

PANORAMA REGION

- The Escarpment, averaging 1000m high, stretches from the Blyde River Canyon, in the north to Graskop and then down to Sabie, in the south forming the boundary between the grassy highveld plateau and the lowveld.
- Over the centuries some of the big rivers in the area, the Blyde, the Crocodile and the Olifants Rivers penetrated the escarpment and carved out natural features, such as the Blyde River Gorge.
- A mist belt is caused by warm moisture-laden air rising from the Lowveld and cooling at the higher elevations.
- This causes misty, cloudy conditions and a relatively high rainfall along the escarpment.
- The wettest place in the country is God's Window with an annual rainfall of over 3000mm.



HAZYVIEW	Population:	Altitude: 483m/1 585ft Rainfall:	Panorama Region
-----------------	-------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------

On route R536 approximately 54km east from Sabie. On route R40 approximately 70km south from the R532 (Tzaneen Road) and route R538 approximately 32km north of Witrivier.

Origin

- Originated as an informal trading centre to various banana plantations around the vicinity.

Name

- Derived from the haze that envelops the landscape in this part of the Lowveld on a hot summer's day.

Agriculture

- Focused mainly on the banana growth import/export industries as well as mango's and litchi and other citrus fruits.

Mining and Industries

Banana Industries

- The area is attested by the many banana plantations around the town.
- Offers many one-hour banana tours with some demonstrations of the farming and growing procedures.

Lowveld Agricultural Co-operative

- Located at Kiepersol about 5km southwest from Hazyview.

Attractions and activities

Shanganan Village

- Located near town.
- Offers some various tours:
 - **Day time tours** starting from the African Market in the centre of the village to the home of a Shangaan family
 - **Midday tours** also include dancing and a traditional meal with a Shangaan family
 - Evening tours includes festivals which present true intercultural experience as the sun sets and the drums started with their rhythmic beat and the torch procession to the home of the chief.
 - The night comes alive with the sounds of the choir singing, the people dancing and the storytellers telling ancient stories of the Shangaan.
 - To take part in these cultural and culinary festivities under the starry night sky long after your usual bedtime is a renouncement in the people of the Shangaan Village who has received the consent of their local elders to share the traditional Shangaan culture with visitors and to become part of this community.

HAZYVIEW Continue...	Attractions and activities	Panorama Region
-------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------

Kruger National Park	– The Numbi Gate of the Kruger National Park is located about 16 km east of the town.	
and Private Reserves	– The town forms a gateway to a number of private parks and reserves in the area, such as the renowned 70 000 ha Luxury Sabie Sand Game Reserve Network.	



GRASKOP

Population:

Altitude: 721m/2 365ft

Panorama Region

Rainfall:

On route R535, approximately 26km west from Hazyview.

On route R532, approximately 23km north from Sabie.

Origin

- Originated as a gold mining camp in the 1880s.
- The mining camp site was on a farm called **Graskop** ('grassy hill'), which was occupied in the 1850s **by Abel Erasmus**, one of the legendary characters of this area.
- Currently, it still serves as the terminus of the branch railway from Nelspruit and is the commercial trading centre for this region

Name

- The name of the farm that belonged to Abel Erasmus, which the town was founded on.

Agriculture

- Plantations

Mining and industries

Mining – Asbestos and manganese

Industries – Serves as a commercial centre in an extensive forest areas with a number of large sawmills.

Attractions and activities

Fairyland – Located east of the town, just beyond the Municipal Caravan Park.
– Indigenous forest, wind-sculpted rocks and wild flowers, including the rare dwarf Protea creates a “wonderland”.

GRASKOP
Continue...

Attractions and activities

Panorama Region

Various
Hiking
Trails

- **The Blyderivierspoort Hiking Trail: (65km)**
 - o Starts at God's Window and follows the edge of the escarpment with magnificent scenic views over the Blyde River Canyon and ends at Swadini Dam Resort on the Lowveld plains.
- **The Geelhout Trail:**
 - o Leads through beautiful indigenous forests.
- **Eerste Liefde Trail:**
 - o 24-km, two-day trail
 - o Starts and ends at Bourke's Luck Potholes.
- **Op die Berg Trail:**
 - o 40-km, four-days trail
 - o Starts and ends at the Potholes.
- **The SAFCOL Uitsoek Trail Network:**
 - o Located about 80 km from Nelspruit.
 - o Passes through the Uitsoek Plantation and the catchments area of the Houtbosloop and Beestekraalspruit Rivers both tributaries of the Crocodile River
- **Spookvoël Trail:**
 - o Starts at the 'natural bridge', a rock formation over a stream about 2 km west of the town on the R532 (Sabie Road).
- **Belvedere Trail:**
 - Follows the history footsteps of the waterfalls and the Blyde River Valley.
- **Protea Trail:**
 - Wanders through indigenous forests, waterfalls and bird life of the area.
- **Fanie Botha Trail:**
- **Tree Fern Creek Walk:**
 - Starts in Louis Trichardt Street, down Graskop Gorge and ends at a pool at the foot of the Graskop Waterfall.
- **Swartbooi Trail (3 hours)**
 - o Starts at "Fairyland", east of the town and follows the historic African route along the edge of the escarpment to the Lowveld.
 - o Hosts a 1 000-year-old Yellowwood tree on the route to the ending.

