



Welcome to Swaziland

"Living in paradise with an amazing group of friends working all day and chilling all night."

The Kingdom of Swaziland is one of the smallest countries in Africa. Located in the southeast of the continent this beautiful country of plateaus and mountains nestles between South Africa and Mozambique and boasts an easy going, fun atmosphere. A passionate and positive attitude towards conservation has resulted in three incredible national parks where the hot African sun beats down on the roaming wildlife comprising large herds of game such as lions and white rhino and thousands of dazzling birds. Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary is Swaziland's most visited reserve. Situated in the "Valley of Heaven" and with its backdrop of glittering waterfalls, lush forests and wide plains merging into distant mountains, it's no wonder that this park will leave you yearning to stay and explore this stunning, peaceful country for longer.

Know your History

Pre-European

The area now known as Swaziland has been inhabited by human beings for at least 2 million years. The ancestors of the pygmies in Central Africa and the San Bushmen of southern Africa once thrived in this area. However, the arrival of the Bantu people, who had learnt the secrets of iron working, pushed aside the stone age inhabitants.

Tradition dictates that the present Dlamini royal family and its followers, the Ngwane, migrated to Swaziland before the 16th century from what is now Mozambique. With the rise of the Zulu empire the Ngwane were unable to resist such an overwhelming force and they moved the centre of their kingdom northward during the early 19th century, establishing themselves in what is now Swaziland under King Sobhuza I. Many of the long established chiefdoms of the area were eventually brought under the dominion of the Ngwane. Under the leadership of Mswati II, from where the name Swazi originates, the Ngwane extended their territory northward whilst keeping the Zulus to the south at bay.

1800s

The first contact with European powers came in the form of British military assistance against Zulu raids. At the same time the first white settlers arrived, the South African Transvaal Boers, who set up farms in Swazi territory. During this time the Swazi reached agreement with the British and the South African Republic over many issues, including independence, autonomy and security. The kingdom came briefly under complete colonial rule from South Africa at the end of the 19th century, but was released by the start of the first Anglo Boer war at the turn of the century. After the British victory,

Swaziland was separated from South Africa and granted autonomous government under British colonial rule in 1902. For the next 62 years, Swaziland was governed by the British High Commissioner for South Africa; however, all decisions were run past the Swazi royalty and white settler interests.

1900s

Under the reign of Sobhuza II the United Kingdom decided to prepare Swaziland for independence rather than let it succumb to the racist South African government of the time. King Sobhuza II and his inner council formed the Imbokodvo National Movement (INM), a political party with strong ties to the Swazi way of life, to take Swaziland into independence. The INM rose to power in the kingdom's first election process in 1964. By 1966 the UK government agreed a new constitution for a constitutional monarchy in Swaziland and self rule after parliamentary elections in 1967. On 6th September 1968 Swaziland became a sovereign independent nation.

In the 1972 elections the INM received 75% of the votes. However, another political party, the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC), received around 20% of the vote, which was regarded as dangerous and divisive by King Sobhuza II. In response, he dissolved parliament and revoked the 1968 constitution. He assumed all governmental powers and barred any political parties or unions from operating. This lasted until 1979, when a new parliament was convened, elected partly by the public and partly by royal appointment.

With the passing of King Sobhuza II in 1982, Queen Regent Dzeliwe assumed the throne. She was soon replaced in 1984 following a political dispute with Queen Regent Ntombi, whose son, Prince Makhosetive, returned from his schooling in England in 1985 to assume the throne as King Mswati III, the last absolute African monarch. He brought order to the kingdom by abolishing the Likoqo, a supreme traditional advisory body, and electing a new parliament. Currently, political parties are banned and the king appoints 10 of the 65 members of parliament, as well as the prime minister. King Mswati can veto any law passed by the legislature and frequently rules by decree.

2000 – Present

When drought hit in 2002 thousands faced starvation whilst the King bought himself a \$50 million luxury jet. In 2003 the government information minister announced that any negative comments about the King were banned from publication. By 2004 the drought was entering its third year and international donor agencies criticised the king's plans to build lavish palaces for each of his 12 wives.

Meanwhile, the country has an HIV/AIDS infection rate of 30% and massive crop failure. The King signed a new constitution in 2005, but the document further entrenches the king's rule and absolute power.

