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## **Africa - The Cradle of Humankind**

**By Sarah Manners**

World–renowned archaeologist Professor Phillip Tobias once said that "Humanity was a gift from Africa to the World". Many scholars believe Africa to be the birthplace of mankind and with the substantial archaeological findings in their favour the world tends to agree.

### **South Africa - Tour the Origins**

South Africa is home to some three million years of prehistory and history, inherited from the ancient cultures which made the mountains and plains their home. This rich inheritance places the country among the few regions in the world where these footsteps towards the development of culture can be followed. If you are interested in the origins of mankind a trip to South Africa is highly recommended. There are a multitude of sites where remarkable discoveries have been made throughout the years and they are now open to members of the public. The tours of these sites allow enthusiasts a glimpse into their own origins.

Until 1924 the world had focussed its attention on Asia in their quest for the origins of mankind. Professor Raymond Dart revolutionised this way of thinking when he discovered the skull of a six year old child in a block of rock sent to him from the town of Taung in South Africa's North West province. The skull displayed both ape–like and human–like anatomical features and was named *Australopithecus africanus*. The skull is regarded amongst the 20 most significant scientific discoveries of the 20th century. Once the skull had been discovered scientists turned their attention to South Africa and a huge number of archaeological sites were found. The **Taung Heritage Site** is now one of South Africa's top tourist destinations, a monument has been built to commemorate the discovery and an old mine tunnel has been reopened for visitors to explore. The Blue Pools are another feature that attract visitors to the Heritage Site. Discovered after a dynamite explosion in a mountain in which lime was being mined the pools are surrounded by caves and streams and are a popular site for hiking, abseiling, picnicking and barbequing.

Another remarkable find was made in 1947 by Dr Robert Broom, who discovered a perfectly preserved adult *Australopithecus africanus* cranium, belonging to the 2, 5–million–year–old "Mrs Ples", at Sterkfontein. Several hundred discoveries followed, some dating back 3, 5 million years and the Sterkfontein site earned its name - **The Cradle of Humankind**. Some of the cradles findings include

## Africa – The Cradle of Humankind

500 skull, jaw, teeth and skeletal fossils of early hominids, thousands of other animal fossils, over 300 fragments of fossils wood, and over 9,000 stone tools. The Cradle of Humankind is a World Heritage Site and certain areas are open to the public. There are also various exhibitions, guided tours and lectures from reputed archaeologists. The Cradle restaurant is the perfect day of exploration and enlightenment. This beautiful restaurant built from stone, steel and glass opens up on three sides with a magnificent view of the African landscape.

South Africa's Limpopo province is a land of myths and legends – the area has a rich cultural history and there are many archaeological sites. The **Makapans Cave** and nearby archaeological and fossil sites are situated on the farm Makapansgat, 19 km north of Mokopane. It was here in 1948 that the fossil remains of *Australopithecus africanus*, a 3, 5 million–year–old ape–man, were found by Raymond Dart. The Makapans Valley, a National Heritage site and currently in line for World Heritage Status, contains an extensive and complete record of hominid occupation. The Makapan caves are full of fossils and archaeological remains and you can take a tour of the caves and area.

Long before Bartholomew Dias rounded the Cape in 1488 the art of working gold was being mastered by Bantu–speaking people living near the **Limpopo River**. Recently gold objects and other exciting finds have been made here. Also near the Limpopo River, **Thulamela in the Kruger National Park** was home to a large stone–walled settlement. A large section of the ancient stone walling has been restored to its former glory and the National Parks Board is working on plans to make this bewitching site a tourism destination in the northern part of the Kruger National Park. Not only can you marvel at the sites archaeological finds but you can also enjoy spending time in one of the worlds most acclaimed game reserves.

In more recent years South Africa has once again captured the world's attention with the discoveries of human remains at the **Klasies River Caves** along the Eastern Cape coast. Human remains with anatomically modern features have been found, dating well over 100 000 years old. If these dates are correct, then it is in Southern Africa that the world's oldest remains of our own species, *Homo sapiens*, have been found – some 60 000 years before their arrival in Europe and Asia.

Apart from all of the human remains discovered in South Africa throughout the years the **treasure trove of art**. South Africa has the greatest collection of Stone Age paintings and engravings in the world. The San have left us a priceless and unique artistic legacy.

