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# Tour Guide to Limpopo



## **Module # 1 - Province Overview**

**Component # 1** - Limpopo Province Overview

## **Module # 2 - Cultural Overview**

**Component # 1** - Limpopo Cultural Overview

## **Module # 3 - Historical Overview**

**Component # 1** - Limpopo Historical Overview

## **Module # 4 - Wildlife and Nature Conservation Overview**

**Component # 1** - Limpopo Wildlife and Nature Conservation Overview

## **Module # 5 - The Waterberg District**

**Component # 1** - Explore The Waterberg District

## **Module # 6 - The Capricorn District**

**Component # 1** - Explore The Capricorn District

## **Module # 7 - The Mopani District**

**Component # 1** - Explore The Mopani District

## **Module # 8 - The Vhembe District**

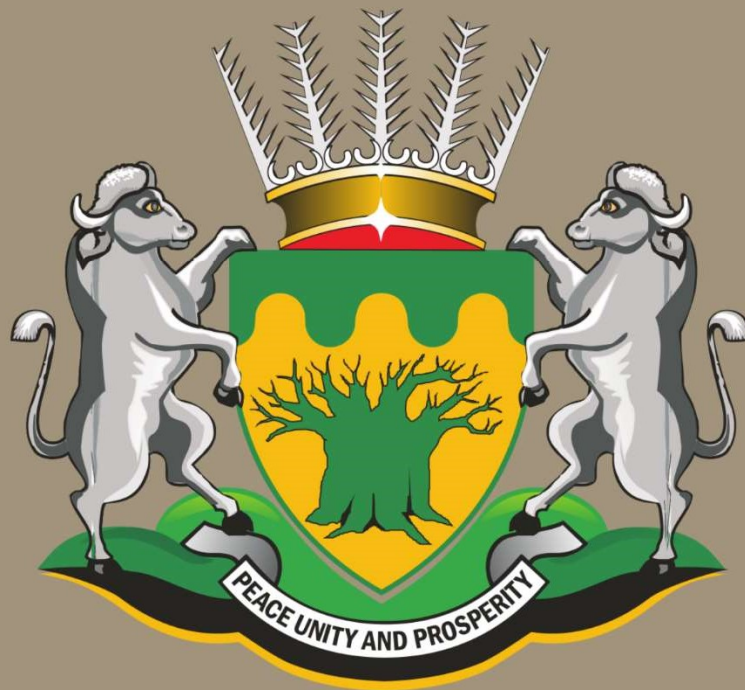
**Component # 1** - Explore The Vhembe District

