

Mpumalanga



From the sluggish flow of the Crocodile River to the relaxed rhythm of its old mining towns and peaceful silence of its nature reserves, unassuming Mpumalanga (Place of the Rising Sun; pronounced M-poo-ma-lan-ga) adheres to a quieter pace of life.

This inland province, South Africa's smallest, is where the plateaus of the highveld begin their spectacular tumble onto the lowveld plains at the Drakensberg Escarpment. Tucked into the escarpment are historic towns, roaring waterfalls and some of the best hiking trails in South Africa. Many travellers zip through on their way to Kruger National Park, but it's worth setting aside a few days to explore the Blyde River Canyon, especially if you crave adventure sports like mountain biking, rafting and canyoning (known in these parts as 'kloofing').

The N4 splits Mpumalanga in two as it shoots toward Swaziland, Kruger and Mozambique. You can ignore the agricultural plains of the west as the scenery doesn't really pick up until you've hit Dullstroom, which is trying to make a name for itself as a fisherman's weekend getaway. Nearby Waterval Boven is justified in its claim to be South Africa's rock climbing capital.

The provincial capital Nelspruit is set among pretty hills and close to laid-back country towns like White River and Barberton. To the north, Sabie has emerged as a serious destination for adventure enthusiasts while quiet Graskop and Pilgrim's Rest offer unparalleled rural charm.

From Nelspruit, Kruger National Park's Numbi and Malelane gates are both an easy drive away, as is the Mozambique border at Komatipoort. Alternatively, head south to the charming old gold-mining town of Barberton and on into Swaziland. In Mpumalanga's far south is Piet Retief, a convenient transit junction if you're en route to Swaziland or KwaZulu-Natal.

Towns in this chapter are organised roughly clockwise west to east, and north to south.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hiking, cycling or rafting around **Sabie** (p449), taking in the cool mountain air and beautiful views
- Dining on pancakes in **Graskop** (p452) or **Pilgrim's Rest** (p451)
- Exploring the **Blyde River Canyon** (p453) on foot
- Getting a taste of Shangaan life at **Shangana Cultural Village** (p455) near Hazyview
- Relaxing in historic **Barberton** (p462) while taking in the nearby Atlas gold mine and the intriguing labyrinth at **Boondocks** (p464)



■ POPULATION: 3.1 MILLION

■ AREA: 79,490 SQ KM

HISTORY

It's not too much of a stretch to say that *terra firma* got its first foothold in Mpumalanga. It was near Barberton, scientists allege, that the first stones cooled on the earth's surface 4.5 billion years ago, when the planet was still a half-baked ball of gases and molten lava.

Fast forward a few billion years to proto-man, who inhabited caves on the escarpment and in Blyde River Canyon. Tribal groups that today inhabit the province are descended from the Venda people and the Pedi, who broke away from the main migration route that headed south from Zimbabwe.

During the *difaqane* (forced migration), groups of Shangaan, Swazi and Ndebele entered the area in the wake of turbulence in Zululand. The Ndebele also threw their weight around, terrorizing rival tribes and taking young men and women hostage.

The first Voortrekkers moseyed onto the scene in the late 1830s and within 10 years established the Transvaal as a republic. This did not go down well with the British, especially after gold was discovered near Sabie. The entire Transvaal was annexed by the British in 1877.

The gold rush attracted miners from all over the globe. The strike, however, was not as large as everyone had hoped and soon the large mining camps near Sabie and Pilgrim's Rest packed up and moved elsewhere.

It was in the Transvaal that the first Anglo-Boer War erupted. The Boers were victorious, took back the Transvaal and made Paul Kruger their first President. This independence lasted only a few years, until the end of the war, when the Transvaal (and the Orange Free State) was returned to British hands.

When the gold rush ended the Transvaal diversified its economy to include modest tree farms and fruit plantations. Nowadays, the economy is kept afloat with the help of tourists attracted to nearby Kruger National Park. In the early 2000s, the province dropped the old Afrikaner name 'Transvaal' in favour of the more progressive 'Mpumalanga'.

CLIMATE

Winter temperatures in Mpumalanga can plummet to close to 0°C on the escarpment and frost is common. In the steamy lowveld, you can leave your jackets at home;

bring a mosquito net and plenty of repellent instead. Summer temperatures here often exceed 35°C, with frequent rainstorms.

NATIONAL PARKS & RESERVES

The southern part of Kruger National Park lies in Mpumalanga, and is by far the province's biggest draw card. Other conservation areas include the many private wildlife reserves on Kruger's southwestern edge (p485), and the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve (p453).

LANGUAGE

Swati, Zulu and Ndebele are the main languages spoken in Mpumalanga, but it's easy to get by with English. In and around Nelspruit, you'll also hear a lot of Afrikaans.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

There are good domestic and regional air connections via Mpumalanga Kruger International Airport (MKIA), about 28km northeast of Nelspruit off Rte 40.

Mpumalanga is crossed by an extensive network of good tarmac roads. While there are frequent bus and minibus connections to/from Nelspruit, public transport is scarce away from major routes, and a hire car is definitely the best way of exploring.

A passenger train line cuts through the middle of the province, connecting Johannesburg (Jo'burg) with Komatipoort and Maputo (Mozambique), via Nelspruit.

For details on air, road and train connections to/from Jo'burg, see p460. For details on connections between Nelspruit and Kruger National Park, see p484. For information on crossing between Nelspruit and Swaziland and Mozambique, see p630 and p629, respectively.

DRAKENSBURG ESCARPMENT

The Drakensberg Escarpment (the section here is known as the Klein Drakensberg or the Transvaal Drakensberg) marks the point where the highveld plunges down over 1000m, before spilling out onto the eastern lowveld. It's one of South Africa's most scenic areas, marked by stunning views and an abundance of adventure activities. It's



also prime holiday territory, which means that accommodation is pricier than in some other parts of the country, and invariably fills up during high season. While it's possible to get around via minibus taxi, the going is slow; car hire is the best option for really exploring the area.

DULLSTROOM

☎ 013 / pop 6000

If trout fishing is your thing, Dullstroom makes for a reasonable stopover on the route to Kruger National Park. The town, located 260km west of Jo'burg, only consists of a few quiet streets lined with pine trees and wood structures, but the surrounding area boasts more than 40 lodges and B&Bs where fishing

is the main activity. Even if angling is not your angle, it's still a great place for walking or horse riding among the lakes and forests. Sitting at an altitude of 2053m, Dullstroom enjoys a cool climate in summer and can receive frost and snow in winter.

If you happen to be in South Africa during the winter months, you can visit the **Dullstroom Derby**, an annual dog-sled race in early July. At the opposite end of the year, try catching the **Dullstroom Arts Festival** in mid-December.

Information

First National Bank At the main junction, with an ATM.
Tourist information centre (☎ 013-254 0020; www.dullstroom.co.za; Hugenote St; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri,

9am-3pm Sat) Along the main road (Rte 540) at the southern end of town, near a collection of bait and tackle shops.

Video Shop & Internet Café (☎ 013-254 0454; Dullstroom Centre; per min R1; ☎ 11am-6.30pm) Internet access.

Sleeping & Eating

Caravan Park (☎ 083-528 5596; camp sites per person R25, caravans R60) Campers can put up at this park located on the edge of town by Groot Suikerbos Dam, 1.2km north of Rte 540.

Old Transvaal Inn (☎ 013-254 0222; Hugenote St; s/d with bathroom R125/200) If you prefer a roof over your head, try this good-value inn which offers 18 pleasant rooms behind a candy shop on the main road. Try to keep your sweet tooth in check.

Dullstroom Inn (☎ 013-254 0071; dullstroominn@dullstroom.net; Teding van Berkhoust St; s/d with breakfast R375/675) This is an unassuming place with cosy rooms and the Old English Pub restaurant (mains from R40), open lunch and dinner. It's on the northwestern edge of town.

Critchley Hackle (☎ 013-253 7000; www.critchleyhackle.co.za; Teding van Berkhoust St; s/d with breakfast from R690/1380; ☎) This is an elegant mansion with its own trout pond and beautiful grounds planted with rose bushes. It's at the northeastern edge of town, signposted from the main road.

Pickles & Things (☎ 013-254 0115; Hugenote St; meals from R30; ☎ 7am-5pm Sun-Thu, 7am-5pm & 6.30pm-11pm Fri & Sat) For something substantial, try this pastel-painted place specialising in trout and continental dishes.

Casa Portuguesa (☎ 013-254 0977; 84 Hugenote St; mains R35-55; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This place offers some ethnic variety with good Portuguese dishes.

Scones, pancakes and tea are Dullstroom's culinary specialities. Places to sample these include **Rose Cottage** (☎ 013-254 0218; 60 Hugenote St; light meals from R25; ☎ 7am-5pm), which also offers cappuccino and light meals, and **Country Corner** (☎ 013-254 0812; Critchley Corner Complex, Hugenote St; light meals from R25; ☎ 8am-5pm), both on Rte 540, two blocks east of the Information Centre.

Getting There & Away

Minibus taxis pass Dullstroom en route to/from Belfast, stopping along the main road, but the main way to get here and around is with your own vehicle.

WATERVAL BOVEN

☎ 013 / pop 2500

This tiny town is in scenic countryside just off the N4, and is known mainly as a base for some superb rock climbing and mountain biking. For details, contact Roc 'n Rope through **Climbers Lodge** (☎ 013-257 0363, 082-753 3695; www.rocrope.com). There's also the chance to abseil at the Elands River Waterfall (from which the town takes its name). A word of caution: don't let the sublime setting lead you into a false sense of security – several climbers have reported being robbed in the area. Take the usual precautions and if you plan on camping, first consult with the tourist info office or Roc 'n Rope.

