

# SOWETO

**Soweto is the most populous black urban residential area in the country, with over one million people.**

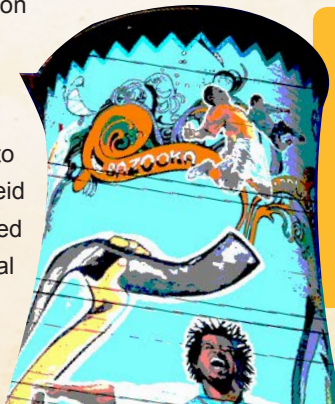
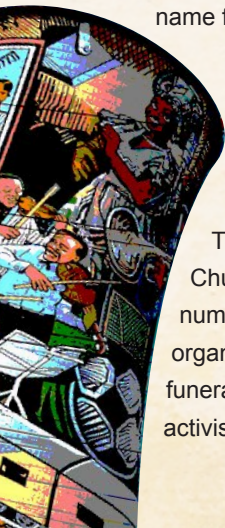
The word “Soweto” may sound like an African name, but the word was originally an acronym for “South Western Townships”. A cluster of townships sprawling across a vast area 20 kilometres south-west of Johannesburg. It was, from the start, a product of segregationist planning.

It was back in 1904 that Klipspruit, the oldest of a cluster of townships that constitute present-day Soweto, was established.

It was in 1963 that the acronym “Soweto” was adopted, following a four-year public competition on an appropriate name for the sprawling township.

Soweto’s rich political history has guaranteed it a place on the world map.

The Regina Mundi Church became home to numerous anti-apartheid organisations and hosted funerals of many political activists.



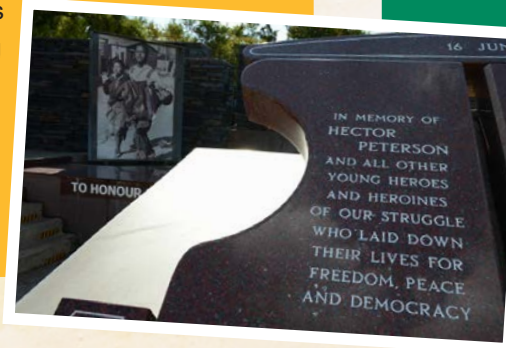
Soweto was always at the centre stage of campaigns to overthrow apartheid. The 1976 Student Uprising, also known as the Soweto Uprising, began in Soweto and spread to the rest of the country. Other politically charged campaigns that started in Soweto include the squatter movement of the 1940s and the defiance campaigns of the mid-to-late 1980s.

The area has also produced many political, sporting and social luminaries, including Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu – the two Nobel Peace Prize laureates, who once lived in the now famous Vilakazi Street in Orlando West. This is the only street in the world that has two Nobel Peace Prize laureates.

**i** Just a few kilometres from Diepkloof is Orlando, home to **Nelson Mandela’s first house**, not surprisingly a popular tourist attraction. Mandela stayed there with his then wife, Winnie, before he was imprisoned and jailed for 27 years. The house is now a museum and contains memorabilia from the short time they lived there together before Madiba went into hiding.

**i** **Archbishop Tutu’s house**, the residence of ANC stalwarts Walter and Albertina Sisulu, and the Hector Pieterse Memorial Museum are in the same neighbourhood. The recently renovated museum offers a detailed account of the events of 1976, including visuals and eyewitness accounts.

**Hector Pieterse** was shot dead by the police during the Student Uprising. The famous picture of his lifeless body being carried by Mbuyisa Makhubu, became the symbol of the 1976 Student Uprising.



**i** In Kliptown, one can visit the **Freedom Square**, a place where the Freedom Charter was adopted as the guiding document of the Congress Alliance – a broad alliance of various political and cultural formations to map a way forward in the repressive climate of the 1950s.

The charter was the guiding document of the African National Congress and envisaged an alternative non-racial dispensation in which “all shall be equal before the law.”

The Freedom Charter was also used as a basis for the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Today, Soweto is known as a must-see place for local and tourists. Thanks to its proximity to Johannesburg, the economic hub of the country, it is also the most metropolitan township in the country – setting trends in politics, fashion, music, dance and language.



It is a booming area and there are many things to see and do in Soweto. Football fans always look forward to the Soweto Derby rivalry between Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs, which is regarded as one of the biggest football games in the world. The derby is usually played in the **FNB Stadium**, which can seat almost 95 000 people.

There is also the **Endaweni Sports Bar**, which is located in Meadowlands.

Those with a taste for kasi flavour can visit **Wandie's Place**, a local restaurant in Dube, Soweto. It is a popular stop on the itinerary of many visitors to Gauteng.



The restaurant's bar area is plastered with the business cards of many other visitors, bring yours along to leave your mark.

If wine tasting is your thing, come to Eyethu, where you can experience wine tasting at a local cinema.

If you feel like taking a walk into history, simply stroll down **Vilakazi Street**, which is named after Dr Benedict Wallet Vilakazi, a distinguished writer and educator who wrote the first poetry book in IsiZulu.

For a more intimate view of the area, visitors can undertake either **bicycle or tuk tours**. This is a fun, interactive and unique way for participants to learn about Soweto's rich culture and history.

People can visit the **Soweto Theatre**, which opened in 2012 and is Soweto's first formal, dedicated performance space.

Those with adventure on their minds can visit the **Orlando Towers**, which are two of the most distinctive landmarks in Soweto. It is the site of the world's first bungee jump between two cooling towers, and other thrilling adventure sports such as abseiling and suspended catch air device falling.

## FAMOUS SOWETANS

### Former President Nelson Mandela:

South Africa's first democratically elected President and "father of the nation". He was jailed for 27 years by the apartheid government, and throughout his life he fought for a democratic and free South Africa. After stepping down as President in 1999 he continued to fight for a better nation and world through the Nelson Mandela Foundation. South Africa and the global community celebrated the centenary of his remarkable life in 2018.

### Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

A human rights activist who rose to prominence as a fearless anti-apartheid campaigner. Upon the attainment of democracy in 1994 he continued to serve the Anglican Church in South Africa and continues to be a champion of democracy and human rights.



**Albertina Sisulu:** Known as MaSisulu, she is remembered as a fearless champion of democracy and human rights. Throughout her life she faced numerous obstacles, yet she continued to fight tirelessly for a better South Africa. MaSisulu was a woman of fortitude whose strength, resilience and the will to carry on shone like a beacon in the darkest days of apartheid. In 2018 South Africa celebrated the centenary of her remarkable life.

**Richard Maponya:** A South African entrepreneur and property developer best known for building a business empire despite the restrictions of apartheid and his determination to see Soweto develop economically.

### Winnie Madikizela-Mandela:

The ex-wife of former President Nelson Mandela sadly passed away earlier this year. Throughout her life she was well known for her dedication to the people of South Africa, and her dedication to create a society free from racial oppression. She was a beacon of hope during the darkest days of apartheid, and is affectionally known as the "Mother of the Nation".

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.brandsouthafrica.com/tourism-south-africa/travel/cities/soweto-heartbeat-of-the-nation](http://www.brandsouthafrica.com/tourism-south-africa/travel/cities/soweto-heartbeat-of-the-nation)

[www.gauteng.net/neighbourhoods/soweto/attractions](http://www.gauteng.net/neighbourhoods/soweto/attractions)