



## Loxton

Loxton's most distinctive feature are its wide streets, originally designed to accommodate the ox-wagons once commonly used by the sheep farming community for transporting goods, livestock, and supplies.

Later telephone poles were placed down the center of these streets to avoid interfering with the 'leiwater' channels running along the edges, giving the town its unique character. These channels, crucial for the town's irrigation system, highlight the ingenuity of early settlers in managing the valuable water resources of the Karoo.

At the heart of Loxton, the Dutch Reformed Church stands prominently, serving as a central landmark and a focal point of the town. Originally known as the farm Phezantefontein, Loxton's journey began when the Dutch Reformed Church purchased land from A E Loxton in 1899 so as to alleviate the strain on the over-crowded Victoria West parish, where farmers faced eight-hour horse journeys every Sunday, and so a local parish was established. The first church, completed in 1900, later became the church hall. A school was built shortly

after to serve the 40 children in the community, and Loxton was officially declared a municipality in 1905.

Charming Karoo-style homes are distinguished by their thick, whitewashed walls, flat or gently sloping tin roofs, and deep stoeps (verandas) shaded by pergolas. Many of these houses feature sash windows with shutters, wooden doors adorned with intricate carvings, and broekie lace (decorative cast-iron work) along the veranda edges.

During spring, Loxton's landscape transforms into a vibrant tapestry of budding fruit trees - fig, olive, apricot, and pear - enhanced by occasional rains that bring vibrant colors and renewed vitality to the semi-desert environment.

Notable writers and artists have been captivated by the Karoo landscape, its quiet, reflective atmosphere, the simplicity of rural life, and the town's rich cultural heritage, finding in Loxton a perfect retreat for their work. Today, the artistic spirit continues to thrive, with local studios and galleries showcasing the diverse talents of those who have made this unique Karoo village their creative sanctuary.

Although the flood of 1961 was a significant event in Loxton's history, reshaping parts of the town and influencing its development, the community today is actively involved in various projects to revitalise and preserve the town's unique heritage while also developing the community and enhancing tourism.



## Enduring waterways

Loxton's abundance of trees, unusual for the arid Karoo, is closely linked to its traditional 'leiwater' system. This irrigation method channels water from a nearby fountain to the town's gardens, enabling the cultivation of greenery that would otherwise be impossible in such a dry environment.

Thanks to the 'leiwater' system, which still functions today, residents have maintained lush, tree-lined streets and verdant gardens. In a region where water is scarce and droughts are common, 'leiwater' has transformed Loxton into a green oasis. The trees not only enhance the town's beauty but also provide essential shade, moderating the harsh climate and distinguishing Loxton from the surrounding semi-desert landscape.

The old hand pump, a relic of the town's early infrastructure, also remains in operation. Originally installed around 1912 when the dam was built, the system includes a hand pump and a network of wooden pipes that relay water from the dam wall to the town. Remarkably, sections of this original wooden pipeline are still in use today, reflecting the enduring utility and historical significance of the infrastructure that helped sustain the town for over a century.

## The rare Riverine Rabbit, a gem of the Karoo



The Riverine Rabbit (*Bunolagus monticularis*), one of the world's rarest rabbits, finds its precarious home in the arid Karoo region of South Africa, including areas around Loxton. This critically endangered species inhabits the riverine vegetation and sandy riverbeds typical of this unique landscape.

Distinctive in appearance, the Riverine Rabbit sports pale, sandy-brown fur with white underbelly and dark stripes, setting it apart from other rabbits. Its large, rounded ears and nocturnal habits make it a fascinating subject for conservationists and researchers. The rabbit primarily feeds on grasses and leaves, making it well-suited to the sparse vegetation of its habitat.

The Riverine Rabbit's presence in the Karoo, and particularly near Loxton, serves as a poignant reminder of the region's unique wildlife and the ongoing efforts required to safeguard it. As conservation efforts continue, the hope is to ensure a future where this rare species can thrive amidst the rugged beauty of the Karoo.