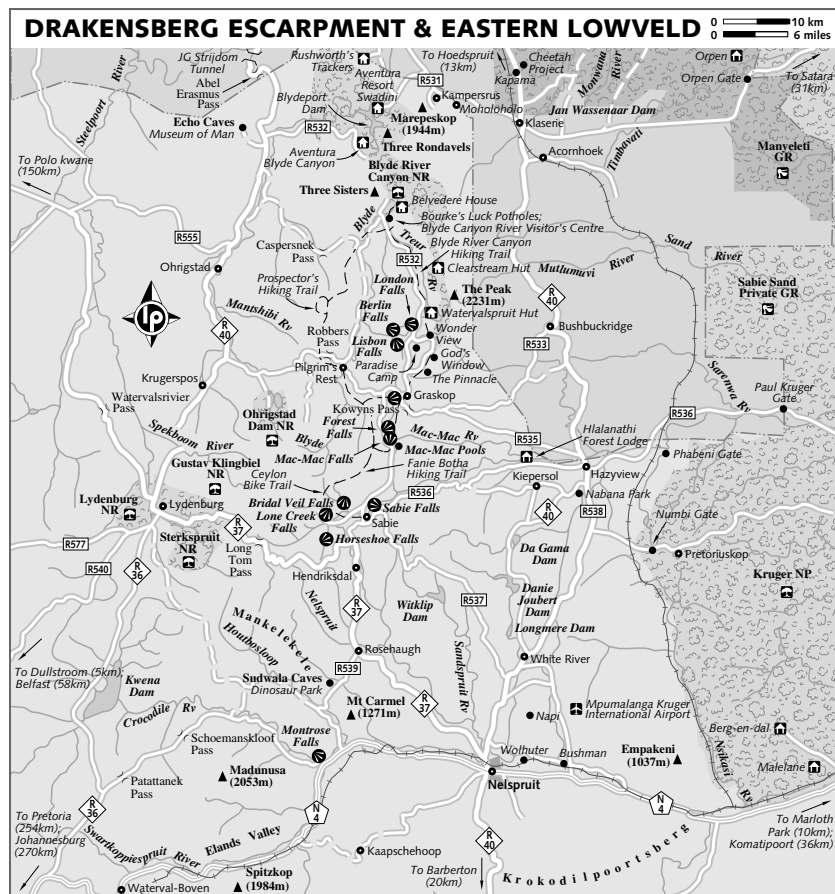
Info Works (☎ 013-257 0444; www.linx.co.za/waterval-boven; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) is a tourist info office located on the left as you enter the town from the N4.

Horse riding is available at **Blaaubosch Kraal Horse Trails** (☎ 013-257 0247, 082-853 3993; www.bktrails.co.za) which offers two-hour horse trips for R120. They are located 8km from town on the road to Lydenburg.

Climbers' Lodge (☎ 013-257 0363, 082-753 3695; www.rocrope.com; dm/d R70/160) caters almost exclusively for rock climbers and mountain bikers. It's a spacious, clean and chilled out place, with several dorm rooms, a self-catering kitchen, lounge room and sun deck. Guesthouse owner Gustav Janse van

MPUMALANGA...

- has the third largest canyon in the world (the Blyde River Canyon);
- produces 80% of South Africa's coal;
- is the country's second largest citrus-growing area;
- encompasses all or part of the former homelands of KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, Gazankulu, Lebowa and Bophuthatswana;
- has the world's largest artificial forests;
- has South Africa's second-lowest adult literacy rate (75.5%);
- is the fifth most densely populated province (38 people per sq km), with about 7% of the total population, of whom about 89% are African and 9% white.



Rensburg also runs Roc 'n Rope and can organise all manner of outdoor activities. A half day of climbing (with equipment and instruction included) costs R300 per person. They can put you on a mountain bike for R30 per hour.

Aloes (☎ 013-257 7037; www.sa-venues.com/mpl/the aloesbp.htm; d/tr/q R300/375/400) is a self-catering lodge with spacious, well-appointed rooms and a porch that overlooks a trout-filled stream. It's a 10-minute drive out of Waterval Boven on the N4 towards Nelspruit.

The home-style **Shamrock Arms** (☎ 013-257 0888; www.linx.co.za/shamrockarms; 68 Third Ave; ☞ breakfast, lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) restaurant serves large portions of country English food. It's kitty-corner to Roc 'n Rope.

The restaurant also has a few rooms (s/d R230/430) with attached bathrooms.

Minibus taxis to Nelspruit cost R25 (two hours).

LYDENBURG

☎ 013 / pop 25,000

Lydenburg (Town of Suffering) was established by Voortrekkers in 1849 and was once the capital of the Republic of Lydenburg. Carrying on Boer traditions, it's still one of the most conservative towns in Mpumalanga. It's also where the famous Lydenburg Heads were found. These seven terracotta masks date to the 6th century AD, when they may have been used in initiation rituals, and are among the earliest

African sculpture forms known in Southern Africa.

Today Lydenburg is a quiet service centre for the farming district and one of Mpumalanga's more modest touristic offerings, unless you're interested in history. East of town along Rte 37 is the beautiful **Long Tom Pass** (2150m), one of Mpumalanga's more scenic drives.

There are ATMs at **First National Bank** (Voortrekker St) and **ABSA** (Voortrekker St), opposite each other near Kantoor St. **4U Computers** (☎ 013-235 1486; 55 Kantoor St; per hr R30; ☞ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat), one block north of Voortrekker St, has Internet access.

Sights

About 3km east of town along Rte 37 is the **Gustav Klingbiel Nature Reserve** (☎ 013-235 2213; admission R10; ☞ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat & Sun), with lots of birds, a small population of antelopes and short hiking trails, plus Iron-Age sites and Anglo-Boer War trenches. Also at the reserve is the very worthwhile **Lydenburg Museum** (☎ 013-235 2213; Long Tom Pass Rd; admission free; ☞ 8am-1pm & 2-4pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat & Sun), with a fascinating collection of animal and human terracotta masks, and replicas of the Lydenburg Heads. (The originals are in the South African Museum in Cape Town.)

Sleeping & Eating

Uitspan Caravan Park (☎ 013-235 2914; uitspanlyd@lantic.net; Viljoen St; camp sites from R75, s/d rondavels R155/275, s/d chalets R195/330; ☞) This well-maintained place is on the road to Jo'burg. The chalets come with bathroom and kitchenette, while the rondavels have bedding and fridge only.

Manor Guest House (☎ 013-235 2099; cnr Viljoen & Potgier Sts; s/d with breakfast R280/460; ☞) An indulgent, four-star B&B with a nice garden. If you are stuck in Lydenburg you can drink your sorrows away at the 'Jolly Roger' pub downstairs.

Misty Mountain Chalets (☎ 013-764 3377; www.mistymountain.co.za; s/d with breakfast R410/680, extra person R250) With great views, country cuisine and a log-cabin atmosphere, this place is a hard-to-beat rural retreat. Located along Rte 37 at the Long Tom Pass, it's an ideal base for mountain biking (you can rent them here for R50 per half-day), bird-watching or relaxing. Accommodation is

in fully equipped two-, four- or six-person self-catering cottages with fireplaces, and there's a restaurant (meals R40-R65) open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Lemon Tree Cafe & Take Away (☎ 013-235 3383; 31 Voortrekker St; ☞ 7.45am-5pm Mon-Fri, 7.45am-1pm Sat), diagonally opposite the post office, and the cosy **Vroutjies Coffee Shop** (☎ 013-235 3016; 13 Voortrekker St; ☞ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) have light meals.

Getting There & Away

The minibus taxi stop is in the town centre off Voortrekker St, with daily vehicles to Sabie (R25, one hour) and Belfast (R35, 1½ hours).

SABIE

☎ 013 / pop 12,000 / elevation 1100m

Perhaps the most inviting town on Drakensberg Escarpment, Sabie offers a good range of accommodation and activities to keep your pioneer spirit occupied for several days. Its attractions include a cool climate, trout fishing, extensive pine and eucalypt plantations in the surrounding area, almost unlimited possibilities for outdoor activities, and easy access to Kruger National Park.

Information

Bookcase (☎ 013-764 2014; cnr Main & Mac-Mac Sts; ☞ 8am-5pm) Sells second-hand books.

First National Bank (Market Sq) Has an ATM.

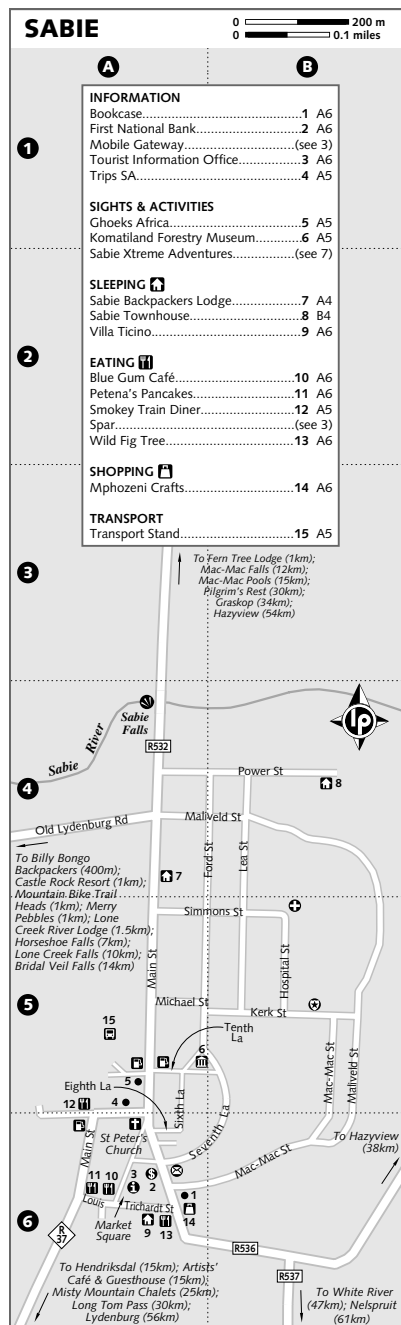
Mobile Gateway (☎ 013-764 2400; per hr R35; Market Sq; ☞ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) Internet access.

Tourist Information Office (☎ 013-764 1125; www.panoramainfo.co.za; Market Sq; ☞ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat)

Trips SA (☎ 764 1177; www.sabie.co.za; Main St) Information centre and booking agent for tours and accommodation.

Sights & Activities

The area around Sabie is dotted with beautiful **waterfalls** (admission to each R5-10). These include **Sabie Falls**, just north of town on Rte 532 to Graskop; the 70m **Bridal Veil Falls**, northwest of Sabie off Old Lydenburg Rd; the 68m **Lone Creek Falls**, also off Old Lydenburg Rd, and with wheelchair access on the right-hand path; and the nearby **Horseshoe Falls**, about 5km southwest of Lone Creek Falls. The popular **Mac-Mac Falls**, about 12km north of Sabie off Rte 532 to Graskop, take



their name from the many Scottish names on the local mining register. About 3km southeast of the falls are the **Mac-Mac Pools**, where you can swim.

