

Front cover with rising sun over Taffelkom mountain and back cover of Tweeling sunset

Picnic along the river at Frankfort river estate and fishing spots and Mandela Stature with (long walk to Freedom) linked to N3 and VKB Silos

Ultimate Relaxation



Mafube Travel Guide

- **Relate**
- **Reconnect**
- **Relive**

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MAFUBE TOURISM

Mafube: Your welcoming gateway to the Free State, easily reached via the N3 highway connecting Johannesburg and Durban! Discover a tapestry of captivating landscapes and vibrant culture, including the unique sandstone formations that add character to Villiers. Experience the tranquil beauty from the heights of Cornelia Tafelkop (Ntswanatsatsi), a testament to the region's agricultural heartland, to the distinctive twin peaks of Tweeling. Explore the historical echoes whispering through the charming streets of Frankfort and the serene surroundings of Villiers itself. **Mafube: A Sesotho word meaning "place of the dawn," perfectly capturing the feeling of rejuvenation for body and mind, a true escape from life's stresses.** Breathe in the fresh air and immerse yourself in genuine Free State hospitality amidst rolling hills and shimmering dams. Mafube offers an authentic escape where natural beauty and warm communities create unforgettable memories.

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Explore the Free State – Tourism Route

The Free State: An invitation to linger and discover a province brimming with unique tourism experiences that transcend a mere stopover. Imagine charting a course along the **Maluti Highlands Route**, where majestic sandstone formations paint the landscape in hues of ochre and gold, offering opportunities for invigorating hikes, abseiling adventures, and encounters with Basotho culture. Delve into prehistoric times along the **Thabo Mofutsanyana Dinosaur Route**, unearthing fascinating fossil sites and retracing the steps of giants that once roamed these plains. Immerse yourself in poignant history along the **Battlefields Route**, where significant historical events unfolded, leaving behind a legacy waiting to be explored.

Beyond these established routes, the Free State unfolds a tapestry of individual gems. Journey to **Sutherland**, a gateway to the cosmos and a haven for stargazers under its famously clear, dark skies. Discover the artistic soul of **Clarens**, a charming village nestled amidst stunning scenery, where galleries and craft shops abound. Traverse the expansive **plains**, offering a sense of freedom and opportunities for horseback riding, wildlife encounters in game reserves, and tranquil moments by shimmering dams and rivers.

Our tourism offerings are designed to ignite your adventurous spirit and enrich your understanding of South Africa's natural and cultural heritage. Picture yourself:

- **Hiking** through dramatic mountain passes, breathing in the crisp mountain air.
- **Rafting** down the mighty **Orange River**, navigating its currents and soaking in the surrounding landscapes.
- **Exploring** ancient **San rock art sites**, connecting with the stories of the land's earliest inhabitants.
- **Witnessing** the breathtaking spectacle of the night sky in Sutherland.
- **Engaging** with local communities, experiencing the warm hospitality that defines the Free State.

The assertion that the "Free State is a go-to and not a go-through province" encapsulates this wealth of experiences. It's a call to deviate from the well-trodden path and discover a region that rewards exploration with authentic encounters and breathtaking scenery. Forget the fleeting glimpse from the highway; the Free State invites you to unpack your bags, immerse yourself in its diverse offerings, and create lasting memories in a land that truly captures the heart. Here, every detour can lead to an unforgettable discovery.

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Experience Mafube

Unveiling the Hidden Gems of Mafube

Mafube, a region steeped in history and blessed with natural beauty, offers a unique and authentic Free State experience. Beyond the well-trodden paths, lies a collection of charming towns, each with its own distinct character and intriguing attractions waiting to be discovered. Let's delve into the specific offerings of each town, highlighting some of their lesser-known historical treasures and natural wonders:

Villiers: Gateway to History and Waterside Tranquility

As the welcoming entry point to Mafube for those travelling from Johannesburg to Durban via the N3, Villiers offers more than just a convenient stop. Its unique tourism appeal lies in a blend of historical significance and aquatic leisure.