Scenic
Routes

**Kowyn's
Pass**

- Takes the R533 down the escarpment into the Lowveld.
- Named after **Kowyn**, a Sotho chief who lived in the region
- A plaque near the summit indicates its completion on 3 October 1959
- It starts just outside Graskop at an altitude of **1 448 m**.
- Then it drops about **500 m** to Bushbuckridge at a gradient of 1: 14.
- For most of the way the new road follows **the old wagon route** which, with a **gradient of 1:7** in places, **was one of the steepest roads in the country.**

Panorama Route		<u>BASIC ROUTE</u> : GRASKOP – BOURKE’S LUCK-THREE RONDAVELS (79KM) – MIN 3 HOURS (ALL STOPS)
0km	Take R532	Leave Graskop
After 2.5km	Turn right	onto the R534
After 1.5km	Turn Right	The Pinnacle – A massive freestanding column of
After 4.5km	Back on R534, Turn right	God’s Window – Magnificent views to the south and east – Overlooking the almost sheer 300m drop into an indigenous forest clad ravine. – The nature reserve at God’s Window includes a rain forest and beautiful Aloe gardens scattered with large outcrops of sandstone. – A trail leads to Wonder View
After 2km	Back on R534, Turn right	Wonder View – The highest point on the edge of the escarpment accessible to the motorist (1730m) – 360 Degree viewpoint: East: 800m drop to the Lowveld with the Kruger National Park and Lebombo mountains in the distance. North: “The Peak”(1832m) can be seen. South/southeast: Graskop can be seen.
After 2km	Back on R534 On the left	Paradise Camp – This is the starting point of the Blyderivierspoort Hiking Trail.
After 4km	Continue with R534 to <u>T-Junction with R532.</u> Turn left (towards Graskop)	
After 1km on the R532, towards Graskop	Turn right	Lisbon Falls – 95m high – Previously known as Waterfall creek. – Gold was discovered around the falls and by March 1874, 63 diggers were trying their luck. Most of them had no success.
After 2km 1.8km	Back on R532 Turn left Parking area	Berlin Falls – 45m high – Named after the farm they are situated on. – Came into being as a result of different weathering resistance of the local rocks

After 19km	Back on R532 On the right side of the road.	<p>Voortrekker Monument : Trichardt & Potgieter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overlooking the Treur River Valley - Commemorates the epic journeys of both Louis Trichardt and Andries Hendrik Potgieter in their attempts to establish trade with the Portuguese in Delagoa Bay. - Trichardt: His trek ended in disaster. First the oxen died due to the Nagana disease caused by the Tsetse fly and the Voortrekkers from malaria after crossing the Lowveld. Thinking their troubles were over on arrival in April 1838 in Delagoa Bay, the one after the other, including Trichardt, contracted malaria and died. Only a small group survived. - Potgieter: Made a second attempt. Coming from the south they had to cross the Drakensberg. Kasper Kruger (father of Paul Kruger) found a negotiable route which is known as Kasper's Nek until this day. They reached the escarpment and "outspanned" (camped) near the present day Graskop. The wagons and families were left behind with the agreement that if the group under Potgieter's leadership didn't return after a stipulated period, they should return home. When the time came, there was no sign of the explorers and they called the river where they camped the Treur (Sorrow) river. A few days later they were overtaken by the party of Potgieter at another river, which he called the Blyde (Joy) river. Potgieter had successfully signed a trade agreement with the Portuguese in July 1844.
After 8km	Continue on R532 Turn right	<p>Bourke's Luck Potholes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the confluence of the Treur and Blyde rivers. - Formation: The swirling whirl pools at the confluence, caused water born sand and rocks to grind cylindrical potholes in the bedrock of the rivers. - Named after Tom Bourke who recognized the gold potential of the area. Unfortunately for him, gold was not discovered on the property of the mining enterprise he became involved with, but on the opposite side of the river. - The visitor's centre displays interesting nature and socio-historic features. - The Lichen trail make an interesting activity to learn about these organism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lichens are two organisms: an algal species and a fungal species, living together (symbioses), helping each other survive. The Algal species provided food for the fungus and the fungus supplies moisture and shelter for the Algae. Lichens grow well on the sunny, warm, north-facing rocks. Lichens are unique to different types of rock. In this