## **Module # 9 - The Sekhukhune District**

**Component # 1** - Explore The Sekhukhune District

# Module 1

## Component 1



# Limpopo

## Province Overview

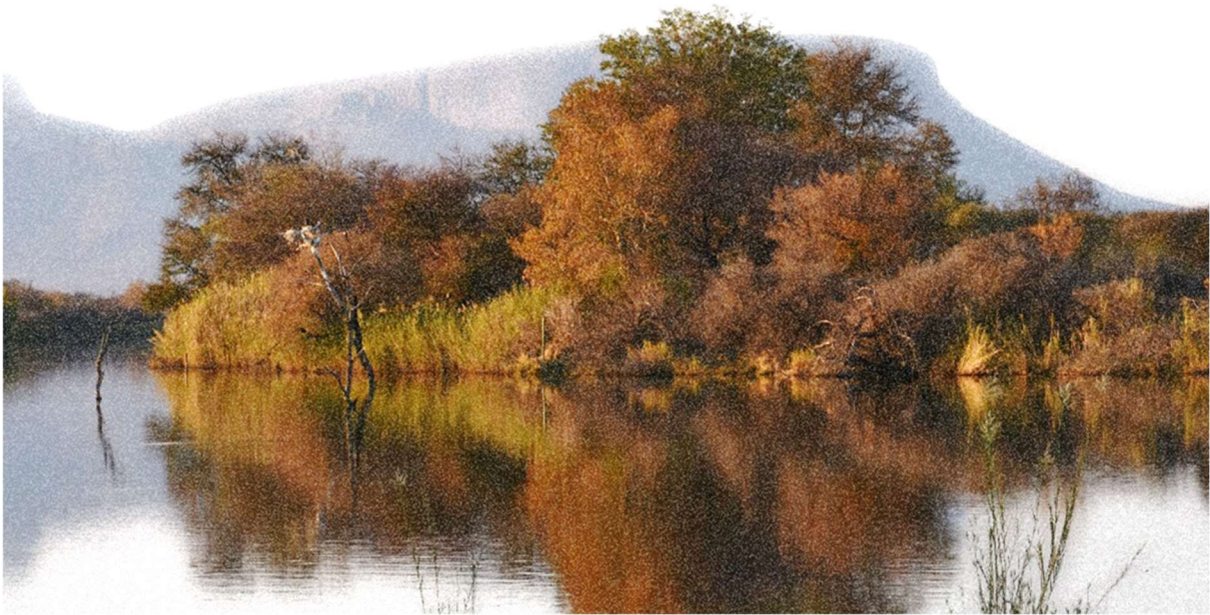


## Introduction

Limpopo is the most northern Province of South Africa. It is sometimes described as the 'Golden Horseshoe', which refers to the huge arc of unspoiled natural countryside. Limpopo is the gateway to the rest of Africa. A unique feature of this Province is that it shares international borders with three countries: Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, as well as the provinces of Mpumalanga, Gauteng and North West.

In 1994, the Province was formed from the northern region of the Transvaal and initially named Northern Transvaal. The following year, it was renamed Northern Province, which remained the name until June 2003, when it was formally changed to Limpopo.

The name is a tribute to the Province's most important river, the Limpopo, located on the borders of Botswana and Zimbabwe. 'Limpopo' is derived from the Nguni word 'iLimpopo', meaning 'rapids' or 'waterfalls'. According to legend, the fleeing army of Mzilikazi gave the name on their way to Bulawayo. This referred to the sound of the running water over the rocks where they crossed to Zimbabwe, somewhere close to the confluence of the Limpopo and Sashe Rivers and Mapungubwe.



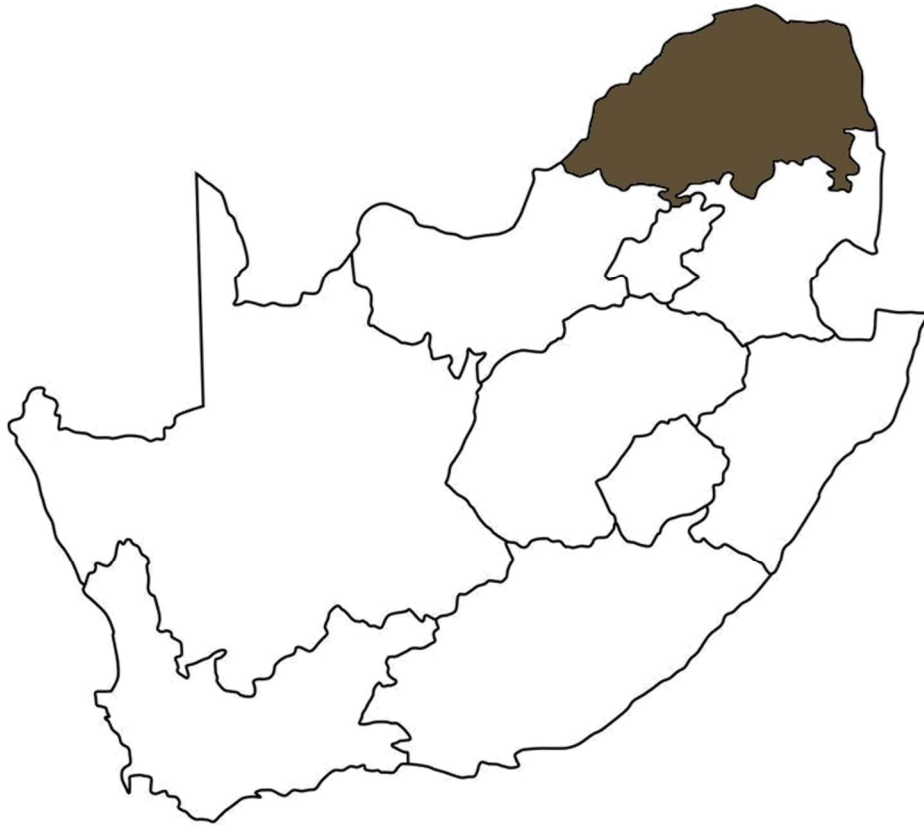
Limpopo consists of mainly rural communities comprising several ethnic groups that are distinct in their cultures. The largest group are the Northern Sotho (Bapedi), accounting for more than half the population in Limpopo. They are followed by the VaTsonga and VhaVenda. The Afrikaans community only accounts for a small percentage.

