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EXPLORE SUGGESTED TOURS



The Long Road to Freedom

Start the day with a tour of Soweto, South Africa's most famous township. Visit historic sites such as the Regina Mundi Catholic Church, the Oppenheimer Tower and the Hector Peterson Memorial, dedicated to the young boy who was the first fatality of the June 1976 uprisings.

Drop in at Nelson Mandela's former Orlando West home in Soweto, where the President lived while practicing as a lawyer in Johannesburg.



Visit a shebeen for lunch for that memorable cultural experience. Try Wandri's Place in Dube, or the Cappuccino Shop in Orlando West, Soweto.

Freedom Square, in Kliptown near Soweto, is an historical monument to the struggle where the Congress of the People signed the Freedom



Charter in 1955.

In the city of Johannesburg explore MuseumAfrica, Johannesburg's major history and cultural history museum, where fascinating exhibits take you on a journey through our turbulent and eventful history.

The Freedom Trail

A Self Guided Tour for the Visitor

Gauteng is a place steeped in some of the most dramatic history in recent times. Johannesburg is the 'city that sprang to life' because of the extraordinary quantities of gold to be found beneath the surface of this remote African plain. Experience some of the most interesting historic sites in our province. This heritage trail is designed to make it easier for you to get out there and explore. Much of our recent history was suppressed or lost during the apartheid years. This broad selection of sites will give you a small, inspirational 'taste of freedom'!

Very important note: Many townships in Gauteng lack adequate street signs and are easy to get lost in. Townships also have higher crime rates than other business and residential districts, and therefore it is not advisable to explore township heritage sites without a local guide.

This will ensure that your visit to any township is safe and problem free. In addition, by patronising a local guide from the township you are assured of contributing to revenue generation where it is most needed.





The Trail

All good stories should start at the beginning. In the case of Gauteng, the very beginning goes back many millions of years to the creation of the vast gold deposits which breathed life into the teeming centres of commerce, industry and creative enterprise that characterise Gauteng today.

Gold Reef City which was, until the 1970s, one of the hundreds of working shafts along the massive east-west arc of gold-bearing rock. In the seventies this part of the mine was closed as most of the accessible gold had been mined out. The site then became a museum focusing on both the history of gold and the extraordinary geology of the area.

A key part of the Gold Reef City complex is the mine shaft which has been kept in working order so that visitors may descend to the rock face deep underground, just as the miners once did. Gold Reef City is a thoroughly enjoyable, safe, yet authentic place where you can learn about the Witwatersrand gold deposits. Underground tours run several times each day and are information-packed.

Gandhi Square, downtown Johannesburg - Gandhi, another great 20th century freedom fighter, lived in South Africa for many years, and in fact during this time, developed the philosophy of 'passive resistance' or satyagraha. Gandhi after qualifying as a lawyer in India, was retained by some Indian merchants in Durban to manage a case for them. This led to the young man experiencing first-hand the already severe racial discrimination in operation even prior to the outbreak of the South African War in 1899. During his years in South Africa he fought many cases for clients who had lost their land to the ever tightening grip of racially based laws. You will see: A newly-renovated city square which commemorates the life of this remarkable man and the fact that his law office was just across the road from the square.

Newtown Cultural Precinct and the Workers' Library - Many of the cases Gandhi fought were for Asian residents of this part of Johannesburg. The famous Market Theatre complex which dominates the precinct was actually termed the 'Indian market', being the main fresh produce market for the burgeoning city. Later, the municipality constructed a number of buildings near the market

to house workers who were retained as part of South Africa's notorious migrant labour system. The original blocks of dormitories or hostels that housed workers in overcrowded poorly ventilated conditions still stand in Newtown today, and whilst they were inhabited by electrical workers not miners, they are exactly the same as the much larger, equally impersonal hostel complexes built on every mine. Look out for: the magnificent Victorian Market Theatre building, which also houses the city's principal socio-historic museum, MuseumAfrica (the latter currently has a good display on Gandhi); the hostel complexes and punishment cell; the Workers' Library, set up to give mineworkers in particular access to research library facilities.

