

**RISE IN THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN**

**MPUMALANGA  
INCENTIVE FACT BOOK**



NATIONAL CONVENTION BUREAU

*Blyde River Canyon – Mpumalanga*





## MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

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There is so much on offer for the adventure-loving delegate in the province of Mpumalanga, whose name means ‘the place where the sun rises’. There are many exquisite attractions to visit – from the world-famous Kruger National Park to the incredible man-made heritage of the mining town of Pilgrim’s Rest, the spectacular beauty of the Panorama Route (incorporating the Blyde River Canyon, God’s Window, Bourke’s Luck Potholes and Long Tom Pass) and beyond. Shangaan Cultural Village is where the traditions of the Shangaan people are celebrated and explored and a great place for delegates to interact with local people. In Dullstroom, there is fantastic fly-fishing, and for the brave-hearted, Waterval Boven is known as a top-notch rock-climbing destination. For those who love history and culture, the Sudwala Caves (known to be some of the oldest dolomite caves in the world) are a sight to behold, while the small town of Kaapsche Hoop with its wild horses is certainly worth a visit, as is the historic town of Barberton. Mpumalanga is one of the country’s smallest provinces but offers huge natural diversity and a mix of attractions and activities for any group visiting this part of the world.

*Lisbon Falls, Graskop – Mpumalanga*



## KEY ATTRACTIONS AND INSPIRING ACTIVITIES:

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- **THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK:** This incredible wildlife sanctuary is one of the most famous national parks in Southern Africa and is home to the Big 5 (leopard, rhino, buffalo, lion and elephant) and an abundance of fauna and flora. For many visitors to South Africa, a trip to the Kruger is a lifetime dream and an essential element of any truly African safari.
- **THE PANORAMA ROUTE:** It's all mountains, forests, valleys and incredible 360-degree views as far as the eye can see. South Africa's famous Panorama Route is a key attraction for visitors to the country, and includes the formidable Blyde River Canyon (one of the world's largest canyons), God's Window, Bourke's Luck Potholes and the Three Rondavels. Nearby, there are scenic waterfalls such as Lisbon Falls, Berlin Falls and Mac Mac Falls. The route really is a fantastic option for a photographic safari for delegates.
- **PILGRIMS REST:** Walk in the footsteps of the early diamond prospectors who came to Pilgrim's Rest to make (and lose their fortunes). The entire town has been declared a national monument. Delegates can stay over in traditional houses and visit the Royal Hotel bar, where they will hear stories about the villains, heroes, smugglers and highway robbers who all played a part in creating the heady gold-rush days of the late 1800s.
- **THE BLYDE RIVER CANYON RESERVE:** This incredible nature reserve (also known as Motlatse Canyon Reserve) is an absolute must if you want to organise adventure activities for your delegates. From hiking and scenic drives to bird-watching, quad-biking and mountain-climbing excursions, this is definitely the place to be. Bourke's Luck Potholes are a remarkable feature located in this reserve and a major attraction in the area. Take delegates up the Abel Erasmus Pass for incredible views of the escarpment from places like God's Window.
- **THE SABI SAND RESERVE:** This exclusive part of the bushveld is where you will find some of the most luxurious safari lodges in the world. The region is known for incredible wildlife combined with luxurious and top-class pampering. It is here that you will find award-winning lodges such as Singita, Ulusaba, Lion Sands and Londolozi, to name just a few.
- **ADVENTURE TIME:** In Graskop, you will find one of the world's highest cable gorge swings, or you can try your luck on the high wire! Further along, there is also the town of Waterval Boven, well-known for adventure activities and rock-climbing in particular. Quad-biking through the forests at Sabie is another popular adventure activity in this part of the world.
- **DULLSTROOM:** For delegates in search of a genteel getaway, Dullstroom fits the bill. Just two-and-a-half hours from Johannesburg, this village is known for fly-fishing and trout fishing with its numerous dams and lakes. There are also golfing options on sprawling estates with very fine greens, as well as lovely shops, restaurants and spa options in the village.



# MPUMALANGA: MBOMBELA

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## Rise in the Land of the Rising Sun

Mbombela is the business centre of the Lowveld region. It was previously known as Nelspruit and has, over the years, burgeoned as the gateway to the Kruger and the rest of Mpumalanga. While the wilderness – rich in game and wildlife – is easily accessible, Mbombela is a thriving urban centre with superb infrastructure, including malls, banks, and excellent hotels. From the city, visitors can access many of the attractions in the area, including the Panorama Route and the Kruger National Park, on excellent roads. There is a variety of attractions and activities in Mpumalanga using Mbombela as a base – whether it's a sightseeing sojourn, a Big 5 safari or a trout-fishing excursion, delegates will thrive on the fact that there is so much to do and so much to explore in this province.