Home to two World Heritage Sites, Mapungubwe and Makapan's Valley (annexe to the Cradle of Humankind, Gauteng) and the renowned Kruger National Park. It is also the land of the Rain Queen, Modjadji and the sacred Funduzi Lake. It is truly a legendary place and distinctly African.

Limpopo is divided into five regions, strategically located according to the cultural inhabitants. **Capricorn** is the central region predominantly occupied by the Bapedi people. **Waterberg** is the largest region in the Province, with the majority of people being the Batswana people. **The Vhembe region** in the far north is dominated by VhaVenda and Vatsonga people. **The Mopani region** towards the Kruger National Park is dominated by Vatsonga, whereas the **Sekhukhune region** is dominated by Bapedi and Ndebele.

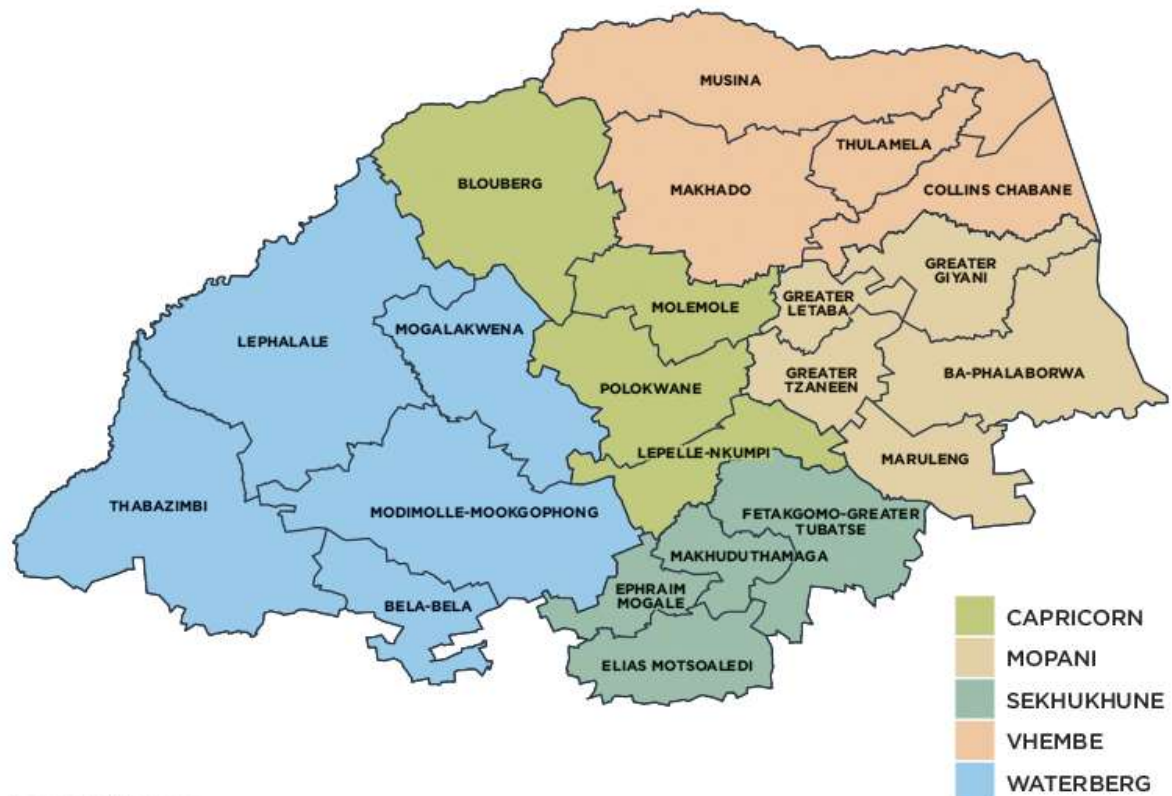


## Location of Limpopo in South Africa



### Limpopo Province Overview

## Municipal map of the Province



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Image source: [www.municipalities.co.za](http://www.municipalities.co.za)