Komatiland Forestry Museum (☎ 013-764 1058; cnr Ford St & Tenth Lane; adult/child R5/2; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat) has displays on local forests and the timber industry. The tracts of artificial forest in these parts are the largest in the world. The museum has wheelchair access.

For horse riding contact **Creepers Creek** (☎ 013-764 2215; yurram@telkomsa.net) at Fern Tree Lodge, located 1km from town on the road to Graskop, or try **Sabie Horse Trails** (☎ 013-764 1011, 082-938 2060).

There are several excellent mountain-bike trails, ranging from 13km to 45km and starting at Castle Rock Resort, near Merry Pebbles (below). Permits, which you'll need to ride on the trails, cost R20 and can be arranged at **Ghoeks Africa** (☎ 013-764 2123, 083-600 9863; bikedoc@lantic.net; cnr Main St & Tenth Lane), which also has bike rental (R30/180 including helmet per hour/day) and can help with repairs.

Hardy Ventures (☎ 013-751 1693; www.hardyventures.com) and **Sabie Xtreme Adventures** (☎ 013-764 2118; www.sabiextreme.co.za) can help organise abseiling, rafting and bungee jumping.

Sleeping

Sabie Backpackers Lodge (☎ 013-764 2118; www.sabiextreme.co.za; Main St; camp sites per person R40, dm R65, d with shared bathroom R160; ☎) This popular establishment has a busy backpacker vibe with lots of activities and all the usual amenities, including cooking facilities and a pub. It's also the base for Sabie Xtreme Adventures (above).

Billy Bongo Backpackers (☎ 072-370 7219, 072-720 2130; www.billybongo.co.za; Old Lydenburg Rd; camp sites per person R45, dm R70, s/d R80/160) This place has a definite party atmosphere and owner Garth Lambert is an enthusiastic host who will lead you on adventure tours by day and long bongo drumming sessions by night. There are a handful of clean doubles and dorm rooms, plus self-catering facilities.

Merry Pebbles (☎ 013-764 2266; www.merrypebbles.co.za; camp sites per person R80, cabins s/d R160/380, 4-/8-person chalets R800/1200) Just north of town off Old Lydenburg Rd, Merry Pebbles is a large camping ground in shaded, spacious grounds on the banks of the Sabie River.

Prices for the cabins rise on weekends and some holidays.

Sabie Townhouse (☎ 013-764 2292; www.sabietownhouse.co.za; Power St; s/d R325/650; ☎) This upscale B&B is a good choice for a treat, with arched windows, plush rooms with private entrances, and a quiet location.

Artists' Café & Guest House (☎ 013-764 2309; www.wheretostay.co.za/artistscafe; s/d with breakfast R330/620) This charming place is in Hendriksdal, about 15km south of Sabie along Rte 37. Accommodation is in old train station buildings that have been converted into rooms, and there's a very good Italian restaurant (meals R50) open for lunch and dinner.

Villa Ticino (☎ 013-764 2598; www.villaticino.co.za; cnr Louis Trichardt & Second Lane; s/d with breakfast R395/500; ☎) Readers highly recommend Villa Ticino, a comfortable Swiss-run B&B in the town centre with an old-world atmosphere and good breakfasts.

Lone Creek River Lodge (☎ 013-764 2611; www.lonecreek.co.za; Old Lydenburg Rd; s/d R900/1300, cabins from R700/920; ☎) Sabie's most upscale accommodation, with plush rooms in the main building backing onto the Sabie River, and comfortable two-storey self-catering cabins across the road. It's about 1.5km southwest of town.

Eating

Sabie has an excellent assortment of restaurants, only a small sampling of which are listed here.

Petena's Pancakes (☎ 013-764 1541; Main St; pancakes R20; ☎ 9am-5.30pm) Dine on your choice of sweet or savoury pancakes in a cosy setting.

Wild Fig Tree (☎ 013-764 3098, 013-764 2239; mark uren@soft.co.za; 6 Third Lane; meals R35-90; ☎) breakfast, lunch & dinner) This place features local specialities such as biltong pâté, ostrich fillet, grilled crocodile, warthog stew and home-made apple pie, all filling and, um, exotic. They also have Internet access and a guesthouse (singles/doubles with breakfast R200/370).

Smokey Train Diner (☎ 013-764 3445; Main St; mains about R40; ☎) lunch & dinner) An Afrikaner diner, with some seating at booths in a refurbished train car and more on a large patio. The menu features *potjiekos* (stew cooked in a three-legged pot) and other Afrikaner dishes, plus a range of burgers and other standards.

Blue Gum Café (☎ 013-764 2209; 65a Main Rd; breakfast from R25, lunch R35; ☎ 8am-5pm Tue-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) This pleasant eatery right in the town centre features coffee, cakes, salads and light meals.

There's a Spar supermarket (Main St) north of Market Sq.

Shopping

There are several craft shops in the town centre, including **Mphozeni Crafts** (☎ 013-764 1541; thewoodsman.co.za; 94 Main St; ☎ 9am-5pm) next door to Woodsman restaurant. Market Sq in the town centre has a small collection of shops.

Getting There & Away

There are daily buses from Jo'burg to Nelspruit, from where you can get minibus taxis to Sabie (R20, one hour between Nelspruit and Sabie). Minibus taxis also run frequently to and from Hazyview (R20, one hour). The transport stand (Main St) is behind Spar supermarket. At the stand is an office that dispenses timetable information.

PILGRIM'S REST

☎ 013 / pop 600

Tourist shops, craft stalls and historic buildings are the fabric of tiny Pilgrim's Rest, located a short detour off the main route between Sabie and Graskop.

The reason for the existence of Pilgrim's Rest dates all the way back to 1873 when gold was discovered nearby. For 10 years the area buzzed with diggers working small-scale alluvial claims. When the big operators arrived in the 1880s, Pilgrim's Rest became a company town, and when the gold finally fizzled out in 1972 the town was sold to the government as a ready-made historical village (it is now a national monument).

Tourism has replaced gold as the local cash cow and it can get very busy on weekends. Visitor activity centres on Uptown. Downtown – about 1.2km down the road – is quieter, with a few restaurants and craft outlets.

There's an **information centre** (☎ 013-768 1060; Main St, Uptown; ☎ 9am-12.45pm & 1.15-4.30pm) at the museums building, and an ATM just down the road. Just up from Royal Hotel is a stand selling colourful batiks.

Sights & Activities

The town's three main **museums** (☎ 013-768 1060; total admission R10) feature a printing shop, a restored home and a general store. More interesting is historic **Alanglade** (☎ 013-768 1060; admission R20; 🚗 tours 11am & 2pm Mon-Sat), a former mine-manager's residence at the northern edge of town furnished with period objects from the 1920s. Tours need to be booked 30 minutes in advance. Just east of town along the Graskop road is the open-air **Diggings Museum** (guided tours adult/child R10/5) where you can see how gold was panned. You need to visit on a tour, arranged through the information centre.

Sleeping & Eating

Pilgrims Rest Caravan Park (☎ 013-768 1427; pilgrims.camp@mweb.co.za; camp sites per person R40, 2-person tents R140, d with shared bathroom R145; 🚽) The cheapest place in town, with fixed tents, basic rooms and large grounds. It's just past Downtown on the Blyde River.

Royal Hotel (☎ 013-768 1100; s/d with breakfast R280/460; 🍷) This is the historic centrepiece of Uptown and a fine example of wooden Victorian architecture. The rooms are elegantly furnished in period style and include brass four-poster beds. Church Bar, adjoining, is a good spot for a drink.

Scott's Cafe (☎ 013-768 1061; Uptown; meals from R25) A busy eatery with a large menu selection and a craft shop.

The Stables Deli & Café (☎ 083-454 4763; meals R22-40; 🚗 8.30am-5pm) This pleasant café serves light meals, sandwiches and cake, plus locally produced jams and sauces.

Getting There & Away

Sporadic minibus taxis run between Pilgrim's Rest and Graskop (R10, 30 minutes), but most traffic along this road is in private vehicles.

GRASKOP

☎ 013 / pop 2000 / elevation 1450m

A useful base to explore the dramatic Blyde River Canyon, the quiet town of Graskop is slowly emerging as a tourist destination. The town lacks the woody ambience of Sabie or Pilgrim's Rest, but the nearby views over the edge of the Drakensberg Escarpment are hard to beat. A walking trail that includes places described in the popular South African classic *Jock of the Bushveld*

starts at the Graskop Municipal Holiday Resort, where you can get a map. The surrounding area is also good for mountain biking.

The best places for information are the **tourist information office** (☎ 013-767 1833; www.wildadventures.co.za; Pilgrim St; 🚗 8.30am-5pm Mon-Sat), inside Spar supermarket and Green Castle Backpackers (below). There's an ATM at **First National Bank** (Kerk St), just north of Louis Trichardt St, and Internet access at **Mobile Gateway** (☎ 072-333 3252; Pilgrim St; per hr R35; 🚗 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat).

Sleeping

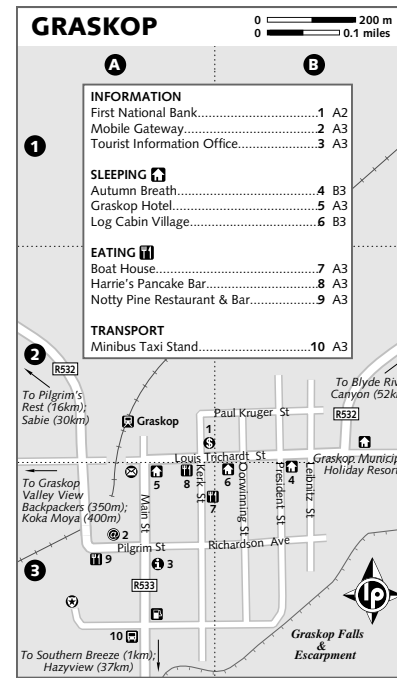
Koka Moya (☎ 013-767 1761; www.krugertours.co.za; 63 Eeufees St; camp sites per person R40, dm R60, s/d with shared bathroom R120/160, with bathroom R150/200) Located in an atmospheric old house west of the centre across the train line, Koka Moya has a very communal feel and backpacker vibe. Andre the owner, a champion storyteller and *potjiekos* chef, arranges excellent day trips in the area and great-value safaris to Kruger National Park.

