



Swaziland

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Best Places to Eat

- » Gil Vincente (p496)
- » Mandela's Restaurant (p495)
- » Lihawu Restaurant (p492)

Best Places to Stay

- » Stone Camp (p501)
- » Reilly's Rock Hilltop Lodge (p494)
- » Mandela's B&B (p494)
- » Phophonyane Ecolodge & Nature Reserve (p499)

Why Go?

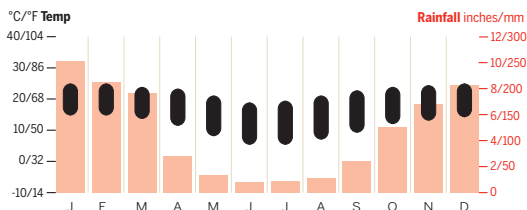
In short: big things come in small packages. The intriguing kingdom of Swaziland is diminutive, but boasts a huge checklist for any visitor. Rewarding wildlife watching? Tick. Adrenalin-boosting activities such as rafting and mountain biking? Tick. Lively and colourful local culture, with celebrations and ceremonies still common practice? Tick. Plus there are superb walking trails, stunning mountain and flat-land scenery, and excellent, high-quality handicrafts.

Presiding over this is King Mswati III, the last remaining absolute monarch in Africa, who, despite his critics, is the source of great national pride. Swaziland is remarkably relaxed, with friendly people and a lack of racial animosities.

The excellent road system makes Swaziland a pleasure to navigate. Accommodation ranges from hostels to family-friendly hotels, wilderness lodges and upmarket retreats. Many travellers make a flying visit here on their way to Kruger National Park but it's worth staying at least a week.

When to Go

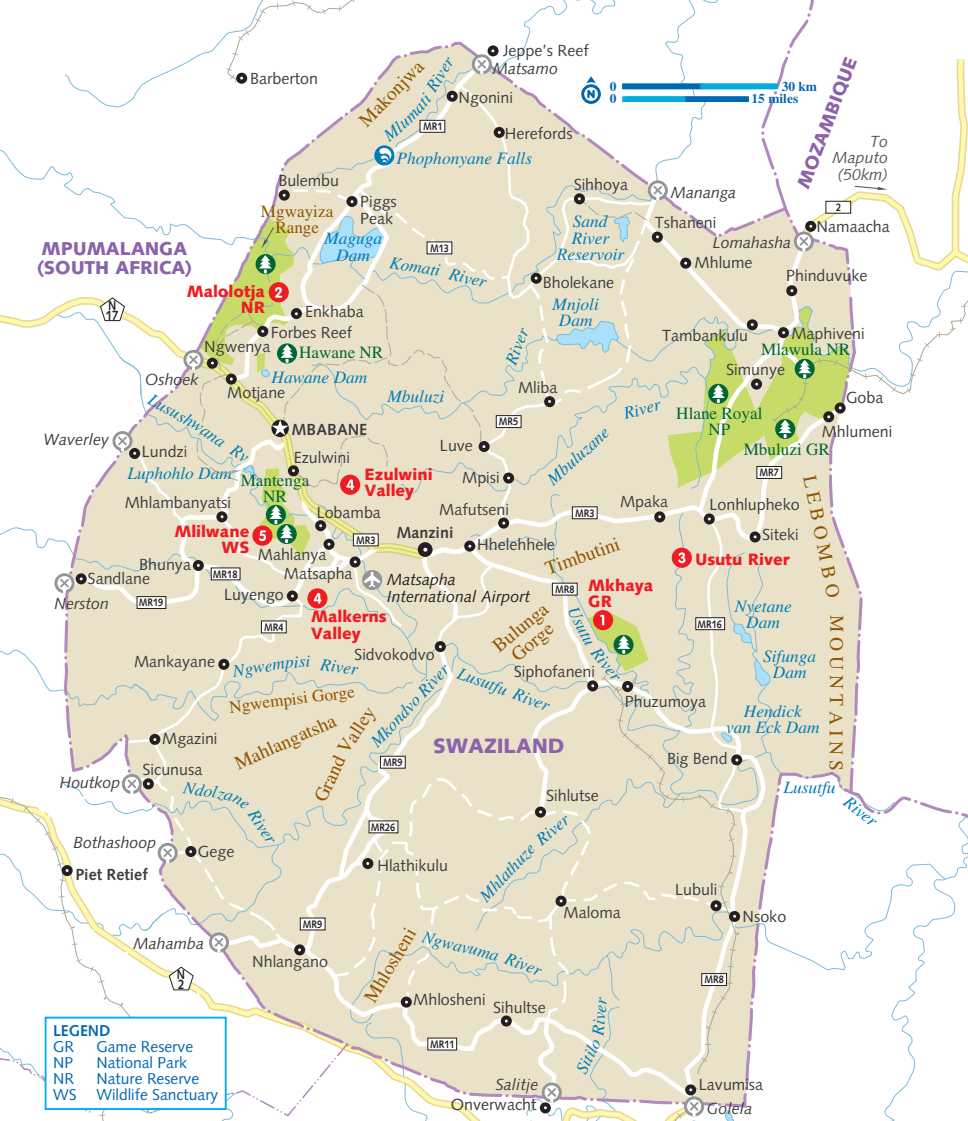
Mbabane



Jan–Apr Full rivers and lush vegetation are the backdrops for photography and adventuring.

Feb–Mar *Buganu* season – enjoy home-brew marula wine in rural Swaziland.

May–Sep Cooler days and winter foliage make for wonderful wildlife viewing in the lowveld.



Swaziland Highlights

1 Watching wildlife, including rare black rhinos in the wild, at the excellent **Mkhaya Game Reserve** (p501)

2 Hiking in **Malolotja Nature Reserve** (p497), an enchanting wilderness area

3 Shooting over white-water rapids on the **Usutu River** (see p501)

4 Browsing the craft shops and royal heartland of the **Ezulwini Valley** (p490) and the **Malkerns Valley** (p494)

5 Cycling or meandering around **Milwane Wildlife Sanctuary** (p493) and relaxing in its comfortable, lovely lodges