A rabbit curio made from local wool by young artisans in honor of the Riverine Rabbit is a perfect gift, highlighting conservation, sheep farming, and community craftsmanship.




## Loxton

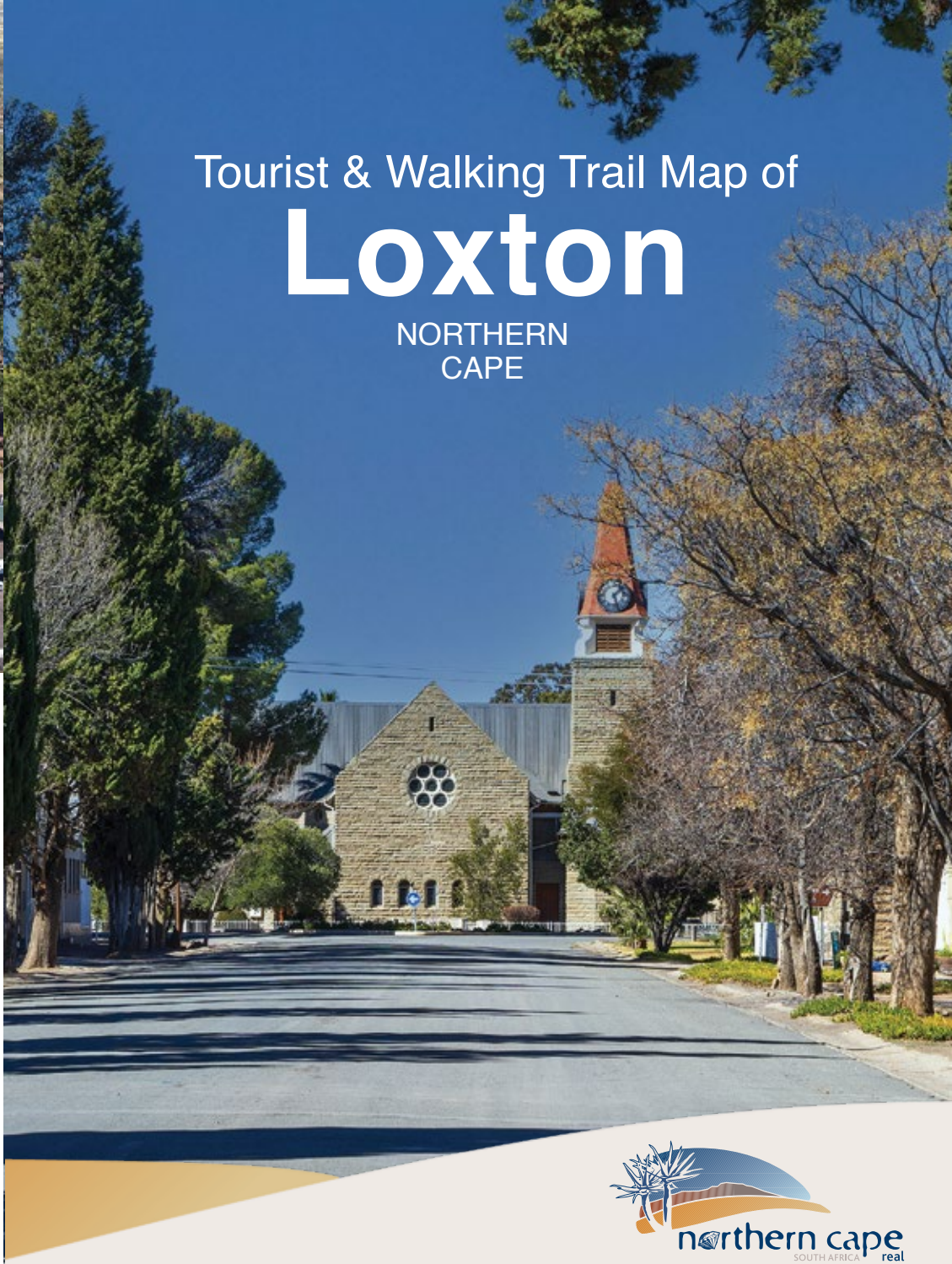
Situated 80km west of Victoria West on the R63, Loxton is one of those rare Karoo villages with plenty of trees within the Ubuntu Municipality, which is a local municipality within the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality, in the Northern Cape province of South Africa.