Robert Ardry wrote that, "Humanity evolved beneath the canopy of African skies on the immense card table of the African Savannah". Exploring this evolution is a magnificent way to gain insight into the origin of mankind. Not only will you be enlightened on your tour of South Africa's archaeological treasures you will also get to experience this beautiful countries modern day treasures.

African Outposts arranges the

which is designed to explore the origin

of mankind in Africa, more specifically Southern Africa. Specialist presenters are available to host you at each of the featured sites mentioned in this article.

## **Business Tourism in Johannesburg**

**By Sarah Manners**

### **Johannesburg: The City of Gold**

The discovery of gold in what is now known as the city of Johannesburg sparked off one of the fastest South African urban developments. Johannesburg or the 'city of gold' as it is fondly referred to, is one of the most diverse areas in South Africa. It is South Africa's premier business destination and is as rich as the cultures and heritages made up by its 5 million inhabitants.

### **South Africa's business hub**

South Africa's premier business destination, Johannesburg, is the most powerful commercial centre on the African continent. 74% of South African companies' headquarters are located in this business hub. It is also home to the Johannesburg Securities Exchange, the biggest stock exchange in Africa and the 16th biggest in the world. Though Johannesburg has financial, municipal, transport and telecommunications infrastructure that rival leading first world cities the cost of living is so much lower, making it the ideal location for business tourism.

### **Business Tourism**

Johannesburg has become the premier destination for domestic and international business tourists. 36% of domestic and 32% of international tourists to Johannesburg come solely for business purposes. It makes financial sense for international business travellers to come to Johannesburg as it will cost two to three times less than when travelling to London, New York or Paris for the same purpose. Johannesburg has become a magnet for international conventions such as the 'World Summit on Sustainable Development'. It is the cities world class venues, such as the Sandton Convention Centre, and infrastructure that have enabled it to become a much sought after destination for international business tourists.

### **Johannesburg international Airport**

The busiest and most business friendly airport in Africa is located in Johannesburg. The Johannesburg international airport accommodates approximately 13 million passengers a year and about 1.2 million of these are business travellers. The airport is located approximately 30 minutes away from Johannesburg's business. There are various car rental companies that operate from the airport and there are a variety of taxi services that can take business tourists to their hotels.

### **Accommodation**

There is no shortage of accommodation in Johannesburg and its surrounding areas. Whilst some business tourists like to stay in the business hub itself, others prefer to stay at the hotels a short drive away where they can have the feeling that they are also on holiday. There is a huge amount of variety when it comes to accommodation in Johannesburg and business travellers will always find the perfect location to suite all of their needs. Many of the hotels offer conference facilities which companies can hire, making the commute from hotel room to boardroom that much more seamless. Many businesses chose to hold their conferences in hotels such as this as it is more practical for the company. The hotel will usually set up the room, provide the technological assistance and the catering.

### **Tourist attractions in the surrounding areas**

Whilst on business to Johannesburg most travellers try and fit in some time to see the very worthwhile tourist attractions in the area. There are a multitude of museums, parks, botanical gardens and

historical sites in and around Johannesburg. The casinos in and around the area provide fun-filled evenings after a long days work. There are a variety of fantastic golf courses in the area as well, some of which are world ranked and often frequented by business tourists. Travelling around Johannesburg taking in the sights and sounds of its different suburbs, sampling local as well as international cuisine and the impressive nightlife are but a few of the things to do whilst on business in this cosmopolitan city.

For those who want to explore Johannesburg on a grater scale a 50 minute drive will take them straight to the `Cradle of Humankind'. A world heritage site consisting of over 200 caves in which 13 fossil sites have been found, the oldest of which is an estimated 2, 5 million years old. The Hartbeespoort dam located not too far out of the business hub is an excellent venue for water sports such as boating, fishing and water skiing. There is also a snake park, fresh-water aquarium and a 2 km cableway taking visitors to a viewing site on the Magaliesberg.

### **Choose Johannesburg**

Johannesburg, South Africa's major business destination is home to world class venues and infrastructure. There is so much to do and see in this city of gold that business tourists are afforded the opportunity of being leisure tourists as well.

The

is located in the suburb of Lonehill which is extremely close to the

Sandton business district in Johannesburg. The hotel is geared towards business travellers and is equipped with the infrastructure to meet their needs whilst offering them hospitality, tranquillity and luxury.



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