



# Lesotho

POP 1.8 MILLION

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## Best Things to Do

- ➔ Ramabanta (p785)
- ➔ Thaba-Bosiu (p784)
- ➔ Quthing (p787)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Malealea Lodge (p786)
- ➔ Maliba Mountain Lodge (p790)
- ➔ Semonkong Lodge (p786)

## Why Go?

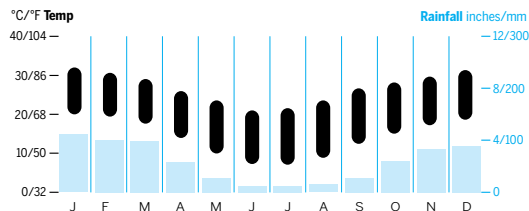
Lesotho (le-*soo-too*) is a vastly underrated travel destination. It's beautiful, culturally rich, safe, cheap and easily accessible from Durban and Johannesburg. The hiking and trekking – often on a famed Basotho pony – is world class and the national parks' infrastructure continues to improve, and getting around is reasonably easy.

The 1000m-high 'lowlands' are the scene of low-key Lesotho life, with good craft shopping around Teyateyaneng and Maseru. But be sure to head to the valleys and mountains, where streams traverse an ancient dinosaur playground.

Lesotho came into being during the early 19th century, when the *difaqane* (forced migration) and Boer incursions into the hinterlands were at their height. Under the leadership of the legendary king, Moshoeshe the Great, the Basotho people sought sanctuary and strategic advantage in the forbidding terrain of the Drakensberg and Maluti ranges.

## When to Go

### Maseru



**Sep Celebrate**  
Lesotho culture at the renowned Morija Arts & Cultural Festival.

**Dec-Jan Feel**  
the full force of Maletsunyane, the magnificent waterfall near Semonkong.

**Year-Round**  
Experience year-round contrasting temperatures in the highlands and lowlands.

## MASERU

POP 430,000 (MASERU DISTRICT)

Ever-expanding, bustling Maseru has a modest array of modern amenities and few sights, but it's a useful place to stock up on supplies before heading into the highlands.

### Sights

Many sights in Lesotho, including Thaba-Bosiu and craft shops in and around Teyateyaneng, are easily accessible from the capital.

#### Catholic Cathedral

CHURCH

The impressive Catholic cathedral, near the Circle at the end of Kingsway, is Maseru's main landmark.

### Sleeping

#### Maseru Backpackers & Conference Centre

BACKPACKERS \$

(☎ 2232 5166; www.maserubackpackers.com; Airport Rd; per person r M140) The best budget choice, which is run by a British NGO, has sparse, clean backpackers' dorms, twins and doubles. It's 3km from the city centre, but accessible by public transport.

#### Black Swan B&B

GUESTHOUSE \$\$

(☎ 2231 7700; www.blackswan.co.ls; 770 Manong Port Rd, New Europa; s/d M450/650; ☎) The Black Swan makes a smart little refuge in a quiet suburb. Well-kept rooms, lap pool and small gym are a nice touch.

#### Lesotho Sun

HOTEL \$\$\$

(☎ 2224 3000; www.suninternational.com; r M1505; ☎ @ ☎) The moderately radiant Sun is a punter's paradise perched on a hill. It boasts the ubiquitous casino and offers a modern motel experience.

### Eating & Drinking

Self-caterers should head to the well-stocked supermarket **Shoprite** in the Sefika Mall and **LNDC Centre**.

#### Good Times Cafe

DINER \$

(Kingsway, Level 1, LNDC Centre; mains M25-60; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Lesotho's rich, famous, young and beautiful gather here with a small expat community for a diner-style menu.

#### Regal

INDIAN \$\$

(☎ 2231 3930; Kingsway, Level 1, Basotho Hat; mains M45-85; ☎ lunch & dinner; ☎) Regal serves surprisingly delicious British-style Indian food at the smartest restaurant in town. It's a boon for vegetarians.

## SET YOUR BUDGET

### Budget

- ➔ Hotel room less than M400 (double)
- ➔ Two-course dinner M60
- ➔ Coffee M10-18
- ➔ Local bus ride from M10

### Midrange

- ➔ Hotel room M400-1000 (double)
- ➔ Two-course dinner M120
- ➔ Beer in bar M10
- ➔ Taxi ride Around M5 per kilometre

### Top End

- ➔ Hotel room more than M1000 (double)
- ➔ Two-course dinner from M180
- ➔ Glass of wine M20
- ➔ Overnight horse trek M380

### Information

The top-end hotels will change currency (at poor rates). The main banks are all on Kingsway.

**Nedbank** (Kingsway) Does foreign-exchange transactions Monday to Friday.

**Post office** (cnr Kingsway & Palace Rd) Maseru's main post office.

**Standard Bank** (Kingsway) Has an ATM.

**Tourist information office** (☎ 2231 2427; Maseru Bridge Border Post; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1pm Sat) Managed by the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation, the office at Maseru Bridge Border Post has information on all of Lesotho's major tourist areas, plus maps and transport tips.

### DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Maseru is fairly safe but muggings and crime are on the increase; always take a taxi at night, when the city and streets are deserted.

### Getting There & Away

The hectic bus and minibus taxi departure points are in and around the Pitso Ground (and nearby streets) to the northeast of the Circle. To avoid feeling overwhelmed by the throngs of people and buses, check first with the tourist office for specific departure points.

The **Shoprite Money Market** kiosk in the LNDC Centre sells bus tickets, including those for Greyhound and Intercape.