The Solomon
Edwardian Guest House

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Street Map of Kimberley
Please do not take this away with you

About the Solomon

The Solomon Edwardian Guest House is located in the Beaconsfield suburb of Kimberley in the Northern Cape, South Africa, nestled between the historic suburbs of Beaconsfield, Herlear, Klisserville and Belgravia. The guest house is situated on a quiet leafy residential street halfway between two of Kimberley's famous historic diamond mines, the "Big Hole" in the city centre and "Dutoitspan" on the outskirts of Beaconsfield. The main house was built C1910 and has been tastefully converted into guest rooms. We also have separate studio guest rooms.

The Guest Rooms

All rooms have a queen size bed and many of our rooms also have an option for a single bed. All rooms have their own ensuite ablutions and are furnished with high quality fixtures and fittings. Each guest room has a flat-screen TV with DSTV "Hotel Bouquet" channels. There is free WiFi (please ask for the password). The guest rooms include a bar fridge, kettle and microwave as a minimum. All linen and towels are provided. The rooms are serviced daily except Sunday and public holidays. For longer stays the linen is changed every three days. Two rooms have easy wheelchair access.

The Gardens, Braai Areas & Parking

The extensive gardens include the Fountain Garden at the front of the house, and a sitting area under a large mature tree at the back. At the rear and side of the house there is the large Edwardian Stoep where you can also enjoy a sundowner.

There are several braai stands for use by guests – please supply your own fire wood. There is a jungle gym climbing frame for your children to play on. You are responsible for supervising them.

We have ample secure parking. If your children are playing in the driveways/parking areas, please be vigilant of moving cars, as well as the motorised car gates at front and rear.

Checking Out of Your Room

Checking out time is 10am. Please leave your key in the room door lock, you can let yourself out via the rear automatic car gate. The pin code for the key pad is displayed in your room.

If you have any problems, ring us on 0794572771 or 0765809170 – we live in the house next door (99 Main Road).
Being The Tourist

Kimberley, the capital city of the Northern Cape province, is in the Sol Plaatje Municipality of the Frances Baard District. It has a population of just over 210,000 people. A prosperous, thriving city, Kimberley is worthy of the title ‘Diamond Capital of the world’. Lacking the furious pace of South Africa’s larger urban giants, the Victorian & Edwardian grandeur of stately buildings complement the more modern buildings which often tower over them.

In 1871, five years after the finding of a diamond further south on the banks of the Orange River near Hopetown, the De Beers brothers gave Dutch diamond-prospectors permission to dig on their small farm. An 83.5 carat diamond was found on the slopes of the small Colesberg Kopje (hill), which led to the biggest diamond rush into the area. As miners arrived in their thousands, the digger camp of "New Rush" rose from the dust. In 1873 it was re-named Kimberley after John Wodehouse, 1st Earl of Kimberley and British secretary of State for Colonies. Colesberg Kopje soon became an indentation and then a large crater - this is the Kimberley diamond mine or "Big Hole", which you can visit today at the recently upgraded and exciting open-air museum.

Galeshewe, the main township that adjoins Kimberley, was originally built under the colonial laws to house the area's African population and is still largely populated by African people. The township's existence dates from 1871 and for many years it was known as Number Two Location, until 1952 when it was named after Chief Galeshewe of the Batlhaping tribe. He was an important figure to the local African population and spent many years in jail after he rebelled against the Cape Colony Government several times to protect his people.

A City of Great Innovation

- The Kimberley Club on Du Toitspan Road was established in August 1881. Among its more illustrious past members, it counts Cecil Rhodes, Leander Starr Jameson, Charles Dunnell Rudd, Barney Barnato, Sir Ernest Oppenheimer and Harry Oppenheimer.
- Kimberley was the home of South Africa's first stock exchange. Situated in Ebden Street, it was officially opened on 2 February 1881 by mayor Moses Cornwall. The exchange quickly became too small for all the business which was being conducted there. In December 1882 the exchange was gutted by fire and the offices moved to the Craven Hotel as a temporary solution. The architect Robert Day designed a new exchange which opened on the corner of Christian and Church Streets. The boom was short-lived and by the time the building was completed very few transactions were taking place. The exchange finally ceased operations in March 1894 and the company was liquidated in 1903. The building was used as a town hall in 1898, during the siege it housed displaced persons, later it was used by the Ohlsson's Brewery until it was demolished in the 1950s.
- In September 1882 Kimberley was renowned as the first town in the southern hemisphere to install electric street lighting. Some of these earliest lights can still be seen outside the City Hall.
- The rising importance of Kimberley in the late 1800s led to one of the earliest International Exhibitions in the southern hemisphere to be staged here in 1892. Opened on the 8th of September by Sir Henry Loch, Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, it presented exhibits of art, including paintings from the royal collection of Queen Victoria, as well as mining machinery and other implements.
- South Africa's first School of Mines opened in Kimberley in 1896, later relocating to Johannesburg.
- General van der Spuy Drive is the location of South Africa's first Flying School. Started in 1913, pilots of the South African Aviation Corps, later the South African Air Force, were trained here. A replica of the Compton Paterson trainer biplane is on view at the Pioneers of Aviation Museum.
The Big Hole Mine Museum offers a trip back in time to when diamonds were first found in Kimberley in the 1870s. In 1871 fortune seekers converged from all over the world and the grey, dusty air around the Kimberley camp was soon filled with the rocking of soil sifting cradles, metal clanging on rocks and honky-tonk.

