

How to volunteer in the real South Africa, now the secret is out!



ethical traveller – <http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/> - has just rated South Africa in the top ten of ethical travel destinations. Cape Town was recognised in the 2009 responsible tourism awards. <http://www.responsibletourismawards.com/>

The world cup will bring even more publicity for South African destinations.

This may well mean that Cape Town will be teeming with a plethora of “voluntourists”, and you may end up meeting more people from your own home town than from the local community.

So where can you go in the staggeringly beautiful and diverse country that is South Africa to enjoy the benefits of tourism – without following the familiar and well-trodden path?

“Port Elizabeth is a South African city with diverse cultures, which isn’t dominated by tourists, whether domestic or international.” Professor Harold Goodwin International Centre for Responsible Tourism quoted in High Life Magazine

The townships of the Port Elizabeth area played a pivotal role during the years of the anti-apartheid struggle. It was in recognition of this fact that, out of 800 applications, Port Elizabeth was the city nominated by Nelson Mandela to carry his name.

This is the city where Steve Biko was interrogated; where Thabo Mbeki’s father spent much of his activist career; Red Location is one of South Africa’s oldest townships where many ANC leaders and activists were born or lived; a number of significant “struggle” (umZabalazo) events occurred here. Just one example – the first arrest after the passive resistance campaign against the notorious pass laws occurred at the Railway Station in the area.

“We have been placing volunteers to work with community HIV initiatives and schools in the townships of Nelson Mandela Bay for 4 years now”, says Sallie Grayson, programme director of award-winning peopleandplaces. “Without exception, all our volunteers – whether they stayed in a homestay, a small locally owned guesthouse or a hotel – have returned home touched by the welcome they were given and their acceptance into the lives of local people.”

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Nelson Mandela Bay (on South Africa's eastern cape) is well known as a malaria-free zone, with great wildlife and trekking opportunities – Addo Elephant Park is just one of the highlights.

“We work with a community not far from Addo, yet before the volunteer programme, not one child at the school of some 700 had ever been to the park. We give volunteers an opportunity to share their tours with local children – something life-changing for all.

” Port Elizabeth is not an obvious first choice of destinations in South Africa. But from a volunteering point of view, it's a superb place to be. The city is a truly African one, and access to township communities who need support is good. Volunteering in Port Elizabeth is an opportunity to really get deep and meaningful contact with the communities you serve. You will experience true African hospitality, without a doubt”



For further information contact sallie@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

See <http://www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/press.aspx>