Money Talks

Swaziland's economy is fairly diverse – agriculture, forestry and mining accounts for roughly 13% of GDP, whilst manufacturing of textiles and sugar related processing is 37% and services, with government services in the lead, at 50%. However, economic growth has lagged behind its neighbours. Its real GDP growth since 2001 has been around two percentage points lower than growth in other Southern African Customs Union (SACU) member countries. Low agricultural productivity, specifically in the Swazi National Land, as well as several droughts, the effect of HIV/AIDS and an inefficient government sector, are likely to have been contributing factors.

During the late 1990s, sizeable surpluses from the decade before caused the public finances to deteriorate. Declining revenues and increased spending meant significant budget deficits; the spending did not lead to more growth and was detrimental to the poor. This increased spending went to current expenditure related to wages, transfers and subsidies. Today the wage bill is 15% of GDP and 55% of total public spending, amongst the highest in Africa. However, thanks to the rapid growth in SACU revenues 2006 recorded a sizeable surplus and SACU revenues today account for over 60% of total government revenues. In the same year, external debt as a percentage of GDP was 20% less and in the last 20 years, Swaziland has seen its external debt burden decline.

Exports

The bulk of high value crops such as sugar, forestry and citrus are grown on Title Deed Lands (TDLs) and benefit from high levels of investment and irrigation and a high productivity rate. However, 75% of the population is still employed in subsistence farming on SNL – an area that suffers from low productivity and investment.

High productivity in textile manufacturing and the industrialised agricultural TDLs contrast with the declining productivity of subsistence agriculture on SNL, creating a dual Swazi economy. This may be a factor that contributes to Swaziland's overall low growth, high inequality and unemployment. The major exportable items – sugar, cotton and wood pulp – are taken to the US, EU and South Africa and are mostly grown on TDL.

Money

ATM machines are present in Mbabane though withdrawals may have a small surplus charge which is likely to be similar to traveller's cheque commission rates. Credit and debit cards (MasterCard and Visa) are accepted for cash withdrawal at most banks but rarely for general payments. However, a credit card will come in useful in the event of an emergency. The currency is the Swazi lilangeni (SZL) although the South African rand is also accepted.

Get Culture Savvy

Swaziland is bursting with all the rich and vibrant colours and music of Africa whilst boasting its own exciting traditions. People dressed in the bright mahiya, the toga like traditional dress and Swazi warriors, with their battle-axes swinging, can be seen attending to their everyday business as you explore the country.

Festivals & Dance

Although Swaziland has modernised significantly in recent years the Swazis still hold two traditional ceremonies every year. Both tourists and locals flock to wonder at the colour and vibrancy of the Umhlanga in August and the Incwala in December. The Umhlanga is Swaziland's famous "reed dance", a ceremony where unmarried girls march long distances to cut reeds and manage them into bundles to present to the queen mother. Several days are dedicated to traditional dance and costume where girls move and sing together in the rising dust, creating an electric atmosphere of celebration.

The Incwala, or "first fruits", ritual is the most sacred and widely celebrated Swazi ceremony. It always starts on the fourth day after the full moon nearest the longest day of the year and can last for several weeks. Every Swazi may take part in the festivities, which includes days of singing and

dancing in various striking traditional costumes, the fruit tasting ceremony, where the King samples a selection of the year's harvest, and a number of other traditions, such as chasing a bull, a day of abstinence and the symbolic burning of ritual objects, signifying the start of a new year.

Arts & Crafts

There are many other examples of Swazi culture and history which can be experienced as a tourist. The Cultural Village is a living museum – a village sized replica of life in the 1850s designed to encourage a lasting interest and respect for the country's past for both Swazis and tourists. Swaziland is also known for its ancient San Bushmen rock paintings which can be found all over Swaziland depicting images of hunting, battles and dances.

Handcrafted souvenirs can be found everywhere in Swaziland, along roadsides and in huge markets and shops, providing the canny tourist with a huge collection of beautiful artwork and handicraft; wooden sculpture, soapstone carvings, glassware, mohair, tapestries, pottery and silk screened batiks and clothing are displayed in a dazzling array of colours, textures and designs.

The traditional Swazi craft is grass weaving. Mats and baskets for every use are produced in every size imaginable – some are so tightly woven that they can store liquids, absorbing some of the fluid itself and keeping its contents cool by means of evaporation.

