

Johannesburg City Profile

To understand the spirit of Johannesburg, it is necessary to realise that, scarcely a hundred years ago, the largest, richest city in South Africa was a huddle of tents pitched on a mining ridge. Hard-nosed, unkempt settlers discovered gold on this ridge in 1886, prompting a mad surge as prospectors sought their fortune.

The ruthless spirit of that gold rush remains fixed in the mindset of the city known today as Egoli, "City of Gold", or just Jozi. It is a tough city, an uncompromising city, characterised by often bewildering extremes of wealth and poverty; yet, it is also a city of opportunity and lively characters.

Today, Johannesburg is the capital of the Gauteng province, a thriving city of business, generating 40% of the country's GDP. It is also a place of cultural diversity where mine dumps stand beside Indian bazaars, where skyscrapers neighbour African "muti" (traditional medicine) shops, where the landscape is punctuated by shopping malls, divided by highways and striped with golf courses.

South-west of Jo'burg, Soweto was developed for black people by the former National Party government. Inhabited by more than two million people, with homes ranging from grand mansions to fragile shacks, a place of enterprise and energy, this city became a focal point in the struggle against apartheid. Soweto boasts many famous places, notably Vilakazi Street, unique in the world for the fact that it was once home to not one but two Nobel Peace Prize winners, the former Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, the revered former President.

Sporting Heritage

The city of Johannesburg has played host to the four largest single sporting events staged in South Africa.

The Rugby World Cup final was played at Ellis Park in 1995, the final of the 1996 African Cup of Nations took place at Soccer City, the athletics events during the 1999 All Africa Games were contested at Johannesburg stadium and the 2003 Cricket World Cup final was held at the Wanderers.

This city with big, raucous and demanding crowds sustains the three largest professional soccer clubs in the country, namely Orlando Pirates, Kaizer Chiefs and Moroko Swallows. Wits University makes up a quartet of leading Premier League clubs.

Rugby's Golden Lions and cricket's Highveld Strikers carry the city's flag in their respective sports, and the city offers world-class facilities for horse racing, swimming, motor racing, tennis, boxing and more than 25 golf clubs. Furthermore, the National Olympic Committee of South Africa has its offices in the great sporting city of Johannesburg.

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The Final 10 Stadiums for the World Cup 2010 in South Africa:

- Green Point Stadium in Cape Town - Nelson Mandela Stadium in Port Elizabeth
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- Mbombela Stadium in Nelspruit - Peter Mokaba Stadium in Polokwane