophonyane’s quiet trails are home to plentiful wildlife. You may spot a timid red duiker or troop of banded mongooses, while vervet monkeys often hang around the lodge. Among some 240 recorded birds, pride of place goes to the dazzling narina trogon, an elusive gem that forms the reserve logo. Colourful rainbow skinks dash around rocky outcrops, where pythons are sometimes also seen. Guests can also enjoy guided community walks and hikes along the nearby Gbolondo mountain ridge.



NKOMATI VALLEY

Nsangwini Rock Art, an atmospheric site, hidden on the northern flank of the Nkomati Valley between Maguga Dam and Piggs Peak, preserves Eswatini’s best bushman paintings. The paintings, which lie beneath a rock overhang down a rocky trail, are the work of the hunter-gatherer San people and could be up to 4,000 years old. Guides from the local community will point out various animal and human bearing spears, and bizarre spirit sporting insect heads. Archaeologists believe that these paintings were completed in a shamanic trance and that many carry symbolic meaning. The work is executed in red ochre and animal blood with wonderful delicacy and precision.

Maguga Dam, an impressive expanse of blue water, can be reached via a loop road east of the MR1, which crosses the Nkomati Valley at the dam wall. It is Eswatini’s largest reservoir and its wall, which stands 115m high, is the fourth largest in southern Africa. Visitors can pause to take in the view at various points. Boating and fishing are both available on the dam, with fully equipped houseboats for hire. You might even glimpse one of the hippos that sometimes make their way here along the Nkomati.

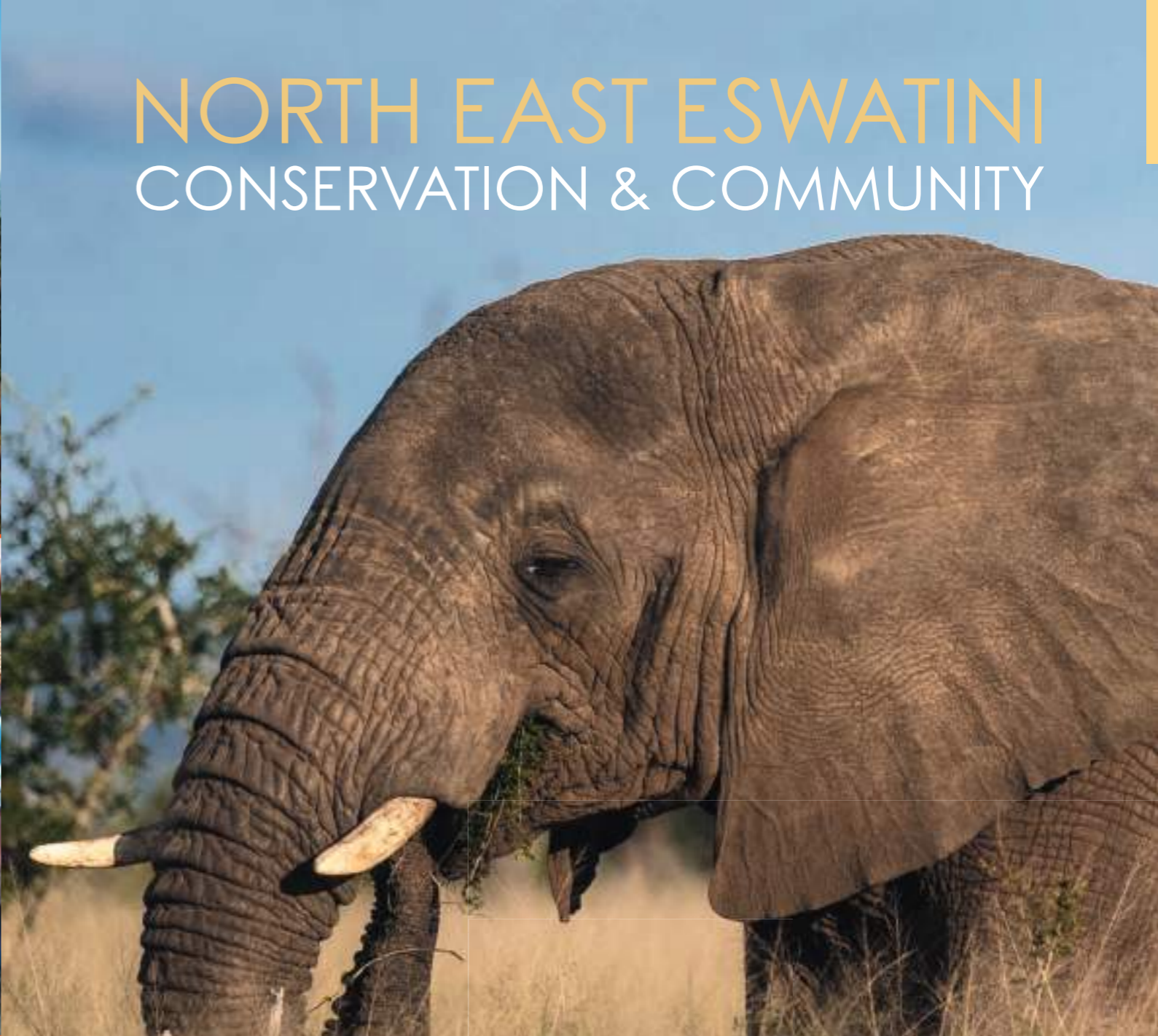


BULEMBU

Bulembu lies on the South Africa border at the end of a rough road west of Piggs Peak. The nearby mountains include the 1,862m summit of Emlembe, the kingdom’s highest peak. The town, nestled at the foot of the mountain, is surrounded by the natural beauty of lush green hills and eucalyptus forests.

Built during the 1930s to serve the Havelock asbestos mine – once the mainstay of Eswatini’s economy – this mining community was left a ghost town after the asbestos market collapsed and the mine closed. It has since received a new lease of life, however, courtesy of a pioneering charity project that has restored the community through a combination of social welfare – notably the rehousing of vulnerable children in old miners’ accommodation – and cottage industries including timber, honey production, spring water bottling, a dairy and a bakery. Today tourists can visit the fascinating and well-kept mining museum, wander the old colonial buildings, see the local enterprises in action, stay at the resurrected and charming Bulembu Country Lodge and hike high into the hills.

NORTH EAST ESWATINI CONSERVATION & COMMUNITY



SPECIAL FOCUS

HISTORIC ESWATINI

Eswatini is an ancient land. The rocks of the highveld, dating back some 3.5 billion years, are among the oldest known on Earth, and there have been people wandering the nation's hills for almost as long as our species has occupied the planet. Today the visitor can find evidence of the ancient past everywhere from Ngwenya mine, where specularite was extracted for ritual purposes during the Middle Stone Age, some 43,000 years ago,

to the San rock art daubed on the walls of cave shelters such as Nsangwini. The Kingdom's more recent past was forged during the 19th-century struggles between the Boers, British and Zulus, and evidence of this fascinating, turbulent period lies in the abandoned mine workings of the gold rush and the first missionary church at Mahamba. The more layers you peel back, the more you discover.

North East Eswatini lies in the lowveld - a great expanse of flat bushveld - with then a ridge of mountains rising to the east to form the border with Mozambique. It's dominated by vast sugar estates which emerged from the 1950s and whose country clubs can be enjoyed by visitors. The wild bush areas (similar to Kruger Park in South Africa) make perfect safari country and the region is therefore home to a number of reserves (all accessed from the MR3 road) which collectively make up a Conservancy. The mountains are wild and beautiful with remote settlements, one of which offers a shining example of community tourism.



LUBOMBO CONSERVANCY

The reserves of Hlane, Malwula, Mbuluzi and Shewula fall within a larger project called the Lubombo Conservancy. This aims to protect the biodiversity of North East Eswatini, also helping improve life for people through more sustainable use of natural resources. This area is also where most big game is found. The free-roaming herds of the past are gone, but a far-sighted conservation programme has preserved the habitat and replenished much of its original wildlife.



HLANE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

Hlane is Eswatini's largest protected area and extends either side of the MR3 – where you may spot wildlife along the verge. The camps are located in the western sector. This area hosts the traditional Butimba, or royal hunt, and today Big Game Parks manages Hlane on behalf of the King. Among a wealth of wildlife reintroduced to its former home, elephant, white rhino, lion and leopard all occur. The rhino and elephant often visit the waterhole at Ndlovu Camp, while lions – the emblem of royal Eswatini – occupy a separate fenced area, where you can see them on a guided game drive. Leopards are more elusive, as are spotted hyenas, whose whooping calls blend with the roars of the lions at night. Giraffe, zebra and hippos are among the other large mammals, while antelope include abundant impala, plus kudu, wildebeest and waterbuck. Highlights among more than 300 species of bird include a large breeding colony of white-backed vultures.

Hlane's wide network of game-viewing roads is ideal for self-drive. You can stretch your legs at picnic sites and watch animals come to drink from the game-viewing hide at Mahlindza Dam. Other activities include guided bird walks and a mountain-bike trail, while overnight bush trails are run in the wild eastern Lusoti section. Accommodation is at Ndlovu Camp, where you can watch the rhinos come to drink, or at the secluded, self-catering Bhubesi Camp, where only the calls of bushbabies and nightjars disturb the night.



MLAWULA NATURE RESERVE

This wild reserve lies to the east of the MR3, north of Simunye, and is managed by the Eswatini National Trust Commission. Its savannah and woodland mosaic is flanked to the east by the Lubombo mountains and to the north by the Mbuluzi river. This habitat variety means that Mlawula boasts an even greater biodiversity than Hlane, but poaching over the years has taken its toll and larger game is harder to see. Impala are the most abundant large mammal, with zebra, wildebeest, nyala and kudu often seen. Predators include a few spotted hyenas, often heard at night, while baboons and klipspringers scale the cliffs of the Lubombos. Mlawula's 350 recorded species of bird represent 70% of Eswatini's total and include such local specialities as white-backed night-heron and African broadbill. The reserve is also a botanical hotspot, with endemic cycads and aloes among its 1,035 recorded species.

Mlawula is a rougher and more challenging destination than Hlane, with fewer facilities and activities, but offers rich rewards for those prepared to explore. Visitors can stay at Siphiso campsite or Magadzavane Lodge, the latter reached via Siteki (see page 33). Most game-viewing roads are, with care, manageable in a normal vehicle. A map marks all roads, trails and picnic spots and, with no dangerous game, you can get out wherever you like. The walking trails offer a rare opportunity to wander unguided in pristine African bush. Trails vary in length from 1.5km to a full day's hike.



MBULUZI GAME RESERVE

This small but highly picturesque reserve adjoins Mlawula to the northwest, and its privately managed bushveld is home to plentiful wildlife. Game-viewing roads, hiking trails and a mountain-bike route wind around the reserve, criss-crossing the Mlawula River and offering impressive views. The terrain undulates between the deep Mbuluzi gorge and steep Lubombo escarpment, with dense riverine forests, rocky cliffs and open savannah. It supports a good population of giraffe, plus kudu, blue wildebeest, zebra, impala and other herbivores. Hippos move in and out of the reserve, while spotted hyenas and leopards are occasionally seen. Over 300 bird species have been recorded, including rarities such as African finfoot, and the rivers hold numerous crocodiles.

Mbuluzi is a strictly do-it-yourself destination. You can drive most roads in a standard family car, visiting viewpoints, picnic spots and a bird hide, or walk the reserve's many trails. Other activities include mountain-biking and fishing. Large private lodges offer secluded, fully equipped, self-catering accommodation, with excellent views.



SHEWULA NATURE RESERVE

Shewula Nature Reserve covers 2650 ha of land put aside by the local community for conservation. It is home to the very popular Shewula Mountain Camp, which enjoys a spectacular location on top of the Lubombos. On a clear day you can see down to the Indian Ocean to the east and across Eswatini to the mountains of Malolotja to the west. This pioneering eco-tourism project has become one of the most successful of its kind in southern Africa. The community own and manage the project and profits go towards local development projects, including orphan care and wind power. Activities include guided nature walks down to the Mbuluzi Gorge, through beautiful scenery in search of crocodiles, birds and other wildlife, and mountain bike (or donkey cart!) rides around the plateau. The highlight is probably the village walk, taking you round the community; a chance to meet local people, visit a school and share some stories over a local beer, even visit the local sangoma (traditional healer). These walks do not feel contrived; the village simply gets on with life while you join in with as much or as little as you like. The sunsets are spectacular, and after dark you can enjoy the communal Swazi meals and watch the sibhaca dance displays.