In 1871 Cecil Rhodes arrived at the "New Rush" Camp. In no time the kopje had disappeared to be replaced by the famous Big Hole. The town was then a place of sun-bleached tents and corrugated tin shanties, interspersed with trading stores, bars and brothels.

In 1873 Barney Barnato arrived at "New Rush". This is also the year that "New Rush" became a town and was renamed Kimberley, after the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Kimberley.

Kimberley settled to become a respectable, elegant Victorian city. It was not until 1888 that De Beers Consolidated Mines was formally incorporated, with Rhodes, Beit, Phillipson-Stow and Barnato as life governors.

A snippet of those early days has been captured by the Big Hole Mine Museum, with various displays and exhibitions detailing what life was like for the fortune-seekers who converged on the area hoping to strike it lucky.

There is a cantilever lookout point over the famous Big Hole. The hole itself is 225m deep with a surface area of 17ha and a perimeter of 1.6km. It ceased production on 14 August 1914 when the lower reaches were flooded. The De Beers Hall, next to the hole, houses a display of jewellery and uncut diamonds, including a replica of the first Hopetown stone.

The Visitor Carpark is off the West Circular Road, on the opposite side of the road to the Big Hole - there is a walk-through underpass that leads you to the Big Hole Mine Museum.
The Duggan-Cronin Gallery in Kimberley is a photographic museum displaying the photographs of Alfred Duggan-Cronin, Aubrey Elliot, Jean Morris and Alice Mertens. Their photographs of the indigenous peoples of southern Africa, taken between 1919 and 1980, show aspects of traditional life and dress now largely vanished.

Duggan-Cronin arrived in Kimberley in 1897. He worked in the De Beers compounds, where he began to build up a photographic record of the different tribes and clans working on the mines.

Encouraged by Maria Wilman, he undertook expeditions to the main tribal areas, where he photographed the people before the Western influence drastically changed their traditional ways of life.

The Duggan-Cronin collection consists of negatives and prints, as well as artefacts of material culture of the tribes, including beadwork, costumes, pottery, iron tools and wood carvings. A selection of his photographs have been included in publications such as The Bushmen Tribes of Southern Africa and The Bantu Tribes of South Africa.

Today the McGregor Museum is responsible for the maintenance of this collection, which is housed in a building in Belgravia originally known as The Lodge, but today simply known as the Duggan-Cronin Gallery.
Magersfontein Battlefield Museum

Situated south of Kimberley and can be reached either via the airport road (31.5km) or via the N12 to Modder River (47.5km). Phone: 053 833 7115

The Battle of Magersfontein, which took place during the Anglo-Boer War on 11 December 1899, was a triumph for the Boer forces, a disaster for the British army, and came close to wiping out Scotland’s proud Highland Brigade.

During the second South African War, the Boers had besieged Kimberley and its 50,000 inhabitants since November 1899. Supplies were scarce in the diamond-mining town and relief was imperative. The British public and press were demanding action. British forces advanced north along the railway line in an attempt to relieve Kimberley, but a Boer force was in their way at Magersfontein.

The British mistakenly believed that the enemy was encamped on the slopes of the surrounding hills and were confident that their superior artillery would win the day. The troops advanced under cover of darkness and prepared to storm the Boer positions at daybreak.

The plan proved horribly wrong. The Boers had dug trenches at the base of the hills and the flat trajectory of their Mauser rifles raked the advancing British troops. Those soldiers of Scotland’s Highland Brigade who survived the rifle fire were pinned down on the battlefield in the heat of the day. Over 200 British soldiers were killed during the battle, many of them dying of sunstroke and exposure. It is claimed that if you listen carefully, you may well hear the mournful notes of a the Scottish piper.

You can take a tour of the Magersfontein battlefield on your own or with an experienced guide and military historian. You’ll visit Boer graves in the veld before stopping at the Burgher Monument. Watch a short audio-visual account of the battle, and then it’s off to the hills to view the Highlander Monument and look across the trenches and battlefield.
McGregor Museum

Atlas Street, Kimberley. Phone: 053 8311761

Not only is the McGregor Museum one of the earliest museums in South Africa, it is considered to be one of the finest. In 1973 the museum staff and collections moved from the original building in Chapel Street to these new premises on Atlas Street in Belgravia. This building had in the past served as a sanatorium, a hotel, a school and a convent.

An exhibition on the Liberation Struggle as it touched on the lives of the people in the Northern Cape, is relevant and enlightening. Other exhibitions which are popular attractions and a constant source of reference to schools, local and foreign visitors include the Ancestors Gallery, the Enviro Zone, the Convent School Display, the Siege Gallery and the Hall of Religions.

The museum houses major natural history and cultural history collections including a botanical herbarium, zoology collections, a history archive, ethnography collections, archaeology and rock art collections, physical anthropology, palaeontology and geology collections.

