



Free State

Includes ➔

Bloemfontein	300
Parys & Vredefort	
Dome Area	305
Harrismith	308
Golden Gate Highlands National Park	309
Clarens	311
Bethlehem	312
Fouriesburg	312
Ladybrand	313
Philippolis	314

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Picnic (p302)
- ➔ Seven on Kellner (p303)
- ➔ Bella Casa Trattoria (p303)
- ➔ Vitos Restaurant & Bar (p311)
- ➔ O's Restaurant (p306)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hobbit Boutique Hotel (p301)
- ➔ Cranberry Cottage (p314)
- ➔ Karma Backpackers (p310)
- ➔ Courtyard B&B (p311)
- ➔ Fisant Bokmakierie & Hoepheop Guest House (p312)

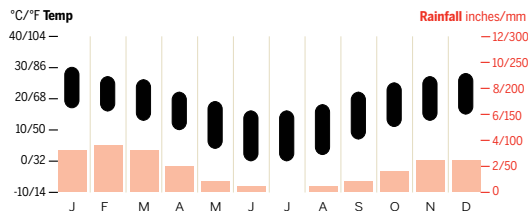
Why Go?

A place of big skies and open pastureland, the Free State is ideal for a road trip. Broad horizons are interrupted only briefly by a smattering of towns and villages and, apart from Bloemfontein, the urban centres are small and manageable.

The Eastern Highlands, around the Drakensberg and the Lesotho border, is a vast area of rocky mountains, steep valleys and summer electrical storms. It's spectacular country, well known for its fruit farms, especially cherries. There are some excellent accommodation options in this part of the country, along with the stunning and walkable Golden Gate Highlands National Park.

The Free State tends to be a place travellers pass through rather than a destination in its own right. However it's well worth exploring for its natural beauty, adventure sports and history – especially Bloemfontein, which, although historically an Afrikaner city, is also the birthplace of the African National Congress (ANC).

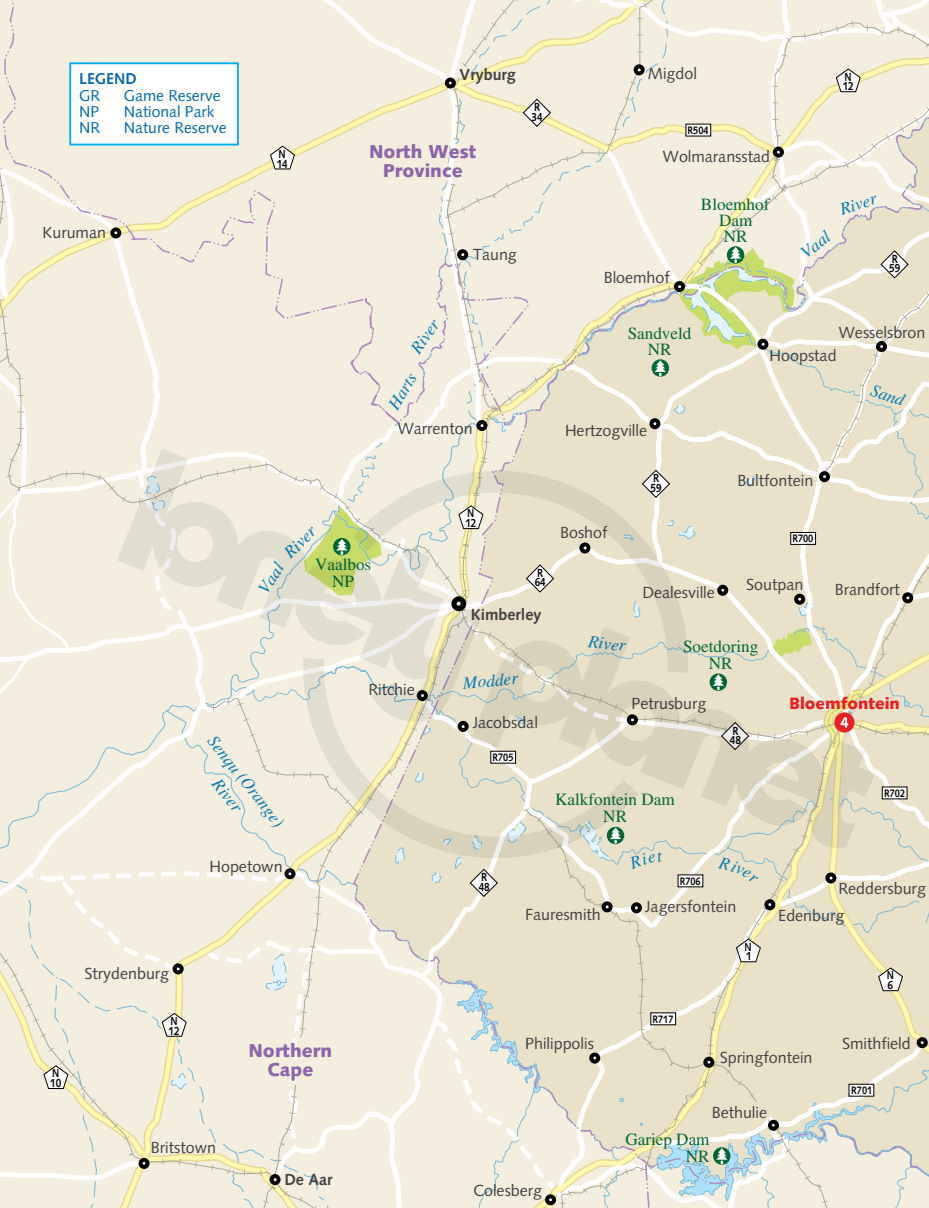
When to Go Bloemfontein



Jun–Aug Dry and sunny weather makes a road trip under big blue skies perfect.

Sep–Dec Best time to view the cherry trees in full bloom and go wild at Ficksburg's cherry festival.

Jan–Mar To escape the heat head for the snow at the foothills of the Maluti Mountains.



Free State Highlights

1 Unearthing little gems among the Free State's small towns and big skies, such as **Clarens** (p311), a nugget of sophistication that's perfect for people-watching.

2 Exploring **Golden Gate Highlands National Park** (p309) on foot and spotting the wildlife that inhabits the grasslands and spectacular sandstone formations.

3 Following the **Sentinel Hiking Trail** (p310) up over the dizzying heights of the Drakensberg plateau.