In general, information available as of 1 January 2003 was used in the preparation of The World Factbook 2003.

This page was last updated on 18 December, 2003.
Background: After the British seized the Cape of Good Hope area in 1806, many of the Dutch settlers (the Boers) trekked north to found their own republics. The discovery of diamonds (1867) and gold (1886) spurred wealth and immigration and intensified the subjugation of the native inhabitants. The Boers resisted British encroachments, but were defeated in the Boer War (1899-1902). The resulting Union of South Africa operated under a policy of apartheid - the separate development of the races. The 1990s brought an end to apartheid politically and ushered in black majority rule.

Geography

South Africa

Location: Southern Africa, at the southern tip of the continent of Africa

Geographic coordinates: 29 00 S, 24 00 E

Map references: Africa

Area: total: 1,219,912 sq km
land: 1,219,912 sq km
note: includes Prince Edward Islands (Marion Island and Prince Edward Island)
water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly less than twice the size of Texas

Land boundaries: total: 4,862 km
border countries: Botswana 1,840 km, Lesotho 909 km, Mozambique 491 km, Namibia 967 km, Swaziland 430 km, Zimbabwe 225 km

Coastline: 2,798 km

Maritime claims:
contiguous zone: 24 NM
territorial sea: 12 NM
continental shelf: 200 NM or to edge of the continental margin
exclusive economic zone: 200 NM

Climate: mostly semiarid; subtropical along east coast; sunny days, cool nights

Terrain: vast interior plateau rimmed by rugged hills and narrow coastal plain

Elevation extremes: lowest point: Atlantic Ocean 0 m
highest point: Njesuthi 3,408 m

Natural resources: gold, chromium, antimony, coal, iron ore, manganese, nickel, phosphates, tin, uranium, gem diamonds, platinum, copper, vanadium, salt, natural gas

Land use:
arable land: 12.13%
permanent crops: 0.77%
other: 87.1% (1998 est.)

Irrigated land: 13,500 sq km (1998 est.)

Natural hazards: prolonged droughts

Environment - current issues:
lack of important arterial rivers or lakes requires extensive water conservation and control measures; growth in water usage outpacing supply; pollution of rivers from agricultural runoff and urban discharge; air pollution resulting in acid rain; soil erosion; desertification

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:
South Africa completely surrounds Lesotho and almost completely surrounds Swaziland

People South Africa

Population: 42,768,678
note: South Africa took a census October 1996 that showed a population of 40,583,611 (after an official adjustment for a 6.8% underenumeration based on a postenumeration survey); estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2003 est.)

Age structure:
0-14 years: 30% (male 6,460,273; female 6,377,090)
15-64 years: 65% (male 13,807,922; female 13,970,088)
65 years and over: 5% (male 864,441; female 1,288,864) (2003 est.)

Median age:
total: 24.5 years
male: 24 years
female: 25 years (2002)

Population growth rate: 0.01% (2003 est.)
Birth rate: 18.87 births/1,000 population (2003 est.)
Death rate: 18.42 deaths/1,000 population (2003 est.)
Net migration rate: -0.35 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Sex ratio:
at birth: 1.02 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.01 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 0.99 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.67 male(s)/female
total population: 0.98 male(s)/female (2003 est.)

Infant mortality rate:
total: 60.84 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 56.86 deaths/1,000 live births (2003 est.)
male: 64.73 deaths/1,000 live births

Life expectancy:
at birth: total population: 46.56 years
male: 46.57 years
female: 46.54 years (2003 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.24 children born/woman (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 20.1% (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 5 million (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: 360,000 (2001 est.)

Nationality:
noun: South African(s)
 adjective: South African

Ethnic groups: black 75.2%, white 13.6%, Colored 8.6%, Indian 2.6%

Religions: Christian 68% (includes most whites and Coloreds, about 60% of blacks and about 40% of Indians), Muslim 2%, Hindu 1.5% (60% of Indians), indigenous beliefs and animist 28.5%

Languages: 11 official languages, including Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu

Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 86.4%
male: 87%
female: 85.7% (2003 est.)

Government

Country name: South Africa

conventional long form: Republic of South Africa
conventional short form: South Africa
former: Union of South Africa
abbreviation: RSA

Government type:
republic

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

Administrative divisions:
9 provinces; Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North-West, Northern Cape, Western Cape

Independence:
31 May 1910 (from UK); note - South Africa became a republic in 1961 following an October 1960 referendum

National holiday:
Freedom Day, 27 April (1994)

Constitution:
10 December 1996; this new constitution was certified by the Constitutional Court on 4 December 1996, was signed by then President MANDELA on 10 December 1996, and entered into effect on 3 February 1997; it is being implemented in phases

Legal system:
based on Roman-Dutch law and English common law; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations

Suffrage:
18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Thabo MBEKI (since 16 June 1999); Executive Deputy President Jacob ZUMA (since 17 June 1999); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government

elections: president elected by the National Assembly for a five-year term; election last held 2 June 1999 (next scheduled for sometime between May and July 2004)

head of government: President Thabo MBEKI (since 16 June 1999); Executive Deputy President Jacob ZUMA (since 17 June 1999); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president

election results: Thabo MBEKI elected president; percent of National Assembly vote - 100% (by acclamation)

note: ANC-IFP is the governing coalition

Legislative branch:
bicameral Parliament consisting of the National Assembly (400 seats; members are elected by popular vote under a system of proportional representation to serve five-year terms) and the National Council of Provinces (90 seats, 10 members elected by each of the nine provincial legislatures for five-year terms; has special powers to protect regional interests, including the safeguarding of cultural and linguistic traditions among ethnic minorities); note - following the implementation of the new constitution on 3 February 1997 the former Senate was disbanded and replaced by the National Council of Provinces with essentially no change in membership and party affiliations, although the new institution's responsibilities have been changed somewhat by the new constitution
elections: National Assembly and National Council of Provinces - last held 2 June 1999 (next to be held by 2 August 2004)
election results: National Assembly - percent of vote by party - ANC 66.4%, DP 9.6%, IFP 8.6%, NNP 6.9%, UDM 3.4%, ACDP 1.4%, FF 0.8%, other 2.9%; seats by party - ANC 266, DP 38, IFP 34, NNP 28, UDM 14, ACDP 6, FF 5, other 11; National Council of Provinces - percent of vote by party - NA%; seats by party - ANC 61, NNP 17, FF 4, IFP 5, DP 3

Judicial branch: Constitutional Court; Supreme Court of Appeals; High Courts; Magistrate Courts

Political parties and leaders: African Christian Democratic Party or ACDP [Kenneth MESHOE, president]; African National Congress or ANC [Thabo MBEKI, president]; Democratic Alliance (formed from the merger of the Democratic Party or DP and the New National Party or NNP; note - NNP split from DP in 2001) [Anthony LEON]; Freedom Front or FF [Dr. Pieter MULDER, president]; Inkatha Freedom Party or IFP [Mangosuthu BUTHELEZI, president]; New National Party or NNP [Marthinus VAN SCHALKWYK]; Pan-Africanist Congress or PAC [Stanley MOGOBA, president]; United Democratic Movement or UDM [Bantu HOLOMISA]

Political pressure groups and leaders: Congress of South African Trade Unions or COSATU [Zwelinzima VAVI, general secretary]; South African Communist Party or SACP [Blade NZIMANDE, general secretary]; South African National Civics Organization or SANCO [Mlungisi HLONGWANE, national president]; note - COSATU and SACP are in a formal alliance with the ANC


Diplomatic representation in the US: chief of mission: Ambassador Barbara Joyce Mosima MASEKELA
consulate(s) general: Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York
FAX: [1] (202) 265-1607
telephone: [1] (202) 232-4400
chancery: 3051 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008

Diplomatic representation from the US: chief of mission: Ambassador Cameron H. HUME
embassy: 877 Pretorius Street, Pretoria
mailing address: P. O. Box 9536, Pretoria 0001
telephone: [27] (12) 342-1048
FAX: [27] (12) 342-2244
consulate(s) general: Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg

Flag description: two equal width horizontal bands of red (top) and blue separated by a central green band which splits into a horizontal Y, the arms of which end at the corners of the hoist side; the Y embraces a black isosceles triangle from which the arms are separated by narrow yellow bands; the red and blue bands are separated from the green band and its arms by narrow white stripes
South Africa is a middle-income, emerging market with an abundant supply of natural resources; well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy, and transport sectors; a stock exchange that ranks among the 10 largest in the world; and a modern infrastructure supporting an efficient distribution of goods to major urban centers throughout the region. However, growth has not been strong enough to lower South Africa's high unemployment rate; and daunting economic problems remain from the apartheid era, especially poverty and lack of economic empowerment among the disadvantaged groups. High crime and HIV/AIDS infection rates also deter investment. South African economic policy is fiscally conservative, but pragmatic, focusing on targeting inflation and liberalizing trade as means to increase job growth and household income.

**GDP:**
- Purchasing power parity - $427.7 billion (2002 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:**
- 3% (2002 est.)

**GDP - per capita:**
- Purchasing power parity - $10,000 (2002 est.)

**GDP - composition by sector:**
- Agriculture: 4.4%
- Industry: 28.9%
- Services: 66.7% (2001)

**Population below poverty line:**
- 50% (2000 est.)

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:**
- Lowest 10%: 1.1%
- Highest 10%: 45.9% (1994)

**Distribution of family income - Gini index:**
- 59.3 (1993-94)

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**
- 9.9% (2002 est.)