### Limpopo Province Overview

## Coat of Arms



**Motto: 'Peace, Unity and Prosperity'**

The colours of the Coat of Arms are green, golden yellow, red, white and black.

- **The buffalo** represent unity, strength and political stability.
- **The shield** represents the Government's commitment to protecting human rights.
- **The Baobab** - these magnificent trees, found in the northern parts of the Province, have been around for hundreds of years, providing food, healing and shelter. It symbolises the strength and steadfastness of the people.
- **Mountain ranges in the shield** depict the mountains and rich agricultural lands.
- **The coronet (small crown) with cycad leaves** depicts royalty. It encourages the continuation of traditional leadership, just as the endangered cycads are preserved.

## Demographics





<b>Land surface area</b>	Total: 125,754km <sup>2</sup> (48,554 sq. mi)
<b>Highest elevation</b>	2,126m (6,975 ft)
<b>Population</b>	Total (2011)      5,404,868 Estimate (2021) 5,926,724 Density            43/km <sup>2</sup> (110/sq. mi)
<b>Languages</b>	Northern Sotho      52.9% Tsonga                17.0% Venda                 16.7% Afrikaans            2.6% Tswana                2.0% Southern Ndebele   2.0%
<b>Races</b>	Black African    96.7% White                2.6% Indian or Asian   0.3% Coloured            0.3%
<b>Capital</b>	Polokwane
<b>Largest city</b>	Polokwane

## Municipalities and Districts

During apartheid, the administrations of Lebowa, Gazankulu, Venda and the Transvaal were created. Today, Limpopo Province is divided into **5 municipal districts**, subdivided into **25 local municipalities**:

### Capricorn District

The name 'Capricorn' is derived from the tropic of Capricorn (southern tropic). The tropic of Capricorn lies 23 o 26' 22" south of the Equator. It marks the most southerly latitude at which the sun can appear directly overhead at noon when the southern hemisphere is tilted towards the sun to its maximum extent in December. This region stretches from the Ysterberg, all along the foothills of the Wolkberg, to the tropic of Capricorn in the north.

-  Blouberg
-  Lepele-Nkumpi
-  Molemole
-  Polokwane





### Mopani District

The name is derived from the local Mopane tree, which is abundant in the region. The district inherited the Maruleng Local Municipality (Hoedspruit) in March 2006. It was previously part of the Bohlabela District Municipality but has since been dissolved. Maruleng means 'place of the Marula'.

-  Ba-Phalaborwa
-  Greater Giyani
-  Greater Letaba
-  Greater Tzaneen
-  Maruleng



## Sekhukhune District

The region is named after Sekhukhune, King of the Maroteng (commonly known as the Bapedi) in Sekhukhuneland during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sekhukhune used to be a cross-border municipality between Limpopo and Mpumalanga Province, but on 27 December 2005, it was incorporated into the Limpopo Province in accordance with Proclamation No. 422.

-  Elias Motsoaledi
-  Ephraim Mogale
-  Fetakgomo/Greater Tubatse
-  Makhuduthamaga

## Vhembe District

'Vhembe', meaning 'the receiver', is the Venda word for Limpopo. The Nzhelele River ('the giver') flows into this major river. The district is sometimes called 'the land of legend' for its rich indigenous cultural heritage.

-  Makhado (Louis Trichardt)
-  Musina (Messina)
-  Collins Chabane
-  Thulamela

## Waterberg District

The Waterberg is the main feature and tourist attraction in this region. The name was given by the Voortrekkers when they first arrived in the area in the 1930s. It refers to the numerous streams running down its slopes.