The Precinct includes the French Cultural Institute, the Foundation for Creative Arts, the Newtown Art Gallery, the Yard of Ale, a great stopover for refreshments, and Gramadoelas Restaurant which offers genuine South African cuisine.

Newtown has renovated a number of warehouses and buildings to house museum displays such as the Worker's Museum, as well as the Artists' Studios.

From Johannesburg head some 60km north to the city of Pretoria to visit the Union Buildings. Designed by Sir Herbert Baker, this famous landmark epitomizes the history of colonialism, of apartheid, and now of freedom. President Mandela was inaugurated in 1994 as South Africa's first democratically elected president on the steps of the Union Buildings.

Visit the home of Sammy Marks, founder of many industries in the old Transvaal and a contemporary of President Paul Kruger. Marks ordered in his will, that nobody should change anything in his home for three generations after his death. A guided tour of this stately house will give the visitor a unique insight into a bygone era.



"Blackspots" areas whereby Africans could fully own land freeholds occurred in many cities around the country. Among these were the Alexandra township in Sandton and the district of Sophiatown. These areas became the special target of apartheid law enforcers as the 1960s approached, and at this time many of these vibrant, tenacious communities were forcibly removed. Since property owners in Sophiatown were protected by the law, many Africans crowded into the area to live as it was more convenient for commuting to work than commuting from the new residential townships like parts of Soweto, which were being built miles away. Sophiatown was a place where



artists, singers, musicians and philosophers abounded. A vibrant culture grew up there during the 1930s, 40s and 50s - only to be smashed by the bulldozers of the Group Areas act in 1960. Look out for a few of the oldest houses of the original Sophiatown suburb which still remain, though most were completely destroyed, in an effort to prevent legal

re-occupation by Africans. One of the most famous anti-apartheid activists spent several very happy years here as a parish priest amongst the poor of Sophiatown. His name was Father Trevor Huddleston who eventually troubled the state to an extent that he was expelled from South Africa.

Father Huddleston never forgot the great love and affection he had for the poor community of Sophiatown, and they never forgot him. He lived to see the new democratic dispensation ushered in, and returned as a visitor when he was a frail and elderly man.

The offices of Mandela and Tambo,

Johannesburg CBD - These were located opposite the main court building in downtown Johannesburg. After much struggle to gain an education, Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela qualified as lawyers. In 1952 they opened a law firm, which dealt very largely with complaints brought by people suffering various problems relating to the cruel laws of apartheid. From this time on, both Nelson Mandela and many others associated with the leadership of the struggle against injustice became the special focus of the state security police. The activities of the firm eventually gave way more and more to actions directed at creating awareness in the wider communities, and to creating and driving actions which both challenged the state's oppression, but which also rallied the energies of the wider African community towards a common goal. 'The Programme of Action' - devised by Mandela and

others was a series of non-violent actions. These included things such as boycotts of state-owned transport, and - most especially - anti-pass campaigns. In devising such plans, much was borrowed from the peaceful, yet effective strategies adopted by Gandhi decades before.

Yeoville, the childhood home of Joe Slovo, first post-1994 minister of Housing - Another of the famous characters whose actions shaped both the development of the ANC and its policies but also who played a large part in both the negotiations for settlement after Nelson Mandela's release and the first steps towards post-apartheid reconstruction was Joe Slovo. Slovo's family emigrated from Eastern Europe to South Africa early in the last century to escape religious persecution and poverty. The young Joe grew up in the streets of Yeoville, then, as now, a leafy residential working-class suburb. Slovo went on to become a gifted lawyer, and one of the key thinkers and strategists in the anti-government movement of the 1950s to the 1990s. In post apartheid South Africa Joe was the first holder of the portfolio of housing in the national government. He died prematurely from a form leukaemia in 1995, and, fittingly, is buried in Avalon Cemetery Soweto.

Freedom Square, Kliptown, Soweto - Today, this famous space shows little sign of the momentous events that occurred here in the mid-1950s.

