



LESOTHO

Lesotho is a mountainous African country on a high plateau, surrounded by the nation of South Africa. The people of Lesotho are called the Basotho and the language they speak is Sesotho. Most of the Basotho live in the North West. Lesotho strongly relies on South Africa for its economy and food.



Quick Facts...

	Lesotho	UK
Area (sq miles)	11,720	93,788
Population	2.22 million	60 million
% Urban	18.5%	89.6%
% Rural	81.5 %	10.4%
Life expectancy	37	78

Background

King Moshoeshoe helped to create the Basotho nation from many different clans to bring peace to the region. In 1868 the King asked the British for assistance in protecting the kingdom from attack, then known as Basutoland – this brought both benefits and disadvantages over the following hundred years. The country gained independence in 1966 and became Lesotho, which is now governed by a President, but still has a king.

Comparing with the UK

Lesotho is a ‘constitutional monarchy’ (like the UK) with the king as the head of state. The capital city, Maseru, has a population of 120,000 - roughly the size of Chester. London’s population is 60 times greater! The furthest city from the sea in the UK is Derby at roughly 70 miles - Maseru is almost 380 miles from the sea.

Climate Facts...

	Lesotho	UK
Average temp in coldest/hottest months	7-24 °C	4-17 °C
Average annual rainfall	700mm	1200mm

Natural wonders

Letseng Diamond Mine is the worlds highest diamond mine at 3,100 meters in altitude.

The Lesotho Promise is a 603-carat diamond, the 15th largest in the world!

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project has strengthened the relationship between South Africa and Lesotho. The project provides water for South Africa and electricity for Lesotho.

Poverty

50% of the people live on less than 50p a day.

8 children out of 100 don't reach the age of 5.

Lesotho ranks as the third most severely affected country by HIV/AIDS. Nearly 30% of the adult population are infected.

More than half the population depend on food assistance due to poverty, drought and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

It is estimated that up to 40% of all children in Lesotho are orphans.

Culture

'Moshoeshoe Day' is a day of celebration much like St David's Day in Wales. The school day consists of singing, dancing and wearing traditional clothing.

Mokhibo is traditional dance performed by females. They wear white skirts made from maize sacks and carry brushes made out of sticks. The dance consists of moving their head and shoulders like a chicken!

The Basotho often like to play football. Send a Cow Lesotho's manager used to play for the national football team!

The staple diet in Lesotho is made up of papa (maize and water), samp (corn & beans) and mokhore (green fried spinach).

English	Sesotho
Hello	Helele
Goodbye	Fala hantle
My name is	Lebitso laka ke
How are you?	U phela joaug?
I am fine	Ke phela hantle

Send a Cow in Lesotho

In the mountains of Lesotho farming families struggle to grow food in the rocky terrain. The extreme environment and climate makes farming difficult. Send a Cow helps families to grow more crops all year round and have some left over to sell. Families are taught how to build keyhole gardens and other techniques that conserve soil and water.



Did you know?

King Moshoeshoe insisted that everyone had to greet each other by saying 'Khotso' (peace) and this still continues today.

In many parts of Lesotho temperatures in winter drop to -20°C and some areas get up to 35 cm of snow. They even have their own ski resort!

Traditional music in Lesotho is played on an **accordion**.

Basotho people are **very friendly** and will hug and hold hands with both men and women.

Lesotho has the **highest, lowest-point** of any country in the world.