



# Northern-Eastern Cape

Alfred Nzo | Your Gateway District



Matatiele ♦ Mount Frere ♦ Mount Ayliff ♦ Ntabankulu ♦ Mbizana



It's here, at the gateway between the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Lesotho, where one is invited to travel through spectacular mountain passes and rural villages, taking in visits to undocumented rock art, sparkling streams, indigenous forests, birds, medicinal plants, craft projects, ancient sites and top-of-the-world views.

# The Northern-Eastern Cape

The Northern-Eastern Cape, also known as the Alfred Nzo District Municipality, is named after ANC stalwart Alfred Nzo, who was the organisation's secretary-general from 1969 to 1991 and the first Foreign Affairs Minister of a democratic South Africa.

This gateway district is known for spectacular mountain scenery in the southern Drakensberg, idyllic, sandy beaches of the Wild Coast and a multitude of attractions in between. Bordering Lesotho in the north, KwaZulu-Natal in the east, OR Tambo district in the south and Ukhahlamba district in the west, the Northern-Eastern Cape is perfectly positioned as a gateway district to a multitude of different paths to suit the most diverse travellers' needs.

The inland part of the region is peaceful and pastoral, a place of high rainfall, lush forests and towering mountains, many of which receive snowfall during the winter, while the Wild Coast beaches are rugged and spectacular. Adventure lovers are able to mountain bike, hike the mountain paths or the sandy beaches, fish for wild trout and sea fish or soak up the fresh air of the area.

When to visit...



## Spring to Autumn

(September to May)

Spring to autumn is the best time to visit this region if you are interested in exploring the many outdoor activities.