**Labor force:**
- 17 million economically active

**Labor force - by occupation:**
- Agriculture 30%, industry 25%, services 45% (1999 est.)

**Unemployment rate:**
- 37% (includes workers no longer looking for employment) (2001 est.)

**Budget:**
- Revenues: $22.6 billion
- Expenditures: $24.7 billion, including capital expenditures of $NA billion (FY 02/03)

**Industries:**
- Mining (world's largest producer of platinum, gold, chromium), automobile assembly,
metalworking, machinery, textile, iron and steel, chemicals, fertilizer, foodstuffs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial production growth rate:</th>
<th>3% (2002 est.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electricity - production:</td>
<td>195.6 billion kWh (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity - production by source:</td>
<td>fossil fuel: 93.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hydro: 1.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other: 0% (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nuclear: 5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity - consumption:</td>
<td>181.2 billion kWh (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity - exports:</td>
<td>6.91 billion kWh (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity - imports:</td>
<td>6.2 billion kWh (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil - production:</td>
<td>196,200 bbl/day (2001 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil - consumption:</td>
<td>460,000 bbl/day (2001 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil - exports:</td>
<td>NA (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil - imports:</td>
<td>NA (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil - proved reserves:</td>
<td>7.84 million bbl (37257)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural gas - production:</td>
<td>1.8 billion cu m (2001 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural gas - consumption:</td>
<td>1.8 billion cu m (2001 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural gas - exports:</td>
<td>0 cu m (2001 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural gas - imports:</td>
<td>0 cu m (2001 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural gas - proved reserves:</td>
<td>14.16 million cu m (37257)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture - products:</td>
<td>corn, wheat, sugarcane, fruits, vegetables; beef, poultry, mutton, wool, dairy products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports:</td>
<td>$31.8 billion f.o.b. (2002 est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports - commodities:</td>
<td>gold, diamonds, platinum, other metals and minerals, machinery and equipment (1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exports - partners: UK 12.8%, US 12.7%, Germany 9%, Japan 8.8%, Italy 5.8% (2002)

Imports:

$26.6 billion f.o.b. (2002 est.)

Imports - commodities: machinery and equipment, chemicals, petroleum products, scientific instruments, foodstuffs (2000 est.)

Imports - partners: Germany 15.4%, US 9.4%, UK 9%, Saudi Arabia 6.9%, Japan 5.8%, France 5%, China 4.9%, Iran 4.1% (2002)

Debt - external: $24.7 billion (2002 est.)

Economic aid - recipient: $487.5 million (2000)

Currency: rand (ZAR)

Currency code: ZAR


Fiscal year: 1 April - 31 March

Communications South Africa

Telephones - main lines in use: more than 5 million (2001)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 7.06 million (2001)

Telephone system: general assessment: the system is the best developed and most modern in Africa domestic: consists of carrier-equipped open-wire lines, coaxial cables, microwave radio relay links, fiber-optic cable, radiotelephone communication stations, and wireless local loops; key centers are Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, and Pretoria international: 2 submarine cables; satellite earth stations - 3 Intelsat (1 Indian Ocean and 2 Atlantic Ocean)


Television broadcast stations: 556 (plus 144 network repeaters) (1997)

Internet country code:.za
Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 150 (2001)

Internet users: 3.068 million (2002)

Transportation

South Africa

Railways:

*total:* 22,298 km
*narrow gauge:* 21,984 km 1.065-m gauge (10,436 km electrified); 314 km 0.610-m gauge
*note:* includes a 2,228 km commuter rail system (2002)

Highways:

*total:* 362,099 km
*paved:* 73,506 km (including 2,032 km of expressways)
*unpaved:* 288,593 km (2000)

Waterways:

NA

Pipelines:

condensate 100 km; gas 741 km; oil 847 km; refined products 1,354 km (2003)

Ports and harbors:

Cape Town, Durban, East London, Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth, Richards Bay, Saldanha

Merchant marine:

*total:* 3 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 30,235 GRT/35,904 DWT
*note:* includes some foreign-owned ships registered here as a flag of convenience: Denmark 3, Netherlands 1 (2002 est.)
*ships by type:* container 1, petroleum tanker 2

Airports:

*total:* 727 (2002)

Airports - with paved runways:

*total:* 143
*over 3,047 m:* 10
*2,438 to 3,047 m:* 5
*1,524 to 2,437 m:* 50
*914 to 1,523 m:* 67
*under 914 m:* 11 (2002)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

*total:* 584
*1,524 to 2,437 m:* 34
*914 to 1,523 m:* 298
*under 914 m:* 252 (2002)

Military

South Africa

Military branches:

South African National Defense Force (including Army, Navy, Air Force, and Medical Services), South African Police Service
Military manpower - military age: 18 years of age (2003 est.)

Military manpower - availability: 

*males age 15-49*: 11,865,280 (2003 est.)

Military manpower - fit for military service: 

*males age 15-49*: 7,211,075 (2003 est.)

Military manpower - reaching military age annually: 

*males*: 471,578 (2003 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure: $1.746 billion (FY02)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP: 1.7% (FY02)

Military - note: with the end of Apartheid and the establishment of majority rule, former military, black homelands forces, and ex-opposition forces were integrated into the South African National Defense Force (SANDF); as of 2003 the integration process was considered complete.

Transnational Issues

South Africa

Disputes - international: managed dispute with Namibia over the location of the boundary in the Orange River

Illicit drugs: transshipment center for heroin, hashish, marijuana, and possibly cocaine; cocaine consumption on the rise; world's largest market for illicit methaqualone, usually imported illegally from India through various east African countries; illicit cultivation of marijuana; attractive venue for money launderers given the increasing level of organized criminal and narcotics activity in the region

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