Most of these fields are represented by professional staff and collection managers, and the collections and associated research programmes are reflected in permanent and temporary exhibits in various sections of the museum as well as in outreach programmes in the province and displays in smaller museums.

(Photo: Cecil Rhodes posing at the Sanatorium where he resided during the Siege of Kimberley. The building was fortified to protect it against Boer shelling.)
Transport Museum
Railway Station, Florence Street, Kimberley. Phone 053 838 2376

The Transport Museum, situated in Kimberley’s railway station, showcases an accurate record of the history of the railways and the development of other forms of transport as time passed, the need increased, and developments advanced.

Included in the display is a cycle that was used by the volunteers from Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) during the Anglo-Boer War, model trains from the Baxter Collection and the cabin of an authentic steam locomotive. This makes the museum a fantastic place for the whole family to visit, combining fun and a sense of insight into the background of modern South Africa.

As a bonus, on the platform is a magnificent steam locomotive, the SAR Class 25NC 4-8-4 Locomotive No.3411. This locomotive was built by North British Locomotive Co as works no 27311 in 1953. The engine & tender measures 91 feet end to end. The engine, when working, weighed 117t & the tender 105t. The main cylinder bore is 24 inch and the stroke 28 inch. The driving wheels are 5 feet in diameter.

Pioneers of Aviation Museum
Generaal Van Der Spy Drive, Kimberley. Phone: 053 839 2722

Kimberley is regarded as the cradle of aviation in South Africa and in 1913, South Africa’s first flying school opened here. Pilots of the South African Aviation Corps, later to become the South African Air Force, were trained in Kimberley.

On 18 June 1911 John Weston flew the first flight in Kimberley, creating a South African flight record of eight-and-a-half minutes in his Weston-Farman biplane. Fearing numerous attempts of this nature, the Aeronautical Society of South Africa was established in 1911. It was the start of the John Weston Aviation Company of South Africa, which did much to popularise flight in the country by travelling to the main centres and offering public flights.

The museum can be found on the site of the original flying school and houses a life-size replica of the Compton-Paterson bi-plane as used for the training of pilots who included the nucleus of the future South African Air Force.

The first female on the African Continent to receive her pilot’s licence, Ann Maria Bocciarelli, was trained at this school.
Wildebeest Kuil Rock Art Centre
On the Barkly West Road, 5 km outside Kimberley (on left, just after Homestead turnoff). Phone: 053 833 7069

The engravings at Wildebeest Kuil were made between 1,000 and 2,000 years ago by the ‘pecking’ technique: a hard, pointed stone was used to chip away the outer crust of the rock, exposing the lighter coloured rock beneath. With time, the exposed portions become as dark as the outer crust through weathering and the build-up of desert varnish.

!Xun and Khwe San locals, researchers and other stakeholders, have joined together to conserve the engravings here - more than 200 are spread over a small hill. A visit here can be a deeply moving as well as an informative experience. The site is on a servitude set aside for rock art conservation and is surrounded by land now owned by the !Xun and Khwe San people.

The rock art guides will help make your visit special. The experience begins at a visitor centre, where there are displays, and an auditorium where you will experience a twenty minute introductory film. The 800m walk-way weaves up and over the hill via a number of information boards. Your guide will provide commentary and will answer your questions. On your return, the café shop at the Centre has art and craftwork from the !Xun and Khwe community. Rock art and other books also on sale.

Research indicates that the engravings are not products of idle doodling, nor are they straightforward narratives, but comprise a sophisticated religious art associated with rituals in San society mediated by medicine people or shamans.

It was believed that power received through controlled use of trance could be harnessed to heal the sick, control animals, and make rain. It is suggested that many of the engravings were inspired by visions experienced during trance, and were depicted on the rocks so that others could draw inspiration from them.
William Humphreys Art Gallery
Cullinan Crescent, Civic Centre. Phone: 053 8311724

WHAG, as it is affectionately known by Kimberlites, is considered one of the finest art museums in South Africa. In 1948 William Humphreys (1889 - 1965) donated to the city a substantial portion of his personal collection of 16th and 17th Century Dutch and Flemish Old Masters, British and French paintings, antique furniture and other objects d’art. This gallery, named after its principal benefactor, first opened in 1952.

This gift, combined with the South African works of art brought together by members of the Art Section of the Kimberley Athenaeum and The Max Greenberg Bequest, formed the nucleus of the collection. It is augmented by the Humphreys Loan Collection and Timlin Collection on indefinite loan from De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited.

More recently the Meyer Collection of European and Oriental Porcelain and the Lawson Collection of Old Master Drawings and Prints have been acquired.

Today the Art Gallery concentrates on collecting South African works of art. Apart from its primary function as a museum of art, this Gallery serves the community as an educational and cultural centre. Its activities include temporary exhibitions, art workshops mainly for children, development stimulation classes for pre-school children, craft workshops for unemployed women, lectures, video shows and concerts.