Part of  
the Karoo  
Highlands  
Route



 TOURIST INFORMATION Ubuntu Municipality Tel 053 6210026

Design & Photography - tourismblueprint.co.za



# Tourist & Walking Trail Map of Loxton

NORTHERN  
CAPE

  
northern cape  
SOUTH AFRICA real  
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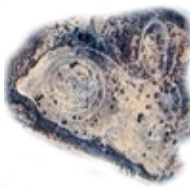


## 1 LOXTON E-LEARNING CENTRE

Market Street

### STARTING POINT FOR THE WALK

Town tourist information office and e-learning centre. Host local efforts to skill people in computer technology, human movement and storytelling. Young children are trained in coding. Also accommodates dance classes for the young and young at heart. Adrian Tony, a popular dance coach and owner of MoveStoryTechno, uses dancing to interpret poetry and natural sounds such as the wind blowing in the pine tree branches. Visitors are welcome to join in the coding training, dancing and storytelling.



## 2 RIVERINE RABBIT GEOGLYPH

Carnarvon Street

The Riverine Rabbit Thinking Path, the second of the Karoo Geoglyphs, was designed by Anni Snyman and PC Janse van Rensburg, with support from the Loxton community, Boitumelo Projects, the Endangered Wildlife Trust, Umvoto hydrogeologists, the Grrr Collective, and Fluid Films. Coordinated by Ingrid Schöfmann, the project involved 38 contributors over ten days. The geoglyph measures 104.5 meters (tail to toe) by 90 meters (ear to foot), creating a 1,097-meter walking path, which takes about 25 minutes to walk.



## 3 PEPPERTREE COTTAGE

Market Street

One of the oldest houses in Loxton. Built on a plot that was not assigned any water irrigation rights when the town was established. Withstood the 1961 flood of the town when the local dam wall caved in. Typical Karoo type architectural style.

## 4 OLD LOXTON FILLING STATION

Magretha Prinsloo Street

The first filling station in Loxton was established in 1932. It operated up until 1958 and belonged to Mr. Retief. Used as a wheat store after 1958. Featured prominently in the popular Deon Meyer movie "Die Laaste Tango" where the last tango was danced.



## OLD HAND WATER PUMP

Cnr Probart and Church Street

The trough and pump, now fenced in, date back to 1912. The main feeder pipe is made of wood. Originally installed to supply water for livestock, horses, and people traveling the old transport route.

(see overleaf for more information)

## 8 NAGMAALHUISIES

Church Street

Many farmers, too far from church, built small two-room "Nagmaalhuisies" (Holy Communion Homes) in Karoo style to stay for important Holy Communion services. Most had "brakdakke" (roofs of ash bush branches).



## 9

### BOSSIE TRAIL

East of Magretha Prinsloo Street

A short walking trail on the outskirts of Loxton. A number of endemic Karoo plants can be viewed in habitat. These are typical plants eaten by the endemic and endangered Riverine Rabbit (*Bunolagus monticularis*). Also serves as a community garden. Ideal place for meditation while on foot.

## 5 ELECTRICAL WORKS

Magretha Prinsloo Street

Housed the towns electricity generators to serve a rapidly growing town. In 1928 a windpump, locally referred to as the "Windpump of Lights", was installed to drive a dynamo to aid with electricity generation. In 1939 the windpump was replaced with a large Blackstone generator.

## 6 KAROS GUESTHOUSE

Magretha Prinsloo Street

A luxury guesthouse with a fine art collection. In October 1967, townsfolk gathered on a nearby hill to glimpse the Soviet-built Sputnik, the first satellite to send a radio signal, sparking the space race. Enjoy superb traditional Karoo dining here.