LOWVELD & LUBOMBOS

The lowveld of eastern Eswatini is quintessential Africa: undulating thorn bush, scattered mud-and-thatch villages, and blue hills lining the horizon. It seems a world away from the cool western highveld. Those blue hills, the beautiful Lubombo Mountains, form the eastern border with South Africa. The advent of the sugar estates from the late 1950s brought development.



LUBOMBO MOUNTAINS

Along the eastern border, forming a natural barrier between Eswatini and Mozambique, is a line of rugged volcanic hills known as the Lubombos, which rise abruptly from the lowveld to some 600m. This range extends far beyond Eswatini, following the Mozambique border north through the Kruger National Park and south into KwaZulu-Natal. These wild hills harbour some unusual habitats, with flora and fauna found nowhere else in the country. A new initiative is opening up a number of eco-walking trails. The Lubombo Eco Trails is aimed at providing the adventure seeker with a unique ecological and cultural experience. It is a community-focused initiative: a growing adventure trails network including hiking, mountain biking, 4x4 routes, bird watching, cultural routes and river rafting. The Eco Trails will initiate a number of community-based enterprises, such as eco lodges and cultural attractions.

SUGAR ESTATES & COUNTRY CLUBS

In the northeast corner of the country, a series of vast sugar estates dominate the lowveld, with a number of estate country clubs offering facilities for visitors. The clubs are something of a blast from the past. They were built mainly for the recreational needs of the expats who work on the sugar estates and come with golf course, sports bars, tennis courts, and other facilities you might expect. But they are by no means stuffy or exclusive and offer a pleasant place to eat or spend the night – generally in large and attractive grounds. In the far north, Mhlume, Tambankulu and Mananga Country Clubs all lie just off the M24. Mananga has its own small game reserve and offers activities on the nearby Sand River Dam. Simunye Country Club offers a convenient watering hole at the centre of the Lubombo Conservancy, with a relaxed vibe, excellent food and lush grounds teeming with bird life.

SITEKI

Siteki, 65km east of Manzini, is perched on top of the Lubombo plateau and offers magnificent views back to the distant mountains in the west. Its name means ‘marrying place’ and derives from a proclamation of King Mbandzeni (1875–1889), who allowed his troops to get hitched here. The town was one of Eswatini’s earliest colonial settlements, attracting settlers with its cooling breezes and the promise of lively trade along the ‘gin road’ to Maputo (then Lourenço Marques). Today, it is hard to imagine the glory years, but you will find basic shops and amenities and, nearby, some lovely places to stay. Mabuda Farm sits on a steep hillside just outside Siteki and offers a variety of accommodation and activities on a busy working dairy farm. Guests can stroll among the hay bales and hedgerows, enjoying the breezes of the ridgetop, ride a pony around the estate, or hike a series of wild trails down the hillside.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

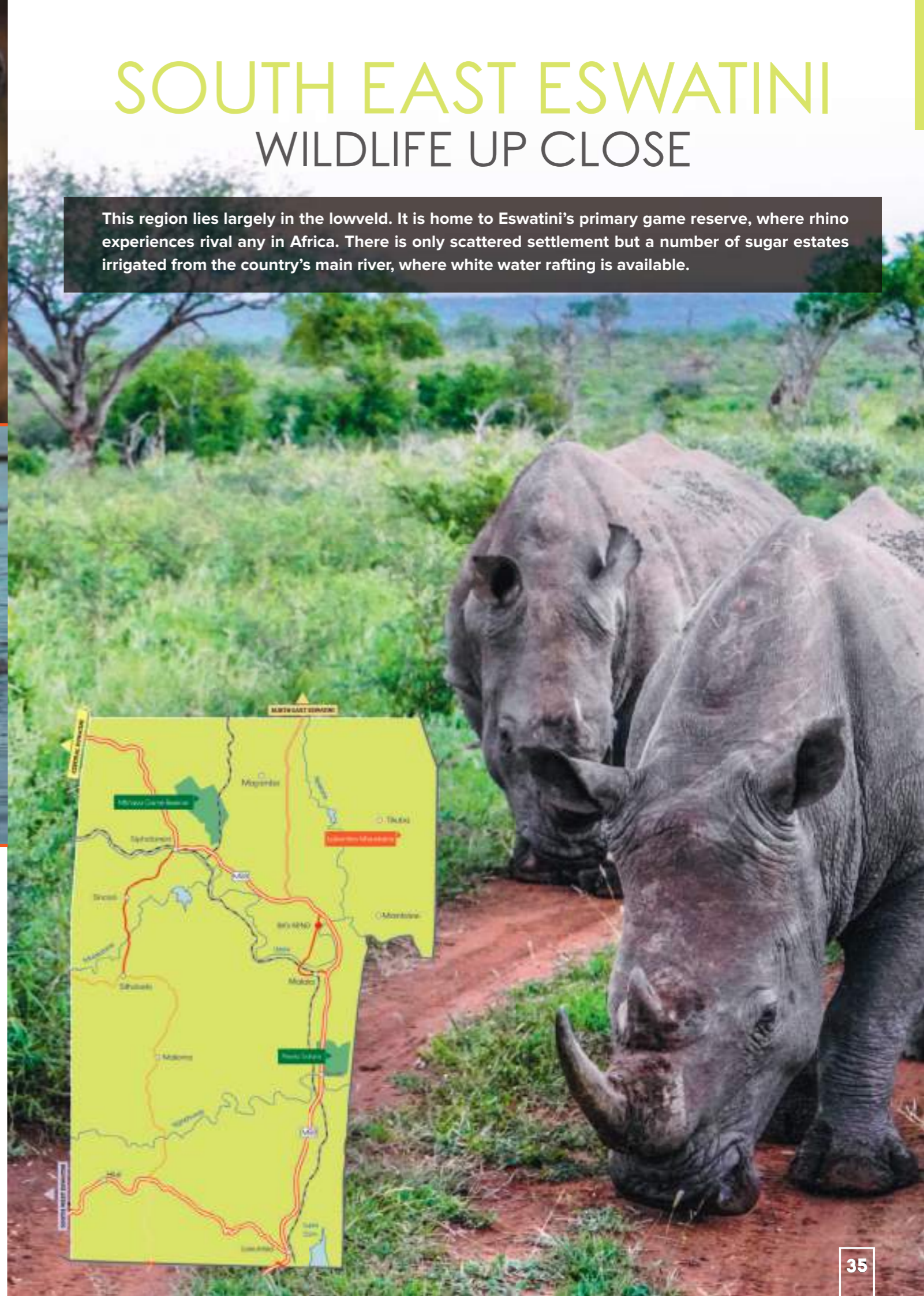
After passing the Big Bend turn-off, 10km east of Manzini, the MR3 highway continues east towards Siteki or the Lubombo Conservancy, winding down through middleveld hills into the flat bush of the lowveld, the temperature rising all the way. En route you will pass the site of Eswatini’s new **King Mswati III International Airport** at Sikhuphe. Completed in 2014, the airport is impressive and the road back to Mbabane via Manzini is being upgraded to make it more quickly accessed from the heart of the country. Further east, the railway siding of Mpaka, is home to **Swazi Secrets**. This rural enterprise makes natural cosmetic products from marula oil, derived from the kernel of the marula tree, and offers sustainable employment to rural women. At the turn-off to Siteki is **Lonhlupeko Craft Market**, where local community members sell soapstone, batiks and other handicrafts.



SOUTH EAST ESWATINI

WILDLIFE UP CLOSE

This region lies largely in the lowveld. It is home to Eswatini's primary game reserve, where rhino experiences rival any in Africa. There is only scattered settlement but a number of sugar estates irrigated from the country's main river, where white water rafting is available.



SPECIAL FOCUS

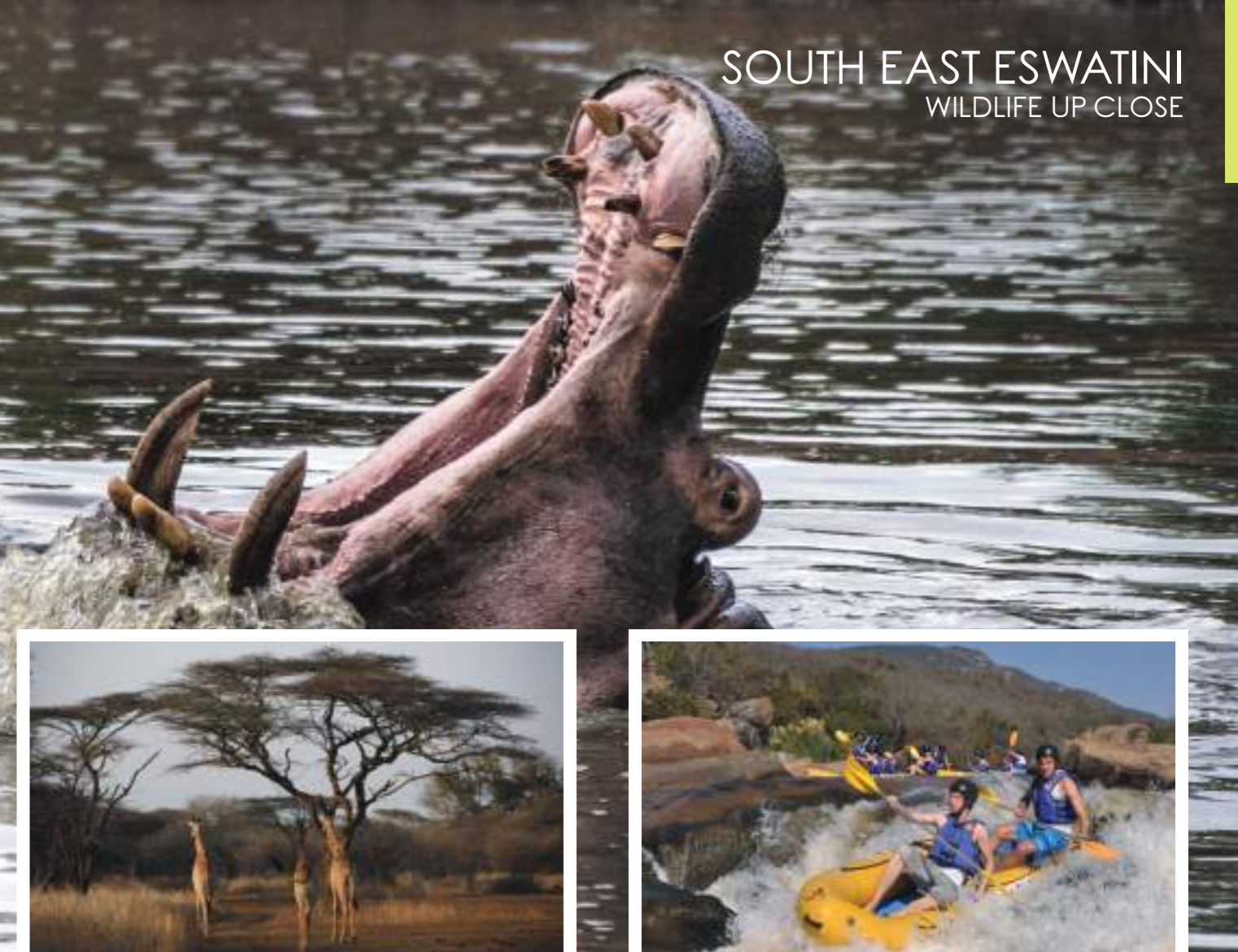
BEASTS & BIRDS

Eswatini's rich variety of landscapes and habitats gives it a profusion of fauna and flora, with the sheer number of species mind-boggling by most European standards. The country is not large enough to offer lots of big game experiences, but it has some 17 protected areas that are home to a very wide range of species,

including the sought-after 'Big 5'. As well as being one of the best places on the continent for rhino safaris (on foot as well as by 4x4 and to see both black and white rhinos), Eswatini is also the perfect place to get to grips with many smaller creatures often overlooked on safari elsewhere. And it is a bird-watcher's paradise.