They also have a successful outreach programme in which they take graphic exhibitions to the small towns of the Northern Cape, where learners are exposed to world of art for the first time.
Wonderwerk Cave

Wonderwerk Cave is on the eastern side of the Kuruman Hills, about 200km northwest of Kimberley off the R31 (30km south of Kuruman). Phone: 082 222 4777

Not really in Kimberley – but too good to leave out! Wonderwerk Cave is a solution cave, which was formed millions of years ago as the dolomite (limestone) was dissolved by ground water and which was much later opened at one end by hillside erosion.

The tunnel-shaped cave runs horizontally for 139 m into the base of the hill. Over time sand was blown into the cave to gradually form horizontal layers of sediment up to the present depth of 4m. Different dating methods have shown that the very lowest levels range back to more than 800,000 years ago. Archaeological excavations showed that all of these layers contain stone artefacts (tools) which indicate that people lived in the cave over the entire period. Wonderwerk Cave thus has a very long record of human history, which exceeds that of any other recorded cave.

Other discoveries made here totally transform previous ideas of how early humans lived. There is clear evidence for a "home base" in the cave, with an area of grass bedding where the occupants slept. There is also evidence that they had the ability to produce fire, one of mankind's greatest technological triumphs. Food was brought back to the cave to be shared by the family group. The range of animal remains found indicate that the hunters were skilled, rather than mere scavengers. These and other findings suggest that the cultural practices that make us truly human arose very long ago in southern Africa.
Kimberley’s Historical Architecture

The earliest ‘architecture’ was a conglomeration of tents with, here and there, a wooden shanty constructed from old packing cases. The reason for this was that, in spite of the visible yield of the mines, there was for many years a prevailing distrust of the long-term future of the diamond-bearing deposits and the consequent stability of the settlement founded upon them.

With the amalgamation of the diamond mining companies in 1888, the permanence of Kimberley as a town was emphasised. During these years Kimberley was transformed from a conglomeration of wood and iron structures to a well laid out town consisting of architectural designed houses and buildings. The large companies forced out the private entrepreneur, individual diggers and small time fortune hunters. Fewer people shared in the profits than previously, but there was more wealth and better living conditions.

The character of architecture in Kimberley, as in much of southern Africa, had been influenced directly by climate, available materials, social structure and fluctuations in prosperity. It has been said that what was characteristic of the 19th century architecture was that there was no typical or consistent way of building which could be called a ‘style’.

The choice of ‘style’ by both client and architect was an arbitrary and personal one – seldom related to the purpose of the building, its surrounding or method of construction. Politics, religious convictions, fashion and romantic associations determined the selection.

Nonetheless an architectural style peculiar to Kimberley did emerge. Increasing ornateness characterised architecture in the 1890s. The building boom which followed the new prosperity exploited the manufactured materials of the Industrial Age. An enormous volume of cast iron and other ready-made components were imported into South Africa.

In Kimberley every style of robust late Victorian architecture was represented. Public buildings boasted elaborate brick facades topped with urns, gables and pediments; stores were fronted with decorative cast iron balconies and hotels sprouted fanciful turrets.

The outstanding feature of most of the buildings from this period was the wood and iron verandah. The verandah became the status symbol and these ranged from plain wooden poles supporting a straight corrugated iron roof, to quite elaborate combinations of Chinese, Chippendale and latticework, supporting curved iron canopies. By 1904 the firm of Church and McLauchlin were manufacturing high qualify terracotta bricks and other products at their Ronaldsvlei works south of Kimberley, for which they won a gold medal at the Cape Town International Exhibition that year.

Within their embellished houses decorated with marble, stained glass, ceramic tiles and imported wallpaper, Kimberley’s well-to-do could escape the ever present realities of a mining town.
Historic Walks

Kimberley is proud to be one of the most authentic historical destinations in South Africa. With this in mind, historians and tourist experts have mapped out a number of short and interesting walks and tours built around themes which are exclusive and unique to Kimberley.

We recommend that you visit the NOCCI Tourism Centre at the Big Hole (Tel: 053 8304426) for a detailed tourist guide book and other tourist information.

Whilst you can undertake most of these walks and tours on your own, you will get much more out of them by booking an accredited tourist guide to accompany you.

- Amandla Trail
- Archaeological Route
- Battlefield (N12) Route
- Belgravia Historical Walk
- Eldorado Trail - Kimberley CBD
- Ghost Trail
- Great North Walk
- Historic Pub Tour
- Walk in the Footsteps of Cecil John Rhodes
- Walk in the Footsteps of Sol Plaatje
Birding

Common birds found around Kimberley

1. African Pipit (Gewone Koester) *Anthus cinnamomeus*. Identification: Pale non-descript bird but the very white outer-tail feathers are characteristic. Habitat: Usually in open grassland or savanna.


4. European Bee-eater (Europese Byvreter) *Merops apiaster*. Identification: Distinguished from all other southern African bee-eaters by its brown back. Blue underparts and a yellow throat are also characteristic. Habitat: Grassland, woodland and savanna. Non-breeding migrant from Europe. However some birds breed in southern Africa and the Kimberley area is a well-known breeding site.
Karoo, riverine bush.


20. Hadeda Ibis (Hadeda) *Bastrychia hagedash*. Identification: Large dark grey, with a metallic green/purple patch on wing seen in good light. Habitat: Occurs in many habitat types, including gardens.