Graskop Valley View Backpackers (☎ 013-767 1112; www.yebo-afrika.nl; 47 de Lange St; camp sites R45, dm R70, s/d from R155/190, self-catering rondavel R275; 🚽 🚿) This Dutch-run backpackers has a variety of rooms, plus rondavels, tent sites and a self-catering flat. The owners can organise adventure tours and they rent out mountain bikes for private use. Take the road to Sabie, turn left at the first four-way stop and another left on de Lange St.

Autumn Breath (☎ 013-767 1866, 082-877 2811; autumnbreath@cfmail.co.za; Louis Trichardt St; s/d with breakfast from R210/360) This quaint B&B has three modern rooms and a restaurant downstairs that is open to the public (so don't wander down in your bathrobe).

Log Cabin Village (☎ 013-767 1974; www.logcabin.co.za; Louis Trichardt St; s/d chalets R250/330; 🚽 🚿) A fenced-in compound in a central location close to the pancake eateries, with pleasant self-contained chalets with TVs and fireplaces.

Graskop Hotel (☎ 013-767 1244; www.graskophotel.co.za; cnr Main & Louis Trichardt Sts; s/d with breakfast R280/500) This is a surprisingly charming hotel, with efficient staff and 34 spacious rooms. Avoid those facing the street as timber trucks roll by in the night. There is a cosy bar, a restaurant and a lounge area with lots of tasteful, modern-art sculptures and paintings.



Eating & Drinking

Graskop is a gourmet's delight, and pancakes are the highlight.

Harrie's Pancake Bar (☎ 013-767 1273; Louis Trichardt St; pancakes R12-30; 🚗 8am-5.30pm) A classic pancake eatery with a cosy atmosphere. Don't expect a stack of buttermilk pancakes with butter and maple syrup – these pancakes are done up gourmet style; mostly stuffed with a choice of tasty meats or vegetables.

Southern Breeze (☎ 082-890 2587; dishes R30-50; 🍷 dinner) Located in the Magodi Lodge about 1km out of town on the road to Hazyview, this local favourite serves up traditional South African dishes with a Malay influence.

Boat House (☎ 013-767 1980; 7 Main St; meals R40-60; 🚗 8am-9pm Tue-Sun) Designed like the interior of a ship, this newcomer offers English breakfasts and excellent seafood.

Notty Pine Restaurant & Bar (☎ 013-767 1030; Pilgrim St; meals R35-50; 🚗 lunch & dinner Sat-Thu, dinner Fri) Specializes in trout dishes.

Getting There & Away

The minibus taxi stand (Main St) is at the southern end of town, with daily morning

departures to Pilgrim's Rest (R10, 30 minutes), Sabie (R15, 40 minutes) and Hazyview (R18, one hour).

BLYDE RIVER CANYON

The Blyde River's spectacular canyon is nearly 30km long and one of South Africa's most impressive natural features. Much of it is rimmed by the 26,000-hectare **Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve** (admission per person R20), which snakes north from Graskop, following the escarpment and meeting the Blyde River as it carves its way down to the lowveld. Most visitors drive along the edge of the canyon, with stops at the many wonderful viewpoints, but if you have the time, it's well worth exploring on foot.

Heading north from Graskop, look first for the **Pinnacle**, an impressive rock formation jutting out from the escarpment. (Lock up your vehicle here as there have been break-ins.) Just to the north along Rte 534 (a loop off Rte 532) are **God's Window** and **Wonder View** – two viewpoints with amazing vistas and batteries of souvenir sellers. At God's Window take the trail up to the rain forest (300 steps) where you might spot rare birds, including the elusive loerie.

When you return to Rte 532, take a short detour 2km south to the impressive **Lisbon Falls** (or if you are coming back to Graskop, catch it in the afternoon).

The Blyde River canyon starts north of here, near **Bourke's Luck Potholes**. These bizarre cylindrical holes were carved into the rock by whirlpools near the confluence of the Blyde and Treuer rivers. There's a **visitor's centre** (☎ 013-769 6019) where you can pay the reserve entry fee and get information on the canyon's geology, flora and fauna.

Continuing north past Bourke's Luck Potholes and into the heart of the nature reserve, you'll reach a viewpoint overlooking the **Three Rondavels** – huge cylinders of rock with hut-like pointed 'roofs' rising out of the far wall of the canyon. There are a number of short walks in the surrounding area to points where you can look down to the Blydepoort Dam at the reserve's far north.

West of here, outside the reserve and off Rte 36, are **Echo Caves** (admission R25) where Stone-Age relics have been found. The caves get their name from dripstone formations that echo when tapped. Be wary of the

volunteer guides that attach themselves to you. Only pay them R5 even if they demand R50 (they will show you a doctored record showing that others paid R50 – they didn't). Nearby, and reached via the same turnoff from Rte 36, the open-air **Museum of Man** (adult/child R10/5; ☎ 8am-5pm), an archaeological site with rock paintings and other finds, is hardly worth your time or money.

Hiking

The main route is the popular and very scenic **Blyde River Canyon Hiking Trail** (R60; 2½ days), which begins at Paradise Camp and finishes at Bourke's Luck Potholes. The first night is spent at Watervlanspruit Hut, and the second at Clearstream Hut. Bookings should be made through the **Mpumalanga Parks Board** (☎ 013-759 5432; mpbinfo@cis.co.za), or at the booking office at Bourke's Luck Potholes. As it's a one-way route, you'll need to sort out onward transport from the end of the trail.

The short but reasonably strenuous **Belvedere Day Walk** (admission R5; 5hr) takes you in a circular route to the Belvedere hydroelectric power station at Bourke's Luck Potholes. The station was built in 1911 and was once the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere. Bookings should be made at Potholes. When walking here, don't go to the river bottom, instead turn left at the guesthouse down a path to some beautiful waterfalls and rock pools.

For more walks in the area, visit the Aventura Resort Blyde Canyon where you can mix and match a series of six hiking routes. Entry is R40 but this can be put towards credit at the restaurant.

Sleeping

It's easy to explore the canyon by car as a day jaunt from Graskop, Sabie or Pilgrim's Rest. If you're continuing further north, a good alternative is to stay in or around the nature reserve, or in Hoedspruit (p510). Ask about low-season (May to September) and midweek discounts.

Aventura Resort Swadini (☎ 015-795 5141; www.ventura.co.za; camp sites R60, plus per person R30, 6-person self-catering chalet R550; 🍷 🍷) Accommodation here is made more appealing by the good location and impressive views. In addition to hiking, the resort can organise white-water rafting, abseiling and more. It's

at the northern end of the reserve along the Blyde River, and about 5km from Blydepoort Dam.

Aventura Blyde Canyon (☎ 013-769 8005; www.ventura.co.za; camp sites R110 plus per person R22; 2-/4-person self-catering chalets R505/685; 🍷) This popular resort is located just off Rte 532, and is convenient for discovering the surrounding area. It offers a full range of resort amenities, including a golf course nearby, horse riding and hiking trails.

Belvedere House (☎ 013-759 5432; mpbinfo@cis.co.za; Mon-Fri R550, Sat & Sun R700) A historic building with lovely canyon views, Belvedere House has self-catering facilities and a peaceful atmosphere. It sits near the old Belvedere power station and is operated by the Mpumalanga Parks Board. It's rented out in its entirety (up to nine people).

Rushworth's Trackers (☎ 015-795 5033; www.trackers.truepath.com; camp sites per person R45, r per person with half board R290, r per person self-catering R160) This is in a good setting just northwest of Swadini, with views over the lowveld. Staff can also help you organise bird-watching and botanical trips. The easiest access is from Hoedspruit (in Limpopo province, and accessed from Nelspruit via Rte 40, or from Sabie via the longer but more scenic Rte 532 and Rte 527). Once in Hoedspruit, take Rte 527 west, turning south after about 20km onto the small Driehoek road (just after crossing the Blyde River). Continue for 6.5km, and watch for the signs.

EASTERN LOWVELD

It's in Mpumalanga's hot, dry eastern lowveld that you'll get a taste for bygone days, when vast bush-covered expanses were the playing fields for the ancestors of the animals that now roam Kruger National Park. While the area lacks the drama and scenic splendour of the Drakensberg Escarpment, it has numerous attractions. These include its location at Kruger National Park's doorstep and a laid-back, un-touristy pace away from major towns.

HAZYVIEW

☎ 013 / pop 20,000

Strung out along Rte 40, the town of Hazyview acts as a service centre and gateway for nearby Kruger National Park. There

HOLLYWOOD IN MPUMALANGA

Mpumalanga may be one of the most famous places you've never heard of. While most visitors would have trouble trying to find it on a map, the province has attracted movie stars, cultural icons, royal families and billionaire business tycoons from all over the world.

What they are interested in is the wildlife and the luxury accommodation located on the eastern edge of Mpumalanga in Kruger National Park. Michael Jackson has made cameo appearances, and so have Brad Pitt, Wesley Snipes, former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and others.

The star attraction is Ulusaba Safari Lodge, the luxurious hideaway owned by Sir Richard Branson. Ulusaba (technically in Limpopo province but accessible from Mpumalanga) is so exclusive that it has its own private landing strip for ultra-rich jet setters. The lodge itself is a sort of Hollywood-in-Africa, complete with hanging rope bridges that connect wood huts set upon stilts. The highlight is the Rock Lodge, carved out of the rock face of a cliff overlooking the Sabi Sand game reserve. Bill Gates was apparently left speechless.

This new-found fame has been good for tourism but also helps when Mpumalanga is looking for financial support to combat problems like HIV/AIDS and poverty. Richard Branson has taken the lead in charitable contributions, funding local business ventures, supporting health initiatives and providing scholarships to underprivileged kids.

are reasonable facilities, but consider it little more than an overnight stop before the early morning dash to the Phabeni (12km), Numbi (15km) or Paul Kruger (47km) Gates.

Information

Simunye Shopping Centre has an ATM and a Checkers supermarket.

Big 5 Country Tourist Office (☎ 013-737 7414; Perry's Bridge ☎ 013-737 8191; www.big5country.com; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun) This helpful office is in the Rendezvous Tourism Centre. Big 5 Country operates a second branch at Perry's Bridge, on the right as you're coming in from the north.

Fx Africa (Perry's Bridge; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Currency exchange.

