



Northern Cape

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Places to Eat

- » Tauren Steak Ranch (p456)
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Best Places to Stay

- » Kimberley Club (p439)
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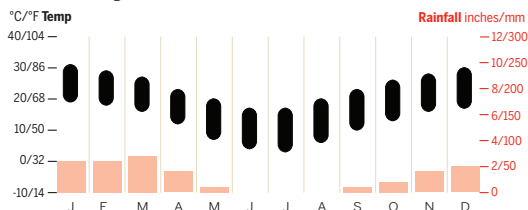
Why Go?

With just a million people inhabiting its 373,000 sq km, the Northern Cape is South Africa's last great frontier. The scattered towns are hundreds of kilometres apart, connected by empty roads across the wildernesses of Namakwa, the Kalahari and Upper Karoo. In these sublime, surreal expanses, reality disappears faster than a meerkat into its burrow. Under the remorseless sun, vehicles share park roads with lions, dune boards swish down roaring sands, and Kimberley's pubs serve as they have done since the 19th-century diamond rush.

It's a raw, elemental land, where gnarly camel-thorn, quiver and Halfmens trees break the boundless horizons. Yet some of nature's greatest tricks here are the instances of rejuvenating beauty. The Senqu (Orange) River waters the dry region, creating the Green Kalahari with its vineyards and epic Au-grabies Falls. Following the rains, red Kalahari sands shimmer with grasses, and Namakwa's spring bloom carpets rocky hills and plains with wildflowers.

When to Go

Kimberley



Jan–Mar Harvest at the Senqu (Orange) River wineries, with vineyard tours and events.

May–Jul Winter is cooler, night skies are brighter and dry conditions bring animals to waterholes.

Aug–Sep Namakwa's barren expanses explode with colour during the spring wildflower bloom.

Northern Cape Highlights

1 Watching a black-maned lion nap under a thorn tree in the wild crimson Kalahari wonderland of **Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park** (p447)

2 Taking a spring hike through a sea of brilliant blue, purple and golden wildflowers in **Namakwa** (p455)

3 Stepping into the diamond-dealing past of the **Kimberley** (p436) on a ghost tour or historic pub crawl

4 Gasping at the water surging between vertiginous cliffs in **Augrabies Falls National Park** (p451)

5 Meeting eccentric locals and poking around the museum in **Calvinia** (p458)

6 Finding the Atlantic at the end of Namakwa's straight roads and wandering along the seafront in **Port Nolloth** (p456)

7 Embarking on an adventure across surreal mountainous desert in ultraremote **|Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park** (p457)



LEGEND
NP National Park
NR Nature Reserve