22. Hoopoe (Hoepoep) *Upupa epops*. Identification: Rufous coloured with boldly barred black and white wings. Long bill and pointed crest are characteristic. Habitat: Occurs in a variety of habitat types, including gardens.


25. Little Swift (Kleinwindswael) *Apus affinus*. Identification: Small, stocky bird. The tail is square and there is a broad white rump and a white throat. Habitat: Common in urban areas and in mountainous habitat.

26. Masked Weaver (Swartkeelgeelvink) *Ploceus velatus*. Identification: During the breeding season the black face and throat and yellow body of the male is characteristic. Habitat: Occurs in most habitats.


28. Pied Barbet (Bonthoutkapper) *Tricholaema leucomelas*. Identification: Black, white and yellow bird with a bright red forehead. Habitat: Usually associated with *Acacia* trees, but also occurs in other habitats. Will readily accept and nest in a sisal stump if placed in a convenient position in a garden.

29. Red Bishop (Rooivink) *Euplectes orix*. Identification: During breeding the red and black plumage of the male is characteristic. Habitat: Usually found near water but also in gardens.

30. Red-eyed Bulbul (Rooioogtiptol) *Pycnonotus nigricans*. Identification: Black head, orange-red eye-ring and yellow undertail are diagnostic. Habitat: Occurs in savanna areas of South Africa. Also in farmyards and gardens. Seldom found far from water.


32. Speckled Pigeon (Kransduif) *Columba guinea*. Identification: Grey and brown with white speckles on the wings. Habitat: Usually associated with mountains, koppies or buildings but feeds in open country.


34. White-backed Mousebird (Witkruismuisvoël) *Colius colius*. Identification: Long pointed tail, white back and maroon rump. Habitat: Occurs in the western parts of southern Africa in habitats ranging from desert scrub to gardens.

35. Yellow Canary (Geelkanarie) *Serinus flaviventris*. Identification: The bright yellow plumage of the male is characteristic. Habitat: Occurs in a variety of habitat types, including arid savanna and gardens.

(Compiled by Mark D. Anderson, Ornithologist)
Lesser Flamingos

The flamingos of Kimberley’s Kamfers Dam are a spectacularly memorable sight, even if you’re not a serious birder. Kamfers Dam is a permanent wetland just minutes by road from the iconic old diamond mining town of Kimberley (N12 heading north). Some years there are around 20 000 birds at the dam; but sometimes the population can rocket up to 80 000 birds.

The flamingos flock to this dam because it has an abundance of algae. The problem was – would they, could they – breed here? A few years back an S-shaped artificial island was but in the middle of the dam. The birds loved it and set a record – this was the first time that the lesser flamingo had bred in South Africa.
# Tour Guide List

This is a list of tour guides accredited through the Kimberley (Sol Plaatje) Tourist Information Centre. Please feel free to contact any one of them for further information and pricing. We apologise for any errors.

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<th>NAME</th>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Soul</td>
<td>Tour Guide</td>
<td>053 839 4309</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Stainthorpe</td>
<td>Tour Guide</td>
<td>053 839 4309</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boitumelo Phirisi</td>
<td>Tour Guide</td>
<td>078 069 5104</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher Jansen</td>
<td>Tour Guide</td>
<td>053 830 4424/083 429 6711</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Carls</td>
<td>Tour Guide</td>
<td>053 839 4455 / 083 475 6580</td>
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<td>Colin Carey</td>
<td>Tour Guide</td>
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<td>Darcelle de Koker</td>
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<td>Tour Guide</td>
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<td>Gilbert Matlhoko</td>
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<td>053 830 4424/083 959 2323</td>
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<td>Mamello Matete</td>
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<td>Masego Kowa</td>
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<td>Mike Birch</td>
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<td>Thabo Mlumba</td>
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<td>Veronica Bruce</td>
<td>N12 Battlefield Route/ General Tours</td>
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<td>Bird Guide</td>
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Glittering Past

Key Dates in the History of Diamond Mining

1866: Eureka! Erasmus Jacobs, a 15-year-old farmer’s son, finds Africa's first authenticated diamond near the Orange River, Hopetown.

1869: The Star of South Africa, an 83.5 carat rough diamond, is discovered by a Griqua herdsman in Hopetown. It triggers the first diamond rush.

1870: In mid-1870 diamonds are found in the river diggings at Klip Drift (now Barkly West), triggering the second diamond rush. Later that year diamonds are found at the farm Bultfontein on the edge of modern-day Kimberley. In December diamonds were found in the adjacent Du Toit’s Pan, triggering the third diamond rush. Cecil Rhodes, aged 17, arrives in South Africa. He sells ice to miners in the hot African sun and saves his money.

1871: The De Beers Mine is discovered in May, and the Kimberley Mine in July. The latter, initially known as New Rush (then Kimberley Mine, and now the Big Hole), would become the world’s richest mine for nearly a century.

1873: Barney Barnato, 18, joins his brother at the Kimberley digs. Meanwhile, Cecil Rhodes buys a claim.

1874: "Barnato Brothers Dealers in Diamonds and Brokers in Mining Property" opens for business.