MKHAYA, NISELA & THE USUTHU

This corner of Eswatini is home to two private game reserves plus the location for one of the country's top adventure activities – white water rafting on the Usuthu River. Mkhaya Game Reserve offers a case study of the challenges involved in African conservation and stands as a beacon of what can be achieved, safeguarding a shrinking natural environment in the face of burgeoning human pressures, after a history of uncontrolled exploitation. Nisela Safaris also offers game viewing and other activities on an area of acacia savannah.



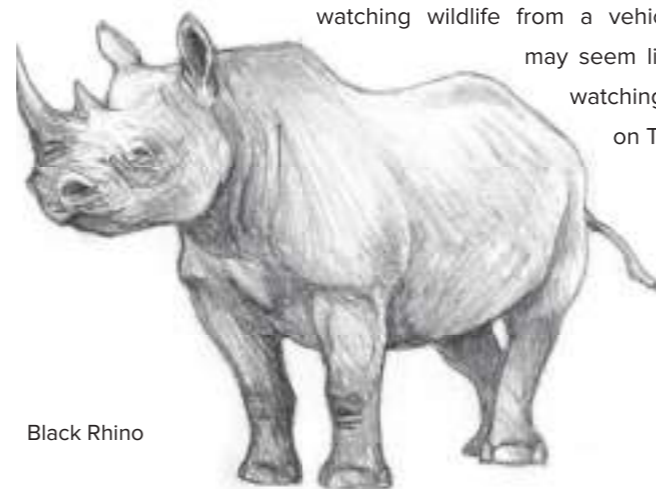
MKHAYA GAME RESERVE

This private reserve, located between Manzini and Big Bend, is Eswatini's most exclusive safari retreat. Here you leave your vehicle behind to join an expert private guide for game drives and bush walks. You then dine beneath the stars, before drifting off to sleep in your chalet to the noises of the night.

Big Game Parks acquired Mkhaya in 1979 in order to protect Eswatini's last indigenous Nguni cattle. As the reserve expanded so did its ambitions. Today it is a sanctuary for endangered species and home to other large mammals that once roamed Eswatini freely. White rhinos are common and black rhinos, though more elusive, are still often seen. You should also find giraffe, zebra, hippo and warthog, plus Eswatini's only herd of buffalo. Roan, sable and tsessebe are among the rarer antelope, with wildebeest, kudu, impala and nyala all abundant. Leopards are only occasional visitors, but you may hear spotted hyenas at night and crocodiles are often seen lounging around the main waterhole. Back in camp the excellent birdlife includes such specials as narina trogon, pink-throated twinspot and crested guineafowl, while nyala and even a few shy suni browse around the camp. After dinner listen for

the fragile whistle of fiery-necked nightjars, the unearthly shriek of greater bushbabies and the whoop of spotted hyenas.

Tracking rhinos on foot at Mkhaya is as thrilling as anywhere in Africa. White rhinos are generally approachable and the guides may take you extremely close. Black rhinos are more nervous and aggressive, so tracking them can be an adrenalin-charged affair. Bush walks are not just about big game, but offer a full immersion in the sights, sounds and textures of the bush. Expect to learn about everything from the air-conditioning of a termite mound to the contents of a hyena's droppings. Afterwards, watching wildlife from a vehicle may seem like watching it on TV.



Black Rhino

NISELA GAME RESERVE

The private Nisela Game Reserve south of Big Bend protects a picturesque tract of 4000 ha of acacia savannah beneath a craggy Lubombos backdrop. These wild hills harbor some unusual habitats, with flora and fauna found nowhere else in the country. The reserve's graded dirt roads are fine for small vehicles and with no dangerous game, visitors can explore trails on foot, guided or un-guided. Wildlife includes plentiful giraffe, plus zebra, blue wildebeest, greater kudu, nyala, impala, common reedbeek, common duiker and warthog and other game. Among the rich reptile fauna are some large pythons and there are crocodiles in the large dam to the south, where catch and release fishing is available. Birders will delight in the more than 300 species recorded around here. Raptors are especially impressive. There is a range of visitor facilities at the entrance to the reserve, including a good restaurant, playground, campsite and curio shop, and there is a choice of accommodation including traditional beehive huts.



Long-tailed
Widowbird

GREAT USUTHU RIVER & BIG BEND

The Great Usuthu is the largest river in Eswatini. It enters the country on the western border with South Africa and leaves through the Lubombo mountains east of Big Bend for its final journey to the Indian Ocean. Its lower reaches are home to hippos, crocodiles and tiger fish, while its waters are the lifeline for Eswatini's sugar estates. Swazi Trails in the Ezulwini Valley (see page 10) offers full- and half-day river rafting trips on a remote stretch of the Usuthu, where the river thunders through wild gorges and meanders through rural communities. Rafters will see impressive rock stacks, riverbank life and a fair amount of wildlife – including the odd small crocodile. They will also get drenched: for most of the year this is a Grade III (medium difficulty) rafting river, but in full flow some sections can rise to Grade V and even VI. Big Bend lies 80km southeast of Manzini on the MR8. Built to serve the sugar industry, it is a regional centre for southeast Eswatini. Emerald-green cane fields have supplanted the dusty bush, and visitors will find shops, services and a handful of places to stay. From Big Bend the road continues south over the Lavumisa border into South Africa and joins the main highway south to Durban.



SOUTH WEST ESWATINI SCENIC SPLENDOUR

Much of South-West Eswatini lies in the highveld – magnificent scenery of rolling uplands cut by grand rivers that have created impressive valleys and gorges. Unsurprisingly, there is great hiking on offer through little-visited wilderness areas. It's also a region with some interesting places of historical significance - home to the country's first church (which can still be visited), and first ceremonial capital.



SPECIAL FOCUS

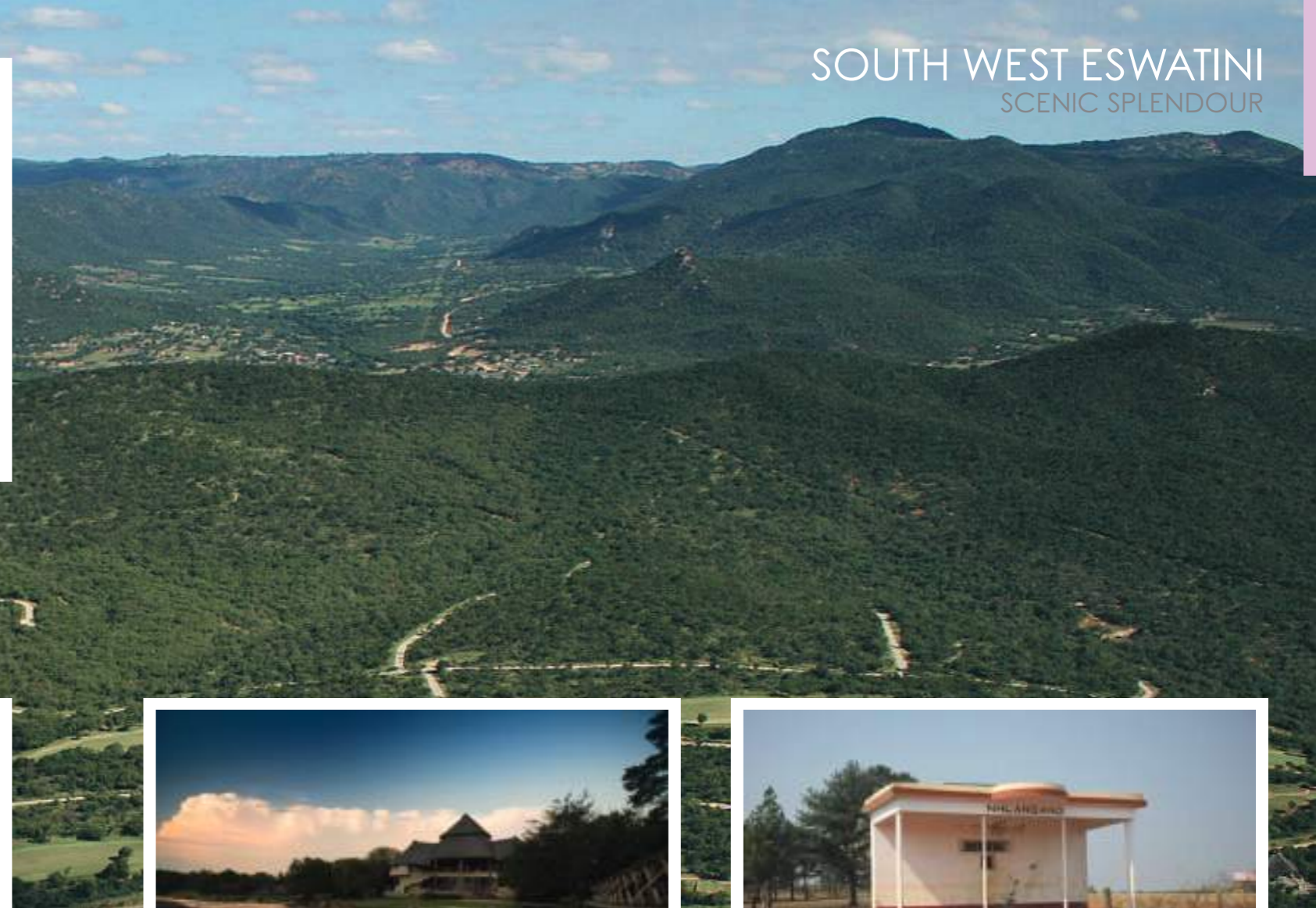
LIVING ON THE LAND

Eswatini is a rural nation, with some 75% of the population making a living from subsistence agriculture on Swazi Nation Land. Maize is the staple crop, grown wherever land is available and pounded to make a mealie-meal porridge called *lipalishi*. The fertile soils of the middleveld are well watered by the rains that pour down from the hills. The region is the nation's breadbasket, and supports large plantations of pineapples and other

fruit for export. Conditions for the subsistence farmer are hardest in the hot, dry lowveld, where the Usuth and other rivers provide irrigation for extensive sugar cane plantations. Cattle wander the length and breadth of Eswatini, and are prized as much for their status value as for their meat and milk. The local Nguni breed of cattle is highly resistant to drought, ticks and disease.

THE DEEP SOUTH

Rolling highveld uplands extend west over the border into South Africa, cut by the Great Usuthu, Eswatini's largest river which flows east across the region, and is joined by its tributaries, the Ngwempisi and Mkondvo, along impressive valleys from the south. Today this is perhaps the least visited region in Eswatini, much of its traffic being in transit. However, this belies its historical significance. Ngwane III, founder of the Swazi nation, established his first ceremonial capital near Nhlanguano, today the region's only large town, and it was via this route from the south that many early settlers arrived, including Eswatini's first missionaries. Among the region's magnificent scenery there are numerous attractions for nature lovers.



MAHAMBAMBA

The historic Mahamba area lies at the very south of the MR9, just short of the main south west road border with South Africa. It has Eswatini's first church and an impressive river gorge, both reached along a dirt road just short of the border. The first Christian missionaries that came to Eswatini in 1844 were Wesleyans. They founded a mission school at Mahamba and gathered a small congregation. In 1912 a church was built on this spot, which today, carefully restored, still stands at the heart of the local Methodist community. Beyond the church, Mahamba Gorge appears as a deep cleft in the rocky, alou-studded ridge, where the Mkondvo river breaks through the mountainous border with South Africa. Here a local community project maintains attractive stone self-catering chalets, with a picnic area and information centre. Trails lead along the river and up over the cliffs into the gorge, where birdwatchers should look out for a colony of the rare southern bald ibis. Other birds include black eagles, while rock hyraxes – their prey – scurry among the boulders.



NGWEMPISI WILDERNESS

This wild corner of Eswatini offers challenging hiking to those prepared to rough it. Its rugged landscape centres upon a spectacular 20km gorge, formed where the Ngwempisi river carves east through the Ntfungulu hills. This an example of the diverse geology prevalent in Swaziland that makes it the strikingly beautiful country it is – and ensures that hiking here is always a challenging and satisfying experience. A community project offers simple but spectacular accommodation at Kopho Lodge, on the north side, and a network of trails around the rugged slopes. Kopho Lodge lies just over the lip of the gorge and looks down onto the river. This ingenious structure is wedged among granite boulders and split over five levels, with interconnecting passages that brilliantly complement the natural rock. A night spent here, with stars shining down through the rock roof, is a memorable one. Facilities are basic. Steep trails head down to the river, where there are natural swimming holes, and wind along the sides of the gorge. The views are breathtaking. Lower down, alongside the river, there is further community-run accommodation at Khelekhele.