Paper Chain (☎ 013-737 6537; Perry's Bridge; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Internet access.

Rendezvous Tourism Centre (www.rendez.co.za) On the main road as you are coming into Hazyview from the south.

Sights

About 5km north of town along Rte 535, is **Shangana Cultural Village** (☎ 013-737 7000; www.shangana.co.za; ☎ 9am-5pm) a made-for-tourists re-creation of a traditional Shangana community. At various times of day it features a market, farming activity, house building, displays of uniforms and weaponry of the *masocho* (warriors), the relation of customs and history by a *sangoma* (witch doctor or herbalist), cooking, dancing and the imbibing of *byala* (traditional beer).

Day tours cost R60, midday visits with a traditional meal cost from R120, and the evening program with a good dinner costs R190. The Marula Crafts Market is also located here.

Sleeping & Eating

Kruger Park Backpackers (☎ 013-737 7224; www.krugerparkbackpackers.com; camp sites per person R40, dm R75, d huts with shared bathroom R130; 🍷) Another spacious, somewhat rustic place, with trips to Kruger and accommodation in dorms or Zulu huts. It's about 2km south of the four-way stop, and about 500m along the road to Kruger's Numbi Gate.

Gecko Bushpackers & Campsite (☎ 013-737 8140; www.gecko-bushpackers.co.za; dm R70, d with/without bathroom R190/170; 🍷) Perhaps the most welcoming and cosy backpackers in the area, Gecko has a friendly staff and a laid-back atmosphere. It's about 2.5km from Hazyview just off Rte 536 to Sabie. It has bright dorm rooms, some doubles, shaded camping, a self-catering area and a pool table. Meals can also be arranged.

Big 5 Backpackers (☎ 013-737 7534, 083-524 6615; www.big5backpackers.co.za; dm/d R75/180; 🍷 🍷) This popular backpackers is in a wooded setting with a 'contemplation area', cooking facilities and safaris to Kruger. It's 3km up from the junction of Rte 40 and Rte 538; watch for the large, purple sign.

Hotel Numbi (☎ 013-737 7301; www.hotelnumbi.co.za; s/d with breakfast R460/720; 🍷) Hotel Numbi, just south of the four-way stop, has a

colonial-era ambience, spacious grounds, the good Pioneer Grill (mains from R40) with views over the lawn, and a less expensive pub menu inside.

Thulamela (☎ 013-737 7171; www.thulamela.co.za; s/d cottages R500/840) Another upscale, comfortable place. It's set in the bush about 13km from Kruger, with majestic views and free-roaming wildlife in the area. Children under 16 aren't permitted. To get here, take the Umbhaba turn-off from Rte 40.

Hippo Hollow (☎ 013-737 7752; www.hippohollow.co.za; s/d chalet R570/850; 🍷) This is a large, sprawling resort-style complex on the Sabie River about 2.5km from Hazyview. Accommodation is in two- and four-bed chalets with a braai (barbecue) area and small kitchenette, or in hotel rooms overlooking the river. True to its name, hippos sometimes wade onto shore by the restaurant.

Rissington Inn (☎ 013-737 7700; www.rissington.co.za; d from R680; 🍷 🍷) An upscale retreat, with comfortable rooms in thatched, white cottages and views over Kruger in the distance. The inn is located a couple of kilometres south of Hazyview. It is 1km north of the Rte 40 and Rte 538 junction, and well signposted.

For meals head to Perry's Bridge, which has several restaurants including the Italian-styled **Pappas Pizzeria** (☎ 013-737 7428; 🍷) breakfast, lunch & dinner) and the slightly more upscale African-themed **Digby's Restaurant** (☎ 013-737 6957; dishes R50-70; 🍷 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun). For something more intimate, head to **Tree Tops Restaurant** (☎ 013-737 8294; meals R60-80; 🍷 dinner Mon-Sat), which features a mix of continental and local cuisine. It's 10km from Hazyview along Rte 36 to Sabie.

Getting There & Away

City to City's daily Jo'burg–Acornhoek bus stops at the Shell petrol station in Hazyview (R95 from Jo'burg). The backpackers places do pick-ups from Nelspruit from about R15 (and some will do pick-ups at no charge if you book a Kruger safari with them).

Minibus taxis go daily to Nelspruit (R20, one hour) and Sabie (R20, one hour).

WHITE RIVER

☎ 013 / pop 10,000 / elevation 950m

White River (Witrivier) is a green, pleasant little town dating back to the days of the Anglo-Boer Wars. It's a bit higher and less

humid than nearby Nelspruit, and worth a short stop. The town is the self-styled 'nut capital of South Africa', and just south of White River off Rte 40, you can visit some nut plantations.

The **tourist office** (☎ 013-750 1073; info@lowveld.info; 🕒 9am-4.30pm) is at the Casterbridge Centre about 2km north of town off Rte 40. There's an ATM at **First National Bank** (Tom Lawrence St) and Internet access at **Post Net** (☎ 013-750 0225; per hr R30; 🕒 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-3pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) in the White River Shopping Centre.

Hardy Ventures (☎ 013-751 1693; www.hardyventure.com) organises various adrenalin activities in the area, including rafting trips on the Sabie, Olifants and Blyde Rivers and hiking.

Sleeping

Gypsies Traveller's Inn (☎ 013-750 0075; gypseytours@iafrica.com; dm R70, s/d with shared bathroom R85/160; 🍷 🍷) Gypsies is a new place located 5km from the airport and 7km from White River. It offers accommodation in small wood cabins with a separate ablution block. There's a pleasant dining area, plus a pimped out converted campervan that sleeps up to four people. To get there, drive 5km east along Rte 538, and then 2km down Jatinga Rd.

Karula Hotel (☎ 013-751 2277; www.karulahotel.co.za; Old Plaston Rd; s R255-280, d R380-420; 🍷 🍷) This colonial-style hotel is the best midrange choice. Its award-winning rooms are pleasant, especially those in the 'luxury' wing, and the grounds – rimmed by jacaranda and bougainvillea – are relaxing. It's on a quiet, winding section of Rte 538.

Outside town there are several comfortable places which are good if you want to spend a few days relaxing in the countryside.

Igwala Gwala Country Lodge (☎ 013-750 1723; www.igwalagwala.co.za; d with breakfast from R550; 🍷) This place is about 3km south of White River off Rte 40 (signposted), with nice gardens and accommodation in plush attached suites (no children allowed).

Hulala Lakeside Lodge (☎ 013-764 1893; www.hulala.co.za; s/d with half board from R750/1100; 🍷) A large resort with a waterside setting, canoeing and row boats, and rooms with fireplaces. It's north of White River, signposted along Rte 40.

Greenway Woods Resort (☎ 013-751 1094; www.greenway.co.za; 6-person chalets R1075; 🍷 🍷) A large resort about 6km from White River near the golf course. The self-catering chalets have fireplaces, and there's a restaurant.

Eating

Fez at Baghdad (☎ 013-750 1250; meals from R30, set menu R85; 🕒 9am-midnight Tue-Sat) This is a delightful bar and restaurant attached to a craft shop. It's about 2km from the town centre along Rte 40 to Hazyview, and opposite the Casterbridge Centre.

Green Bottles (☎ 013-750 1097; dishes R25-50; 🕒 9am-9pm Mon-Thu, 9am-10pm Fri & Sat, 9am-4pm Sun) This chic, arty restaurant, located at the Casterbridge Centre, serves up fine meat and seafood dishes. It's also a good place to relax with a fruit shake or glass of wine.

Getting There & Around

Minibus taxis go throughout the day to/from Nelspruit (R5, 20 minutes) and Hazyview (R15, one hour).

NELSPRUIT

☎ 013 / pop 235,000

Nelspruit, Mpumalanga's largest town and provincial capital, sprawls along the Crocodile River Valley in the steamy, subtropical lowveld. There are some good, affordable accommodation options and plenty of restaurants, making it a good place to sort out your stuff while you consider the next direction of your plunge.

Orientation

At the centre of things, or at least trying to be, is the Promenade Centre, with a modest selection of shops and restaurants. Opposite are the ticket offices for Translux and other long-distance buses. About 5km north of town off the White River road is the large Riverside Mall, which has taken much of Promenade Centre's business, and is the best place to shop.

Information

EMERGENCY

Police station (☎ 013-759 1000; 15 Bester St) Opposite Nelspruit Plaza.

INTERNET ACCESS

Alpha Internet (☎ 013-755 5015; Crossing Centre; per hr R25; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-4pm Sun) Internet access.

Mugg & Bean (☎ 013-757 1036; Riverside Mall; per hr R50) There is a wi-fi hotspot here, although the charge is borderline outrageous.

Nexus Internet Café (☎ 013-741 2303; Sonpark Centre; per hr R30; 🕒 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun) Internet access, opposite Town Lodge.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Nelmed Forum (☎ 013-755 1541; cnr Nel & Rothery Sts) Offers 24-hour emergency medical care.

MONEY

ABSA (Brown St) With an ATM.

First National Bank (Bester St) Does foreign exchange.

Nelspruit Crossing Mall (cnr General Dan Pienaar & Louis Trichardt Sts) With an ATM.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Dana Travel (☎ 013-753 3571; www.danaagency.co.za; shop 12, Crossings Centre) This long-standing agent can help with air tickets and other travel arrangements.

Lowveld Tourism (☎ 013-755 1988/9; www.lowveld.info; cnr General Dan Pienaar & Louis Trichardt Sts; 🕒 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) This helpful office at Nelspruit Crossing Mall takes bookings for all national parks, including Kruger, and can help arrange accommodation and tours.

Mozambique consulate (☎ 013-752 7396; moz.conns@mweb.co.za; 32 Bell St; 🕒 8am-2pm Mon-Fri) Does same-day visa processing for R80 – half the price of a visa at the border.

Sights & Activities

Pick up some fresh apples, mangos and melons at Nelspruit's lively produce **market** (cnr Brown & Currie Sts). If you're after something quieter, take a stroll among manicured stands of flowers, gnarled baobabs and patches of indigenous forest in the 150-hectare **National Lowveld Botanic Gardens** (☎ 013-752 5531; adult/child R10/4; 🕒 8am-6pm). It's on Rte 40 about 2km north of the junction with the N4.

The small **Sonheuwel Nature Reserve** (☎ 013-759 9111; admission free) features antelope species, vervet monkeys and rock paintings. It's on the southern edge of Nelspruit, off Van Wijk St.