- **The Mandela Holding Cell:** A poignant yet often overlooked historical site, Villiers is home to a holding cell where Nelson Mandela was briefly incarcerated during his long walk to freedom. This unassuming location offers a powerful reminder of South Africa's struggle for liberation and provides a tangible link to a pivotal moment in history. While not widely publicized, efforts are underway to preserve and potentially open this site for respectful visitation, offering a unique and deeply moving historical experience.
- **The Majestic Vaal Dam:** Villiers boasts direct access to the expansive Vaal Dam, a significant water body offering a plethora of recreational activities. Tourists can enjoy boating, fishing, yachting, and waterskiing against the backdrop of the Free State's serene landscapes. The dam's shoreline also provides opportunities for picnicking and enjoying the tranquil atmosphere.
- **Unique Sandstone Formations:** Scattered around Villiers, intriguing sandstone outcrops and formations add a distinctive geological charm to the area. These natural sculptures, weathered by time and the elements, offer interesting photographic opportunities and a glimpse into the region's ancient past.
- **The Wilge River Connection:** The life-giving Wilge River, originating in the highlands of Lesotho, meanders through the landscape near Villiers before flowing into the Vaal Dam. Its scenic banks offer opportunities for leisurely walks and appreciating the natural flow of water that sustains the region.

Cornelia: Echoes of Faith and Agricultural Heritage

Nestled amidst the agricultural heartland of Mafube, Cornelia exudes a sense of peaceful tradition and bears witness to the region's enduring faith.

- **The Oldest Dutch Reformed Church:** Cornelia proudly houses what is believed to be one of the oldest Dutch Reformed Churches in the Free State. This historical edifice stands as a testament to the early European settlers and their deep-rooted religious beliefs. Its architecture and the stories held within its walls offer a fascinating glimpse into the past. While perhaps not a headline attraction, its historical significance and architectural charm make it a worthwhile visit for those interested in the region's heritage.
- **The Agricultural Landscape:** Cornelia is surrounded by fertile farmlands, offering visitors a chance to experience the agricultural backbone of the Free State. Depending on the season, one might witness the harvesting of crops or the grazing of livestock, providing an authentic rural experience.
- **The Ascent to Ntswanatsatsi (Tafelkop):** Dominating the Cornelia skyline is the majestic Ntswanatsatsi, also known as Tafelkop (Table Mountain). This distinctive flat-topped peak holds historical significance as a lookout point and offers breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding agricultural landscape. Hiking to its summit provides a rewarding experience, connecting visitors with both the natural beauty and the history etched into this prominent landmark.

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Tweeling: The Mystery of the Twin Peaks

Characterized by its striking twin mountains, Tweeling offers a unique visual landmark and a sense of geological intrigue.

- **The Iconic Twin Peaks:** The most prominent feature of Tweeling is undoubtedly its two distinct, almost identical peaks that rise majestically from the surrounding plains. These natural wonders offer excellent opportunities for hiking and exploration, rewarding those who reach their summits with stunning vistas of the Mafube region. Local folklore and stories often surround these peaks, adding a layer of mystique to their appeal.
- **A Glimpse into Rural Life:** Tweeling offers a genuine experience of small-town South African life. Visitors can interact with the friendly locals and gain insight into the slower pace and close-knit community spirit that defines this area.
- **Exploring the Surrounding Countryside:** The area around Tweeling is characterized by rolling hills and agricultural landscapes, inviting leisurely drives and opportunities to connect with nature.

Frankfort: Whispers of History and Riverside Charm

Situated on the banks of the Wilge River, Frankfort carries echoes of the past and offers a tranquil riverside setting.