		<p>area quartzite, shale and dolomite are found.</p> <p>Lichens are vital in nature for oxygen and carbon dioxide cycles, soil formation and food for certain animals.</p> <p>Lichens are also used in perfumes, traditional beers and medicines, antibiotics and preservation of mummies.</p> <p>The lack of lichens is indicative of air pollution.</p>
9km	Continue on R532 Turn right	<p>Lowveld Viewpoint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At an altitude of 1219m - The viewpoint is on a flat rocky mountain top with views of the Blyde river canyon with the Blyde River flowing below. - Moss and ferns fill the cliffs while the upper rocks are covered with lichen.
After 5km	Continue on R532 Turn Right	
2.9km	To viewpoint parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three Rondavel Viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The following can be viewed from here: - The famous three rondavel peaks of quartzite and shale. - The 800-m deep Blyde River Canyon: It is often referred to as the “Grand Canyon” of Africa. This 26km long-gorge is enclosed in the more than 22 000-ha Blyde River Gorge Nature Reserve and the Blyde river dam in the distance. The reserve is home to many types of animals, such as baboon, leopard, lynx, grey and red rhebuck and klipspringer. Among the birds identified in the reserve are all three South African loeries. Hippos and crocodiles are found in the Blyde River Dam. - Thabeneng (“the mountain with the shadow that moves” by indigenous people or “sundial” according to the whites). A mountain to the northeast and virtually surrounded by the waters of the Blyde river dam. - The Battle of Moholoholo (1864) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The Bapedi tribe, living below the escarpment retreated to the top of the escarpment during the hot summer months. The Swazi used to raid and plunder their settlement and crops while they were gone. Many skirmishes followed and the cry of the Swazi “Swatini” meaning “the place of the Swazi” gave the name Swadini to the peak overlooking this area. o In 1864, one of the local chiefs Maripi Mashile of the Mapulana clan, decided to aid the Bapedi. He gathered an impi and they ascended to the top of the mountain and bombarded the Swazis with large boulders.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mist settled on the mountain while they were fighting and to the Bapedi it was a good sign to be covered by the mist while they could see their enemies. They managed to defeat the Swazi. ○ The peak was named in honour of Chief Maripi (Mariepskop-1945m) there is an unmarked grave on the flat top of Mariepskop. It contains the ashes of Colonel Reitz, son of President F.W. Reitz of the Free State republic. ○ The three adjoining hills (the three rondavels) were named after Chief Martini's three principal wives: Matabele, Mogoladikwe and Maseroto.
--	--	--

THREE RONDAVEL VIEWPOINT – ABEL ERASMUS-JG STRIJDOM TUNNEL

0	Turn right on R532	Coming From the <u>Three Rondavels</u>
After 24km	T-junction with R36. Turn right towards Tzaneen.	
		<p>Abel Erasmus Pass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The old Zetterberg stage coaches used this pass to make their way down the Drakensberg Mountains on their way to the Lowveld. - The modern tarmac road and pass (about 11km long) was opened in 1959 - Named after Abel Erasmus, a nineteenth-century pioneer of this area. 40 km north of Ohrigstad the R36 descends through the Drakensberg escarpment into the Lowveld by way of Abel Erasmus Pass, which is about 11 km long and follows an old Voortrekker track. - Abel Erasmus was one of several famous characters of the 19th-century eastern Transvaal. He served as 'native commissioner' for the Transvaal government and had to maintain law and order among fractious gold-diggers, and between the diggers and the local indigenous folk. Often in a crisis he made his own rules on the spur of the moment. To the locals he was known as <i>Dubula duze</i> ('he who shoots at close range') because he never fired before he saw the whites of a man's eyes. - The pass incorporates the J.G. Strijdom tunnel which was named for the prime minister during 1954-58 of the Union of South Africa. Completed in 1959, the tunnel is 134 m long, and parking areas at either end offer panoramic views over the Olifants River valley and the Lowveld. - It passes beneath rusty, lichen-covered cliffs and descends some 800m to the Olifants River Valley, before passing through the 134m-long JG Strijdom Tunnel and reaching the Lowveld plains

		at the bottom.
		Tufa Waterfall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A normal waterfall erodes its way backwards through the rock over which it plunges. - A tufa fall moves forward as it creates “stalactite” type of growth over the years due to calcium carbonate deposits in the water. - The green and red ramparts of the Drakensberg peaks just before the JG Strijdom tunnel clearly shows the stratified nature of its creation.
		JG Strijdom Tunnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 134m long - Named after former Prime Minister, JG Strijdom. - Opened in 1959.