Another part of the strategy the resistance leadership devised was the creation of a 'People's Bill of Rights'. This is a very famous document, and became known as The Freedom Charter. Kliptown, Soweto, was the place chosen for a large public meeting in 1955 during which the contents of the document would be finalised and agreed upon. It was extremely difficult for any sort of public meeting to be held at the time, as almost all types of gathering had been banned by the authorities. Various activists had invited suggestions from the public, and many had poured in by mail or by word of mouth. The activists had drafted a series of points, each of which were discussed at the meeting in Kliptown, watched over by silent, intimidating ranks of police. Eventually the meeting was dispersed, seemingly with only a few sporadic arrests. But the document the meeting had approved created a panic within the government and a draconian clampdown swept over the country as a result of the Kliptown meeting. As a direct result of the creation of the Freedom Charter the government arrested a staggering 156 people, including Nelson Mandela, as well as scores of men and women who had had little or nothing to do with the creation of the Freedom Charter. All 156 defendants were charged with the capital offence of treason. This led to the very famous show trial of the late 1950s called the Treason Trial. The Treason Trial dragged on for 4 years, disrupting personal lives and ruining businesses. Most of the hearing took place in a building that stands in central Johannesburg still, the Drill Hall. (see below).

The Mandela family home in Soweto -

All tours of Soweto take visitors to this tiny 'matchbox' house where Nelson and his wife Winnie spent some of the short time they were able to live together as a family. It is typical of the cramped, minimal type of housing the government built for Africans, so as to discourage them from really putting down roots in the city. Under apartheid, Africans were supposed to work in the city but 'go home' to the distant rural areas, where opportunities were few, when their labour was no longer required.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu's home,

Soweto - Some three houses away from the Mandela home one comes across a house with a high blue wall. This is the home of Bishop Tutu, known internationally as a stalwart anti-apartheid cleric. Bishop Tutu has dedicated his life to communication and reconciliation, and was the person often chosen to conduct some of the most difficult mass funerals that took place during the 1970s and 1980s. Upon retiring as Archbishop of Cape Town, he was appointed to head up the process of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC), whose hearings have continued for some years.

Sharpeville Police Station - South African history is studded with events that stand out as landmarks. One of these was the shooting of some 69 people, many in the back as they ran away, on 21 March 1960, during a peaceful anti-pass campaign organised by the Pan African Congress (PAC), which was led at the time by another famous name in struggle, Robert Sobukwe. The PAC was a political organisation of the late 1950s which had a different view to that of the African National Congress. The PAC, led by the gifted and charismatic Robert Sobukwe, felt that the ANC was not doing enough to challenge the government's continuing oppression. They were a radical group with exclusively 'black rights' oriented ideas. The PAC's call to demonstrate had been quite widely supported, and many people marched all over the Witwatersrand townships, including Sharpeville. An orderly crowd of a few thousand had gathered in front of the police station, when a nervous policeman apparently fired a shot. The police had live ammunition and immediately opened fire on the defenceless crowd, resulting in the killings. The reaction to Sharpeville reverberated around the world. The Stock Exchange fell, many people left the country, and the mood was sombre. Many of the young up and coming leaders like Robert Sobukwe were detained in a massive security sweep.

The Hector Petersen memorial - The site of Sharpeville links easily with another major political shooting (of which there were many) in nearby Soweto, termed the 1976 Soweto Student Uprising. This, like Sharpeville, created an indelible image



worldwide and turned the tide of South African history. By 1976 the apartheid system was truly entrenched. One of the most hated laws were those governing schooling and education, as the communities felt strongly that the so-called 'Bantu education system' (which was of a much lower standard than the education offered to whites), was intolerable. The students, therefore, began to plan their own peaceful demonstrations to protest having to learn lessons in Afrikaans only, amongst other grievances. A large and peaceful demonstration was planned by student leaders for June 16, 1976. There was a heavy police presence as the massive march got underway. The events that followed were remarkable. A single tear gas canister was thrown into the crowd, followed by a single shot. This shot found its mark with a young student named Hector Petersen. Photographer Sam Nzima caught the moment when another boy emerged from the crowd carrying the lifeless body of Hector Petersen. This event was like a spark from a tinderbox. The thousands of children erupted in a wave of furious retaliatory actions. Crowds rampaged, burning government buildings, stoning cars and attacking policemen who tried to turn them back. What was remarkable was that the events in Soweto sparked spontaneous rioting all around the country. The struggle had been esoundingly taken up by the children. This resulted in children being detained, and a number of very young men being sent to Robben Island. The image of Hector Petersen has, like that of Sharpeville, marked certain turning points in South Africa's history.

