



Lesotho

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Best Things to Do

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Best Places to Stay

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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.

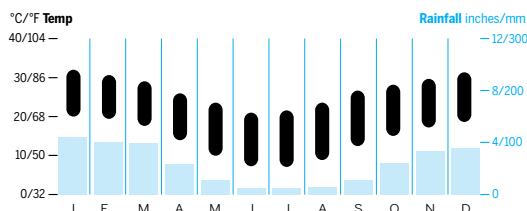
The contrast with South Africa could not be more striking, in both post-apartheid attitude and topographical extremes. Even a few days spent in Lesotho's mountain air will give you a fresh perspective on the continent.

This is essentially an alpine country where villagers on horseback in multicoloured balaclavas and blankets greet you round precipitous bends. The hiking and trekking – often on a famed Basotho pony – is world-class and the infrastructure of the four national parks continues to improve.

The 1000m-high 'lowlands' are the scene of low-key Lesotho life, with good craft shopping around Teyateyaneng and the cruisy capital, Maseru. But be sure to ascend inland into the ethereal rock-strewn, bowling-green valleys and stone-faced mountains, where blue streams traverse an ancient dinosaur playground. This is genuine adventure travel.

When to Go

Maseru



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

Dec & Jan Feel
the full force of Maletsunyane, the region's highest waterfall

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

MASERU

POP 430,000 / ELEV 1600M

Maseru is one of the world's more low-key capital cities. It sprawls across Lesotho's lower-lying western edge, rimmed by the Berea and Qeme Plateaus. While the city has few sights, Maseru is where you can get your bearings, sort out logistics and stock up on supplies before heading into the highlands and beyond.

Sleeping

Maseru Backpackers & Conference Centre

BACKPACKERS \$

(📍2232 5166; www.maserubackpackers.com; Airport Rd; dm M150, 2- to 4-person r M400) The best budget choice, which is run by a British NGO, has sparse, clean backpackers' dorms, twins and doubles. The main reason to stay here is for outdoor activities, including canoeing trips on the Caledon River (M200). It's 3km from the city centre and popular with large groups.

Foot hills Guesthouse

GUESTHOUSE \$

(📍5870 6566; melvin@xsi.net.co.za; 121 Maluti Rd; s/d incl breakfast M380/550) This converted, sandstone house offers something different to the fairly bland capital-city standard. The small, kitschy rooms have garden aspects and guests mingle on the verandah each morning over breakfast. You'll need a taxi to get here.

Lesotho Sun

HOTEL \$\$\$

(📍2224 3000; www.suninternational.com; r M1505; ☎️) The moderately radiant Sun is a punter's paradise perched on a hill. A thorough spruce-up has lifted the premier hotel in Lesotho up a notch. It boasts the ubiqui-

tous casino and two restaurants, and offers a typical modern motel experience. Sun-downers by the pool are a Maseru must for nonguests.

Eating

Ouh La La

CAFE \$

(📍2832 3330; Cnr Kingsway & Pioneer Rd; breakfast, lunch & dinner M25-50) Locals and expats mix easily in this streetside garden cafe on the doorstep of Alliance Francaise.

Mediterranée's Restaurant Pizzeriaie

PIZZERIA \$

(📍2231 2960; LNDC Centre; mains M45-75; ☺️ lunch & dinner) The Med cooks up yummy wood-fired pizzas and grilled meats and smoking jazz soundtracks.

Regal

INDIAN \$\$

(📍2231 3930; Level 1, Basotho Hat; mains M45-85; ☺️ lunch & dinner; 🍷) Regal serves surprisingly delicious British-style Indian food (think 'butter chicken' and 'spicy kormas') at the smartest restaurant in town.

Shopping

The **Basotho Hat** (📍2232 2523; Kingsway; ☺️ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4.30pm Sat) have a supply of woven Basotho hats and other souvenirs. For tapestries try **Maseru Tapestries & Mats** (📍2231 1773; Raboshabane Rd) or **Seithati Weavers** (📍2231 3975), about 7km from town.

Information

Dangers & Annoyances

Maseru is reasonably safe but watch for bag-snatching and pickpocketing. Walking around at night is *not* recommended; the city and streets are deserted.

WORTH A TRIP

TEYATEYANENG

If heading west – or for a day drive from Maseru – Teyateyaneng (Place of Quick Sands) is the craft centre of Lesotho. Some of the best crafts come from: **Helang Basali Crafts** (☺️ 8am-5pm) at St Agnes Mission, about 2km before Teyateyaneng; Setsoto Design, near Blue Mountain Inn; Hatooa Mose Mosali; and Elelloang Basali Weavers about 4km to the north of TY. At most places you can watch the weavers at work.

Minibus taxis run between Teyateyaneng and Maseru (M14, 45 minutes, 35km). Chartering a taxi from Maseru costs around M150 one way.

En route are the **Ha Kome cave houses** (☺️ 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat), 21km from TY and several kilometres from Mateka village. These extraordinary inhabited mud dwellings are nestled under a rock overhang, hidden within the pink and orange cliffs. There's a small information centre; 4WD required.