

MASILONYANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

WHAT TO DO

THEUNISSEN

Erfenis Dam Nature Reserve

The Erfenis Dam Nature Reserve lies in the grassveld and vlei (marsh) region of the Free State about 18 km east of Theunissen. Beautiful karee and wild olive trees grow along the ridges of the reserve. The turn-off to the reserve lies just off the Theunissen-Winburg Road.



Animals such as mountain reedbeek, red hartebeest and zebra can be easily spotted in the open grass savannah. The reserve also has many different species of terrestrial and aquatic birds and waterfowl, such as South African shellduck and Egyptian geese.

Accommodation consists of a caravan park with power points for some of the sites, as well as a bush camp with five tents (2 beds per tent). All the tents have power points and lights. Both the caravan park and the bush camp have adequate ablution facilities.

The dam in the reserve is home to several species of fish, such as yellowfish, carp, barbel and Orange River mudfish. Angling is one of the most popular activities in the reserve but visitors can also participate in other water sports, such as skiing, canoeing, paragliding and windsurfing.

Twefontein Nature Reserve and Game Farm

The farm is situated approximately 7 km from the town. It is the location of the first Cheetah breeding and research project in the Free State where you can have the opportunity to see the rare and endangered Cheetah, with specific feeding-times which you will be allowed to watch closely.



Game viewing and hunting, as well as birdwatching are offered. Game species include the usual antelope and buck, as well as zebra, lion and giraffe. Wild dogs are successfully being bred at the reserve.

There are three distinct styles of accommodation offered, being thatched log cabins with en-suite bathroom, equipped with colour TV. Or guesthouse facilities in a 100 year old restored farmhouse with stone walls, or, for the more adventurous, a very secluded bushcamp (with hot water and open-air showers), and self-catering is an option.

Adventure and Sport

The town has its own golf course. Watersport include angling, canoeing, power boating and skiing at the nearby Erfenis Dam. Abseiling facilities are also available.

Arts and Crafts

The town is one of the stops on the Goldfields Art Route. Weaving is one of the crafts practised in the area.

WINBURG

Voortrekker Monument

Winburg acted as a settlement and religious centre for Voortrekkers. Winburg was originally selected as the site for the main Voortrekker Monument, but Pretoria won favour and a five-tiered secondary Voortrekker monument was built on the outskirts of Winburg instead in the 1950s.



It carries the names of the Voortrekker leaders: Piet Uys, Andries Hendrik Potgieter, Andries Pretorius, Piet Retief and Gerhard Maritz. On 16 December, the day on which the descendants of the Boer settlers celebrate the Battle of Blood River, the sun passes directly over the monument and a plaque with a Christian religious message at the base is illuminated.

Voortrekker Cemetery

A Voortrekker cemetery and an Anglo-Boer War concentration camp cemetery lie close to the impressive Voortrekker Monument.



Voortrekker Garden of Remembrance

This garden commemorates the Great Trek and those who participated in it.

Winburg Museum Complex

The Winburg Museum Complex outside the town consists of a towering five-tiered monument honouring the five original Voortrekker groups who undertook the Great Trek. It also includes the modest dwelling of Marthinus Steyn, the last president of the Orange Free State Republic. His homestead, on the farm Rietfontein, is now a museum.

BRANDFORT

Winnie Madikizela Mandela's House

Winnie Madikizela Mandela, a social worker and first wife of Nelson Mandela, spent almost a decade living in Brandfort. Winnie Mandela was implicated in the organization of the Soweto Uprising, and upon conviction by the South African courts, spent six months in jail. When she was released on 16 May 1977, the South African government exiled Winnie Mandela to the small town of Brandfort, in the then Orange Free State Province.

De Aap Farm

The farm De Aap, one-time home of the first president of the Republic of South Africa, CR Swart, is situated in the district and has been proclaimed a National monument.

Dwyersdorp Concentration Camp

Dwyersdorp Concentration Camp, outside the town, was named after Captain Dwyer, a humane man, who showed mercy towards the Boer women and children incarcerated there and helped them wherever he could. A beautiful statue of an angel, all in white, resting against an upright cross, in front of the Dutch Reformed Church, honours the many women and children who died here.



The Monument erected at the Concentration Camp cemetery, on the farm Lovain, lists all the names of the dead.

Vice-Admiral Weston Home

The first aeroplane ever built in Africa saw the light of day on the property of Vice-Admiral Weston, who lived in Brandfort. The first aeroplane builder in South Africa lived in Brandfort. M J L Weston immigrated here from the USA. While still there, he built a glider in 1892. In South Africa, between 1907 and 1909 he built an aeroplane on the farm Kalkdam. However, the engines were not powerful enough. The Farman brothers in France then installed a 50 horsepower Gnome engine. This plane did its first flight on 18 June 1911 near Kimberley. Weston's longest flight lasted 8 minutes. His home is now a popular tourist attraction.

Voortrekker Memorial Wall

The memorial wall located in front of the Dutch Reformed Church, honours the early Voortrekker settlers.

Angling

Palmietfontein Dam, in the Brandfort area, is open to anglers.

Bird-hunting

Grassland and Stone Safaris offer bird-hunting trips to interested parties.

Hunting

Several farms in the area offer hunting and game-watching safaris.

Quad biking

The Grasslands Quad biking trails are guided eco-trails through typical Free State landscape.

Sport

The town has bowling, badminton, rugby, soccer, squash and tennis clubs, as well as an 18-hole golf course.