

Enjoy the Blue Flag beaches of sunny South Africa

Written by {ga=staceyv}
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The warm Agulhas current of the Indian Ocean flows southward along South Africa's coastlines of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, where it meets the cold Benguela current of the Atlantic Ocean that flows northwards along the Western and Northern Cape's beaches.

South Africa's beaches are among the most beautiful in the world, and 26 hold the prestigious Blue Flag accreditation, the highest benchmark. The Blue Flag is an eco-label that is awarded each season by the Foundation for Environmental Education, which is a non-profit organisation that seeks to promote the environmentally friendly development and preservation of the planet's beaches.

To secure a Blue Flag, a beach must meet very stringent criteria, including making a map of the beach available that shows all the facilities, strict water quality testing, beach sand that is free of debris and trash, clean bathrooms, the monitoring of coral reefs around the beach, and trained lifeguards and life-saving equipment – to name but a few.

Local holidaymakers and international tourists who spend the day at one of South Africa's Blue Flag beaches can expect to soak up the sun, and enjoy the waves on world-class sands, knowing that their safety is a top priority and that no damage is being done to the environment.

Blue Flag beaches can be found right along South Africa's sunny coast.

Blue Flag beaches in the Northern Cape

The holiday town of McDougall's Bay is home to the only Blue Flag beach on the coastline of the Northern Cape, and is about 10km outside of Port Nolloth.

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Blue Flag beaches in the Western Cape

Bikini Beach, Camps Bay, Clifton's 4th Beach, and the pristine beaches of Mnandi, Muizenberg and Strandfontein are some of the many reasons tourists make Cape Town their first port of call when arriving in South Africa. The Mother City has more Blue Flag beaches than any other metropol along South Africa's coastlines, with six in total.

Holidaymakers in Mossel Bay can enjoy the Hartenbos and Santos beaches, while in the area of the Overstrand Municipality there are Grotto beach, Hawston beach and the beautiful sands of Kleinmond. Making up the rest of the Western Cape's impressive 13 Blue Flag beaches are Lappiesbaai and Yzerfontein Main Beach.

Blue Flag beaches in the Eastern Cape

The beaches of Eastern Cape are often characterised by endless stretches of very white sand, high windswept dunes that are popular with sandboarders, and sheltered coves that are frequented by families with small children. Working your way down the coastline, there are a total of eight Blue Flag beaches.

Boknes beach just outside Port Alfred is your first stop, followed by Kelly beach which is near the picturesque marina. Kariega beach, by Kenton-on-Sea, is along what is arguably one of the most beautiful stretches of sand on any coastline in the world – you can walk for miles without seeing another soul.

Port Elizabeth has three beaches that have Blue Flag status: Hobie beach, Humewood and Well's Estate, which is north of the city. Don't miss out on Dolphin Beach in Jeffrey's Bay, which is the place to be for the Christmas holidays for youngsters, and Robberg 5 in Plettenberg Bay.

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Blue Flag beaches in KwaZulu-Natal

The climate along the coastline of KwaZulu-Natal, or simply KZN as it's known to locals, is more tropical with lush vegetation and often high humidity. All four of the province's Blue Flag beaches are found along the south coast. They are the main beaches in Margate and Ramsgate, the beach at the small coastal town of Trafalgar and the exotic Marina beach at San Lameer.