## Accessibility

Mbombela is easily accessible, with:

- Seven daily flights from Johannesburg
- One daily flight from Cape Town
- Two daily flights from Durban

The region is also accessible via local flights on South Africa's low-cost airlines and numerous charter flights that fly into Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport.

Johannesburg is the gateway to South Africa via OR Tambo International Airport – the largest airport in Africa. Connecting flights via Johannesburg include:

- Europe: Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Istanbul, London, Luxembourg, Madrid, Munich, Paris, Zurich

- Middle East: Abu Dhabi, Cairo, Dubai, Jeddah
- North America: Washington, New York
- South America: Buenos Aires, Sao Paolo
- Asia: Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Mumbai, Singapore
- Australia: Perth, Sydney

From Johannesburg and Pretoria, Mpumalanga is an easy four-to-five hour drive by car or bus.

## Where to stay

There are over 1 568 graded hotel rooms in and around Mbombela, including 54 five-star rooms, 584 four-star rooms and 930 three-star rooms. While the city hotels such as the Protea Hotel in Nelspruit are a good place to stay, the real attraction for delegates and incentive travellers are the excellent game lodges and country estates in the province. For very high-end accommodation, the lodges in the Sabi Sand Reserve are an excellent option; for value-for-money accommodation, there are excellent options around the Kruger National Park. For a country feel, venues such as Hulala Lakeside Lodge are an option, and there are numerous golf estates and country estates in places like Dullstroom. For something a little different, delegates can stay over in the mining town of Pilgrim's Rest in traditional steel-roofed houses and go on gold-panning expeditions.





## Exceptional incentive activities

- **BIG 5 COUNTRY:** Incentive travellers will love the opportunity to enjoy a bona fide bush experience – whether it's going on safari and stopping in the bush for sundowners, a guided hiking trail through the wilderness, or a star-gazing evening under an African sky as the sounds of nature provide the background soundtrack.
- **LOWVELD NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN:** These magnificent gardens are a must for delegates who enjoy being in nature. The gardens have numerous plant species on display, medicinal gardens and the largest collection of cycads in Africa. There are some lovely areas where delegates can enjoy a picnic or they can visit the coffee shop and restaurant for refreshments.
- **THE SHANGANA CULTURAL VILLAGE:** Generally, incentive delegates love to get in touch with local culture, and the Shangaan Cultural Village outside Hazyview is one of the finest. This well-appointed cultural village under ancient trees will give insight into the various aspects and ways of Shangaan life. Take a guided tour, buy some arts and crafts at the Marula Market, enjoy a traditional feast in the royal kraal and watch performers dance and sing as they share the story of the Shangaan people.
- **GOLD-PANNING IN PILGRIM'S REST:** For something a bit different, let delegates try gold-panning when visiting the historical old town of Pilgrim's Rest. This is a fun activity generally not relevant anywhere else in the country.
- **SUDWALA CAVES AND THE SUDWALA DINOSAUR PARK:** Regarded as the oldest caves in the world, delegates will enjoy going on the Crystal Tour, which takes you 2 000m into the caves en route to the Crystal Chamber to view the incredible array of crystals. A visit to the Sudwala Dinosaur Park is another fun outing for those who will enjoy a journey back to Jurassic times. The park is set in a beautiful tropical garden and visitors can enjoy the abundant birdlife in the area from a wooden deck that overlooks the 'Rainforest Valley'.
- **BOATING SAFARIS ON LOSKOP DAM:** Take a boat safari on the largest dam in the southern hemisphere and experience a bit of game viewing from the water. The Loskop Dam Nature Reserve is known for incredible fauna and flora and you may even see three of the Big 5 from your boat (leopard, buffalo and white rhino). There are also some wonderful hikes in the reserve.
- **THE WILDFLOWERS AND LAKES OF CHRISSIESMEER:** This area is known as the 'lake district' of the country, and visitors come from near and far to see the wild flowers, and fish for bass and carp in the local pans and lakes. The town is named after the biggest lake, Lake Chrissie, and there are about 270 pans and lakes in the area. There's also an annual frogging festival.
- **BARBERTON AND THE MAKHONJWA MOUNTAINS:** Barberton is something of a geological mecca and the town's ancient green rocks are among the world's oldest geological formations. The mountains are over 3.5-billion years old and are sometimes called 'the Genesis of Life'. Take a long walk with a local geologist and learn more about this incredible part of the world. The gold-rush town has numerous historical attractions (including the fascinating local museum) and there are plenty of outdoor activities, including horse-riding, archery and quad-biking - or how about paragliding off Lone Tree Hill?
- **KAAPSCHEHOOP:** Another fascinating small town in Mpumalanga, delegates can enjoy a farm-stay experience and an opportunity to see the wild horses for which this town is so famous. The region is also known for excellent birding and for sightings of the endangered blue swallow. Activities include hikes and walks, horse-riding and horse-drawn carriage rides.

*Blyde River Canyon – Mpumalanga*

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