-  Bela-Bela
-  Lephalale
-  Modimolle/Mookgopong
-  Mogalakwena
-  Thabazimbi

## Cities and Towns

**\*Names in brackets are previous town names**

-  Afguns
-  Alldays
-  Bandelierkop
-  Ba-Phalaborwa (Phalaborwa)
-  Bela-Bela (Warmbaths)
-  Bosbokrand
-  Elim
-  Gravelotte
-  Haenertsburg
-  Hoedspruit
-  Klaserie
-  Lebowakgomo
-  Lephalale (Ellisras)
-  Letsitele
-  Leydsdorp
-  Makhado (Louis Trichardt)
-  Modimolle (Nylstroom)
-  Modjadjiskloof (Duiwelskloof)
-  Mogwadi (Dendron)
-  Mokopane (Potgietersrus)
-  Mookgophong (Naboomspruit)
-  Musina (Messina)
-  Ofcolaco
-  Polokwane (Pietersburg)
-  Roedtan
-  Sekgopo
-  Senwabarwana (Bochum)
-  Seshego
-  Thabazimbi
-  Thohoyandou
-  Tzaneen
-  Vaalwater
-  Vivo
-  Zebedeila
-  Zion City Moria

## Geographical features of the landscape

### The main rivers

The Limpopo River originates near Johannesburg at the Braamfontein Spruit and Crocodile Rivers before joining the Pienaar's Rivier after the Hartbeespoort Dam. It follows a course of approximately 1,600km before flowing into the Indian Ocean at Xai-Xai in Mozambique. Millions of years ago, the subcontinental tilt of the Angolan highlands diverted much of the water from what used to be one of the mightiest rivers in Africa to the Okavango and Zambezi Deltas.

### The major rivers flowing into the Limpopo (Vhembe) River

The major rivers feeding it in the north include the Sand, Nzhelele ('the giver'), Nwanedi and the Luvuvhu Rivers.

### The western region is drained by the north-flowing rivers:

-  Crocodile
-  Matlabas
-  Mogalakwena
-  Mokolo
-  Palala

The eastern regions are drained by the Olifants and Great Letaba rivers, as well as their tributaries.

