

Life in Soweto

Story by Mantobazane Khumalo

Soweto is a hugely popular urban area with a population of a million people. It is a place steeped in history; the place where the 1976 student uprising began - the beginning of the revolution which ended apartheid. Many things have changed, but people still have the idea that Soweto is a ghetto and a dangerous place.

Have you ever been to Soweto to discover all the adventures that await you there? Has it ever crossed your mind that Soweto can be an exciting destination? Well! Soweto has some great restaurants, tours, historical sights and hotels. It may take some getting used to if you're from the suburbs, but it is a 'vibey' place with friendly, interesting people who are waiting to welcome you.

We all have expectations when we travel to different places. We believe what we have heard. I remember the first time I went to Kwa-Zulu Natal there are girls [izintombi nto] walking around with their breasts exposed and when the guys [inzizwa] feel that they love you they can take you to their homes whether you like it or not and send your parents cows for

[lobolo]. Weird hey! But that's the kind of new thing you experience when you travel.

Soweto will give you more new experiences than you ever dreamed possible. It is like no other place on earth. Where else can you visit the homes of two Nobel Peace Prize winners in one street? Where else can you bungee jump from a cooling tower or have a barbeque at the car wash?

'The people of Soweto have soul. Mother Teresa said, 'Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do... but how much love we put into that action'. We are united, we put other people's needs first. We always apply the Ubuntu spirit [Umntu ngumuntu ngabantu - we are people because we are around people]. That is who we really are we are like sisters and brothers.

We have great restaurants like Kwa Thabeng, Nambitha and Ekasi Kitchen where you get the best Indian food, traditional food and what we call bring and braai. We call it 'tshisa nyama' it is where we get red meet and then it is 'braaied'.

(barbequed) Soweto is the place to be.

Everyone goes to Soweto, but you can't talk about Soweto without mentioning Morris Isaacson High School, Dorothy Nyembe Park, Regina Mundi Church and the Hector Pieterse Museum. Morris



Hector Pieterse Museum

The intersection of great lives and stories



Our home - Soweto



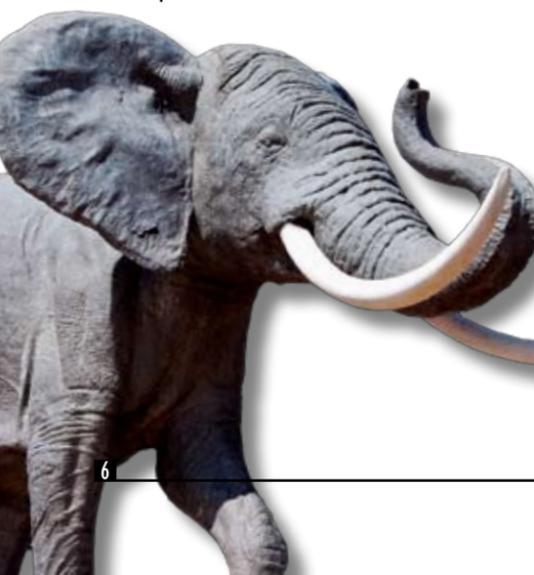
Isaacson High School (my alma mater) is where the 1976 uprising started, with the brave students who fought for our freedom to even call Soweto our home, Tsietsi Mashinini is a hero.

Talking about heroes in fight against Bantu Education, we lost Hector Pieterston who is now one of the reasons why we have Hector Pieterston Museum to remember the people who fought for our freedom. It is not only kindness that we have, that makes us so proud, it is also the blood shed to free us.

Soweto has its share of local celebrities who are making it big in the television and radio industries - guys like Zola 7 who have their shows broadcast on SABC. Simphiwe Tshabalala who grew up in Phiri is a well known soccer star who managed to score a goal against Mexico in the opening game of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. We bring out the best because we know that it takes a village to raise a child.

As a community that cares about its people we have shelters that help people regardless of who you are. We know that giving is the essence of living that's why we have shelters such as Othandweni Homeless centre, Disability centre, old age centre and South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence. We would like to bring out the best in Soweto kids.

We believe in the beauty of our nation and in the beauty of the mindset of everyone to bring out the best in Soweto. Watch out! Soweto will soon be one of the top tourist attractions in the world!



A baby plays next to where his mother sells her goods.



Sculpture of various taxi signs



A restaurant in the famous Vilakazi Street



Horses and carts are still used to transport goods locally.



Nelson Mandela's humble pre-prison home.



The old cooling towers, now a major landmark and great place for bungee jumping.



Bara taxi rank - one of the biggest taxi ranks in the world.