NKONYENI GOLF ESTATE

Just before entering the Grand Valley from the north you will spy the lush greens of Nkonyeni Golf Estate, near the confluence of the Ngwempisi and Usuthu. This impressive resort is one of a kind in Eswatini. Its mosaic of cottages, paved roads, sports facilities and pristine fairways, all artificially landscaped into tracts of indigenous bush, is a somewhat unexpected sight amid the surrounding wild country.

The estate is essentially a luxury village where residents get a swimming pool, health spa, tennis courts, two five-star restaurants and a top 18-hole golf course (one of the top two in Eswatini). The well-tended grounds team with birdlife and the fenced 500ha reserve is home to zebra, impala, kudu, waterbuck and other game. Day visitors are welcome and it has a choice of accommodation for overnight stays, allowing guests to then make use of all the facilities and activities, which include game drives, clay pigeon shooting, quad biking, mountain biking and golf.



THE GRAND VALLEY & NHLANGANO

The MR9 highway from Manzini to Nhlanguano winds south alongside the Mkondvo River before climbing dramatically onto the exposed plateau of the highveld. Much of this route is known as the Grand Valley. It is a glorious drive, with stunning scenery and picturesque rural communities on either side. As the road winds up the escarpment, it offers stupendous views in both directions. Up on the plateau the bush gives way to undulating grasslands. Here you will find Nhlanguano, amid its apron of forestry. Nhlanguano is the region's largest town and in winter its highveld climate makes it reputedly the coldest in Eswatini. Founded in 1921 as the farm supply centre of Goedgegun, in 1947 it was renamed Nhlanguano, which means 'meeting place', when King George VI met King Sobhuza II here in order to thank his Swazi counterpart for the kingdom's help during World War II. This occasion remains the only ever visit by a British monarch to Eswatini. Today the town is best known for its casino, at the out-of-town Nhlanguano Hotel, which also offers rooms, activities and a fine view.

ADVENTURE & ACTIVITIES

Eswatini, otherwise known as 'Africa in a nutshell', is equally equipped for the thrill seeker as it for the safari lover or culture enthusiast. The variety and range of activities available in this small country is truly remarkable. From getting up close and personal with wildlife, to hands-on cultural experiences; from high-speed journeys down river or gorge to leisurely hikes through a pristine wilderness - there is so much to keep all visitors fully occupied! With nowhere more than 2 hours away from the country's central tourism hub, activities can be enjoyed with ease and visitors are able to pack in as much, or as little as they wish.

SAFARIS

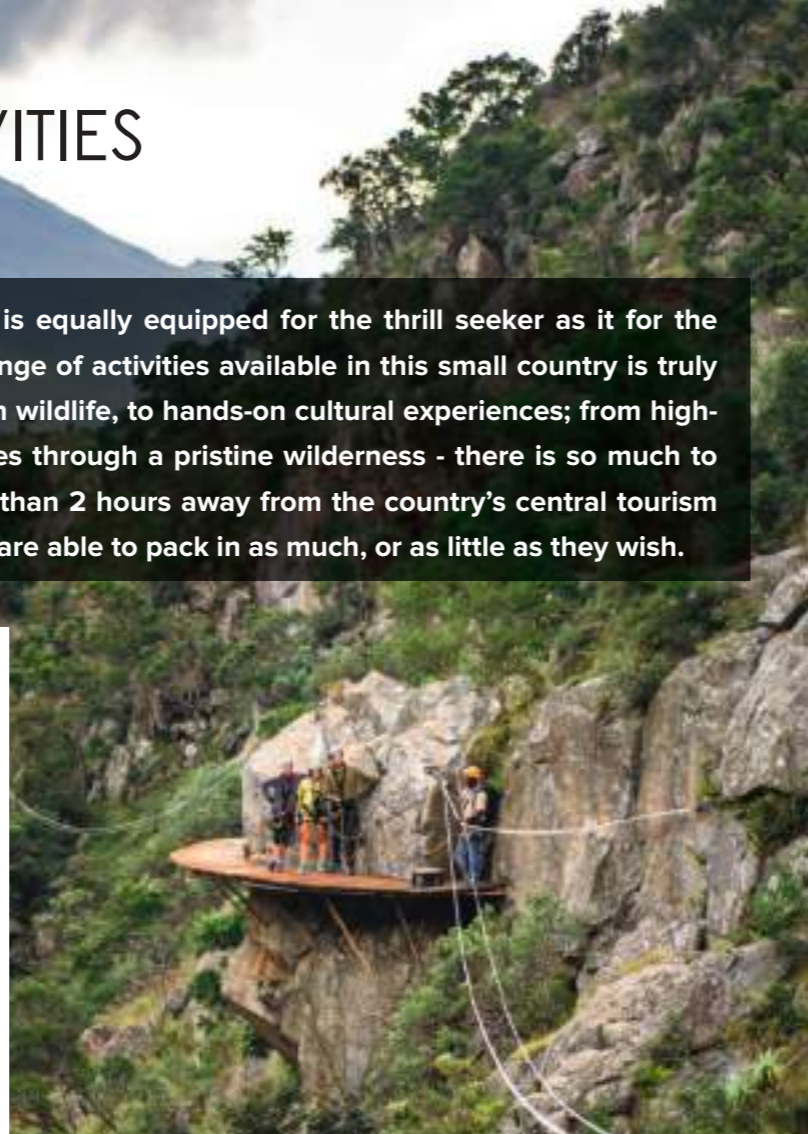
Eswatini is a Big 5 destination, with lions in Hlane Royal National Park (p.34), and both black and white rhino in both Hlane and Mkhaya Game Reserve (p.36). Game drives are very rewarding, but there are also opportunities to safari on horseback, mountain bike or on foot, if you want to get up close and personal. This even applies to the rhino, which can be tracked on foot – one of the most thrilling safari experiences there is. But, in Eswatini it's not all about being big, with some rare species of smaller flora and fauna to be discovered. As for the bird-watching, the variety of species found across Eswatini's varied habitats matches that of the much larger Kruger Park just to the country's north.

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

Eswatini's mountains, valleys, rivers and other natural wonders make it a perfect playground for those seeking adrenaline activities, with a variety of activities that belies its small size.

CAVING: Those who want to get beneath the surface of Eswatini – literally – can try this innovative activity run by Swazi Trails. It explores a unique cave system formed by the Kophola River that flows underground between Msunduzi and Kophola Mountains, just off the Malagwane Hill (p.9). There is an 800m course of passages some 90m below ground. This is the only major granite system known in southern Africa, and comprises a series of chambers with names such as Key Hole, French Connection and (for Harry Potter fans) Platform Nine and Three-Quarters'.

CANOPY TOURS: Malolotja Nature Reserve (p.24) is home to Eswatini's first Tree Top Canopy Tour. This is in the Sihlotswane Gorge, where one 50m suspension bridge and 11 wooden platforms have been ingeniously affixed to the steep sides. Participants descend the gorge by zip lining down from platform to platform high above the forest canopy. Some lines are more than 300m long.



CLIMBING & ABSEILING: Eswatini's highlands, mountains and gorges offer opportunities to both climb and descend a number of rock faces.

QUAD BIKING: Eswatini has a handful of Quad biking opportunities, from hour-long dedicated quad bike trails to half day explorations. Quad bikes, and trails are available with Swazi Trails in the Ezulwini Valley (p.10) and at Hawane Resort and Nkonyeni Golf Estate (p.41).

TUBING: Tubing is organised by All Out Africa Tours on the Ngwempisi river (p.40). Participants float downstream in large adapted inner tubes, kitted out with safety helmets. This is a wonderful way to experience a remote area of real beauty and spectacular scenery.

WHITE WATER RAFTING: Trips are run by Swazi Trails on the Usuthu River, between Sidvokodvo and Siphofaneni. This is a remote and inspiring stretch of river. Its waters thunder through clefts and gorges, alternating with calmer stretches of bush and grazing land. You can expect fine views of rural Eswatini, with imposing rock formations, riverbank community life and a fair amount of wildlife. For most of the year this is generally a Grade III (medium difficulty) rafting river. In peak flow, however, it rises to Grade IV, and even has Grade V and VI sections, which the rafting trips avoid.

HIKING

The highlands, forests and nature reserves in Eswatini are well known for their excellent range of self-guided hiking trails, offering the opportunity to experience nature at your own pace. There are paths and trails in many locations allowing for hikes from a couple of hours to many days, and access to places and views that are inaccessible by vehicle. In the reserves such as Malolotja (p.24), Mlilwane (p.15), Mbuluzi (p.31) and Mlawula (p.30), these hikes have the added thrill of possible wildlife encounters. In other hiking areas, such as Sibebe Rock (p.8), the Nkomati Valley (p.27), Ngwempisi (p.40), the Lubombo Mountains (p.32) and Mahamba Gorge (p.40), it's purely about the wonderful views and unspoilt wilderness.

HORSE RIDING

Exploring on horseback offers perhaps the greatest freedom and views always seem to be more spectacular when seen from the back of a horse. Visitors can discover the beauty of Eswatini along a number of trails and duration can be anything from a couple of hours to a number of days, depending on experience and ability. Some routes have the added thrill of being within wildlife reserves. The main stables all have good facilities and cater to all levels. They are: Chubeka Trails at Mlilwane (p.15), Hoofbeat Safaris in the Ezulwini Valley (p.10), Foresters Arms at Mhlambanyatsi (p.9), and Hawane Resort near Malolotja (p.24).

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Another great way to explore Eswatini's stunning landscapes is by mountain bike. As with hiking, the most adventurous can set out on their own across the country. There are popular mountain bike trails in a number of places through beautiful scenery and even wildlife areas, including Mhlambanyatsi (p.9), Hawane (p.24), Hlane (p.30), Mlilwane (p.15), Malolotja (p.24), Mbuluzi (p.31) and Shewula (p.31). Bikes are available for hire at some but not all places. There are a number of mountain bike races held every year across the wildernesses and reserves of Eswatini which attract international competitors.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

With Eswatini's rich culture and strong traditions, this is a wonderful country to partake in some fascinating cultural activities. The monarchy and the people of Eswatini actively maintain and preserve a remarkable cultural heritage, allowing visitors to get a better idea of traditional African culture here than pretty much anywhere else in the region. What is seen, including spectacular festivals, has not simply been resuscitated for the tourist dollar but is the real deal. As well as the spectacle of the festivities, it is the warmth and friendliness of the Swazi people that shines through in the more personal encounters and experiences. Favourites such as Mantenga Cultural Village (p.14) provide opportunity to experience the traditional way of life, as well as enjoy a dance performance by the village. Homestead visits and stays are also available, with perhaps the best established opportunity being the Shewula Mountain Camp (p.31); a community initiative giving visitors the chance to experience first hand their way of life. The cultural experiences at Mlilwane (p.15) and Hlane (p.30) are truly authentic and there are walking and cycling tours of the royal heartland of Lobamba (p.16). If you can time it right, witnessing one of Eswatini's famed festivals or traditional ceremonies is a once in a lifetime experience. See more on page 18. For keen shoppers, the quality and range of Eswatini's arts and crafts has to be seen to be believed. Not only are they of standards that see them exported to boutiques around the world, but the majority of producers and outlets have been set up to support local community projects. And there is usually an opportunity to see the artisans at work (p.13).

SPORT

Sports such as squash, tennis, swimming are available at hotels and lodges as well as the Country Clubs on the Sugar Estates. Royal Swazi Spa in the Ezulwini Valley (p.10) and Nkonyeni to the south (p.41) are the best places to visit for those who enjoy golf, both with 18 hole championship courses. Fishing is available at a number of dams and rivers around the country, with trout, tiger fish and a number of native species to be found.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL & VOLUNTEERING

Eswatini struggles beneath its burden of poverty. The HIV/AIDS epidemic, despite recent successes, has resulted in orphans and vulnerable children now accounting for an estimated 15% of the population. Numerous NGOs work to help the most vulnerable in society - helping people to help themselves rather than simply providing handouts. This creates opportunities for volunteers and there are many ways to become actively involved during your trip to Eswatini. All Out Africa are well known for their volunteer projects. Even visitors not taking a 'hands-on' approach can feel assured that the country's tourist industry actively supports both local communities and wildlife & environmental conservation projects.