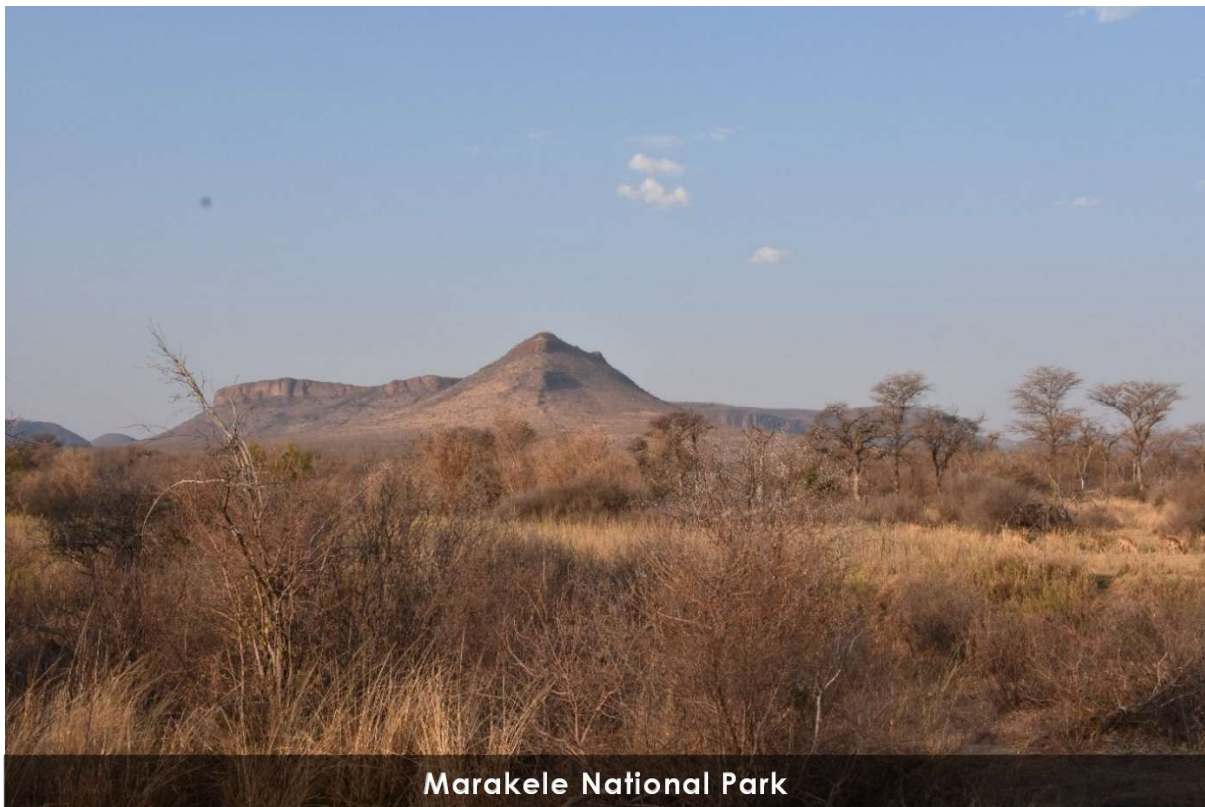
## **The main mountain ranges**

### **Drakensberg Escarpment**

The 'Dragon Mountains' or 'Mountain of Spears' (Ukhakhlamba), known in Zulu, form the eastern border of the Bushveld. It starts in the vicinity of Tzaneen and includes the Wolkberg. The Strydpoort Mountains is a western spur of the Drakensberg, running towards Mokopane (Potgietersrus). It is believed that the two Voortrekker leaders, Hans van Rensburg and Louis Trichardt, had some differences here. Ever since they moved through the defile ('poort') in these mountains in 1836, it has been known as 'strydpoort' ('defile of conflict or struggle').

### **Waterberg**

The Waterberg stretches from Thabazimbi to Mokopane (Potgietersrus). The average elevation is 600m. Some peaks exceed 1,400m.



**Marakele National Park**




### **Soutpansberg**

The Soutpansberg is the most northern mountain range in South Africa. Situated north of Makhado (Louis Trichardt), at the foot of the Soutpansberg.

### **Lebombo Mountains**

## Springbok Flats

An extensive, featureless plain that is part of the Bushveld. It stretches on either side of the Pretoria-Zimbabwe railway.

-  Northern boundary: Strydpoort mountain
-  Western boundary: Waterberg Range
-  Eastern boundary: Olifants River

The Springbok Flats form the border between the Kruger National Park and Mozambique. The name was derived from the fact that thousands of springbok roamed these parts in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The average altitude is 1,000 m. The average annual rainfall is 620mm.



## Routes

### The 'Great North' road or 'Cape to Cairo' road.

The most important route is the N1, also known as 'the Great North', road or 'Cape to Cairo'. It more or less cuts through the middle of the Province, passing most of the important towns until it reaches the Zimbabwean border at Beit Bridge. Almost any route in Limpopo will take you through unspoilt bushveld scenery.



### Scenic and adventure driving

The R71 from Polokwane to Tzaneen en route to the Kruger Park (Phalaborwa gate) is one of the country's most spectacular scenic drives. Arriving from Mpumalanga via the JG Tunnel provides spectacular views of the Valley of the Elephant.

## The Ivory Route

The ivory hunters and gold traders who roamed these areas in the past, inspired the Ivory Route. It offers a real experience of the African Wilderness, encompassing about 3.6 million acres of game farms, nature reserves and National Parks across Limpopo. The roads also cross all the provinces' major mountains, and some areas require an off-road vehicle (4x4). Good sightings of lions and leopards are possible in the Manyeleti Game Reserve, while the Letaba Ranch has vast numbers of elephants and buffalo. Some cultural highlights on the route include the 'kraal' (homestead) of the Modjadji, the Rain Queen, San Rock Art and the Iron Age sites at Thulamela and Mapungubwe. Mapungubwe was declared a World Heritage Site, along with the Caves in Makapan's Valley, taking the visitor back to the Early Stone Age. Several tented bush camps offer accommodation on this route.