Just northwest of Nelspruit and signposted from Rte 40 is the **Croc River Reptile Park** (☎ 013-752 5511; adult/child R30/15; 🕒 8am-5pm), where you can meet the original inhabitants of Crocodile River Valley.

The area around Nelspruit is good for bird-watching; contact **Lawson's Bird Safaris**

(☎ 013-741 2458; www.lawsons.co.za) to organise tours. There's also some challenging hiking, notably along the **Kaapscheepoort trail** (per night R57; 2, 3 or 4 days) and the **Uitsoek trail** (per night R57; 1 or 2 days). For bookings, contact **Komatiland Forests Ecotourism** (☎ 013-754 2724; www.komati-ecotourism.co.za; 10 Streak St).

There's an excellent 50m **swimming pool** (☎ 013-759 9411; Drysdale St; adult/child R6/5; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Tue-Sat, 1-5.30pm Sun & public holidays) at Van Riebeeck Park sporting complex.

Festivals & Events

Held in the summer months (either June or July), **InniBos** (www.innibos.co.za) is Nelspruit's biggest festival. Basically a cultural fair, InniBos brings together artists, musicians and

theatre groups for five days of events. Entry is around R20 per day.

If you are around in August, try to catch the **Nelspruit Jazz Festival** held at the Rugby Stadium behind Crossing Mall.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Nelspruit Backpackers (☎ 013-741 2237; nelback@hotmail.com; 9 Andries Pretorius St; camp sites per person R40, dm R70, s/d with shared bathroom R130/180; 🏠) Among Nelspruit's backpackers, this one best combines service, comfort and location. Rooms have recently been upgraded. It's a Baz Bus stop and its travel wing, Mbombela safaris, can organise itineraries in the area. Look for the red, yellow and green gate.

Funky Monkey Backpackers (☎ 083-310 4755; www.funkymonkeys.co.za; 102 Van Wijk St; camp sites per person R40, dm R70, s/d with shared bathroom R130/180; 🏠) A popular, well-run place in a spacious house, with a pool table, braai area and friendly staff. It's a little far from town, but it is a Baz Bus stop, and pick-ups from the bus terminal can be arranged.

Nelspruit Sun Guest House (☎ 013-741 2253; sunlodge@absamail.co.za; 7 De Villiers St; dm R65, d with/without bathroom R200/180; 🏠) This quirky place has accommodation in tasteful wood buildings set in a lush garden. It's not as welcoming and 'backpacker friendly' as the previous two entries. The Baz Bus stops here.

Old Vic Travellers Inn (☎ 013-744 0993; www.krugerandmore.co.za; 12 Impala St; dm R90, d with/without bathroom R300/250, 4-person self-catering cottages R420; 🏠) A friendly, somewhat upscale backpackers, with self-catering facilities or meals on request, tents for rent and lots of information on the area. It's about 3km south of the centre, near an extension of Sonheuwel Nature Reserve, and a Baz Bus stop.

Safubi Holiday Resort (☎ 013-741 3253; 45 Graniet St; camp sites R120, 2-/4-/6-bed chalets R395/495/595; 🏠) Safubi is a well-kept, self-catering resort about 2.5km from the town centre in pleasant grounds backing on to a nature reserve. There's a coffee shop and a large swimming pool. Take the N4 west, and turn left at Graniet St (at the Caltex petrol station); it's 1km further on.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Road Lodge (☎ 013-741 1805; www.citylodge.co.za; tr R285; 🏠) In the same complex, but a step down from Town Lodge, with straightforward rooms.

Auberge Guest Lodge (☎ 013-741 2866; www.aubergeguestlodge.com; 3 de Villiers St; s/d with breakfast R285/385; 🏠) A quiet, well-maintained guest-house with comfortable rooms in the main house, and a small yard. It's just down from Town Lodge.

Matopos Lodge (☎ 013-753 3549; www.matopos.co.za; 14 Sheppard Ave; s/d with breakfast R350/450; 🏠) Rooms at this comfortable place have ceiling fans, and some have balconies. It's in a quiet setting about 15 minutes on foot from the centre near Van Riebeeck Park.

Town Lodge (☎ 013-741 1444; www.citylodge.co.za; cnr General Dan Pienaar & Koorsboom Sts; s/d R415/500;

🏠) Town Lodge is downmarket from its sister chain, City Lodge, but good value.

Utopia in Africa (☎ 013-745 7714; www.utopian-africa.com; 6 Daleen St; s/d with breakfast R425/720; 🏠) An exquisite guest villa with thoughtful décor and friendly service. This one overlooks the Sonheuwel Nature Reserve. To get there, head south on General Dan Pienaar St, turn left on John Vorster St, right on Halssnoer St (which becomes Augusta), and then right on Daleen.

Loerie's Call (☎ 013-744 1251; www.loeriescall.co.za; 2 du Preez St; s/d with breakfast from R450/590; 🏠) One of Nelspruit's classiest guest-houses. The rooms are set apart from the main house, each with their own entrance.

Eating & Drinking

Villa Italia (☎ 013-752 5780; cnr Louis Trichardt & Paul Kruger Sts; mains R35-60; ☎ lunch & dinner) This long-time local favourite serves a wide range of good pastas, pizzas and other Italian fare.

Costa do Sol (☎ 013-752 6382; cnr Louis Trichardt & Paul Kruger Sts; meals R40-50; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) A quaint little Portuguese place opposite Villa Italia featuring seafood, good soups and classic Portuguese cuisine.

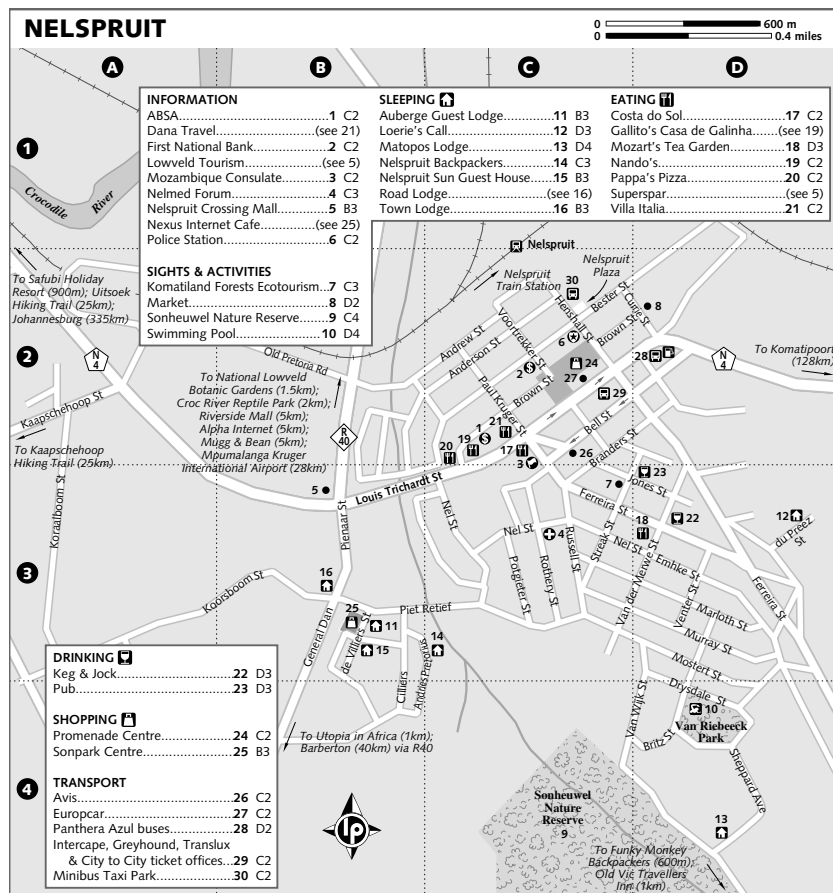
Keg & Jock (☎ 013-755 4969; Ferriera St; mains from R30; ☎ lunch & dinner) Probably the best late-night hang-out in Nelspruit, the Keg & Jock is a lively place with good pub food and a streetside patio. There's live music on Wednesday and Friday nights.

Pub (☎ 755 4861; 10 Jones St; mains from R30; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Sat) The Pub specialises in large platters of meat and big glasses of grog. It's pub crawling distance from the Keg & Jock.

Mozart's Tea Garden (☎ 013-755 2287; cnr Ferreira & Van der Merwe; light meals R25-35; ☎ breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) Offering a wide variety of healthy foods, Mozart's is a good place to go if you are on a diet. Of course, they also offer a few fattening items if you are not. It's tucked off the street behind a children's play park; enter from Van der Merwe.

Weisenhof Coffees (☎ 013-755 2853; cnr Louis Trichardt & Paul Kruger Sts; light meals from R20; ☎ breakfast & lunch) This centrally located café is a good place to grab a snack or get your caffeine fix. It's next to Costa do Sol.

Superspar (cnr General Dan Pienaar & Louis Trichardt Sts) For self-caterers, there's a huge super-market at Nelspruit Crossings Mall.



For fast food, head to Brown St, where you'll find **Nando's** (Brown St) and the similar **Gallito's Casa de Galinha** (☎ 013-52 5371; Brown St; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner). Opposite is **Pappa's Pizza** (☎ 013-755 1660; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner), which draws a good crowd with its tasty pizzas and open porch seating.

Shopping

The biggest shopping centres are the glitzy Riverside Mall (about 5km north of town off Rte 40, with a wide range of stores), and **Nelspruit Crossing Mall** (cnr General Dan Pienaar & Louis Trichardt Sts) with various shops and ATM facilities. Promenade Centre has a reasonable array of eateries and shops, while **Sonpark Centre** (Piet Retief St, between General Dan and de Villiers Sts) has an Internet café and a few restaurants.

Getting There & Around

AIR

Mpumalanga Kruger International Airport (MKIA; code MQP; ☎ 013-753 7500; www.kmiaairport.co.za) is the closest commercial airport. There are daily flights with **South African Airways** (SAA; ☎ 013-750 2531; www.flysaa.com) and **SAairlink** (☎ 013-750 2531; www.saairlink.co.za) to Jo'burg (R1200; one hour), Cape Town (R2040; 2½ hours) and Durban (R1540; 1½ hours). You can usually score a big discount when booking online.