VISITOR PRACTICALITIES

CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

Eswatini has a temperate climate in the highveld and a subtropical one lower down in the middleveld and lowveld. The warmest months are from October to March, when it can become very hot in the lowveld. Conversely, the coolest are from June to August, when it is chilly at night in the highveld. The rainy season (November–March), brings violent electrical storms, though the highveld can experience rain and mist at any time of year. Most roads are perfectly navigable all year round and wildlife is present all year.

ESWATINI TOURISM AUTHORITY

- Headquarters: 4th Floor, Sibekelo Building (North Wing), Mhlambanyatsi Road, Mbabane Tel: 2404 9693 / 2404 9675
 - International Tourist Information Office: info@thekingdomofeswatini.com
 - Regional Tourist Info Office, Mbabane: Sibekelo Building Ground Floor Tel: 24049693 / 24049675 information@tourismauthority.org.sz
 - Regional Tourist Info Office, Ngwenya border post: Tel: 24424206 ngwenyainfo@tourismauthority.org.sz
 - King Mswati III International Airport Infodesk: Tel: 23335343 km3info@tourismauthority.org.sz
 - Gables Tourist Info Centre: Tel: 24171619 gablesinfo@tourismauthroity.org.sz
 - Mananga Tourist Info Centre: Tel: 23232123
- All Tourist Info Offices are open Mon-Fri 8am–5pm, Sat: 9am–1pm, except Ngwenya Border, King Mswati III International Airport and Mananga which close at 4pm on Fridays.

OTHER TOURIST INFO OFFICES

- Ezulwini Tourist Office, Mantenga Craft & Lifestyle Centre: Tel: 2416 2180 (office hours), 7602 0261 (after hours) info@swazi.travel - www.swazi.travel
- Open: Daily 08.00–17.00
- Tourist Information, Malandelas: Tel: 2528 3423 tours@alloutafrica.com - www.alloutafrica.com
- Tourist Information, Lidwala: Tel: 2416 2260 bookings@alloutafrica.com - www.alloutafrica.com

ACCOMMODATION

Eswatini has accommodation to suit all budgets, from campsites to upmarket hotels. See Listings (overleaf) for details of properties, grouped to match the various sections of this brochure.

TOURS & ACTIVITIES

Eswatini is fully equipped for the thrill seeker, safari lover and culture enthusiast. The variety and range of activities available is truly remarkable. For further details see Activity & Adventure (page 40) and for contact details of Eswatini's tour and activity operators, see Listings (page 48).

GETTING THERE AND AWAY

Air: The only flights to Eswatini are from Johannesburg: Airlink flies daily between Johannesburg and King Mswati III International Airport. The flight takes around 55 minutes. Airport tax of SZL100 payable on departure: Tel: +27 11 451 7300 - www.flyairlink.com Most major international airlines fly to Johannesburg.

Bus: An increasing number of companies run safe, comfortable and reliable minibus services between Eswatini and South Africa a number of times a day. The most frequent routes are from Manzini / Mbabane / Ezulwini to Johannesburg, but Durban and Nelspruit are also now served.

- SiyeSwatini Transmagnific: Tel: 2404 9977 info@goswaziland.co.sz - www.goswaziland.co.sz
- Sky World Travel and Tours: Tel: 2404 9921, 7664 0001, +27 73969 5113 (South Africa) info@skyworld.co.sz - www.skyworld.co.sz
- Exclusive Shuttle and Tours: Tel: 2404 3315 info@exclusiveshuttletours.com

Self Drive: Eswatini has 13 road borders with South Africa and two with Mozambique. The drive from Johannesburg airport takes approximately four hours. Borders have different opening hours, For the latest regulations on taking a vehicle into Eswatini, check the 'How to Get There' page on: www.thekingdomofeswatini.com

GETTING AROUND

Guided Tours: There are a number of local tour operators that can provide guided tours of Eswatini. See the Listings (page 49).

Self Drive: Traffic drives on the left, as in South Africa. Drivers need an international licence in English. Tared roads link main towns, tourist centres and most borders. Many rural roads are unsealed but reasonably maintained. In remote areas and some nature reserves you may need a 4WD or high-clearance vehicle. Main towns and most borders have filling stations. Drivers should be cautious at all times. Be aware of other vehicles in poor condition (eg: no lights), livestock on the road and sudden changes in weather. Keep well within the speed limits (120km/h on motorways; 80km/h on other unrestricted roads); wear your seatbelt (a legal requirement); and avoid driving at night if possible. Be especially careful on unsealed roads.

Vehicle Hire: If driving from South Africa, you will find most major international car hire companies at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg. The following companies are based in or close to Mbabane:

- Affordable Car Hire, Swazi Plaza: Tel: 2404 9136
 - Comprehensive Car Hire: Tel: 2404 6566
 - Europcar, Engen Garage: Tel: 2404 0459
 - Swazi Trails: Tel: 24162180
- The following are based at King Mswati III International Airport:
- Europcar: Tel: 2518 4393
 - Avis: Tel: 2333 5299

BORDER HOURS

Bulembu/Josefdal	08:00 - 18:00
Gege/Bothashoop	08:00 - 18:00
Lavumisa/Golela	07:00 - 22:00
Lomahasha/Namaacha (Moz)	07:00 - 22:00
Lundzi/Waverley	08:00 - 18:00
Mahamba	07:00 - 22:00
Mananga	08:00 - 18:00
Matsamo/Jeppes Reef	07:00 - 20:00
Mhlumeni/Goba (Moz)	24 hours
Ngwenya/Oshoek	07:00 - 00:00
Nsalitje/Onverwacht	08:00 - 18:00
Sandlane/Nerston	08:00 - 18:00
Sicunusa/Emahlathini	08:00 - 18:00

IMMIGRATION

Visitors require a passport valid for at least three months after departure date. A tourist or business traveller may visit for up to 30 days. Nationals of UK, USA, Australia, Canada, South Africa, British Commonwealth countries and EU countries do not require a visa. Other nationals must apply for a visa from their Swazi embassy or consulate. Visas cannot be obtained at the border, though some local operators can assist in pre-arranging visas. All visitors must complete an immigration form and customs declaration. A road fund levy of SZL50 is payable at the border for all non-Eswatini-registered vehicles.

HEALTH

Eswatini is generally a healthy place in which to travel. Much of the country enjoys a temperate climate, which means that many tropical ailments found elsewhere in Africa are rare or absent. Before leaving, consult your doctor or a specialist travel clinic, if possible at least 8 weeks prior to travel. It is wise to be up to date on tetanus, polio and diphtheria and hepatitis A. Immunisations against rabies need only be considered if spending time in remote rural areas. Proof of vaccination against yellow fever is needed if you are coming from a yellow-fever endemic area, though a yellow-fever vaccine is not needed for Eswatini alone. Considerations include:

- **Bites and stings:** Most prevalent during the rainy season (October–April). Don long clothes at sunset and apply repellent.
- **First-aid kit:** A minimal kit contains: a good drying antiseptic; small dressings (plasters/Band-Aids); sun screen; insect repellent; anti-malarial tablets; pain killers; antibiotic eye drops; fine tweezers (to remove insect stings, thorns, splinters, etc); alcohol-based hand rub.
- **HIV/AIDS:** Very high (though reducing) prevalence in Eswatini. Always use protection.
- **Malaria:** Eswatini is virtually malaria-free. But it can occur very occasionally in low-lying eastern regions. Anti-malaria tablets recommended; consult your doctor. Risk increases in the Kruger Park or Mozambique.

Avoid mosquito bites by covering up in the evenings and using insect repellent.

- **Sun:** The sun can be fierce even when conditions appear overcast. Use high-factor sunscreen, wear a hat and keep out of the sun when possible.
- **Tickbite fever:** Prevalent in long grass areas, especially during rainy season. Use insect repellents and wear long trousers and sleeves. Check yourself carefully in the shower.
- **Water:** All main towns have safe drinking water. Bottled water is widely available in towns and filling stations.
- **Wildlife:** Snakebite is very rare. Minimise risk by wearing closed shoes when in the bush. Most dangerous animals occur only in reserves, but treat smaller animals with caution, especially 'tame' warthogs and monkeys around camps. Beware crocodiles in lowveld rivers and dams.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

All major towns have hospitals and clinics, though government hospitals are often under-resourced. A more reliable (but pricier) alternative is private clinics. Make sure that you have adequate and up-to-date medical insurance.

For Severe Trauma

- Mbabane Clinic, Mbabane (private): Tel: 2404 2423
- Raleigh Fitkin Hospital, Manzini: Tel: 2505 2211
- Emergency evacuations Trauma Link Eswatini: Tel: 7606 0911
- **Other**
- Manzini Clinic: Tel: 2505 7301
- MediSun Clinic, Ezulwini: Tel: 2416 2800
- Mkhaya Clinic, Manzini: Tel: 2505 5339
- Mbabane Government Hospital: Tel: 2404 2111
- Nhlngano Health Care Centre: Tel: 2207 8421
- Piggs Peak Government Hospital: Tel: 2437 1111
- Siteki Good Shepherd Hospital: Tel: 2343 4133

POLICE & EMERGENCIES

Report any crime or an accident to the police immediately. On-the-spot fines are issued for speeding offences.

Police: **999** Ambulance: **977** Fire: **933**

SECURITY

Eswatini is a safe and friendly country in which to travel. It does not have South Africa's crime rate and tourists are seldom at risk. That said, visitors should take the usual sensible precautions. The UK foreign office offers the following advice:

- Avoid travelling by road after dark because of the dangers of animals on the roads.
- Avoid walking in downtown Mbabane and Manzini after dark.
- Keep valuables in a safe place; avoid carrying large amounts of money or wearing conspicuous jewellery.
- Always park in well-lit areas of town.
- Keep car doors locked and valuables such as mobile phones, cameras and handbags out of sight.

MONEY

Eswatini's currency is the lilangeni (plural: emalangeni), which has parity with the South African rand (ZAR). One lilangeni is divided into 100 cents. Rand notes are accepted in Eswatini but emalangeni are not accepted in South Africa. You can change currency at most banks, found in all main towns and usually open weekdays 08.30–14.30. Most have ATMs.

Exchange rates as at Oct 2019:

€1 = 16.30 ZAR

£1 = 18.68 ZAR

\$1 = 14.77 ZAR

FOOD

Eswatini has many excellent restaurants, with a cosmopolitan selection in Mbabane, Manzini and The Gables shopping centre. Numerous US-style chains offer burgers, pizzas and other fast food. For traditional Swazi food, visit a Swazi family or attend a local celebration. Edladleni, just outside Mbabane, offers a classy take on Swazi cuisine. All large towns have supermarkets, with most of the goods you would expect to find overseas. There are large malls in Mbabane, Manzini and The Gables (Ezulwini).

ESSENTIAL PACKING

- Clothing: summer clothes (T-shirts/shorts etc); lightweight longs (for lowveld evenings); fleece/pullover (for highveld evenings) lightweight raincoat; walking footwear; sandals (best with closed toes); swimwear; jeans (for horse-riding, mountain-biking); hat (with brim).
- General: sunglasses; first-aid kit; binoculars; sunscreen; torch; camera (with zoom lens for wildlife); spare batteries and memory cards; plug adapter; credit cards; mobile/cell phone; anti-malarials; water bottle.
- Documents/literature: passport (with visa, if required); driving licence; travel insurance details, including emergency number; travel guide.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

1 January (New Year's Day); Good Friday; Easter Monday; 19 April (King's Birthday); 25 April (National Flag Day); 1 May (Labour Day); Ascension Day; 22 July (birthday of late King Sobhuza II); late August/early September (Umhlanga, reed dance); 6 September (Somhlolo (Independence) Day); late December/early January (Incwala, first fruits ceremony); 25 December (Christmas Day); 26 December (Boxing Day).