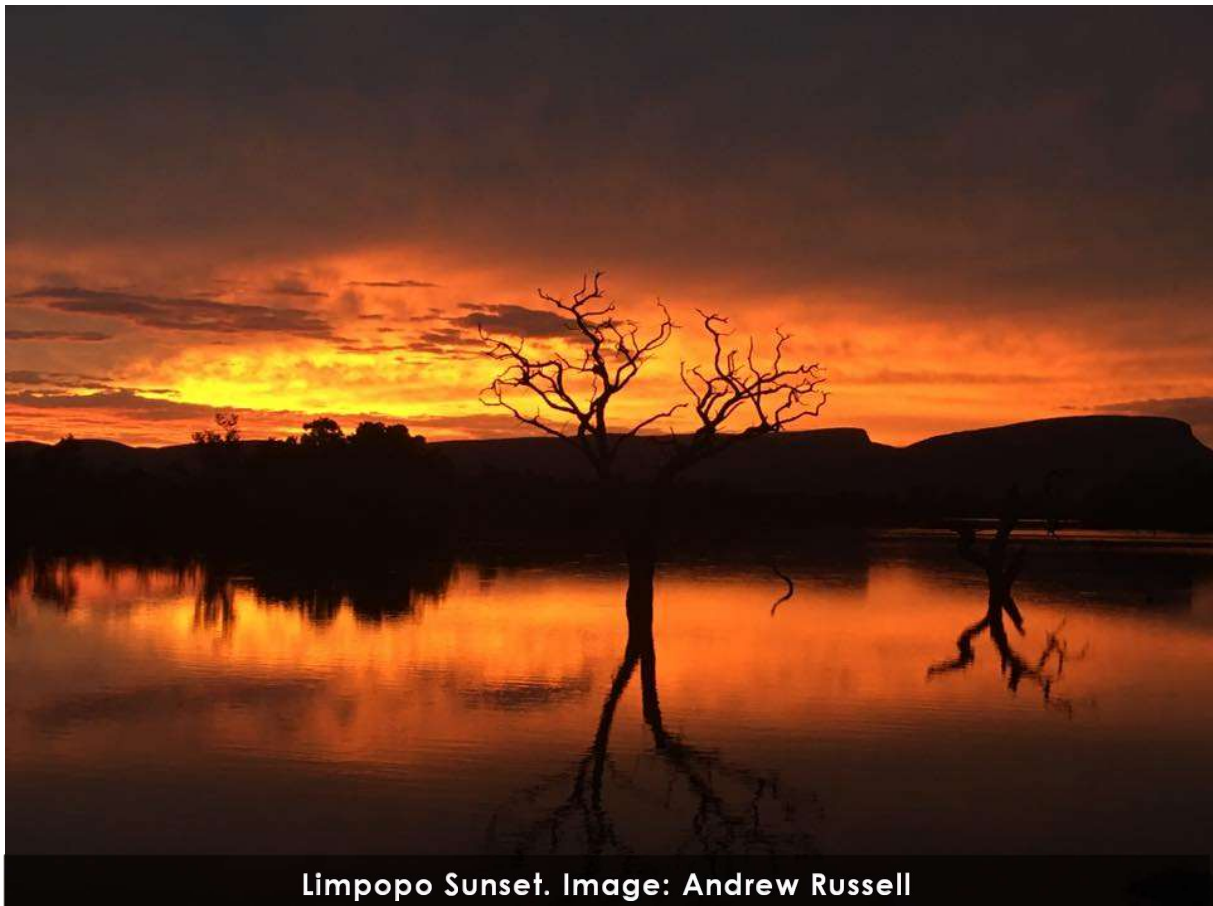


## The Ribolla Open African Route

The route covers the primary areas of Thohoyandou, Makhado (Louis Trichardt) and Giyani. It focuses on arts and crafts offered by the Province, including famous artists such as Noria Mabasa, Jackson Hlungwane, Phineas Masuvhelele and Sarah Munyai. Traditional VaTsonga/Shangaan and VaVenda cultures can be experienced here.

