

Eastern Cape launches coastal route to showcase breathtaking attractions

Head for the trip of a lifetime along the Eastern Cape coastline to discover one of South Africa's most breathtaking stretches of seascape.



The Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) has developed a new Coastal Route covering nearly 900km of pristine coastline spanning the length of the Eastern Cape. The province is rich in biodiversity with contrasting landscapes featuring primeval coastal forests and white sandy beaches, diverse wildlife, ancient rock art and Xhosa culture, offering the intrepid explorer an adventure of a lifetime.

The new Coastal Route is designed to appeal to both self-drive and group tourists looking for an authentic and memorable travel experience. The route is divided into eight regional routes that will take travellers to the Eastern Cape's less explored and off-the-beaten-track attractions to discover the heart and soul of the province.

The eight regional routes include Baviaans, Tsitsikamma Adventure, Kouga, Frontier Country, Sunshine Coast, Amathole Mountain Escape, the Wild Coast, and Greater Addo. The route incorporates suggested itineraries based on interesting things to see and do as well as value-for-money local accommodation which are sure to extend visitor stays in the province.



Addo Elephant Park... and more

The benefit of the Coastal Route is that it will highlight not only the Eastern Cape's well known and iconic attractions such as the Mkhambati Nature Reserve, Addo Elephant National Park and the province's amazing beaches and surfing spots, but it will also take travellers to some of the undiscovered places of natural beauty. For sand dune enthusiasts, the 6500-year-old Coastal Dune Field found at Alexandria is the largest shifting dune field in the Southern Hemisphere and has been nominated for listing as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Other

attractions include the Amathole Mountain Escape and Port St John, Jewel of the Wild Coast.

For those interested in history and culture, tourists can view ancient man-made fish traps at Cape St Frances and experience Grahamstown, a small city that boasts more than 70 heritage sites including a cathedral and the surrounding Victorian and Edwardian shop fronts on the Church Square. Alternatively, you can spend time visiting the final resting place of Sarah (Saartjie) Baartman the "Hottentot Venus" in Hankey, visit the Xhosa cultural hub of the province in the Wild Coast and experience mouth-watering dishes in East London, surrounding game reserves and in Port Alfred.

Go jump

At Tsitsikamma adrenalin junkies can participate in the highest bungee jump in the world, take a treetop canopy tour or go black water tubing. Those who like their thrills a little more sedate, can spend a few days at one of the many 5-star game lodges, play golf, go fishing or just relax at a spa. The Eastern Cape has it all. Other highlights along the Route include Jeffrey's Bay, home of the best right-hand wave in the world; Port Elizabeth, a water-sport paradise offering every conceivable coastal and marine recreational experience one could think of including the added thrill of deep sea diving to explore a few of the 300 ships wrecked in nearby Algoa Bay. There are six blue flag beaches along the coastal route

including the world-renowned kite-surfing spot at Cannon Rocks.

The Baviaans Wilderness Area is an extension of the Cape Floral Kingdom and has been declared a World Heritage Site. Addo Elephant National Park abutting the Indian Ocean is the only protected area in the world where not only the "Big 5" (lion, leopard, buffalo, elephant and rhino) may be seen but also whales and Great White sharks.



The Wild Coast covers untouched beaches with waterfalls running into the sea. The annual sardine run rivals the famous Masai Mara wildebeest migration in East Africa. The area is rich in cultural diversity, including the Birthplace of Nelson Mandela's with a National Museum in Mthatha dedicated to the origin of His footsteps. The area is home to many of South Africa's historic leaders and human icons such as O.R. Tambo and Walter Sisulu. This region is also known for its authentic Xhosa culture tradition, Art amenities and other adventure activities.



ECPTA is determined to make the Eastern Cape Province the destination of choice in South Africa; a destination where biodiversity, conservation and tourism management underpin sustainable development. Travelers can access the area via a number of sea ports along the coast, a well maintained road network, or through airports at Port Elizabeth and East London. For more information visit <http://www.openafrica.org/route/coastal-route> and or Tel: +27 43 701 9600 to find out more.

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