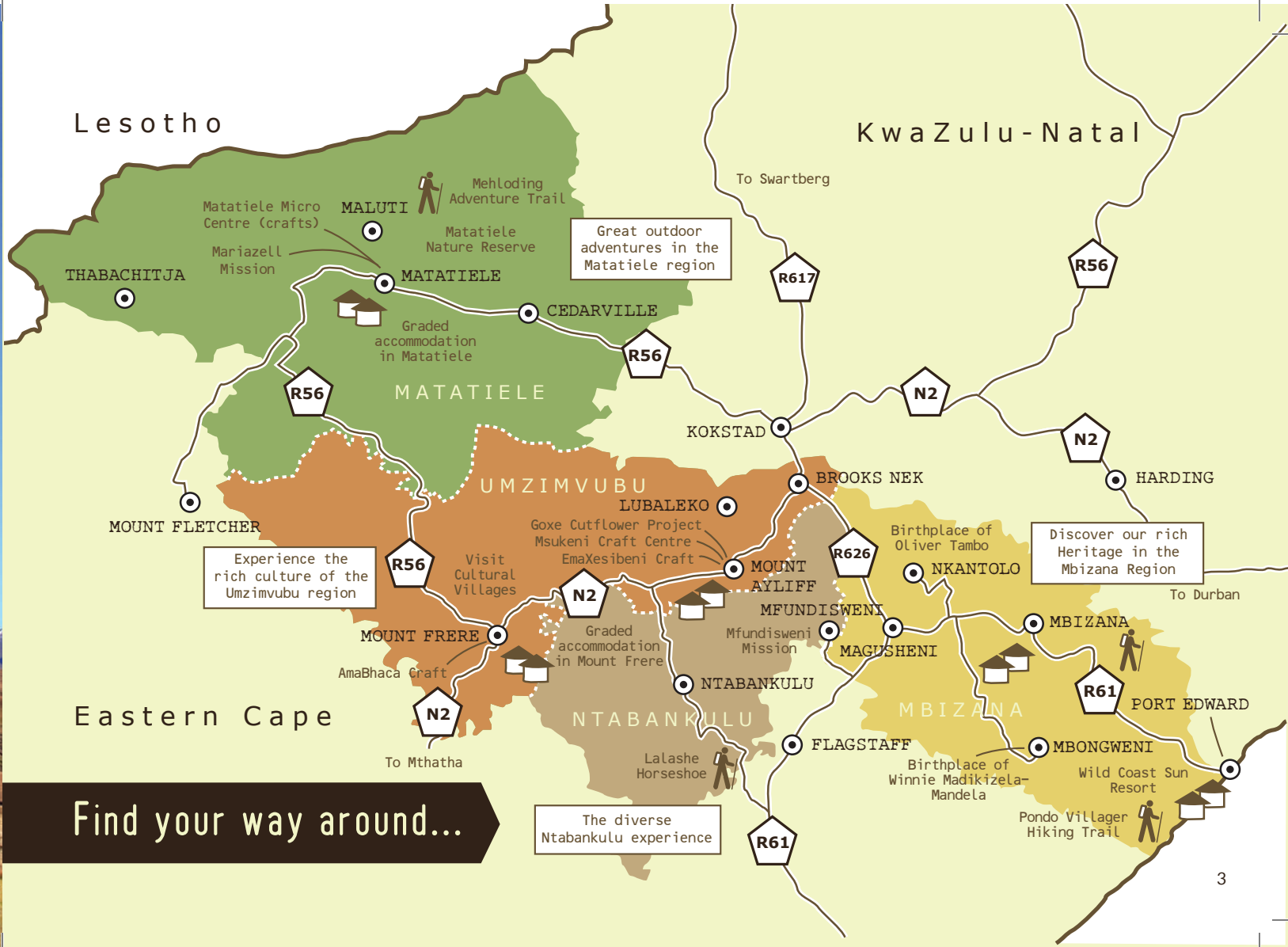
## Winter

(June to August)

A winter visit will showcase the spectacular mountain scenery at its best, with the peaks likely to be dusted in snow.

Find us on the map...





**Find your way around...**



Matatiele Golf Course



## Matatiele Region

### Outdoor adventure living

The Northern-Eastern Cape is rugged, rural and wild – perfect for all your outdoor adventure needs. With Matatiele as your base, explore parts of the countryside that few are lucky enough to see. The ‘uncommercialised’ vibe matches its laid back, friendly hospitality. This is an ideal ‘off the beaten track’ destination to explore and unwind.



Ongeluksnek Nature Reserve

## The R56 Matat Route

### DID YOU KNOW?

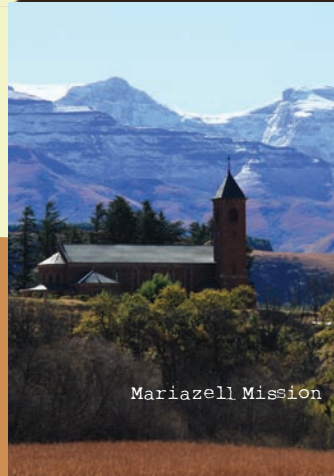
The name "Matatiele" is a Sotho word, based on the Sesotho phrase "matata aile" meaning "the ducks have gone"



## The most scenic route between the Cape and KwaZulu-Natal

The R56 route is a safer, shorter and more scenic alternative to the N2 between KwaZulu-Natal and the Cape, making Matatiele an ideal stop over en route between provinces. Why not stay a while to enjoy trout fishing, the Mehloding Hiking Trail, mountain- and motor-biking, nature reserves and 4x4 routes.

The landscape is of breath-taking grassland foothills and mountains up to 2000m high. The peaks near Ongeluksnek are over 2800m. The area lies in a grassland biome, with extensive wetlands and high-lying sandstone areas, providing a habitat for a diversity of flora and fauna.



Mariazell Mission

A drive along the Ongeluksnek access road west from Matatiele is a treat, with birds galore, spectacular mountain views and, in April, a cosmos show to rival Namaqualand, capped off by a visit to the 104 year old Mariazell Mission.



Cultural Dancers in Umzimvubu



## Umzimvubu Region



Goxe Cut Flower Project

### Your cultural awakening starts here

From local arts and crafts such as beadwork, weaving, sewing and pottery to traditional dancing, cuisine and storytelling, the Umzimvubu region is alive with cultural heritage. To experience this hospitality and an authentic African way of life first hand, a visit to any of the Cultural Villages in the area is a must. Let the beat of the Xhosa spirit guide you in your journey through the unspoilt landscapes of Umzimvubu.



## The N2 Route



### DID YOU KNOW?

**Goxe Cutflower Project:** A hiking trail, up-market chalets and a conference centre are coming soon. (construction has already started!)

## Your convenient stopover

The towns of Mount Frere and Mount Ayliff serve as ideal stop-over points for travellers driving between KwaZulu-Natal and the coastal towns of the Eastern Cape. Mount Frere is the larger of the two towns, and both have numerous accommodation options for the traveller. You'd be hard-pressed to find a more convenient spot to rest for the night.