Nationwide Airlines (☎ 086-173 7737; www.nationwideair.co.za) flights also connect Nelspruit several times weekly with Jo'burg and Cape Town.

BUS

Baz Bus (☎ 021-439 2323; www.bazbus.com) connects Nelspruit with Jo'burg/Pretoria and Manzini (Swaziland), and stops at all the backpackers in town.

Intercape (☎ 086-1287 287; www.intercape.co.za), **Greyhound** (☎ 013-753 2100; www.greyhound.co.za) and **Translux** (☎ 013-755 1453; www.translux.co.za) all go daily between Jo'burg (and Pretoria) and Maputo (Mozambique) via Nelspruit. Among these, Greyhound offers the best service and charges R160-175 for Jo'burg or R140 to Maputo, they offers a 10% discount to foreign tourists. Their **ticket offices** (Louis Trichardt St) are together, just up from Henshall St, and opposite Promenade Mall. **Panthera Azul** (☎ 011-618 8811) also stops in Nelspruit – at the Excel petrol station (cor-

ner Bell and Louis Trichardt Sts) – on its run between Jo'burg and Maputo.

CAR RENTAL

Avis airport (☎ 013-741 1029); downtown (☎ 013-755 1567; 29 Bell St)

Budget (☎ 013-750 1774) At the airport.

Europcar (☎ 013-750 0965) At the airport.

Imperial (airport; ☎ 013-750 2871) Also has a desk at Hotel Promenade.

MINIBUS TAXI

The local bus and minibus taxi park is behind Nelspruit Plaza near the corner of Bester and Henshall Sts. Minibus taxi destinations and fares include White River (R6.50, 20 minutes), Barberton (R14, 40 minutes), Sabie (R15, one hour), Hazzyview (R17, one hour), Graskop (R25, 1½ hours), Komatipoort (R45, two hours) and Jo'burg (R100, five hours).

CityBug (☎ 013-741 4114; www.citybug.co.za) operates a convenient shuttle service in town for R20 per person door-to-door. They also have a chauffeur service to/from Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport, a weekly shuttle to Durban (R380 per person one-way) and a three-times-daily shuttle between Nelspruit and Johannesburg International Airport (R180 per person).

TRAIN

The *Komati* (see p630) runs daily between Jo'burg and Komatipoort via Nelspruit.

MALELANE

☎ 013 / pop 6500

Spending a night at one of the guest lodges in Malelane makes for a good primer before entering Kruger National Park. Most of the lodges back up to the Crocodile River, where you'll be able to spot plenty of hippos, crocodiles and other wildlife. The town itself is a small, unattractive service centre, just off the N4.

An **information desk** (☎ 013-790 1193; ☺ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat & Sun) at the Spar supermarket can arrange tours.

If you are heading towards Swaziland, don't miss the **Matsamo Cultural Village** (☎ 013-781 0578, 082-457 8964, www.matsamo.com; ☺ 7am-6pm) located in no man's land between South Africa and Swaziland at the Jeppe's Reef border crossing. Matsamo is a sort of 'living museum' where you can sleep in a

luxurious hut (room with half board R655, including show) decked out with animal skins and wood furnishings. Day visitors can go on a guided tour of the village and watch a cheerful song and dance performance for R100. Buffet breakfast (R65) and lunch (R85) are also available. It's all quite staged and targeted toward package tours, but still a fun introduction to Swazi culture, and certainly not your typical border crossing experience.

Sleeping & Eating

River House Lodge (☎ 013-790 1333; www.icon.co.za /-gardner; 22 Visarend St; camp site R45; cottage per person R300) This is an elegant five-star thatched estate with B&B-style accommodation. All rooms have their own small terraces, and there are attractive gardens bordering the river. It's west of River Cottage and signposted from the main road.

Lino's Lodge & Deck Restaurant (☎ 013-790 0793; s/d with breakfast R285/455; ☺ restaurant breakfast & lunch Tue-Sun, dinner Tue-Sat) This place offers good dining, especially seafood, on a nice open deck. There's also accommodation in pleasant white-and-green cottages on the banks of the river. It's just west of River Cottage, and reached via a long, frangipani-lined driveway.

River Cottage (☎ 013-790 0825; s/d with breakfast R300/500, 6-person cottage R1200; ☺ ☺) This is a well-tended place sitting on the Crocodile River just west of town. The smaller cottages are set back on a clipped lawn, while the six-person one is close to the river; all are self-catering, with their own braai areas.

Casa Portuguesa (☎ 013-790 3314; dishes R45-70; ☺ noon-9pm Mon-Sat, noon-2pm Sun) This unique restaurant is located about 2km south of Kruger National Park's Malelane Gate. Surrounded by a lagoon inhabited by crocodiles, the restaurant offers a tranquil setting and good Portuguese meals.

KOMATIPOORT

☎ 013 / pop 4700

This border town is at the foot of the Lebombo Mountains, near the confluence of the Komati and Crocodile Rivers and only 10km away from Kruger National Park's Crocodile Bridge Gate. It's a convenient stop if you're travelling to/from Mozambique or Swaziland.

At the time of writing, there were plans to set up an information desk inside the Spar supermarket. Close to Spar is a petrol station and ABSA bank with exchange facilities.

If you happen to be in Komatipoort in late June, ask around for the **Prawn Festival**, which celebrates the modest crayfish in all its glory.

Sleeping & Eating

Spice of Life (☎ 013-793 7373; www.spiceoflife.co.za; camping R40, dm R65, s/d R100/150; ☺) This small, scruffy backpackers is on the N4 near the border with Mozambique. They have cooking and laundry facilities, and it's one of the only places around with Internet access. It's about 300m east of the Komati River Chalets.

Komati River Chalets (☎ 013-793 7623, 082-347 4669; www.komatiriverchalets.co.za; s/d with breakfast R260/460, 5-/7-person self-catering chalets R900/1050; ☺ ☺) This good-value place has plain stucco-and-thatch chalets set around large clipped grounds, a popular pub, and tiger fishing in season. It's signposted from the N4, and just over the railroad tracks, with a second access route signposted from town.

Trees Too (☎ 013-793 8262; www.treestoo.com; s/d with breakfast R290/380, 4-person f R675; ☺) A small, nice private home with B&B accommodation around a small garden. The management also has plans to open up dormitory accommodation for R65 per person. It's on a leafy side street about 500m in from Rissik St and signposted.

Hippo's Restaurant & Lodge (☎ 013-793 8155; hipposrestaurant@telkomsa.net; 80 Rissik St; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Hippo's has a large menu selection featuring filling portions of meat and fish. Adjoining is **Pioneers Guest Lodge** (☎ 013-793 8028; s/d R220/280).

Restaurante Tamarina (☎ 013-790 7057; Rissik St; mains R40-55; ☺ lunch & dinner) Tamarina is a good place to sample prawns and Portuguese fare before heading over the border into Mozambique. It's opposite Hippo's Restaurant & Lodge.

Getting There & Away

Minibus taxis leave from just off Rissik St near the Score supermarket, and regularly do the run between Komatipoort and Maputo (Mozambique; R65, 1½ to two hours). If you're driving, there are two tolls

along the N4 on the Mozambique side. Exit procedures are fairly swift and on the Mozambique side you can buy a visa for R180 (you can get one for half the price at the Mozambique consulate in Nelspruit, p457).

BARBERTON

☎ 013 / pop 29,500

The splendid town of Barberton dates to the gold rush days of the late 19th century, when it was a boom town and home to South Africa's first stock exchange. However, most miners soon moved on to the newly discovered Rand fields near Jo'burg, and Barberton's prominence declined. All working gold mines in the region are now over 100 years old and the town itself plods along in a relaxed country manner.

The helpful **Tourist Information Centre** (☎ 013-712 2121; www.barberton.co.za; Market Sq, Crown St; ☎ 7.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) in the town centre can assist with accommodation, tours of historic sites, and day hikes in the area. If you call in, ask for tourist info. There are ATMs at **First National Bank** (Crown St) and in **Shoprite** (Crown St). You can access the Internet at **NJR Computer Services** (☎ 013-712 4739; shop 2, Eureka Centre; per 30 min R10; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1pm Sat).

Sights & Activities

Barberton boasts several restored houses dating to the late-19th and early-20th centuries. All are open for touring (contact the Barberton Museum for more details) and give a glimpse into the town's early history. They include **Belhaven House** (Lee St; adult/child R10/5; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Mon-Fri), and **Stopforth House** (Bowness St; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Mon-Fri) and **Fernlea House** (Lee St; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Mon-Fri), whose admissions are both included in the Belhaven ticket.

Barberton Museum (☎ 013-712 4208; 36 Pilgrim St; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm) is also worth a look. Next door is **Umjindi Gallery** (☎ 013-712 5807; Pilgrim St; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat), with various crafts and a jewellery workshop where you can watch the artists at work.

Located just off the eastern end of Judge St is an iron and wood **blockhouse** from the Anglo-Boer War, part of the chain built by the British when the war entered its guerilla phase. On the southwestern edge of town is an abandoned 20.3km **aerial cable-**

way. When it operated, it was the longest industrial cableway in the world, bringing asbestos down from a mine in Swaziland. Coal was carried in the other direction to provide counterweight.

Origins (☎ 013-712 5055, 083-266 9329; www.origins.co.za; 20 Sheba Rd) runs various tours, including a good Eureka City Ghost Town tour of the old Barberton gold mines.

Sleeping

Barberton Chalets & Caravan Park (☎ 013-712 3323; www.barbertonchalets.co.za; General St; camp sites per person R60, caravan sites R80, s/d/tr cottages 170/250/320; ☎) This caravan park is conveniently close to the town centre, with lots of shade and grassy areas, camping and self-catering chalets.

Cockney Liz (De Villiers St; s/d R150/200) The Chill Inn management runs Cockney Liz, opposite, with good functional rooms that include TV, and private bath.

Makhonjwa Nursery & Guest House (☎ 013-712 2584; 10 Duncan St; per person R150; ☎) Another good value guesthouse, this one is a self-catering place run by the folks who own Co-co Pan restaurant.

Chill Inn (☎ 013-712 3477, 082-733 6755; cnr De Villiers & Tate Sts; d R160-250) This welcoming hotel has a braai area and double rooms with TV.

Phoenix Hotel (☎ 013-712 4211; phoenix@soft.co.za; 20 Pilgrim St; s/d R180/320; ☎) This is an old-style country hotel with a staid pub, a tea room and comfortable, clean rooms.