## STONE AGE SHOP

Cnr Kempen and Beaufort Streets

The Dutch Reformed Church decades ago bought the property known as the "Old Owl's House" to establish an old age home. Today the building serves as a popular antiques and collectables shop, as well as an art gallery. Also on sale are local hand-made leather goods, wool and haberdashery. Owned by Jan and Christelle van Wyk. Jan is an established leatherworker and Christelle a fine art painter.



## 11 KAROONAG

Cnr Fraserburg & Kempen Streets

Formerly owned by Deon Meyer, a South African thriller novelist. His works have been translated into 28 languages. He has also written numerous scripts for television and film. The house was a recent build by Ben Bruwer, who back in the days was the mechanic at the local district council.



## 12 DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH

Church Square

In 1924, the Dutch Church building was completed. Beyers Naudé served the Loxton congregation from 1942 to 1945. The church has a bell that rang for six months before it cracked and stopped working. Although it no longer sounds, the bell remains in place and, when it did ring, its sound could be heard up to 40km's away.



## 13 DIE WINDPOMP PUB

Overlooking the Church Square

Rich in ambience and vibrant.

Great place to meet the locals and enjoy delicious pub grub. Also serving finger-licking good pizzas from their wood-fired oven. All streets in Loxton lead to Die Windpomp pub at sunset.



## 14 LOXTON LEKKER

Overlooking the Church Square

Previously a Standard bank, the original vault is still visible inside. Popular local coffee shop. Also offers a book shop and local delights ("kontrei produkte") such as rusks, biscuits and other refreshments.



## 15 FOUR SEASONS GUESTHOUSE

Church Street

This Edwardian-era cottage, with its unique decorative fretwork, is the only one to have survived the 1961 flood that destroyed similar homes. Overlooking the village square in Loxton, this residence stands as a beautiful testament to the village's heritage.



## 17 OLD MAGISTRATE/COURT HOUSE

Church Street

The Loxton magistrate was established in 1918 when Mr. P.B. Borchers was appointed as the town's magistrate on 5 February. Serves as a typical Karoo homestead today.



## 16 OU TRONK (JAILHOUSE)

Church Street

Built in 1900, the jail has been converted into a guesthouse, preserving its historic charm while offering unique accommodation. The Jail was initially established to curb serious alcohol abuse in town. Stone used in construction was sourced from Loxton. House opposite the old jail was the former South African Police charge office.

## 21 'JAKHALSDANS' HOUSE

Cnr Fraserburg & Nieuwe Street

This farmhouse, originally owned by Mr. Stoffel Hugo, the mayor of Loxton in the 1950s and 60s, now belongs to his daughter, Christa Hugo. It also served as Theuns Jordaan's home in Deon Meyer's film "Jakhalsdans".

## 20 OLD MILK SHED

Beaufort Street

Typical example of standard Karoo architectural style constructed in the early 1900s, although it has been completely renovated. According to the older townsfolk milk was stored in the building back in the days before it was distributed in the town and district.



## 19 BRAKDAK HOUSE

Beaufort Street

A typical Brakdak Karoo house, named for its flat roofs covered with cuttings from the endemic "brakbos" (salt bush), also known as "ou man se soutbos" or "asbos." This shrub (*Atriplex nummularia*), which thrives in salty soils, remains valuable to farmers today. The house, once used as a lucerne bale store, was restored by Frans Odendaal, a former National Heritage Council worker. Known locally as the "hoëstoephuisie" due to its high veranda, it was featured in the Deon Meyer film "The Last Tango".



## 18 LOXTON ART GALLERY

Beaufort Street

Home with Victorian architectural style belonged to Dr. Mans, father of popular novelist, Ena Murray. Today owned by Alewyn and Annelise Vorster, both established fine artists. Annelise is a niece to Ena Murray and an acclaimed painter. Alewyn is the creator of sought after hand-made figurines and statuettes made of pewter, many of them with a military action theme.