COMMUNICATIONS

The international telephone code for Eswatini is +268. MTN (www.mtn.co.sz) and Eswatini Mobile (www.swazimobile.com - launched in 2017) are the country's mobile networks. An extensive landline network covers most of the country. Mobiles are known locally as 'cell phones'. Some overseas networks are unavailable in Eswatini. Starter packs, including local SIM cards, are available (at low cost) at the main borders, airport and other points of entry. You can purchase airtime vouchers from any of the ubiquitous vendors. Internet services are widely available but can be slow. You will find internet cafés in the main towns and at Ziggy's Internet Café at Malandela's. Most, but not all, hotels offer Wi-Fi.

FURTHER INFO & USEFUL LINKS

- www.thekingdomofeswatini.com - the official tourism website with travel advice, accommodation listings and general information.
- www.sntc.org.sz - the Eswatini National Trust Commission, who are responsible for the National Museum, Mantenga Cultural Village, King Sobhuza II Memorial Park, and the reserves of Malolotja, Mantenga, Mlawula and Hawane.
- www.naturalhistorysociety.org.sz - The National History Society of Eswatini
- www.tourismeswatini.com - The Hotels and Tourism Association of Swaziland.



LISTINGS

Name	Map Ref	Type	Rooms	Beds	\$\$\$	Tel:	Email:	Web:
CENTRAL ESWATINI - Mbabane								
Brackenhill Lodge	①	B&B	8	11	C,B	24042887	brackenhill@realnet.co.sz	www.brackenhillswazi.com
Cathmar Cottages	②	SC	6	14	C,B	24041165	shieldguest@yahoo.com	www.visitswazi.com/cathmar
City Court Guest House	③	GH	10	12	B,A	24043133	info@citycourt.co.sz	www.citycourt.co.sz
Crisovik Guest House	④	SC	9	14	C	24049883	larysokuu@yahoo.com	www.crisovik.com
Ekulindzeni Leisure Homes	⑤	B&B, SC	9	18	C,B	24042575	zwane.associates@swazi.net	www.visitswazi.com/ekulindzeni
Ematjeni B&B	⑥	B&B	5	10	B,A	24043110	ematjeni@realnet.co.sz	www.ematjeniguesthouse.com
Eveni Guest House & Restaurant	⑦	GH, SC	6	12	C,B	24040173	eveniguesthouse@yahoo.com	www.eveniguesthouse.co.sz
Hilton Garden Inn Mbabane	⑧	H	124	248	A*,A	24092200	hgmbabane.reservations@hilton.com	www.hilton.com
Immanuel Guest House	⑨	GH	10	12	C	24048809	immanuelodge@swazi.net	www.immanuelguesthouse.com
Kent Rock B&B	⑩	B&B	2	2	B	24044826	kentrock@swazi.net	www.kentrockaccommodation.co.sz
Margaret Guest House	⑪	GH	7	10	C	76045655	jsempuma@gmail.com	n/a
Mbabane Bed & Breakfast	⑫	B&B, SC	2	6	C	76426780	culturaltours@yahoo.com	n/a
Meilkes Mount	⑬	SC	13	18	D	76042826	n/a	n/a
Mountain Beauty Villa	⑭	B&B	3	6	B	24111493	zandilepat@gmail.com	n/a
Mountain Inn Hotel	⑮	H	52	82	B,A	24042781	info@mountaininn.sz	www.mountaininn.sz
Nana's Place	⑯	L, BP	4	8	C,B	24049949	naddai@swazi.net	www.nanasaccommodation.com
Opulence Lodge	⑰	Bed only	10	16	C,B	24040454	opulencelodge@gmail.com	n/a
Red Berry B&B	⑱	B&B	6	12	C,B	76023160	redberrybb@realnet.co.sz	www.redberrybb.co.sz
Rehoboth Mountain Suites	⑲	B&B	6	12	B,A	24105630	rehobothsuites@gmail.com	www.rehobothsuites.com
Shield Guest House	⑳	SC	8	10	C,B	24046072	shieldguest@yahoo.com	www.visitswazi.com/cathmar
Swazi Ark of Arts & Culture	㉑	B&B	8	16	C	76742511	poppymnkhoza@gmail.com	n/a
Swazi Oak Lodge	㉒	B&B, GH	14	28	C	24046234	saeedbucas@yahoo.com	n/a
The Place	㉓	GH	10	20	B	78285090	info@theplace.co.sz	www.theplaceswaziland.com
Thokoza Anglican Conference	㉔	B&B	37	74	C	24046681	admin@thokoza.org.sz	n/a
Upper Room Guesthouse	㉕	B&B	4	10	C	24049949	naddai@swazi.net	www.nanasaccommodation.com
Vekis Town Lodge	㉖	B&B	7	14	C	24048485	vekistownlodge@gmail.com	www.vekistownlodge.com
Vekis Village	㉗	SC	11	22	C,B	76036396	vekisvillage@gmail.com	www.vekisvillage.com

CENTRAL ESWATINI - Around Mbabane								
African Violet	㉘	BP	9	18	C,B	76572812	africanvioletswaziland@gmail.com	www.africanvioletswaziland.net
BK Lodge	㉙	B&B	14	16	B,A	24212750	bookings@bklodge.com	www.bklodge.com
Eden Guest House	㉚	GH	15	18	B	24046317	kapola_eden@swazi.net	n/a
Emathombeni House	㉛	SC	3	6	C	n/a	magagulavelakhe@yahoo.com	n/a
Emafini Lodge	㉜	H	14	38	B	24041284	info@emafini.co.sz	www.emafini.co.sz
Foresters Arms Hotel	㉝	H	34	52	B	24674177	info@forestersarms.co.za	www.forestersarms.co.sz
Highland's View	㉞	GH	8	16	B	24049174	kapolaguesthouse@gmail.com	n/a
Jama's Place Lodge	㉟	B&B, SC	10	20	C,B	24212781	jamaspacelodge@gmail.com	www.jamaspacelodge.com
Mvubu Falls Hotel	㊱	L	10	20	B	24044655	mvubufalls@realnet.co.sz	www.mvubufalls.com
Phibs Guest House	㊲	GH	7	14	C,B	24221991	phibsg@gmail.com	n/a
Silverstone Falls	㊳	GH	7	20	B,A	76215159	info@silverstone.co.sz	www.silverstonefalls.com
Thula Du Estate	㊴	SC	6	12	C,B	24049854	thula.promotions@gmail.com	n/a

CENTRAL ESWATINI - Ezulwini Valley, Mlilwane & Mantenga								
Benka Lifestyle	㊵	B&B	5	14	B,A	24171944	benkallifestyle@swazilizkhar.com	www.swazi-lizkhar.com
Bethel Court	㊶	H	47	103	B	24161977	reservations@swazibethelcourt.com	www.swazibethelcourt.com
Buhleni Farm Chalets	㊷	SC, C	9	36	C,B	24163505	info@buhlenifarm.co.sz	www.buhlenifarm.co.sz
Damicha Lodge	㊸	B	8	22	B,A	24171944	damichalodge@gmail.com	www.damichalodge.com
Ebuhleni Guest House	㊹	GH	5	10	B,A	24163460	maurisswazi@realnet.co.sz	www.swaziwoodlands.com
Ekuphumleni Guest House	㊺	GH	5	9	C	24162313	fmkhonta@uniswacc.uniswa.sz	n/a
Ezulwini Executive Apartment	㊻	SC	5	10	A	24161714	dlhands@me.com	n/a
Ezulwini Guest House	㊼	GH	4	8	B	24162832	info@ezulwiniguesthouse.com	www.ezulwiniguesthouse.com
Green Haven Luxury Apartments	㊽	SC	10	16	A,A*	76762929	greenhavenluxury@gmail.com	www.greenhavenluxury.com
Happy Valley Hotel & Casino	㊾	H	65	130	A	24161061	reservations@happyvalleyhotel.com	www.happyvalleyhotel.com
Legend Backpackers	㊿	BP	17	88	D,C	24161870	info@legends.co.sz	www.swazi.travel
Lidwala Lodge	①	BP, C	9	34	D,C	76905865	info@lidwala.co.sz	www.lidwala.co.sz
Lugogo Sun Hotel	②	H	202	400	A	24165000	lugogo.sun@suninternational.com	www.suninternational.com
Mantenga Lodge	③	H	38	80	B,A	24161049	reservations@mantengalodge.com	www.mantengalodge.com
Mantenga Nature Reserve	④	Ch, BH	15	33	C,B	24161151	culturalvillage@sntc.org.sz	www.sntc.org.sz
Mayoloza B&B and Backpackers	⑤	B&B, BP	4	14	C	76082629	info@mayoloza.com	www.mayoloza.com
Mdzimba Mountain Lodge	⑥	SC	9	14	B,A	76206925	info@swatitrandtours.com	www.swatitrandtours.com
Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary	⑦	B&B, SC, C	62	145	C,B	25283943	reservations@biggameparks.org	www.biggameparks.org
Mogi Boutique Hotel	⑧	GH, H	8	24	B	24171585	mollieroques@gmail.com	www.mogijafrica.com
Reilly's Rock Hilltop Lodge	⑨	B&B	9	19	B,A	25283943	reservations@biggameparks.org	www.biggameparks.org
Royal Swazi Spa	⑩	H	149	195	A*	24165000	royalswazi.hotel@suninternational.com	www.suninternational.com
Sibane Hotel	⑪	H	30	60	B,A	24161670	reservations@sibanehotel.co.sz	www.sibanehotel.co.sz
Sondzela Backpackers	⑫	BP	21	49	D,C	25283117	reservations@biggameparks.org	www.biggameparks.org
Sundowners Lodge	⑬	B&B	8	12	C	25283059	info@swazisundowners.com	www.swazisundowners.com
The Royal Villas Hotel	⑭	H	57	114	A	24162042	reservations@royalvillas.co.sz	www.royalvillas.co.sz
Timbali Lodge	⑮	B&B	31	73	B	24161156	timbali@realnet.co.sz	www.timbali lodge.co.sz
Victory Guest House	⑯	GH	7	14	B	24163309	enhleko@yahoo.com	n/a

Name	Map Ref	Type	Rooms	Beds	\$\$\$	Tel:	Email:	Web:
CENTRAL ESWATINI - Malkerns Valley								
Brookside Lodge	⑰	SC	17	32	C,B	25283765	reservations@brookside-lodge.com	www.brookside-lodge.com
Esthers Lodge	⑱	B&B	8	16	C	25283552	esther@estherslodge.com	www.estherslodge.com
Malandela's Guest House	⑲	GH	8	16	C	25283448	bookings@malandelas.com	www.malandelas.com
Nyanza Guest Cottages	㉑	SC	6	19	C	76085779	info@nyanza.co.sz	www.nyanza.co.sz
Rainbird Chalets	㉒	B&B, SC	5	18	C,B	25283452	rainbird@swazi.net	www.rainbirdchalets.com
Willows Lodge	㉓	B&B, SC, Ch	13	38	C,B	76021284	willowslodge@posix.co.sz	www.willowslodgeswaziland.com