1887: Cecil Rhodes and Barney Barnato, each buying claims and shares in nearby mines, vie for commercial pre-eminence at the Kimberley diamond fields. To out produce each other, they flood the market causing diamond prices to plummet. A merger is the only solution.

1888: De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited is established on 12 March. Rhodes is named founding chairman.

1890: The Wesselton Mine is discovered. Ten merchants form the London Diamond Syndicate, and agree to buy De Beers' entire production.

1897: Barney Barnato dies tragically when he falls from the SS Scot en route to England.

1899: Within days of the outbreak of the second Boer War, the town of Kimberley is besieged. It remains under siege, its mines closed, for 124 days.

1902: Cecil Rhodes dies at his cottage at Muizenberg, aged 48. Before his death, he's heard to say, "So little done, too much to do." The same year, Ernest Oppenheimer arrives in Kimberley to work as a diamond buying agent. He and Rhodes never meet.

1914: The outbreak of war causes the suspension of all mining at De Beers’ properties. The Kimberley mine never re-opens.
First Northern Cape Diamonds

The Eureka

The Northern Cape in March 1867 was a hot and desolate place. However, to young Erasmus Stephanus Jacobs, 15, there was much with which to amuse himself as he played with the 'klippies' which abounded on their farm De Kalk near Hopetown (120km south of present day Kimberley). Erasmus was somewhat amused when a neighbour, oom Schalk van Niekerk, asked if he could borrow one of the play stones which he had found a year earlier - a particularly shiny one.

Schalk took the stone to a friend, John O'Reilly, who lived at 'Rookop', some hours away. O'Reilly seldom stayed in one place for long, as he usually travelled about by ox-wagon, trading and hunting, and often shot lions on his trips to the north. Schalk mentioned that he believed the stone to be a diamond on account of its hardness and weight.

O'Reilly showed the stone to Jewish storekeepers at Hopetown who ventured that it might be a topaz. At Colesberg he was about to throw it away when the Acting Civil Commissioner, Lorenzo Boyes, suggested trying it on a pane of glass. They then sent it to Dr W.G. Atherstone of Grahamstown in a plain envelope, one of the few people in the Cape Colony who knew anything about minerals and gems, who identified it as a 21.25-carat brownish yellow diamond. Dr Atherstone in turn passed it to Mr Southey, the Colonial Secretary. Sir Philip Wodehouse, then Governor of the Cape Colony, thereafter bought it for £1,500. Southey stated: 'This diamond is the rock upon which the future success of South Africa will be built'. The diamond was shown at the Paris Exposition in 1867 and later cut to its present form, whence it became know as The Eureka Diamond.

This 10.73-carat brilliant is not, by ordinary standards, exceptional. However, it was cut from the first diamond found in South Africa in 1866, and therefore has historical significance.

The Star of South Africa

Although Erasmus Jacobs never found another diamond, Schalk van Niekerk was luckier. Three years later, having learned something of precious stones, Schalk traded a shepherd boy for a stone, giving him five hundred sheep, ten oxen and a horse. It was practically all of van Niekerk’s possessions, but a few days later in Hopetown he sold the rough crystal to the Lilienfield Brothers in Hopetown for £11,200. Later, the stone was purchased by Louis Hond, a diamond cutter, and fashioned to what was described as an "oval, three-sided brilliant" and was sold to William Ward, the Earl of Dudley, for £25,000.

The the Star of South Africa (also known as the Dudley Diamond) stayed in the Wards’ possession until 2 May 1974 when it was sold on auction in Geneva for 1.6 million Swiss Francs, equivalent to around £225,300 at the time. The diamond resided in the Natural History Museum in London for a period of time in the early 2000s and was also part of the "Cartier In America" travelling exhibit in 2009 - 2010.
Origins of Kimberley

Finding of the Eureka and later the Star of South Africa led to South Africa’s first diamond rush in 1869 to the banks of the Orange River near modern day Hopetown. However, a second far greater find was made in 1870 on the gravel banks of the Vaal River near modern day Barkly West (35km north-west of present day Kimberley). At the height of the rush to these river diggings, diamonds were found in the mud brick walls of the farmhouse of Bultfontein (Hilly fountain) owned by Cornelius du Plooy. The house was dismantled and the site is now the colossal hole in the ground of Bultfontein Mine.

Later that year, in December 1870, children found diamonds whilst playing next to Du Toit’s Pan on their father’s farm Dortsfontein (Dry fountain). A whole army of diggers stampeded to the pan, and the site is now the second colossal hole in the ground of Dutoitspan Mine. Dutoitspan Mine, named such because the farm Dorstfontein originally belonged to Abraham Paulus du Toit, who had built a small house next door to the Pan, a basin shaped like a saucepan that holds water. Du Toit sold the farm to a Mr Geyer for £525 on 12 May 1865, and he in turn sold it to Adriaan J. van Wyk for £870 on 6 January 1869.

In May 1871 a new discovery was made on the farm Vooruitzicht (Outlook) that was owned by the brothers Diederick and Nicolaas de Beer (the title deeds to the farm were granted to the De Beers brothers in 1860). This was to become the third colossal hole in the ground – the De Beers Mine.

