

# Celebrate connected communities at Makhelwane Festival with Gauteng Tourism this weekend

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Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) is excited to be a part of Jozi's celebrated community market, Makhelwane Festival. Now in its seventh year - 'Makhelwane', a lifestyle festival that reconnects and reignites the neighbourly culture of "Bo Makhe" kicks off this Friday, 28 January 2022 at Native Rebels with an opening night extravaganza. The festivities continue on Saturday the 29th and Sunday the 30th at Lebo's Soweto Backpackers and promises the best township experience that features food, music, art, storytelling, and various fashion brands that will showcase their talent.

Makhelwane's original concept was that of a community-based festival where homeowners open their homes to allow aspiring business owners to showcase their products using their yards. The festival is deep rooted in the historic culture and lifestyle in townships where neighbours shared and exchanged food, gifts, gestures which are purely based on the spirit of Ubuntu. The festival gives food traders, artists, fashion designers an opportunity to showcase their products to festival attendees, making it the perfect platform to promote *Made in Gauteng* products.

This year, the festival shifts from its original plan of hosting it in a street where houses become restaurants, houses turned into galleries, boutiques etc. The festival will now be held at Lebo's Backpackers to honor owner and founder, the late Mr. Lebo Malepa, a pioneer of township tourism

businesses in Soweto who died in December 2021. Lebo's Backpackers is popular for its authentic township experiences and the only backpacker's accommodation in a township. Sthembiso "Sthe" Dlamini, GTA CEO explains that, over the years the province has seen tremendous growth in how business is conducted in townships as well as the vast opportunities available to customize services which cater directly to the needs of these communities. "Such initiatives speak directly to our mandate as government to create conducive environments for township businesses to flourish", says Dlamini. "The festival looks beyond domestic tourism, it is a subsidiary initiative for township products where organisers aim to develop and drive township tourism to further create sustainable platforms for young creatives and entrepreneurs across Gauteng," she adds.

Makhelwane Festival takes place in a spacious outdoor space and therefore promises to be Covid-19 safe. This year will also celebrate connected communities that have made it through the pandemic. A kiddie's playground will be provided, making the event a family friendly affair. Gautengers are encouraged to start their Saturday on 29 January at the launch of the Playground, Braamfontein's new weekly rooftop market before invading Soweto township. The market will be held at 73 Juta Street, the same space where the Neighbourgoods Market was held and promises to feature everything we enjoyed in it's the last version.

There's no better way to start your 2022...It's Your GP, Enjoy It!

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**About the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA)**

GTA is the official destination marketing agency for the Gauteng City Region. Its mission is to effectively, efficiently and professionally grow the visitor economy and enhance visitor's experiences by: branding, marketing and promoting tourism in Gauteng; bidding for and hosting mega, major, significant, local and community events; and providing and managing visitor information services.

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