- **Historical Architecture:** Frankfort boasts several well-preserved historical buildings that whisper tales of its past. Exploring the town's architecture provides a tangible connection to its early development and the lives of its pioneers. While specific "unknown" sites might require local inquiry, the overall historical ambiance of the town is a significant draw.
- **The Flowing Wilge River:** The Wilge River, after its journey from the Lesotho highlands, flows through Frankfort, adding a scenic element to the town. Its banks offer opportunities for leisurely walks, birdwatching, and enjoying the peaceful sounds of flowing water. The river has undoubtedly played a significant role in the town's history and development.
- **Local Heritage and Stories:** Engaging with the long-time residents of Frankfort can often unearth fascinating local stories and historical anecdotes that aren't found in guidebooks. This personal interaction can provide a richer understanding of the town's unique heritage.

Embracing the Authentic Mafube Experience:

Mafube's tourism offering is characterized by its authenticity and its ability to connect visitors with both the natural beauty and the rich history of the Free State. By venturing beyond the main highways and exploring the unique character of each town, tourists can uncover hidden gems and create lasting memories. From the poignant history held within the Mandela Holding Cell in Villiers to the ancient geological formations surrounding Tweeling and the enduring faith reflected in Cornelia's old church, Mafube invites you to delve deeper and experience the true heart of the Free State. The welcoming spirit of its communities and the diverse landscapes ensure a journey that is both enriching and unforgettable.

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Destinations and accommodation

Frankfort

Villiers

- **Villiers Touriste Hotel**
 - Offers accommodation
 - Address: 01 Pieter St, Villiers, 9840, South Africa
 - Phone number: +27 58 821 0944
 - Opening hours: Open daily from 12:00 AM to 11:30 PM
- **Niki's Guesthouse**
 - Offers accommodation
 - Address: 266 Main St, Villiers, 9840, South Africa
 - Phone number: +27 82 565 8447
- **DeCurve Guesthouse and Spa**
 - Offers accommodation and Spa
 - Address: 1449 Ext 3 Qalabotjha Villiers, 9840, South Africa
 - Phone number: +27 060 851 8511
 - Opening hours: Open 24 hours daily

Tweeling

Lions Rest Game Lodge:

- Offers game lodge accommodation.
- Phone: 083 2030434,
- Email: info@lions-rest.co.za,
- Website: Lions Rest Game Lodge.

Cornelia

- N/a

• Wine and dine

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Frankfort –

Villiers –

- T-Junction Shisanyama and Pub
- Situation Lounge
- Tourist Bar Lounge
- Guest Ark lounge
- Villiers Grill
- Komza Tau Kitchen
- Heritage Sites
 - Mandela Holding Cell Museum
 - Tweeling rock formations and paintings
- Events and shows
 - Farmers day - July
 - Bikers Rally -
 - Classic car show - October
 - Agriculture Exhibition -
 - Food Market - September
 - Annual Fishing Competition -
 - Spin Fest -
 - PST Festive Soccer Tournament - December
 - Mafube Golf Challenge - July
 - Music Festival - 25 November

Tourism Information

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Mafube LED Office

- **Address:** JJ Hadebe Street, Frankfort. 9830
- **Phone:** 058 813 9700

Fezile Dabi District Municipality - LED & Tourism Directorate

- **Address:** John Vorster Road, P.O Box 10, Sasolburg, 1947
- **Phone:** +27 (16) 970 8600 or +27 (16) 970 8733
- **Email:** info@feziledabi.gov.za

Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority

- **Address:** 111 Zastron Street, Westdene, Bloemfontein, 9300
- **Postal Address:** PO BOX 9229, BLOEMFONTEIN, 9300
- **Phone:** +27 (51) 404 0300
- **Email:** fsgrb@fsgrb.co.za

Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTE)

- **Physical Address:** Tourist Centre, 60 Park Road, Willows, Bloemfontein, 9300
- **Tel:** +27 (051) 400 4852
- **Fax:** +27 (051) 400 9440/9
- **Email:** radikelt@detea.fs.gov.za
- **Website:** <https://www.destea.gov.za/>

- Free State Provincial Heritage Resources Authority (FSPHRA)- Mandela Holding Cell Museum

- **Address:** Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation, Office 204
- **Phone:** 051 410 4750
- **Fax:** 086 401 0431

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AGRI-TOURISM INFORMATION



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