Food

Swazi food has been influenced by a number of foreign cuisines over the years and today it is possible to find Greek, Hungarian and even Indian food in restaurants and many other food types in grocery stores in the larger towns. However, every country's best dishes are its own and it is always recommended that visitors try the local specialities as much as possible. Traditional Swazi food is often basic; it can be slightly spicy and is really tasty. Maize is Swaziland's staple food, so that maize based foods are eaten with most meals. Meat stews are also popular and a common option, with beans and nuts being common ingredients.

Some of the best traditional snacks are available from roadside stalls, including roasted corn on the cob, sweet breads, vegetables and wonderfully fresh fruit.

Learn the Lingo

Both Swazi and English are official languages of Swaziland and are spoken throughout the country. Swazi, also known as Swati and SiSwati, is a Bantu Language of the Nguni group which is spoken in Swaziland and South Africa. There are 1.5 million speakers of the language, with Zulu and Tsonga also spoken by a small percentage of the population.

Knowing just a few basic phrases of a local language can vastly deepen your experience of a culture and understanding of local people, so here are just a few Swazi phrases to get you started.

ENGLISH	SWAZI	ENGLISH	SWAZI
Greetings		Numbers	
Hello	Sawubona	1	kunye
How are you?	Unjani?	2	kubili
I am fine	Ngikhona	3	kutsatfu

I am fine, thank you	Ngikhona ngiyabonga	4	kune
Goodbye	Sala kahle	5	kusihlanu
Good luck	Inhlanhla lenhle	6	kusitfupha
Have a safe journey	Ube (singular)/Nibe (plural) neluhambo loluphephile	7	kusikhombisa
8	kusiphohlongo		
Expressions		9	kuyimfica
Yes	yebo	10	kulishumi
No	cha	11	lishumi nakune
Please	ngiyacela	12	lishumi nakubili
Thank you	ngiyabonga	13	lishumi nakutsatfu
You're welcome	wamukelekile	14	lishumi nakune
Help	sita (singular) / sitani (plural)	15	lishumi nesihlanu
Danger	ingoti	20	emashumi lamabili
Emergency	simo bucayi	21	emashumi lamabili nakunye
Excuse me	lucolo	22	emashumi lamabili nakubili
Come here	wota lapha	50	emashumi lasihlanu
I am sorry	Ngiyacolisa	100	likhulu
I love you	Ngiyakutsandza	1000	inkhulungwane
Happy birthday	lusuku lwekutsalwa loluhle		
Merry Christmas	khisimusi lomuhle		
Questions / Sentences		Days	
Do you accept (credit cards/ traveller's cheques)?	Uyawavuma (emakhadi etikweledi/emasheke etivakashi)?	Today	lamuhla
How much is this?	Kubita malini loku?	Yesterday	itolo
I want...	Ngifuna...	Tomorrow	kusasa
What are you doing?	Wentani?	Monday	uMsombuluko
What is the time?	Ngicela sikhatsi?	Tuesday	Lesibili
Where are you going?	Uya kuphi?	Wednesday	Lesitsatfu
Where is...?	Uphi ...?	Thursday	Lesine
I don't know	Angati	Friday	Lesihlanu
I come from...	Ngibuya nga ...	Saturday	uMgcibelo
Sunday	Lisontfo		

Lay of the Land

Swaziland is a tiny country which is dwarfed by the rest of Africa. Located in the southeast of the continent it is bordered by South Africa on the west, north and south and Mozambique on the east. Swaziland has been referred to as "the Switzerland of Africa" as a result of its magnificent mountain scenery and unique, ancient rock formations. As well as the mountains the terrain consists of vast sloping plains and hills and varies from just 21 m above sea level at the Great Usutu River to 1,862 m at Emlembe.

Swaziland is divided into four diverse areas each having their own landscapes and environments.

Highveld

This mountainous area boasts not only striking peaks but a beautiful thriving landscape combining rivers, waterfalls and gorges.

Middelveld & Lowveld

In these central and southern areas the mountains gently turn to lush valleys and African bushland. It is in these areas that the fertile land is used for agriculture including both cattle farming and growing crops. The bushland is especially important to the Swazi people because it is where many of their indigenous plants and animals are found.

Lubombo

This last area is where the mountains again rise from the plains. The area is mostly protected and provides a unique opportunity to view wildlife up close.