If rural, untapped mountain trails and walks are your passion then spend some time enjoying a hike on foot or mountain-bike up the Ntsiswa Waterfall where, upon reaching the top, a visitor is greeted with a panoramic view of this unspoilt region.



# The Craft Route

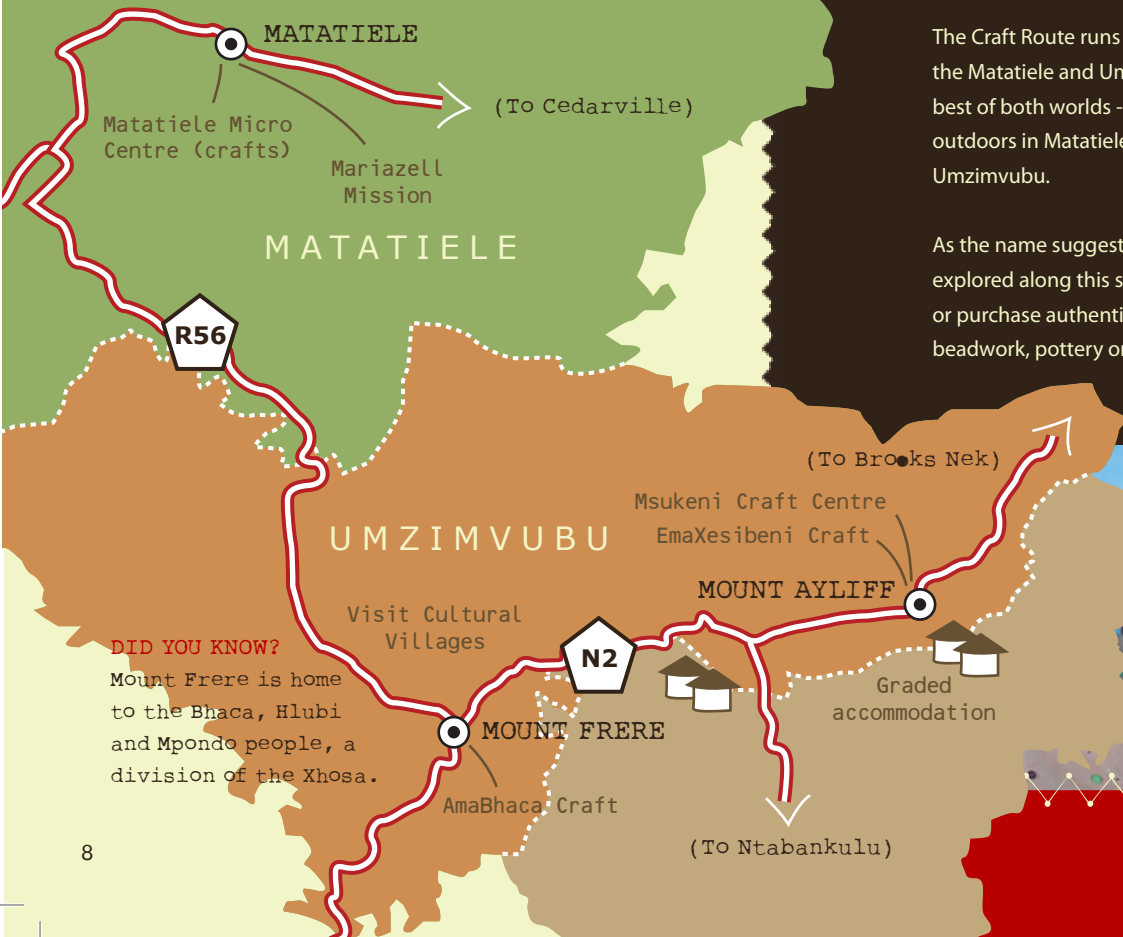
## Matatiele, Mount Frere and Mount Ayliff

The Craft Route runs between Matatiele and Mount Frere, linking the Matatiele and Umzimvubu districts. This route provides the best of both worlds - the beauty and excitement of the great outdoors in Matatiele, and the traditional cultural awakenings in Umzimvubu.

As the name suggests, there are numerous craft centres to be explored along this stretch of road, from where one can browse or purchase authentic Xhosa craftwork, such as woven goods, beadwork, pottery or taste some home-made cuisine.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Mount Frere is home to the Bhaca, Hlubi and Mpondo people, a division of the Xhosa.





## Let's start making our way towards the coast...

Let the beat of the Xhosa spirit and the sweet fresh air, ever-present in your journey through unspoilt landscapes, trails and cultures, guide you through this rare oasis.

