



SOUTH AFRICA



Nomadic Bushmen lived in Southern Africa reached the Cape of Good Hope about 2000 years ago. They intermarried with the Khoikhoi peoples and became known as the Khoisans. Southern Africa became a popular stop for European crews after Vasco de Gama opened the Cape of Good Hope spice route in 1498, and, by the mid-17th century, the Dutch developed a permanent settlement in Table Bay on the site of present-day Cape Town and slowly expanded settlement towards the north. Towards the end of the 18th century, with Dutch power fading, the British came in and took control of South Africa.

The first Anglo-Boer War ended in a crushing Boer victory and the establishment of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republic. The second Anglo-Boer War broke out following the discovering of gold around Johannesburg. By 1902 the Boers had exhausted their conventional resources and resorted to commando-style raids, denying the British control of the countryside. The British overcame the resistance. In the end, the Boers were compelled to sign an ignominious and bitter peace.

), legislation was passed restricting black rights and laying the foundations for apartheid. Under apartheid, every individual was classified by race, and race determined where you could live, work, pray and learn. Black people were divided into one of 10 tribal groups, forcibly dispossessed and placed in rural Homelands. The plan was to restrict blacks to Homelands that were, according to the government, to become self-sufficient, self-governing states. In reality, these lands had virtually no infrastructure and no industry, and were therefore incapable of producing sufficient food for the black population. There was widespread suffering which led to the black resistance developing in the form of strikes, acts of public disobedience and protest

marches. This resistance was supported by international opinion from the early 1960s.

After withdrawing from the British Commonwealth in 1961, South Africa became increasingly isolated. The racial segregation continued, which caused more violent responses. These upheavals finally triggered the United Nations' economic and political sanctions. There were clashes between political rivals, tribal enemies, opportunistic gangsters, and between those who lived in the huge migrant-workers' hostels and their township neighbours. Economic sanctions began to bite in 1989. The Rand collapsed and Reformist FW De Klerk came to power. Virtually all apartheid regulations were repealed, political prisoners were released and negotiations began on forming a multiracial government. Free elections in 1994 resulted in a decisive victory for the African National Congress and Nelson Mandela became president. De Klerk's National Party won just over 20% of the vote, and the Inkatha Freedom Party won 10.5%. South Africa rejoined the British Commonwealth a few months later.

Despite the scars of the past and the enormous problems ahead, South Africa today is immeasurably more optimistic and relaxed than it was a few years ago. The international community has embraced the new South Africa and the ANC's apparently sincere desire to create a truly non-racial nation.

Language

South Africa has 11 officially recognised languages. The majority of students are placed in Afrikaans and English families of whom most families have English as a second language.

Religion

Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and traditional religions





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Short Facts



Area

South Africa is a big wallop of a country, extending nearly 2000km from the Limpopo River in the north to Cape Agulhas in the south and nearly 1500km from Port Nolloth in the west to Durban in the east.

Climate

South Africa is located south of the Tropic of Capricorn. It is mostly dry and sunny but the climate is moderated by its topography and the surrounding oceans.

Population

47,9 million.
77% black, 10% white (60% of whites are of Afrikaaner descent, most of the rest are of British descent), 8% mixed race, 2.5% of Indian or Asian descent.

Government

South Africa is a republic and independent member of the British Commonwealth.

Education

School begins at age of 7. Compulsory education at primary and lower secondary level is 9 years. Secondary education is until the 12th grade and is offered in the following categories: private schools and government schools. Both categories can lead to higher education. Exchange students are placed in schools according to age and previous school records. The school year normally begins in January and lasts until the first week in December. South African schools charge school fees of varying amounts. Students wear school uniforms.

Students are responsible for own transport costs to school, school uniforms, books, stationary and school trips. They should have a willingness to stay with different cultures and poorer families and learn new languages.





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YFU Activities

There is a 32 day tour of the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Kwa Zulu Natal in the South African Summer holiday. The tour takes students along some of the most beautiful coastline in South Africa. It also includes 10 days volunteering and helping with the preparation of Nelson Mandela's Christmas Party for Children. On Christmas day they spend the day with Nelson Mandela helping with the party. The tour also includes a hike along the coast, visiting Jeffrey's Bay (the surfing Mecca of South Africa), A visit to a game park, a national heritage site and staying in a Shosa village and sleeping in a Zulu Hut.

Exchanges with

Inbound: Australia, Germany, New Zealand, USA, Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, Estonia, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and France.

Outbound: Australia, Germany, USA, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Sweden and Estonia

