

THE NORTHERN CAPE

Stretching from the West Coast across to Kimberley on the Free State border, this is the largest province in South Africa. And it's not only diamonds that are found in profusion here. There are numerous places of stark natural beauty such as the Kgalagadi National Park, the Au-grabies Falls, Namaqualand and the Richtersveld.

It's here that the enterprising San people lived. When the stars sang, they hunted eland across the sky. In those days, God was a person.



KIMBERLEY

Diamond capital of the world, Kimberley became famous in the days of Cecil John Rhodes and Barney Barnato. The Big Hole is the biggest ever excavated by pick and shovel and the museums and art gallery recall a time when the local population exceeded that of Cape Town and Johannesburg did not yet exist.

South Africa's last remaining tram runs from the City Hall to the Big Hole every hour. Jump on and head under ground to watch miners at work. Then, at the end of a long day, relax at the Star of the West, South Africa's oldest pub.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ☞ Intercape buses run from Cape Town to Upington and Jo'burg with connections to Windhoek.
- ☞ The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is now one of the biggest parks in Africa, if not the world.
- ☞ The Kalahari was once home to the San bushmen.
- ☞ The Au-grabier National Park has great hiking trails.



The world famous "Big Hole" is a remarkable 240m deep hand-dug open-cast mine. By the time it closed in 1914, 14,5 million carats of diamonds had been mined. Today one can visit the working mine, venturing underground to see how diamonds are extracted...

GUMTREE LODGE

Hull Street / Old Bloemfontein Road (R64)

POBox 21, Kimberley, 8300

Tel: 053 832 8577

Cell: 082 926 0574

estellegumtree@telkomsa.net www.gumtreelodge.co.za

From City Hall: Travel down Transvaal Road. At 4th traffic light, right into Hull Street. It's the 4th house on left, opposite the Country Club and Eskom.

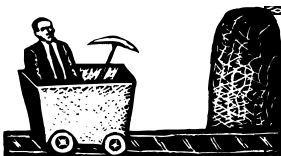
A visit here wasn't always the happy event it is today. Originally built in 1926 as the Bultfontein Convict Station by the famous De Beers Diamond Company, this historic site was donated to the SA Youth Hostels Association in 1979.

It was then transformed into comfortable accommodation comprising dormitories, family rooms and double and single rooms with en suite bathrooms. There are also some self-catering




units available. The 10 hectare site, with the towering blue gum trees that give it its name, has its own licensed restaurant, swimming pool, playground, braai spots and a tuck shop.

Don't miss the chance to step back into the 19th century at the Diamond Rush exhibition centre with its cobbled streets and period shops. An underground mining tour and a visit to some of Kimberley's museums will complete the experience.



It may seem strange to visit a town because of its hole in the ground, but the sheer size of the hole and the knowledge that it was the work of miners with shovels and wheelbarrows takes your breath away.

 Dorms R120; Singles R200;
Doubles R340;
Family Units R400.

If it wasn't for dogs, some people would never go for a walk.



COLESBERG

If you're travelling between Jo'burg and Cape Town, Colesberg is a convenient halfway stop. Although small, the town is well supplied with restaurants and pubs and the locals are friendly.

Coleskop, an important landmark for 18th century travellers making their way into the unknown interior, can be seen from over 40km away.



COLESBERG BACKPACKER

39 Kerk Straat, POBox 169, Colesberg, 9795


Tel/Fax: 051 753 0582 hvzvorster@absamail.co.za



Just as the road begins to feel as it will never end, Coleskop pops up in the distance, a welcome landmark in the middle of nowhere.

If you're tired, take a break in this little farming town and forget about the day's driving while you relax on the veranda in the garden, enjoy a long hot shower or a good Karoo meal.

The backpacker is on the main road and your hosts will make sure that you are comfortably settled, so you're bright eyed and ready for the road in the morning.

 Dorms R70; Doubles R180; Camping R35.



"Reality is merely an illusion, although a very persistent one." - Einstein.



Broken promises don't upset me. I just think, why did they believe me?