



## Swaziland Cultural Information & Helpful Tips

### **Location Description:**

The Kingdom of Swaziland, a fully independent country filled with bygone African traditions, is a secure hub from which all the surrounding major attractions of southern Africa are easily accessible. To the north is the Kruger Park and in the south are the game reserves of Kwa Zulu Natal as well as the main route to Cape Town. Johannesburg is a mere 240 miles away. Mozambique's coastal capital, Maputo, is 100 miles distant. There are regular daily short flights from Johannesburg, Durban and Maputo.

Geographically, Swaziland has every feature of the African continent's terrain, with the exception of desert. The countryside is so diverse – around every bend there is a new view. The Kingdom is divided into separate geographical regions running from north to south, each region is determined by altitude and characteristics.

The highveld region has magnificent mountain scenery with ancient rock formations, it features waterfalls, valleys and deep gorges; it forms the western border of the country at an average altitude of 4000 feet. To the east the sub-tropical lowveld drops to 850 feet, characterized by typical African bush vegetation where a wide variety of flora and fauna abound. This region is hotter and drier than the highveld. The smallest region, Lubombo, rises to 2000 feet and is bordered by Mozambique. This unexplored area is dissected by three main rivers and has an abundant unusual plant and animal life.

**Weather:**

The seasons are the reverse of those in the Northern Hemisphere with December being mid-summer and June mid-winter. Generally speaking, rain falls mostly during the summer months, often in the form of thunderstorms. Winter is the dry season. Annual rainfall is highest on the Highveld in the West.

Variations in temperature are also related to the altitude of the different regions. The Highveld temperature is temperate and, seldom, uncomfortably hot while the Lowveld may record temperatures around 104 degrees in summer.

**People, Culture and Religion:**

Swaziland is Africa's last traditional Kingdom, and ancient customs that once were common throughout the continent, now only remain in Swaziland. Other countries re-create ceremonies for tourists – but here they are real and are performed very much as they have been for many generations.

A poignant link with the past are bushman paintings that depict scenes from a lifestyle lost for thousands of years. The guidance of the ancestors is still sought today by many Swazi traditional healers to provide the herbs and potions which they claim cure various ailments of the mind and body.

Swaziland's cheerful, friendly people maintain their traditions and rich distinct culture as a vital part of their every day lives. It is this blend of ancient and modern life that gives Swaziland its unique atmosphere of warmth and freedom.

Swati and English are the official languages, and English is the official written language. In most parts of the countryside you'll have little difficulty being understood. Although indigenous religions are not widely practiced, traditional Swazi culture remains strong, and important ceremonies, such as the Incwala

and Umhlanga have religious overtones.

Christianity is the dominant religion. Missionaries inspired much of the country's early development and still play a role in rural development. Missionaries mostly are western Christians, including Baptists, Mormons, evangelicals, and other Christians. Bahais are one of the most active non-Christian groups in the country.

The Christian churches in Swaziland are affiliated with one of three ecumenical bodies, i.e. the Swaziland Council of Churches, the Council of Swazi Churches and the Swaziland Conference of Churches (SCC). The SCC binds all the evangelical churches together, such as the Church of the Nazarene, the Free Evangelical Church, the Swaziland Reformed Church, and many others.

Religions in % of population: Protestant 44.3%, Indigenous Christian 29.9%, African Traditional Religions 18.9%, Roman Catholic 4.9%, other 2%.

### **Government and Economy:**

Government type: monarchy; independent member of Commonwealth

Capital: Mbabane; note - Lobamba is the royal and legislative capital

Autonomy for the Swazis of southern Africa was guaranteed by the British in the late 19th century; independence was granted 1968. Student and labor unrest during the 1990s have pressured the monarchy (one of the oldest on the continent) to grudgingly allow political reform and greater democracy.

In this small, landlocked economy, subsistence agriculture occupies more than 80% of the population. The manufacturing sector has diversified since the mid-1980s. Sugar and wood pulp remain important foreign exchange earners. Mining has declined in importance in recent years with only coal and quarry stone mines remaining active.

Unemployment rate: 34% (2000 est.)

**Statistics:**

Population:

Total Population: 1,161,219

note: estimates for Swaziland explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2003 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.83% (2003 est.)

Life expectancy at birth: (2003 est.)

total population: 39.47 years

male: 41.02 years

female: 37.87 years

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 38.8%

**Literacy Rate:**

Literacy of Total population age 15 and over: 78.3%

The education system of Swaziland consists of primary, secondary and post secondary education. The age entry into primary school is six years and the cycle or duration is seven years, which means students theoretically finish when they are 12 years old after they have written an examination awarding Swaziland Primary Certificate (SPC).

Secondary education is divided into two sublevels. The junior level has a duration of three years while the senior is two years. Students who pass the junior level obtain a Junior Certificate and proceed to take the Cambridge O-Level examination, which offers a General Certificate of Education (GCE) for entry to tertiary institutions and to university.

**Shots and Vaccinations:**

An updated Tetanus shot is strongly recommended.

Based on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

It is highly recommended that all of your childhood vaccines MMR, Diphtheria, Tetanus, DTP and Polio be up to date. Also it is recommended that you consult with your personal physician regarding the following: Malaria medication, Yellow fever, Hepatitis A or IG Vaccine, Hepatitis B, Tetanus and Typhoid.

Filename: Tips and Cultural Information about Swaziland.doc  
Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\Owner\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\OLKC4  
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\Owner\Application Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot  
Title:  
Subject:  
Author:  
Keywords:  
Comments:  
Creation Date: 5/22/2006 2:33:00 PM  
Change Number: 6  
Last Saved On: 6/8/2006 10:29:00 AM  
Last Saved By:  
Total Editing Time: 16 Minutes  
Last Printed On: 1/18/2007 11:35:00 AM  
As of Last Complete Printing  
Number of Pages: 5  
Number of Words: 1,005 (approx.)  
Number of Characters: 5,731 (approx.)