Avalon cemetery, Soweto (best visited when accompanied by a guide) - This is the place where two major white anti-apartheid figures are buried, alongside many black South Africans who died in the struggle. Avalon is the unofficial "Heroes Acre" for many who lost their lives during the apartheid years. Joe Slovo's funeral was huge and moving. After the ceremony in Orlando stadium the coffin proceeded to Soweto on a gun carriage. The cortege was feted by many thousands of people along the route. The other white activist buried here was one of the leading women of the struggle period, Helen Joseph.

The University of the Witwatersrand ('Wits') -

As one drives north on Jan Smuts Avenue through the business district of Braamfontein towards the northern suburbs of Jo'burg, Wits campus maybe seen on the left hand side. Founded in the 1920s, Wits earned a reputation for resisting the worst efforts of the government to enforce segregation in universities. The university also had at least two famous African leaders as alumni: Nelson Mandela and Robert Sobukwe.



The Johannesburg Fort -

The Fort has been dubbed Johannesburg's Robben Island, so famous and numerous were the people who passed through its gates as prisoners. Some of these are: Gandhi; Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Jo Slovo, Ahmed Kathrada and a whole host of people who went on later to be incarcerated on Robben Island. Originally built by Paul Kruger late in the 19th century to protect Johannesburg if Kruger's Boer Republic went to war with Britain, the Fort later became a convenient prison for the whole gamut of lawbreakers. Political prisoners were kept here, but so were hardened criminals, as well as thousands of black citizens arrested for pass offences. Conditions at the Fort were notorious. It was excessively over crowded, and warders were particularly brutal. However, like all prisons, the Fort also has its stories of grandeur and humour. This was the place, in 1956 where many activists actually met one another for the first time, when the 156 Treason Trialists were brought together. Many people only knew one another by code names, and this presented people with a golden opportunity to talk with one another, strategise and generally caucus - something which the draconian banning laws that many suffered with outside prevented! The Fort also has a women's section where many famous activists such as Ruth

First were held, often in solitary confinement. Others housed in the women's prison building included the spine chilling female mass murderer Daisy de Melker before her eventual execution. Note: The Fort is not generally open to the public for tours, and, from the outside, looks merely like a large earthwork with a massive gate-like entrance. The Parktown & Westcliff Heritage Trust (see the events listing section) occasionally run excellent tours of the complex, something to watch out for. **'Book for these tours through computicket'**. As mentioned, the Fort was originally a key fortification built in the late 1800s by the leader of the Transvaal Republic, Paul Kruger. Kruger was one of the country's most remarkable historical personalities. He was president of the fledgling republic when gold was found, and wisely, knew that gold could bring many problems (one of which was the 'rush' of unorganised people that happened whenever mineral wealth was found) as well as wealth. A conflict soon loomed, however,



between Kruger and the rulers of the territory to the south, the British. The South African (Boer) War is remarkable in many respects as, in its later phase, it was the world's first true guerrilla war. The Boer sharp shooters gained as fearsome a reputation as the English archers did in the middle ages: delivering a fast and deadly accurate curtain of fire. This is an important story to tell, as the story of the Boer War was also about freedom - the freedom of the Boer Republics from being taken, against their will, fully into the British Empire. The Boers fought an extraordinary campaign for the right to rule their republics as fully separate countries.

No European country actually formally supported Kruger and the Boers' fight for self determination, though many hundreds of individuals from dozens of countries as diverse as Russia and

Ireland boarded ships and sailed to Africa to fight on the Boers' side.

The Boer War, which sees its centenary anniversary running for another two years, was thus also one of world's epic battles for freedom. But at no time during the war did either Boer or Brit give serious consideration to the needs and rights of the majority of the region's population. This very fact led to the formation of the SANNC (the South African Native National Congress) in 1912 - the forerunner of the ANC.