What's the Weather like?

Swaziland's climate varies from tropical to temperate which can result in long periods of intense heat and sometimes drought. As the country is in the southern hemisphere the seasons are the opposite of the British pattern with the result that the summer months are between October and May and winter occurs from June to September. However, winters are unlike the UK's, being pleasant and dry and a relief from the intense heat and humidity of an African summer.

Biodiversity

Swaziland boasts three impressive national parks, the Hlane Royal National Park, Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary and Mkhaya Game Reserve, that protect the country's abundance of animal life. Several other smaller reserves border these parks and the TDL and SNL that dominate the cultivated land.

The Hlane Royal National Park is an area of bushland held in trust for the nation by the King, home to animals such as elephant, lion (the symbol of Swazi royalty), white rhino and an astounding array of birdlife, including the highest density of nesting white-backed vultures in Africa. The National Park is the largest of the protected areas and was named Hlane by King Sobhuza II. It covers 300 km² of Swazi bushveld and is dominated by ancient hardwood vegetation.

Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary is based in the Ezulwini ("valley of heaven"), a huge reserve of grassland, mountains and waterfalls with a dramatic forest backdrop. It is one of the most popular places to visit. Near Lobamba, it is in the heart of the Ezulwini Valley. The name Mlilwane refers to the little fire that appears when lightning strikes the granite mountains. Wildlife here is predominantly herbivorous, antelope, giraffe, and zebra, but crocodiles can be found.

The Mkhaya Game Reserve's unspoilt wilderness is Swaziland's main refuge for endangered species. The reserve is around 30 km north of Big Bend at a turn off from the village Phuzomova ("drink the wind"). It is mainly Lowveld scrubland with acacia and thorn trees. Originally bought to graze the threatened long horned nguni cattle after white beef farmers thought them too small and unproductive for the industry, the cattle now live alongside zebra, wildebeest and antelope. Mkhaya is also home to the rare black rhino and the roan antelope, which is nearly extinct.

Mlawula Nature Reserve runs along the edge of the Lubombo Mountains and looks across to the western edges of Mozambique. Unique species of ironwood trees can be found here and cycads grow on the slopes. The Mlawula stream and Mbuluzi river flow through the reserve's spectacular valleys and stone age tools over 1 million years old have been found along their beds.

Flora

Swaziland's range of geographical and climatic zones have endowed the country with a wide range of flora, including aloes, orchids and begonias. The country has one of the highest levels of plant diversity in the world and the highest in Africa. Swaziland is also host to several species of plants used by traditional medical practitioners, plants with proven effectiveness against pests, plants with potential as pharmaceuticals and fragrances and edible wild plants. Because of unsustainable harvesting and the spread of cultivation for agricultural purposes many of these plants, some still used in traditional medicine, face extinction.

Fauna

Swaziland's vast reserves allow for animals to roam in relative safety throughout the country. Blue wildebeest, kudu, impala, zebra, waterbuck and hippo are the larger of the indigenous mammals, but all wildlife has become increasingly scarce outside the protected areas as a result of agricultural expansion. The lowland rivers host large numbers of crocodile and the country is a popular nesting site for European stork, sacred ibis and grey heron. The African lion is the symbol of royalty and the pride of Swaziland, with large prides being found predominantly in Hlane Royal National Park. Swaziland is also popular for bird spotters, with birds such as the lilac-breasted roller, red-necked spurfowl and green-wing pytilia in large numbers in all reserves.

Good Books

Teaching Guides

- Essential Grammar in Use with Answers: A Self-study Reference and Practice Book for Elementary Students of English 2nd Edition. Raymond Murphy. Cambridge University Press, 2002. 9780521529327
- Essential Grammar in Use with Answers: A Self-study Reference and Practice Book for Intermediate Students of English 3rd Edition. Raymond Murphy. Cambridge University Press, 2004. 9780521532891

- Lessons from Nothing: Activities for Language Teaching with Limited Time and Resources (Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers). Bruce Marsland. Cambridge University Press, 1998. 9780521627658
- Games for Children (Resource Books for Teachers). Gordon Lewis & Gunther Benson. Oxford University Press, 1999. 9780194372244
- Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching 2nd Edition. Diane Larsen-Freeman. Oxford University Press, 2000. 9780194355742

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