In July 1871 a servant working for a party of diggers from Colesberg who were digging at the Du Toit's Pan, found three diamonds on a small kopje (hillock) known locally as Colesberg Kopje, just a few hundred meters from the earlier find on the farm Vooruitzicht. Colesberg Kopje soon became an indentation and then a crater as a new rush of diggers descended on what was also first known as the De Beers Mine (the earlier diggings on the same farm became known for a while as Old De Beers).

The mining camps around the first three mines were named after their respective mines. With the latest discovery, the camp became...
known as New Rush, for obvious reasons. Over the ensuing months the digger camp of New Rush swallowed up the earlier camp of Old De Beers.

One digger remembered the dry diggings of 1871 in the following manner, “The four great mines [New Rush, Dutoitspan, Bultfontein and Old De Beers] were roughly circular in shape, and claim holders erected their dwellings as close to the mines as possible, and traders, storekeepers and publicans put up their buildings in any vacant spot... thus each mining camp was composed of a central group of workings surrounded by a ring of shacks, shanties, huts and shelters constructed of any material that would keep off the rain or the scorching heat of the sun.”

The satellite township (now named after the baTlhaping chief, Kgosi Galeshewe) was established in 1871. British Colonial Commissioners arrived in New Rush on 17 November 1871 to exercise authority over the territory on behalf of the Cape Governor. Digger objections and minor riots led to Governor Barkly's visit to New Rush in September 1872, when he revealed a plan instead to have Griqualand West proclaimed a Crown Colony. Richard Southey would arrive as Lieutenant-Governor of the intended Crown Colony in January 1873.

Months passed however without any sign of the proclamation or of the promised new constitution and provision for representative government. The delay was in London where Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Kimberley (John Wodehouse, 1st Earl of Kimberley), insisted that before electoral divisions could be defined, the places had to receive "decent and intelligible names. His Lordship declined to be in any way connected with such a vulgarism as New Rush and as for the Dutch name, Vooruitzicht... he could neither spell nor pronounce it."

The matter was passed to Southey who gave it to his Colonial Secretary J.B. Currey. A correspondent at the time wrote, "when it came to renaming New Rush, Currey proved himself a worthy diplomat. He made quite sure that Lord Kimberley would be able both to spell and pronounce the name of the main electoral division by, as he says, calling it 'after His Lordship'."
New Rush became Kimberley by Proclamation on 5 July 1873. Digger sentiment was expressed in an editorial in the Diamond Field newspaper when it stated "we went to sleep in New Rush and waked up in Kimberley, and so our dream was gone." Kimberley became a municipality in 1877.

The digger camp of Du Toit’s Pan also swallowed up the earlier camp of Bultfontein, which was subsequently re-named Beaconsfield after the former British Prime Minister, Lord Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield). By 1882 a tramway connected Kimberley to Beaconsfield and the streets were illuminated by the first electric lights in Southern Africa.

In 1888 the great amalgamation took place between Rhodes' De Beers Mine and Barney Barnato's Kimberley Central Mining Company. The Wesselton Mine, close to the Bultfontein and Dutoitspan Mines, started in 1890. It was the fifth and last of the colossal Kimberley mines. Also in 1890 Rhodes rose from being the digger’s representative for Barkly West in the Cape Legislature to Prime Minister of the Cape Colony.

A little known fact is that the Seventh Day Adventists religious group was founded by Pieter Wessels in 1885 in a small corrugated iron church on the corner of Blacking Street and Dyer Place in present day lower Herlear. It was amply financed to the sum of £451,438, paid in 1891 by the De Beers company in exchange for the Wesselton Mine, a Wessels family property.

The two towns of Kimberley and Beaconsfield were eventually amalgamated in 1912 to form the City of Kimberley. The original municipal boundary stone can still be seen at the corner of Main and Carrington Roads (diagonally opposite from the Halfway Public House).
Kimberley’s Five Colossal Mines
Eating Out

If you don’t feel like cooking, Kimberley boasts a wide range of eateries, from fine cuisine, to family restaurants, from coffee shops to fast food outlets. We have listed many of these—there are others, particularly at the two main shopping malls - the Diamond Pavilion on Oliver Road (N8 Bloemfontein Road) and the North Cape Mall on Memorial Road (N12 Cape Town Road).

For fine cuisine we especially recommend Annabell’s at the Halfway House Hotel (200m from The Solomon); Butlers in Belgravia (1km from The Solomon), The Kimberley Rhodes Grill (3km from The Solomon) and Harvest Grill at the Flamingo Casino (5km from The Solomon).

For breakfast we especially recommend Mugg & Bean at the Diamond Pavilion shopping mall (2km from The Solomon). The Kimberley Club Café Vitello does great lunchtime meals.

Mugg & Bean

Mugg & Bean is a home away from home or an office away from the office – the perfect meeting place Breakfast, Lunch, tea, all-day snacks, and coffee of course

Diamond Pavilion Mall, Oliver Road (N8 Bloemfontein/airport road)

053-832-0521
SkyBar Cocktail & Platter Lounge:

Authentic Mexican & Tappas Restaurant

Come and visit us for the best Mexican food, Cuban music, cigars and TEQUILA!!!!