Fountain Baths Holiday Guest Cottages (☎ 013-712 2707; www.fountainbaths.co.za; 48 Pilgrim St; cottages per person R200) This pleasant place with self-catering cottages is at the southern end of the street, where it resumes after merging into Sheba Rd (Crown St). It was built in 1885 and used to be Barberton's public pool.

Kloof House (☎ 013-712 4268; www.kloofhuis.co.za; 1 Kloof St; s/d with breakfast R200/360; ☎) A cosy B&B up a steep hill just southeast of Market Sq, with pleasant rooms, including some with private bathroom and good views.

Old Coach Road Guest House (☎ 013-719 9755; www.oldcoachroad.co.za; s/d R265/490; ☎) This very nice getaway has cosy rooms, all with their own entrance away from the main house. Some have wheelchair access. It's set in large grounds about 9km north of Barberton, and signposted from Rte 38.

Barberton Mountain Lodge (☎ 013-712 5055; 4-bed lodge R800; ☎) Up in the hills behind

town (advance bookings only) is a pleasant, self-catering lodge operated by Origins tour agency.

Eating

Co-co Pan (☎ 013-712 2653; Crown St; mains R25-35; ☎ 5.30-9pm Mon-Sat, 5.30-8pm Sun) This casual eatery opposite the museum is a good budget choice, with burgers, salads and other basics. Entry is through a small general shop.

Bye Apart Ate (☎ 013-712 2846; 27 De Villiers St; meals from R25; ☎ 9am-9pm Wed-Mon, 9am-5pm Tue) Don't be put off by the portraits of the apartheid-era prime ministers; the owners of the restaurant don't take apartheid that seriously. As the name suggests, the theme is a tongue-in-cheek send off to the old system and what you'll find is a very relaxed, welcoming atmosphere. The menu here is simple but the food is fresh and tasty. Choose from pasta, steak or lamb chops.

Victorian Tea Garden & Restaurant (☎ 013-712 4985; light meals from R25; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) The gazebo here is a great spot to relax and watch the passing parade. It's between Pilgrim and Crown Sts, next to

the tourist information office. The menu features sandwiches and fast food.

Globe Café (☎ 082-883 3105; 18 Pilgrim St; mains R50-60; ☎ noon-8pm Mon-Fri, 5-8pm Sat) Globe is in a historic building with an agreeable ambience and excellent meals featuring some adventurous dishes, including lamb shanks and Thai chicken.

Getting There & Away

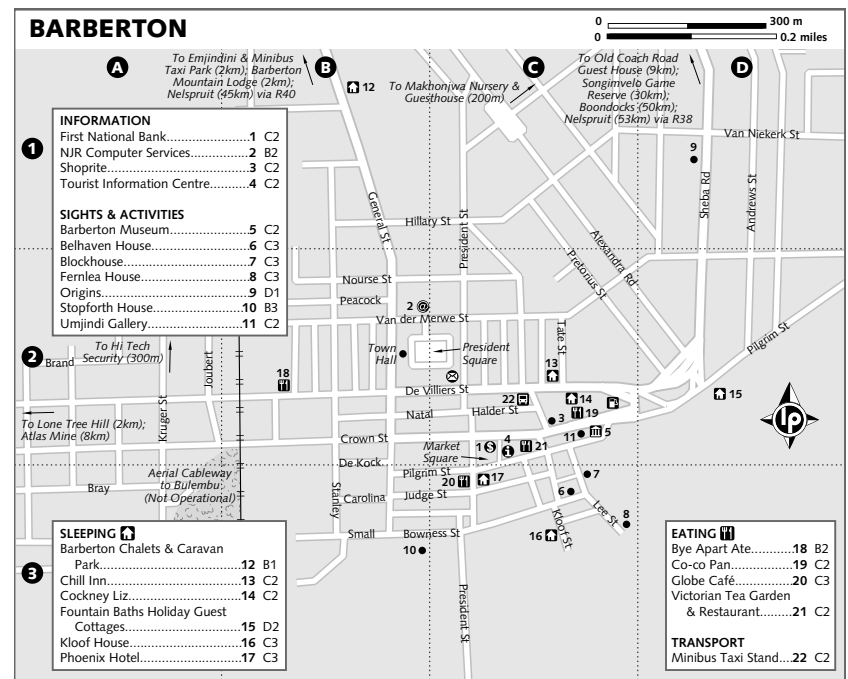
From Barberton to Badplaas, a winding tar-mac road goes over the Nelshoogte Pass. The road to Swaziland has been upgraded.

A few minibus taxis stop in town near Shoprite, but it's better to go to the minibus taxi park near Emjindini (3km from town on the Nelspruit road). The fare to Nelspruit is R15 (40 minutes), to Badplaas it is R20 (one hour). Most departures are in the early morning, by 8am.

AROUND BARBERTON

Lone Tree Hill

Just southwest of town past the prison is **Lone Tree Hill** (admission R20 plus key deposit R50), a prime paragliding launch site. To get here,



follow De Villiers St west from town, and turn left about 500m past the prison. **Hi Tech Security** (☎ 013-712 3256; McPherson St), just off Kruger St, can assist with keys and access.

Atlas Mine

Barberton has ridden the fortunes of its gold mines for more than a century. To see one in action, head 8km west of Barberton to the **Atlas Mine** (☎ 013-712 8026, 072-128 0604; andreab@soft.co.za; 2½-hr tour R150) where visitors don helmets, lights, gumboots and overalls before crawling through the caverns. If you're claustrophobic, you can stay above ground and pan for what the mine describes as the 'world's oldest gold'. This is no idle boast, scientists have proven that rocks and minerals in the area are indeed the oldest on Earth.

Songimvelo Game Reserve

This beautiful 56,000-hectare **reserve** (☎ 017-883 0964; mpbinfo@cis.co.za; admission adult/child R15/7) sits in lowveld country south of Barberton, with high-altitude grassland areas on its eastern edge along the mountainous Swaziland border. There are no lions, but there are numerous other introduced species, including elephants, zebras, giraffes and various antelopes, and both walking and horse riding are popular. (Note that walking is limited to certain areas, and walkers must be accompanied by a guide.) Songimvelo is also home to some of the earth's oldest rocks – perhaps dating to four billion years ago – and to some interesting archaeological sites. You can stay overnight at **Kromdraai Camp** (cabin R250), with simple, self-catering, six-person wooden cabins.

Boondocks

A holistic retreat, **Boondocks** (☎ 013-726 0140, 082-808 2733; www.boondocks.co.za; day visit R50; self-catering cottage R250-350, 6-person house R1000-1500), is a unique place to get away from it all. Beautifully landscaped gardens include pools, springs and a labyrinth. There is also a 2200-acre game reserve with a variety of wildlife, including giraffes, zebras and wildebeests. Visitors taken by the place can make arrangements to stay at the retreat. Boondocks is located on Rte 38, around 45km from Barberton on the road to Kaapmuiden.

BADPLAAS

☎ 017 / pop 8000

If relaxing in **thermal springs** (☎ 017-844 1000; admission per person/vehicle per day R50/30) appeals, Badplaas is worth a short stop. Rising up on the horizon are the dramatic Hlumuhlumu Mountains.

Aventura Badplaas (☎ 017-844 1000; www.aven.tura.co.za; camp sites R75, plus per person R30, s/d R265/530, 2-/4-bed self-catering chalets R420/R750; ♿ 🚿 🚰) is the best place to stay if you want a resort atmosphere, complete with beauty treatments and a choice of chalets or double rooms. There's also a caravan park. If you stay, admission to the hot springs is R10. It's well signposted – you can't miss it.

Baluli Lodge (☎ 017-844 1040; www.baluli.com; d/tr R300/330; ♿) is smaller, simpler and quieter than the Aventura next door. In addition to nice rooms, it offers a bar, restaurant and TV room.

Minibus taxis run between Badplaas and Machadodorp, via the N4 (R18, one hour), and Barberton (R20, one hour).

PIET RETIEF

☎ 017 / pop 32,000

While it's not much to look at, the farming town of Piet Retief is the largest in southern Mpumalanga and a convenient stopping point en route to Swaziland or KwaZulu-Natal. About 80km southwest of Piet Retief near Wakkerstroom is the **Ekangala Grassland Biosphere Reserve**, known for its excellent bird-watching. The area south of Piet Retief is also known for its many Anglo-Boer War battlefields.

There are ATMs at **First National Bank** (Church St) and **ABSA** (Church St), both in the town centre, and Internet access at Böhmers Restaurant (opposite).

Sleeping & Eating

Lala's Lodge (☎ 017-826 1838, 083-302 2466; camp sites per person R35, dm R70, r per person with breakfast R200) Lala's Lodge is a nanna-style place with dorms, doubles and a communal lounge. It's about 1.5km north of town, signposted off the N2 towards Ermelo.

LA Guest House (☎ 017-826 2837, 082-292 2163; laguesthouse@telkomsa.net; 3 Market St; s/d with breakfast R240/340; ♿) This comfortable B&B has immaculate, spacious rooms, two with small cooking areas, and a yard. It's in a quiet location just a few blocks from the town centre.

Weaver's Nest Country Village (☎ 017-730 0115; www.weavers.co.za; s/d with half board R575/850, 4-person self-catering cottages R600) Located near Wakkerstroom is this much larger place, signposted off Rte 543, with rooms and self-catering cottages.

Wetlands Lodge (☎ 017-730 0101; d with half board R600) Also near Wakkerstroom (about 90km southwest of Piet Retief), try this place just off Rte 543 with a fireplace and a well-stocked library.

Böhmers Restaurant (☎ 017-826 4178; 15A Church St; 🍴 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Steak and chicken dishes abound at this low-key eatery on the main road through town.

Böhmers coffee shop (☎ 017-826 2236; 🕒 7am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) Right next door is this cafe, which has light meals, snacks and Internet access for R20 per 30 minutes.

Getting There & Away

Greyhound (www.greyhound.co.za) stops in town at Waterside Lodge on the southern end of Church St on its daily Pretoria–Durban run. The fare from Piet Retief to Pretoria is R140; to Durban it's R180.

The minibus taxi stand is at the back of SuperMac (cnr Kerk & Brand Sts). From here to the Swaziland border post at Makhamba costs R15 (30 minutes).

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