Turffontein concentration camp - Another feature which emerged from the Boer War was the concept of 'concentration camps'. Because the war was dragging on and costing enormous sums each day, after some time the British adopted a 'dragnet' strategy. The Boer forces lived off the land, and were fed and watered by the women left by the men to run the farms. The British then decided to round up all Boer civilians on the land and keep them in holding camps or concentration camps. Conditions in the camps were horrendous, and some 26 000 women, children and the infirm died in them. The site of Turffontein, today a racecourse, was one of the main concentration camps in the Johannesburg area. Black people were also held in such camps, although less information is currently available on these.

The memorial to Enoch Sontonga, Brixton Cemetery - As one drives down the road next to the cemetery, also called Enoch Sontonga Avenue, one glimpses a massive black marble cube in a beautiful glade of tall trees, in the middle of a green park-like space. This space is actually a graveyard that was once reserved for black Johannesburgers. This is the exquisite memorial to another forgotten contributor to the life and culture of South Africa, the gifted author of one of the country's two national anthems, Nkosi sikele' iAfrica ('God Bless Africa'). Sontonga was a highly gifted writer and teacher, and, interestingly, a keen photographer. He sadly died young, apparently from peritonitis, in Johannesburg.

The Drill Hall, Joubert Park - This building was where the first sessions of the infamous 1956 Treason Trial took place. Eventually, proceedings were moved to Pretoria, to a synagogue in the centre of the city. The reason for this was to try to discourage the public protests which took place regularly outside the Drill Hall. After four long tedious years of evidence, the state was forced to acquit every single person accused in the Treason Trial! There is a very good exhibition on the trial at MuseumAfrica in the Newtown cultural precinct.

Alexandra Township - In the 1940s Alexandra Township, a so-called 'black spot' located close to Johannesburg's new de facto business hub, was a ferment of anti government activity. Like Sophiatown, Africans could own property freehold here. After many protests in the poverty-stricken

townships against bus price hikes a nine month negotiation and bus boycott led to a capitulation on the part of the bus companies. But when they again tried to raise the fares a short time later, the township rallied en masse to protest. For many weeks white commuters were amazed by the sight of some 20 000 people walking every day to work - a truly remarkable show of solidarity. After a number of skirmishes, 20 banning orders, the routine harassment of white lift givers and a 7-week long deadlock a compromise was reached late in 1944.

Waverley, Johannesburg, Bram Fischer a Rhodes and Oxford educated scholar ran the gauntlet of the apartheid state's wrath. He dedicated the vast majority of his working years in the 1950s and early sixties to fighting, via the courts, the growing state oppression. His most spectacular performance was as the lead defence lawyer in the Rivonia Trial (1963-4), which resulted in Nelson Mandela and others receiving life sentences instead of the death penalty. Soon after the end of the trial he began to receive unwelcome attention from the security police. Bram went under cover, to begin a 6 month stint in limbo living in Waverley as a mysterious 'Mr Black'. He served 9 years of his sentence, only being released in 1975 when upon point of death from cancer.

Lilliesleaf Farm, Rivonia - This property was the place where the leaders of the anti-government groupings began to meet secretly in the very early 1960s in order to plan an armed resistance campaign. In those days Rivonia was a sleepy, semi-rural district of scattered farms and smallholdings. The sale of the property was fronted by a white Johannesburger who was sympathetic to the cause, and, to the casual eye, the house looked like any other South African household. Eventually, however, the ever vigilant security police began to get suspicious of the activities at Lilliesleaf. A raid was planned, and many leading thinkers of the movement were picked up.

Pretoria Central prison - Whilst Johannesburg was the scene of many dramatic incidents, the focus now moves to Pretoria, where apartheid was actually administered (Pretoria is the administrative capital of the country). Pretoria Central, where a number of people convicted of atrocities during the apartheid years are now imprisoned. This also was the location of Death Row in South Africa, and the place where one of the youngest black activists to be hung for political activity, Solomon Mahlangu, a resident of Mamelodi township outside Pretoria, died in 1976. There is now a square in the township named after Mahlangu, with a dramatic statue commemorating his life. A number of white activists received very long sentences in Pretoria Central. The longest serving of these was activist Denis Goldberg who served some 20 years.