## Climate

The Province falls within a summer-rainfall region (October to March), and thunderstorms in the afternoon are common. The eastern and northern parts are subtropical, with humid and hot summers. Polokwane (previously Pietersburg) lies more or less in the middle of the Province and, therefore, except for the eastern region, reflects the Province's temperatures well. The average temperature in summer is around 27°C. The nights are cold and mostly frost-free in winter (May to September), with chilly mornings and dry, sunny days. The Lowveld (eastern parts) can get very hot. Towns such as Ba-Phalaborwa (Phalaborwa) can reach up to 45°C, but temperatures in the Kruger Park itself are usually around 30°C. Frequent mist occurs in the mountainous areas (Haarnertsburg and Magoebaskloof area).



Limpopo Sunset. Image: Andrew Russell

## Economy

The Province is a typical developing area, exporting primary products and importing manufactured goods and services. It is also one of the poorest regions of South Africa, with a big gap between poor and rich residents, especially in rural areas. It boasts some of the greatest reserves of agriculture, mineral and tourism resources, many of which remain hugely under-exploited.



## Agriculture

Many rural people still practice subsistence farming (most of the produce is consumed by the farmer, leaving little to sell or trade). Cattle ranching flourishes in the bushveld region and is often combined with controlled hunting. Most of the hunting in South Africa takes place in this Province.












In terms of agriculture, Limpopo could be described as the 'garden of South Africa' with its rich fruit and vegetable production. Other products include coffee, nuts, guavas, sisal, cotton, sunflower, maize, wheat tobacco and timber (more than 170 plantations). Grapes are also successfully cultivated in the Modimolle district. ZZ2 Natuur Boerdery is the largest tomato farm in South Africa and lies between Tzaneen and Makhado (Louis Trichardt).

## Mining

The mining sector is also important in the Province and employs about 88,000 people in Limpopo (Stats SA 2018). As expected, mining contributes the biggest share in Mopani, Waterberg, and Sekhukhune, while in Vhembe and Capricorn, community services are the biggest sector.

**An abundance of minerals occur here:**

-  Antimony
-  Chromium
-  Coal (high and middle grade)
-  Copper
-  Diamonds
-  Emeralds (the only mine in South Africa is found at Gravelotte)
-  Gold
-  Iron-ore
-  Magnetite
-  Mica
-  Phosphate
-  Platinum-group metals (PGM)
-  Silicon
-  Vermiculate

**The following base commodities are also present:**

-  Black granite
-  Corundum
-  Feldspar

## Infrastructure

### Transport

The Province is linked to the Maputo Development Corridor through the Phalaborwa Spatial Development Initiative, which consists of a network of road and rail corridors connecting to the major seaports. This enhances trading and investment opportunities in the Province. The major airport in the Province is Polokwane International Airport. The International Airport falls under the administration of Gateway Airport Authority Limited (GAAL). It is the most northern international entry point to the Republic of South Africa. R76 million was spent by the Limpopo Department of Roads and Transport to upgrade airport facilities for the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup. The money was used to upgrade the airports at Giyani, Thohoyandou, and Polokwane. Two other major airports are also used, one at Ba-Phalaborwa (Phalaborwa) and the other at Hoedspruit.



## Education and schools

The Department of Education is charged with the responsibility of effecting quality education and training for all. The Department has to coordinate all professional development and support. As of December 2020, 12.9% of Limpopo population had attained some post-school qualifications.

**The following higher education institutions are found in Limpopo:**

-  University of Limpopo (Polokwane, Mankweng)
-  University of Venda (Thohoyandou)
-  Tshwane University of Technology (Polokwane Campus)
-  Capricorn College for TVET (Seshego)
-  Capricorn College for TVET (Polokwane)
-  Lephalale TVET College (Lephalale)
-  Letaba TVET College (Tzaneen)
-  Mopani South East TVET College (Phalaborwa)
-  Sekhukhune TVET College (Motetema)
-  Vhembe TVET College (Venda)
-  Waterberg TVET College (Mokopane)
-  Giyani Campus Of Nursing College
-  Limpopo Province College of Nursing (Giyani Campus)