CENTRAL ESWATINI - Manzini								
Asante Guesthouse	㉔	GH	10	15	C,B	25053556	bookings@asanteswazi.com	www.asanteswazi.com
Blossom Rest House	㉕	B&B	5	5	C	25053401	blossom@swazi.net	www.blossomresthouse.com
Day Eve Guest House	㉖	GH	7	14	C	25056258	n/a	n/a
Ekupholeni Garden Villas	㉗	H	6	7	B	25058747	info@ekupholenigardenvillas.com	www.ekupholenigardenvillas.com
Emerald Lodge	㉘	B&B	5	10	D,C	25053425	n/a	n/a
Fairview Guest House	㉙	GH	8	24	C	25058162	fairviewguesthouse@gmail.com	www.fairviewguesthouse.net
Gibela Getaway Lodge	㉚	SC	17	40	C	25053024	gibela@pureswazi.com	www.visitswazi.com/gibela
Global Village Guest House	㉛	GH	34	60	C,B	25052226	bookings@globalvillage.co.sz	www.swaziglobalvillage.com
Havilla Court	㉜	GH	8	20	D,C	25059662	khosieh@realnet.co.sz	www.swazihavilla.com
Madonsa Guest House	㉝	GH	11	22	C	25055725	madonsa.guesthouse@swazi.net	www.madonsa.co.sz
Manzini Lodge	㉞	B&B	11	14	C	25053263	manzinilodge@swazi.net	n/a
Mbare Guest House	㉟	B&B	7	7	D	25053655	n/a	n/a
Mocambique Hotel	㊱	H	18	32	D,C	25052586	anamaria76242339@gmail.com	n/a
Moneni Guest House	㊲	GH	7	16	C	78025786	workgroup@swazi.net	n/a
Open House Boutique Hotel	㊳	H	12	17	A,A*	25058745	info@openhouseboutique.co.sz	www.openhouseboutique.co.sz
Palm Tree Guest House	㊴	GH	15	31	C	25057064	mahlalalaphumie@yahoo.com	n/a
Park Hotel	㊵	H	36	108	C	25057423	expo@swazi.net	www.swaziplace.com/parkhotel
Peace Centre Guest House	㊶	GH	5	10	C	25058056	peacecentreguesthouse@gmail.com	www.peacecentreguesthouse.net
Peace Valley	㊷	GH	5	10	C,B	7611354	peacevalleyguest@gmail.com	www.peacevalleyguesthouse.co.sz
Ritz Accommodation	㊸	L	14	29	C	76058624	ritzaccommodation@gmail.com	n/a
Road Lodge	㊹	GH	7	18	D,C	25056521	info@roadlodge.net	www.roadlodge.net
The George Hotel	㊺	H	110	170	B	25052260	reservations@tgh.co.sz	www.tgh.co.sz
True Reality Guest House	㊻	GH	5	10	C	25058934	serancongwane@yahoo.com	n/a
Ursel Guest House	㊼	GH, SC	7	18	C	76047525	ursel-group@swazi.net	n/a
Valley View Lodge	㊽	L, SC	8	25	C,B	25054063	valleyviewlodge.swaziland@gmail.com	www.valleyviewlodgesd.com
Zamekile Guest House	㊾	B&B	6	18	C	76052619	zamekileguesthouse@gmail.com	www.zamekileguesthouse.com

CENTRAL ESWATINI - Matsapha & Summerfield								
Dwaleni Farm Lodge	㊿	L	17	35	B	25504380	dwalenifarm lodge@gmail.com	www.dwalenifarm lodge.co.sz
Esibayeni Lodge	①	H, SC	297	468	C,BA	25184848	reservations@esibayenilodge.com	www.esibayenilodge.com
Gallery Hotel	②	H	60	68	B	76635993	info.galleryhotel.sd@gmail.com	n/a
Matsapha Inn	③	H	16	32	C	25186893	matsaphainn@realnet.co.sz	n/a
Salt & Pepper Guest house	④	GH	4	8	D	76032796	saltpepperguesthouse@gmail.com	n/a
Summerfield Botanical Garden	⑤	H	34	57	A,A*	25184743	info@summerfieldresort.com	www.summerfieldresort.com
The Orchards	⑥	GH	7	14	C	76462499	theorchards28@gmail.com	n/a
Wide Horizons Retreat	⑦	B&B	5	10	C	25053915	widehorizonsretreat@gmail.com	www.widehorizonsretreat.com

Name	Tel:	Email:	Web:
ESWATINI'S ARTS & CRAFTS			
Baobab Batik	25283242	info@baobab-batik.com	www.baobab-batik.com
Black Mamba Chilli	25184000	info@blackmambachilli.com	www.blackmambachilli.com
Coral Stephens Handweaving	24313340	murrae@coralstephens.com	www.coralstephens.com
Eswatini Kitchen	25373060	info@eswatinikitchen.com	www.eswatinikitchen.com
Gone Rural	25504936	contactus@gonerural.co.sz	www.goneruralswazi.com
Khutsala	78024772	info@heartforafrica.org	www.khutsala.com
Ngwenya Glass	24424053	ngwenya@ngwenyaglass.co.sz	www.ngwenyaglass.co.sz
Quazi Design	24220193	info@quazidesign.com	www.quazidesign.com
Swazi Candles	25283219	info@swazicandles.co.sz	www.swazicandles.com
Tintsaba	24313380	admin@tintsaba.com	www.tintsaba.com
Tsandza Handweaving	25188867	info@tsandzaweaving.com	www.tsandzaweaving.com
Yebo Art Gallery Design	24162984	armstrongaleta@gmail.com	www.yeboswaziland.com
Zoggs Design	76055015	zoggsdesign@googlemail.com	n/a

KEY

MAP REF: See location on rear cover fold out map. Greyed out circles are not marked on the map.	TYPE: BH - Beehive Huts BP - Backpackers B&B - Bed & Breakfast C - Camping Ch - Chalets	GH - Guest House H - Hotel Hb - House-boat L - Lodge SC - Self Catering T - Tents	\$\$\$: (Emalangen/Rand P.P.P.N) A* 2000-5999 A 1000-1999 B 500-999 C 200-499 D 35-199
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Dial +268 when calling from out of Eswatini

LISTINGS

Name	Map Ref	Type	Rooms	Beds	\$\$\$	Tel:	Email:	Web:
NORTH WEST ESWATINI								
Bulembu Country Lodge	107	H, SC	15	30	C	76021593	reservations@bulembu.org	www.bulembu.org
Hawane Backpackers	108	BP	12	52	D	24441744	infhawane@realnet.co.sz	www.hawane.co.sz
Hawane House-Boat	109	Hb	1	4	A	24441744	infhawane@realnet.co.sz	www.hawane.co.sz
Hawane Resort	110	Ch	23	46	C,B	24441744	infhawane@realnet.co.sz	www.hawane.co.sz
Highlands Inn	111	H	18	22	C	24371144	highlandsin@buycash.co.sz	n/a
Ingwemabala Executive Lodge	112	GH	5	8	C	76641526	thembanm@centralbank.org.sz	n/a
Maguga Lodge	113	B&B, L, C, SC	35	70	C,B	24373975	info@magugalodge.com	www.magugalodge.com
Malolotja Nature Reserve	114	SC, BP, C	8	40	D,C	77606755	malolotjares@sntc.org.sz	www.sntc.org.sz
Mthunzi's Paradise	115	BH, SC	2	8	D	76080469	swazivillage@mailfly.com	www.swazivillage.com/mthunzi
Phophonyane Falls Lodge & NR	116	L, BH, Te, SC	11	33	B,A	24313429	lungile@phophonyane.co.sz	www.phophonyane.co.sz
Piggs Peak Hotel & Casino	117	H	104	208	B,A	24378800	res@piggspkhotelandcasino.co.sz	www.piggspkhotelandcasino.co.sz
Run 'n Fire Garden Court	118	GH	7	9	C	76252549	mangogroup1@gmail.com	www.runinfire.takagogo.com
Sobantu Guest Farm	119	GH, BP	8	20	D	76053954	sobantuguestfarmbackpackers@gmail.com	n/a
Sunset View Guest House	120	B&B	4	13	C	24371534	sunsetviewguesthouse.sz@gmail.com	www.sunsetviewguesthouse.net
Stan's Lodge	121	SC	9	18	B	25532041	stanslodge@swazi.net	n/a

NORTH EAST ESWATINI								
Buckswood Hilltops	122	L, B&B, Ch	17	46	C	76751776	stay@buckswoodhilltops.com	www.buckswoodhilltops.com
Emphandzeni Hotel	123	H	12	12	D	76238583	n/a	n/a
Hlane Royal National Park	124	B&B, SC, C	35	82	C,B	25283943	reservations@biggameparks.org	www.biggameparks.org
Lijuba Guest House	125	GH	5	30	C	76113056	mmsgwane@gmail.com	n/a
Mabuda Farm B&B	126	B&B, BP, C	13	43	D,C	23434124	helen@mabuda.com	www.mabuda.com
Mafalala B&B	127	B&B	4	8	C	23333394	mafalalabnb@gmail.com	n/a
Magadzavane Lodge	128	B&B, SC	20	80	C	23435108	magadzavane@sntc.org.sz	www.sntc.org.sz
Mananga Country Club	129	GH, B&B	19	40	C,B	23232404	manangaclub@realnet.co.sz	www.manangalodge.com
Mananga Country Club Bush Camp	130	C, SC	4	10	C	23232404	manangaclub@realnet.co.sz	www.manangalodge.com
Mbuluzi Game Reserve	131	SC	27	46	D,C	23838861	mbuluzi@swazi.net	www.mbuluzi.com
Mhlume Country Club	132	H	17	34	C,B	23134350	doriel@rssc.co.sz	www.mhlumeclub.com
Mhlumeni Camp	133	C, T	4	8	D	78292617	mhlumenicamp@gmail.com	n/a
Mlawula Nature Reserve	134	SC, C	10	29	D	23838885	mlawula@sntc.org.sz	www.sntc.org.sz
Shewula Mountain Camp	135	B&B, C	8	33	D	76051160	info@shewulacamp.org	www.shewulacamp.org
Simunye Country Club	136	B&B, SC	40	142	C,B	23134758	theal@rssc.co.sz	www.simunyeclub.com
Siteki Hotel	137	H	34	62	B	23436573	sitekihotel@swazi.net	www.sitekihotel.co.sz
Tambankulu Club & Guest House	138	B&B	12	24	C,B	23737193	tambguest@swazi.net	www.tambankulu.co.za
Tio-Ze Restaurant & Motel	139	B&B	12	18	D	23333023	n/a	n/a

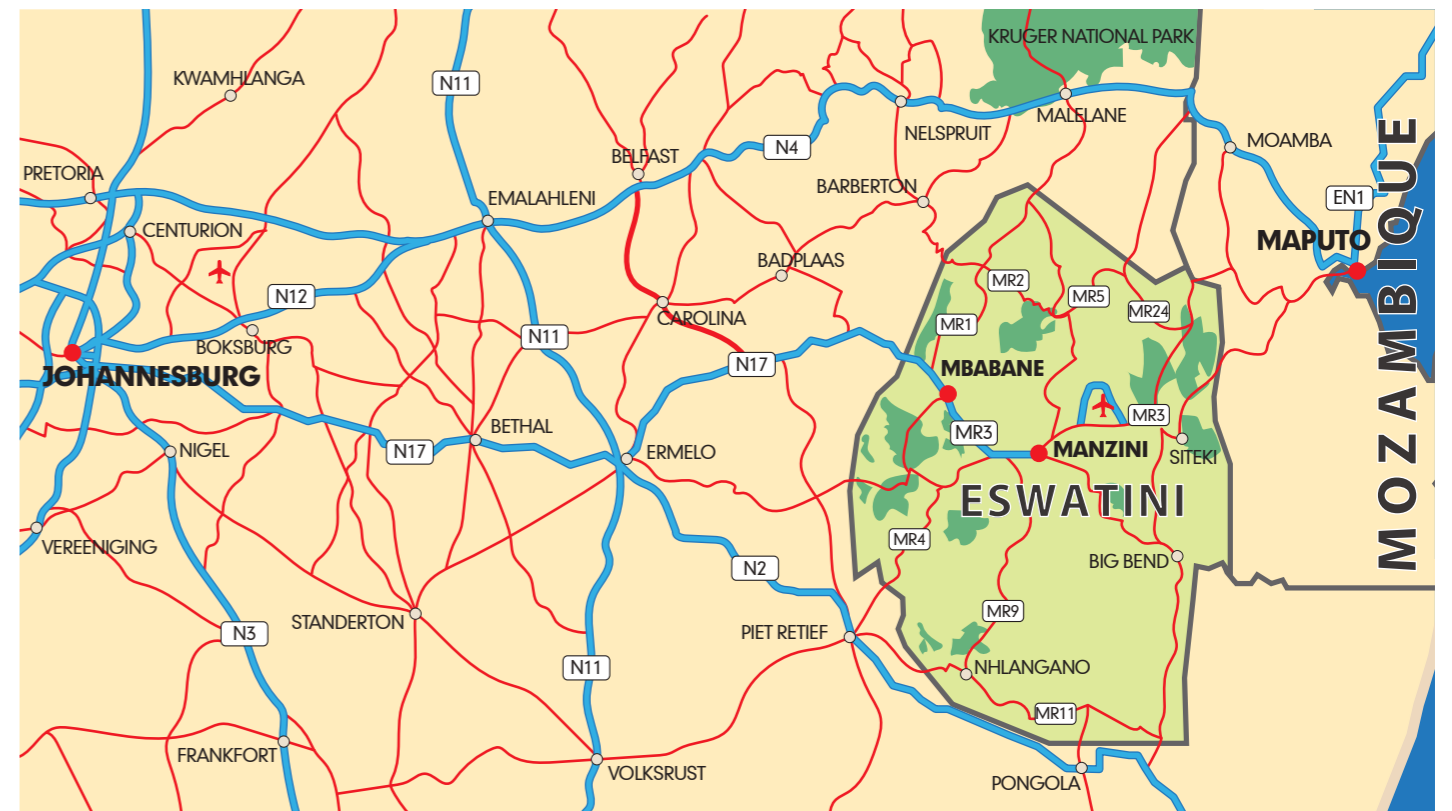
SOUTH EAST ESWATINI								
Bend Inn	140	H	16	32	C	23636855	bend-inn@swazi.net	n/a
Bushlands Farms	141	C	8	8	C	76043170	bushlandssd@gmail.com	n/a
GPG investment	142	B&B	12	52	C	23636080	riverside@realnet.co.sz	n/a
Mkhaya Game Reserve	143	B&B	12	34	A,A'	25283943	reservations@biggameparks.org	www.biggameparks.org
Nisela Safaris	144	GH, BH, Ch	27	76	D,C	23030318	reservations@niselasafaris.co.sz	www.niselasafaris.com
Riverside Hotel	145	H	23	38	C	23636910	carla@riverside.co.sz	n/a
The Lebombo Villa B&B	146	B&B	10	20	C,B	23636081	thevilla@swazi.net	n/a
Ubombo Country Club	147	B&B, C	26	51	D,C	23636462	ucc@fedics.co.sz	n/a
Wendy's Lodge	148	L, C	5	14	C,B	76083721	zwelligamedze@gmail.com	n/a