Welcome to GAUTENG

Church Square, Palace of Justice, the Raadsaal, and Paul Kruger - Church Square in Pretoria is a site full of associations with a number of struggles for freedom. The Palace of Justice, this turreted construction siding the south-east quadrant of the Square was the scene of one of the most famous of South Africa's major political trials, the Rivonia Trial. It was held in Pretoria ostensibly to avoid the publicity which the inevitable demonstrations would produce in Johannesburg. Statue of Paul Kruger. Kruger's House A very fine statue of the legendary Boer leader can be seen at the centre of the square. Just a few minutes away, down Church Street, lies the very modest house that he and his wife Gezina occupied. Kruger was a member of the strict Doppe sect of the Dutch Reformed Church, of which there is an example directly across the road from his home. Kruger and Gezina are buried in the cemetery in central Pretoria known as Hero's Acre, along with many who died on both sides during the South African War.

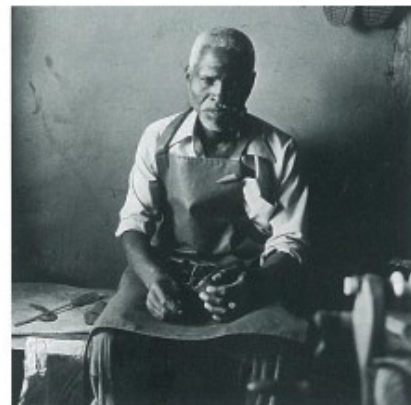
Solomon Mahlangu Square, Mamelodi township - Whilst Soweto is the most famous South African township for many visitors, all townships have wonderful cultural activities and vibrant life to sample and enjoy. Mamelodi is no exception to this - and it is particularly well known for its contribution to music. Mamelodi and various Cape townships vie with one another for the title of 'jazz capital'! Mamelodi is home to several of the country's most successful musicians, including the hugely popular Vusi Mahlasela. Mamelodi's resistance history is also fascinating. It is possible to book a tour with a local guide who will show you many famous sites in the township, including the poignant Solomon Mahlangu Square near the town's administrative buildings. The square commemorates the execution of a young Mamelodi resident, who was executed for his political activity in the 1970s. The statue is usually surrounded by a profusion of beautiful flowerbeds

Mamelodi cemetery - Few people are aware that African prisoners executed in South Africa were buried in Mamelodi cemetery, regardless of where they originally came from. Apparently, under apartheid, the authorities did not allow the families of the dead to remove their bodies for burial at home.

The Union Buildings - Built in the early years of the 20th century, during the period of political Union between the former British colonies of the Cape and Natal and the two Boer Republics, the Union Buildings embody much of the philosophy held by the British at the time over the way colonies should be run and governed.

The Union period of South Africa's history (1902-10) was about building bridges between Boer and Brit after the bitterness of the Boer War - but no one gave thought or attention to the rights of black South Africans. It was soon after the Act of Union was passed in 1910 that the first broad based African movement was formed specifically to lobby and work for black rights in South Africa.

This organisation, formed in 1912, was the forerunner of the African National Congress. The most famous occasions now held at the Union Buildings are the inauguration ceremonies of the country's presidents.





Terminology:

ANC - African National Congress - Apartheid - the legally ratified system of discrimination based on race practised by the Afrikaner Nationalist government of South Africa from 1948 until the 1990s

Boer - the term for a frontier farmer of Dutch origin

PAC - Pan Africanist Congress

Satyagraha - 'passive resistance'; Gandhi himself preferred the Indian term which translates as 'the force which is born of truth and love or non-violence'

South African War - also called The Anglo Boer War, or the Boer War, this was the war fought between Great Britain and the two Boer republics in southern Africa from 1899-1902, essentially over political control of the regions where the mineral wealth occurred

Township - these were the urban settlements or labour pools of Johannesburg, and all other South African cities developed. Characterised by very poor infrastructure and lack of facilities of all kinds, townships were placed far from the 'white' urban areas to maintain strongly segregated urban and rural geography.

TRC - Truth and Reconciliation Commission - the body set up to hold a series of hearings whose purpose is to establish the truth of the many unclear incidents of violence which occurred during the apartheid years. Applicants for amnesty for such actions have come from all sectors of South African citizenry.