229 Du Toitspan Road (next to Halfway House).

076 167 1154

Spur Steak Ranches

Colourful US-style steak & burger diner chain. Also does breakfast

Kids play areas

Mohawk Spur

120 Du Toitspan Way

053 832 9412 /

Choctaw Spur

Jacobus Smit Ave, Off Memorial Road (N12 towards Cape Town)

053 832 4231
John Dory’s Fish, Grill & Sushi

An excellent fish and grill menu as well as having a dedicated sushi bar.

Kids play area.

North Cape Mall, Memorial Road (N12 Cape Town Road)

053-8323457

Panarottis Pizza Pasta

Since the first Panarottis opened in Cape Town in 1990, they’ve prepared their food the same way they do in Italy – with the freshest and finest ingredients, a dash of Mediterranean flair, and loads of passion.

Kids play area

North Cape Mall, Memorial Road (N12 Cape Town Road)

079-7467458
Arguably South Africa’s most loved seafood restaurant.

Ocean Basket recently relocated just a few hundred metres from The Solomon, next to the Halfway House Hotel. Only a short walk – it is a safe neighbourhood.

229 du Toitspan Road

053 831 1973 (best to book at weekends and public holidays)

Annabell’s is a culinary surprise; delivering great quality fare with all the trimmings

Situated within this historic public house, Annabell’s is known as much for its striking location as for its mouth-watering food and excellent service

Just a short walk from The Solomon

Halfway House Hotel, 229 du Toitspan Road

053 831 6324
Rhodes Grill Restaurant @ Kimberley Club

An exquisite compilation of culinary dishes fused to temp the palate, served in one of the oldest buildings in Kimberley.

There is no specific cuisine as there are different flavours to each dish which just work. The approach is good fresh food with a difference, executed to perfection.

72 Du Toitspan Rd (access is from Curry Street where they have a secure carpark)

053 832 4224

Restaurant @ Protea Hotel
You can enjoy a full breakfast daily from 6:30 to 9:30 during the week and from 7:30 to 10:30 on weekends.

A light lunch is served from 12:00 to 18:00 and their a la carte dinner menu is available from 18:00 to 22:30.

West Circular Road (next to the Big Hole)

053 802 8200

Copper Oryx @ Kimberley Anne Hotel

Discover unique local flavours during an exclusive culinary experience.

Whether you’re at a special conference, meeting or stylish social event, the Copper Oryx offers a truly exclusive experience for any occasion.

60 MacDougall Street (close to the Diamond Pavilion Mall)

053 492 0004

Tiffany’s @ Savoy Hotel
The menu offers the most delicious Northern Cape meats, tasteful seafood and traditional South African specialties, served in a special atmosphere resembling the diamond rush of bygone days.

Meals and beverages served from 11h00 – 22h00

19 Old De Beers Road

053 832 6211
Harvest Charcoal Grill @ Flamingo Casino

This is a contemporary, family-friendly, a la carte steakhouse that offers an extensive selection of the finest red meat, chicken, seafood, salads and vegetarian dishes.

You can also enjoy a meal-matching wine list and a dedicated children’s menu.

Flamingo Casino, N12 Johannesburg Road

053 830 2673

Kalahari Restaurant @ Kalahari Lodge

This includes a split-level thatched restaurant, a separate Ladies Bar and a large open porch leading to established gardens.

Grills and steaks are their speciality.

Cnr of Landbou & N12 Cape Town Road

053 831 3043
Butlers Restaurant @ Estate Hotel

Lead by internationally experienced executive chef, Butler’s will introduce you to a blend of international and local cuisine.

Experience their exquisitely presented culinary delights, from a constantly evolving menu.

7 Lodge Street, Belgravia
053 83 22 66 8

Lemon Tree Restaurant

The Lemon Tree Restaurant has become a popular hangout for locals and visitors alike, wanting to experience Diamond City.

Enjoy one of their delicious meals, a burger, steak or espetada, with a beer, or enjoy cake and coffee with your friends or family.

33 Angel Street
053 831 7730
China Restaurant

The best authentic Chinese food in town. Eat-in restaurant and take-aways

147 Du Toitspan Road

053 831 4444

Nando’s is famous throughout South Africa for its legendary butterfly cut, PERi-PERi chicken - marinated for 24-hours before being flame-grilled and basted in your choice of addictive Nando’s Peri-Peri sauce

Kim Park Centre, Cnr Lennox & Chapel Street

053 831 5258
Kentucky Fried Chicken – KFC

Fast-food fried chicken chain
Cecil Sussman Street
053 831 2255
Corner George & Bulfontein Streets
053 832 9607
Memorial Road and Mac Dougal Street
053 832 9554

McDonalds

Fast food burger restaurants
(both have drive thru)
North Cape Mall, Memorial Road (N12 Cape Town Road)
0538328022
Corner of Lennox St and Chapel St, Kimberley CBD

Solomon Edwardian Guest House (www.thesolomon.co.za)
THE SOLOMON
Edwardian Guest House

www.thesolomon.co.za
info@thesolomon.co.za
Cell: 079 4572771
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1 Solomon St, Kimberley

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