

UNESCO World Heritage Sites – South Africa

South Africa – Cultural Heritage Sites

#Khomani Cultural Landscape

Inscribed in 2017

Location: Northern Cape

-25.687, 20.375



© Francois Odendaal

The #Khomani Cultural Landscape is located at the border with Botswana and Namibia in the northern part of the country, coinciding with the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park (KGNP). The large expanse of sand contains evidence of human occupation from the Stone Age to the present and is associated with the culture of the formally nomad #Khomani San people and the strategies that allowed them to adapt to harsh desert conditions. They developed a specific ethnobotanical knowledge, cultural practices and a worldview related to the geographical features of their environment. The #Khomani Cultural Landscape bears testimony to the way of life that prevailed in the region and shaped the site over thousands of years.

Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa

Inscribed in 1999

Location: Gauteng

-24.159, 29.177



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The Taung Skull Fossil Site, part of the extension to the site inscribed in 1999, is the place where in 1924 the celebrated Taung Skull – a specimen of the species *Australopithecus africanus* – was found. Makapan Valley, also in the site, features in its many archaeological caves, traces of human occupation and evolution dating back some 3.3 million years. The area contains essential elements that define the origin and evolution of humanity. Fossils found there have enabled the identification of several specimens of early hominids, more particularly of *Paranthropus*, dating back between 4.5 million and 2.5 million years, as well as evidence of the domestication of fire 1.8 million to 1 million years ago.

Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape

Inscribed in 2003
Location: Limpopo
-22.193, 29.239



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Mapungubwe is set hard against the northern border of South Africa, joining Zimbabwe and Botswana. It is an open, expansive savannah landscape at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers. Mapungubwe developed into the largest kingdom in the sub-continent before it was abandoned in the 14th century. What survives are the almost untouched remains of the palace sites and also the entire settlement area dependent upon them, as well as two earlier capital sites, the whole presenting an unrivalled picture of the development of social and political structures over some 400 years.

Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape

Inscribed in 2007
Location: Northern Cape
-28.6, 17.204

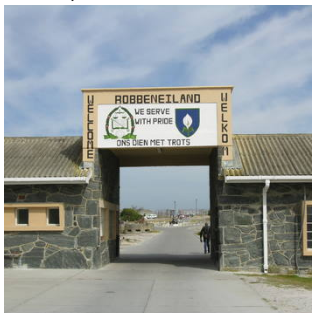


© UNESCO

The 160,000 ha Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape of dramatic mountainous desert in north-western South Africa constitutes a cultural landscape communally owned and managed. This site sustains the semi-nomadic pastoral livelihood of the Nama people, reflecting seasonal patterns that may have persisted for as much as two millennia in southern Africa. It is the only area where the Nama still construct portable rush-mat houses (*haruom*) and includes seasonal migrations and grazing grounds, together with stock posts. The pastoralists collect medicinal and other plants and have a strong oral tradition associated with different places and attributes of the landscape.

Robben Island

Inscribed in 1999
Location: Western Cape
-33.8, 18.367



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Robben Island was used at various times between the 17th and 20th centuries as a prison, a hospital for socially unacceptable groups and a military base. Its buildings, particularly those of the late 20th century such as the maximum security prison for political prisoners, witness the triumph of democracy and freedom over oppression and racism.

South Africa – Natural Heritage Sites

Cape Floral Region

Protected Areas

Inscribed in 2004

Location: Western Cape

-34.361, 18.475



© Western Cape Nature Conservation Board

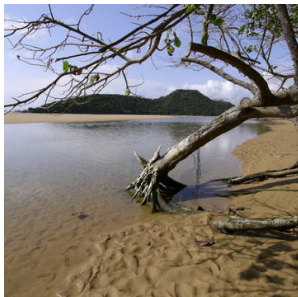
Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2004, the property is located at the south-western extremity of South Africa. It is one of the world's great centres of terrestrial biodiversity. The extended property includes national parks, nature reserves, wilderness areas, State forests and mountain catchment areas. These elements add a significant number of endemic species associated with the *Fynbos* vegetation, a fine-leaved sclerophyllic shrubland adapted to both a Mediterranean climate and periodic fires, which is unique to the Cape Floral Region.

iSimangaliso Wetland Park

Inscribed in 1999

Location: KwaZulu-Natal

-27.839, 32.55



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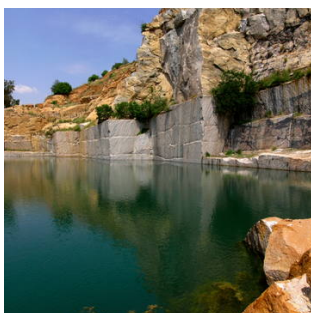
The ongoing fluvial, marine and aeolian processes in the site have produced a variety of landforms, including coral reefs, long sandy beaches, coastal dunes, lake systems, swamps, and extensive reed and papyrus wetlands. The interplay of the park's environmental heterogeneity with major floods and coastal storms and a transitional geographic location between subtropical and tropical Africa has resulted in exceptional species diversity and ongoing speciation. The mosaic of landforms and habitat types creates breathtaking scenic vistas. The site contains critical habitats for a range of species from Africa's marine, wetland and savannah environments.

Vredefort Dome

Inscribed in 2005

Location: Free State

-26.86, 27.26



© Geoff Mason

Vredefort Dome, approximately 120 km southwest of Johannesburg, is a representative part of a larger meteorite impact structure, or astrobleme. Dating back 2,023 million years, it is the oldest astrobleme yet found on Earth. With a radius of 190 km, it is also the largest and the most deeply eroded. Vredefort Dome bears witness to the world's greatest known single energy release event, which had devastating global effects including, according to some scientists, major evolutionary changes. It provides critical evidence of the Earth's geological history and is crucial to understanding of the evolution of the planet. Despite the importance of impact sites to the planet's history, geological activity on the Earth's surface has led to the disappearance of evidence from most of them, and Vredefort is the only example to provide a full geological profile of an astrobleme below the crater floor.