### From Cape to Coast

From the highlands of Matatiele and Umzimvubu, it's time to put your vehicle into a lower gear and start your slow and scenic descent through the countryside of the former Transkei to the coastline of the famous Wild Coast. Expect delightful surprises, beautiful scenery along the way and coastal charm to end off.



The Lalshe Horseshoe, Umzimvubu River



## Ntabankulu Region

### Rich heritage and natural wonders

There are currently a number of tourism initiatives under way in Ntabankulu, which translates from isiXhosa to “Great Mountain”.

The area certainly is very mountainous and this natural splendour is central to most tourism activities and attractions. For cultural tourists, there are opportunities to experience the Mpondo culture through crafts such as beadwork and garments and traditional dance in the form of the *imfene* and the *indlam*.



Mfundisweni Mission

# The Ntabankulu Experience



## DID YOU KNOW?

Coming soon to Ntabankulu is a cultural village where local craftspeople will exhibit their traditional crafts, such as beadwork, pottery and artwork.

## A diverse experience awaits

There are currently a number of tourism initiatives under way in Ntabankulu. The Ntabankulu Cultural Village will offer vendor facilities for local craftspeople to exhibit their traditional crafts. An adjoining restaurant will serve traditional foods. The Ntabankulu Arts and Craft Centre will be used as a secondary cooperative centre specialising in Mpondo beadwork and traditional garments, Sotho traditional garments and dances.

The Ntabankulu Dam has potential as a tourist destination and development could include a game reserve along with a Conference Centre, Hotel and Arts & Craft Centre. Activities at the dam would include water sports, fishing, game viewing, hiking, eco and cultural tourism.

The Xukula Bushmen Graves at Bathweni Village, date back to the 1880s and during times of drought, locals assemble to sing and dance at the grave of the last Bushman, Ngwevana Mhlatyana. It is said that within hours of this traditional ceremony, rain will fall.

The impressive Mfundisweni Mission was requested by King Faku of AmaPondo (1780-1867), with the assistance of Rev. Thomas Jenkins, in an effort to curb the tribal wars that were raging at that time.



Amadiba Adventures



## Mbizana Region

### History, culture and natural attractions

What the Mbizana region lacks in industrial ventures, it more than makes up for in wild, adventurous landscapes, stretching from the inland hills to the unspoilt coastline. Making up a large portion of the former Transkei's Wild Coast, this is God's own country, with hills, waterfalls, a petrified forest, ancient archaeological sites, endless sandy, white beaches, a rugged coastline and scenic estuaries.



The Wild Coast Sun Resort

## The R61 Heritage Experience



### DID YOU KNOW?

Members of Winnie Mandela's extended family still live in Mbongweni. A visitor's centre has been erected in the shape of hut in which Winnie was born and spent her childhood.

## Discover rich heritage

The R61 connects the northern boundary of the Eastern Cape to the N2 highway and is a very popular stretch of road for those travelling between KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern or Western Cape. For those in no rush or simply looking to take a scenic route, there are plenty of treasures to be found in this area – both culturally and naturally.

Former ANC president Oliver Tambo was born in Nkantolo, a small village within the Mbizana region. Further south is Mbongweni the hometown of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, past leader of the ANC Women's League and former wife of president Nelson Mandela.

While the villages may be home to some of the country's greatest leaders and the pristine beaches may be the stuff of legend, it is in the people of Mbizana, the Pondo nation, where the real treasure lies. The Pondo Theme Park, located on the south bank of the Mtamvuna River (which separates the Eastern Cape from KwaZulu-Natal) consists of a museum with historical amaPondo artifacts, a restaurant serving traditional amaPondo cuisine, accommodation for tourists and an amphitheatre.

## Gateway to exploring

### Views from the top of the world

There can be no better way of exploring the rich, diverse wildlife, scenery and cultural heritage of South Africa than by discovering the Southern Drakensberg area.

Some might describe this path as the road less travelled but the area is rich in breathtaking landscapes and offers a journey of inspiration, fascination and unlimited beauty. One of the smaller municipalities, what Umzimvubu lacks in sheer size, it more than makes up for in soul and visitors can't help but feel drawn in by the natural splendour.



Mushroom Rock, Mehlooding Adventure Trail,  
Matatielele Region



Diverse flora and fauna



Waterfall in Umzimvubu