SOUTH WEST ESWATINI								
Assegai Inn	149	H, BP	7	7	C	22176421	assegai@swazi.net	n/a
Bushbaby Lodge	150	B&B	8	16	B	78024736	bushbabyreservations@gmail.com	www.nkonyenilodge.com
Dee's Guest House	151	GH	5	9	C	76146358	n/a	n/a
Diamond Guest House	152	GH	8	8	D	22079893	diamondinvestment82@gmail.com	n/a
Mahamba Gorge	153	SC	6	9	D,C	76179880	mahambagorgelodge@gmail.com	www.mahambagorgelodge.com
Nhlangano Casino Royale	154	H	47	94	C,B	22078211	gm@nhlanganocasino.org	www.nhlanganocasino.org
Nkonyeni Golf Estate	155	L, Ch	32	64	B	25400022	nkonyenigolf@swazi.net	www.nkonyeni.com
Phumula Farm Guest House	156	H	40	60	C	22079099	phumulaguesthouse@swazi.net	www.phumulaguesthouse.co.za
Swazi Dreams	157	BH	5	10	B	78300238	info@swazi-dreams.world	www.swazi-dreams.world
Tfutjana Mount Resort	158	B&B	1	1	B	78374027	sithenkhosi@gmail.com	n/a
The Hive Guest House	159	B&B	8	16	C	25388152	lungstatsab@gmail.com	n/a
Tums Water World Hotel	160	H	21	32	C,B	25058212	tumswaterworld@realnet.co.sz	www.tumswaterworld.com

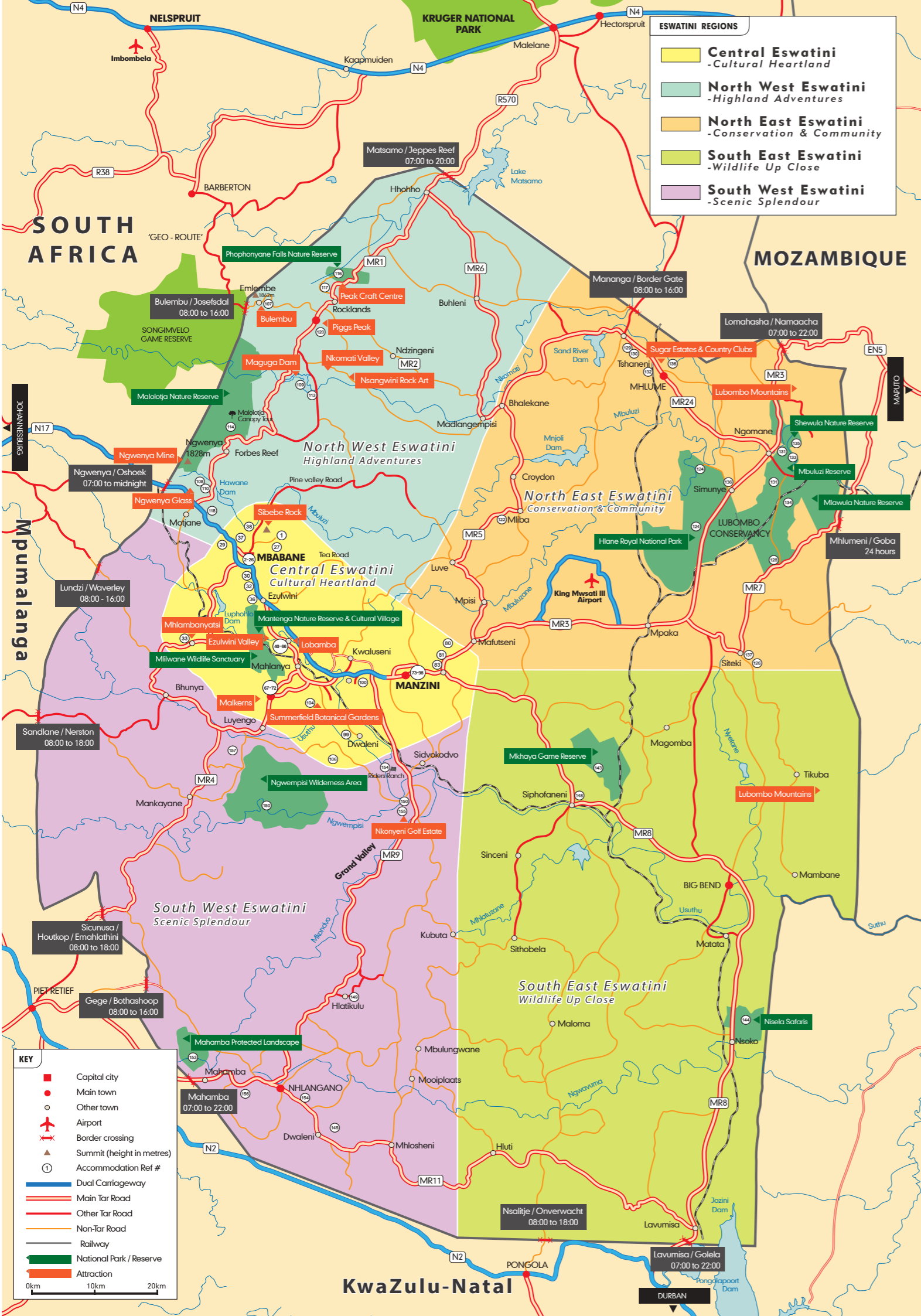
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Malolotja Nature Reserve	24161516	marketing@sntc.org.sz	www.sntc.org.sz	Unaided Hiking Trails, Zip-Lining
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Swazi Trails	24162180	info@swazitrails.co.sz	www.swazitrails.co.sz	Rafting, Caving, Abseiling and many more
Swaziland Angling Association	n/a	angling@swazi.net	n/a	Fishing
Swaziland Guided Fishing Tours	76025482	diccon@swazifishingtours.com	www.swazifishingtours.com	Fishing
Eswatini National Trust Commission	24161516	info@sntc.org.sz	www.sntc.org.sz	Cultural Village, National Museum
Taman Tours	24163370	enquiries@tamantours.com	www.tamantours.com	Culture, Crafts & Wildlife Tours
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Woza Nawe Swaziland Cultural Tours	25058363	info@swazitouring.com	www.swaziculturtours.com	Cultural Experiences

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TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES			
Eswatini Tourism Authority (Head Office)	24049693 / 24049675	infodesk@tourismauthority.org.sz	www.thekingdomofeswatini.com
International Tourist Office	+44 (0)115 9727250	info@thekingdomofeswatini.com	www.thekingdomofeswatini.com
Regional Tourist Info Office (Mbabane)	24042531		
Regional Tourist Info Office (Ngwenya Border Post)	24424206		
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For more information on visiting Eswatini see:
www.thekingdomofeswatini.com



GETTING STARTED IN siSwati

Swazis speak siSwati, which means 'of the Swazis'. This is an Nguni language and is closely related to siZulu, spoken in KwaZulu-Natal. To an outsider, its pronunciation may seem tricky, with clicks and other sounds that do not trip so easily off the European tongue. Nonetheless, any attempt to use a few greetings and other simple phrases will be warmly welcomed. Here are just a few that might come in useful. Plural forms (e.g. 'we' or plural 'you') are given in brackets.

PRONUNCIATION

- The most common of three click sounds is a dental click, produced by 'tutting' with your tongue against your front teeth. This is written as a 'c'.
- A 'k' is generally pronounced as a hard 'g'.
- An 'hl' is pronounced with the tongue against the palate, like the Welsh 'll' in Llanelli.
- All vowels are long or longish (more 'sheep' than 'ship').
- There is no silent 'e'; *babe* (father) is pronounced 'bar-bay'.

GREETINGS

Greetings follow a ritual sequence of a questions and responses.

Person 1: Hello/Good day (greeting) *Sawubona (Sanibonani)*
 Person 2: Yes, good day (response) *Yebo!*
 Person 1: How are you? *Kunjani? (Ninjani?)*
 Person 2: I'm (we're) well *Ngikhona (Sikhona)*
 Person 2: I'm (we're) well (alternative) *Ngiyaphila (Siyaphila)*
 Person 2: And how are you? *Unjani wena? (Ninjani nine?)*
 Person 1: I am (we are) also well *Nami ngikhona (Natsi sikhona)*

OTHER CIVILITIES

Yes	<i>Yebo</i>
No	<i>Cha</i>
Please (Please may I have...)	<i>Ngiyakucela</i>
Thank you	<i>Ngiyabonga (Siyabonga)</i>
Goodbye (stay well)	<i>Sala (Salani) kahle</i>
Goodbye response (go well)	<i>Hamba (Hambani) kahle</i>
Excuse me	<i>Lucolo</i>
It's OK	<i>Kulungile</i>
I'm sorry	<i>Ngiyacolisa</i>
I'm (we're) pleased/happy	<i>Ngijabulile (Sijabulile)</i>
It's nice/delicious!	<i>Kumnandzi!</i>
Come in	<i>Ngena</i>

OTHER USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

I want...	<i>Ngifuna...</i>
I don't want...	<i>Angifuni...</i>
What do you want?	<i>Ufunani?</i>
Go!	<i>Hamba</i>
Let's go	<i>Asambe</i>
I'm (we're) going	<i>Sengiyahamba (Sesiyahamba)</i>
I'm hungry	<i>Semgilambile</i>
I didn't hear/understand	<i>Angikuva kahle</i>
I don't know	<i>Angati</i>
It's hot	<i>Kuyashisa</i>
It's cold	<i>Kumakhata</i>



OTHER USEFUL WORDS

Father	<i>Babe</i>
Mother	<i>Make</i>
Brother	<i>Bhuti (Bobhuti)</i>
Sister	<i>Sisi (Bosisi)</i>
Sir (general term of respect)	<i>Nkhosi</i>
Money	<i>Imali</i>
Food	<i>Ukudla</i>
Water	<i>Emanti</i>
Bread	<i>Sinkhwa</i>
Meat	<i>Inyama</i>
Here	<i>Lapha</i>
Today	<i>Nomuhla</i>
Tomorrow	<i>Kusasa</i>
Yesterday	<i>Itolo</i>

SOME QUESTIONS

Where do you come from?	<i>Uphumaphi?</i>
What is your name?	<i>Ungubani libito lakho?</i>
How much is this?	<i>Kungumalini loko? / Malani?</i>
What did you say?	<i>Utsiteni?</i>
What are you doing?	<i>Wentani? / Nentani?</i>
What is the time?	<i>Ngicela sikhatsi?</i>
Where are you going?	<i>Uya kuphi? / Uyaphi?</i>
What is this?	<i>Yini loku?</i>
Where is he/she?	<i>Uphi? (Baphi?)</i>

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