



ULTIMATE AFRICA ATLAS



1 CONTINENT | **57** COUNTRIES | **15** REGIONS | **181** MAIN MAP PAGES
108 PARKS, RESERVES & SITES | **90** ADVENTURES | **175** STREETMAPS | **400** PAGES

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Legend
 National Park/Reserve/Tourist Region ●
 Adventure Region ●
 Capital ●
 Other City ●

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STREETMAP LEGEND

- Major road
- Main road
- Minor road
- Pedestrian mall
- Point of interest
- Post office
- Police station
- Information
- Church
- Mosque
- Hospital
- Park
- Lake or dam

REGIONAL LEGEND

- Capital city
- Major town
- Secondary town
- Other town
- Village
- Airport & airfield
- Point of interest
- Border post & entrance gate
- Peak height
- Hiking trail
- Wine farm or estate
- Diving
- Tollgate
- Distance, distance pin & mountain pass

- National road tarred or untarred
- Main road tarred or untarred
- Secondary road
- 4x4 (4WD) road & track
- Railway
- International boundary
- Provincial boundary
- Perennial river
- Non perennial river
- Pan
- Dry lake
- Marsh
- Waterfall

INFO BOXES

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The Nile Valley

Nestled in the bowl of the great Nile Basin, Egypt and Sudan are both hot and, at times, stifling. Both nations have as many differences as similarities and, although they may be neighbours, the topography of the land and the political landscape are quite disparate. Although rain is scarce throughout much of Egypt and northern Sudan, the southern reaches of Sudan – covered by grassland, savanna, forest and marsh – may experience rainfall for as much as eight months of the year. Their governments are equally diverse – Egypt is a relatively stable republic, largely pro-West and with a history of ethnic tolerance, while military Islamic fundamentalists have governed Sudan since 1989. Sudan has also been plagued by civil unrest between Arab Muslims in the north and African Christians in the south since 1983. Although travel to Egypt remains an important earner of foreign income, security fears have had some effect in recent years, and travel in Sudan may still be risky.

EGYPT



CAIRO

The largest city in Africa as well as the Middle East, Cairo is a delightful clamour of taxis and traffic, sights, sounds and smells, and is home to 16 million Egyptians. Its shimmering skyline is a rich amalgamation of modern highrises and rickety flat-topped dwellings, many of which trace their origins back centuries and even tens of centuries. Cairo is a traveller's delight, providing a fascinating look into the age-old empire of the pharaohs, with markets, museums and music conjuring up the spirits of the ancients. Among Cairo's great treasures is the mosque of El Azhar, founded more than 1,000 years ago and still the religious centre of Islamic Cairo. Another is the bustling Khan el Khalili bazaar, the commercial heart of the city.

PYRAMIDS AT GIZA

Approximately 17km to the west of Cairo's famed university, and accessible from the capital by either bus or taxi, stand the Great Pyramids at Giza, acclaimed by the ancients as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The entire conurbation of antediluvian tombs, seemingly swathed in mystery, is spellbinding in its stature. The monumental Sphinx, along with the conical mausoleums of Cheops and Chephren that pierce the desert sky, form El Giza's imposing centre. So ancient are these magnificent structures that, though they were built adjacent to the Nile, over the centuries the river has meandered over 5km away. Greek myth has it that the Sphinx (meaning 'to hold fast') guarded ancient Thebes, killing any traveller unable to answer her puzzling riddle – until the mythological Oedipus correctly answered the riddle. The Sphinx then killed herself.

VALLEY OF THE KINGS

Although the valley on the west bank of Luxor is barren and apparently lifeless, it is home to one of the most unashamed treasures of the ancient world: a series of long-forgotten crypts crowned by the breathtaking tomb of Tutankhamun, the boy-god-king who died at the tender age of 19. This most spectacular of all the ancient tombs was first discovered and opened in 1922 by Howard Carter. The four diminutive rooms within the tomb revealed an unparalleled hoard of astounding artefacts and magnificent jewels that had been buried with the young pharaoh who lived during one of the most splendid periods of ancient Egypt.

SINAI

The rocky, undulating landscape of this mountainous peninsula in northeastern Egypt is situated at the northern end of the Red Sea, flanked by the gulfs of Suez and Aqaba. The imposing edifice of Jebel Musa stands 2,285m high, making it one of Egypt's highest mountains and the spiritual heart of the rugged peninsula. It was immortalized in scripture as Mount Sinai, where God gave the Judaic leader Moses the stone tablets that bore the Ten Commandments.

RED SEA

The blue water of the Red Sea – a long, narrow stretch of water separating Arabia from northeast Africa – is an underwater wonderland of marine gardens, mesmerizing schools of fish, spectacular dive sites and some of the finest coral reefs in the world. Fringing the bewitching desert and the jagged horizon of the highlands, the 438,000km² of the Red Sea is said to be anything from 20 to 40 million years old. It links with the Mediterranean in the north via the Suez Canal and spills out into the Indian Ocean in the south. It takes its name from its occasional red appearance as algae congregate in surface waters. The reefs here are festooned with magnificent corals and bursts of colour that originate from the amazing aquatic life. The sandy depths of the great sea are hunted by lionfish and spotted stingray, and the region is so abundant in wildlife that some of the most respected marine scientists of modern time have spent lifetimes studying the enormous biodiversity of this bowl of water.

ASWAN

Situated just below the Nile's First Cataract, Aswan remains a relatively small town, with a population of about 200,000, yet it plays a vital role in the lives of millions of Egyptians, most of whom draw their power from the Aswan High Dam. Officially opened in 1971, the huge dam forms a reservoir on Lake Nasser and stretches some 480km from the First to the Third Cataract. It was constructed just 6km upstream from the old 1902 dam, and the water remains the centre of life here, with domestic cattle and water buffalo grazing on its endless banks. Mystery writer Dame Agatha Christie penned a portion of *Murder on the Nile* from her suite in the Cataract Hotel overlooking the First Cataract.

NILE RIVER

In the west lies the great Qattara Depression, a remarkable 133m below sea level, and to the east stretches the Red Sea. While the upper reaches of the river are often very narrow and lined by precipices, the lower valley emerges into the expansive and heavily populated Nile Delta. In contrast to the dry and dusty sands beyond the relatively lush course of the river, no less than 95 per cent of Egypt's population have made their home in the Nile Valley from what comprises only three per cent of the country's landmass.

ELEPHANTINE ISLAND

In the middle of the mighty Nile, opposite the Aswan High Dam – the latter-day successor to the original dam built in 1902, and twice raised during the course of the 20th century – is the ancient settlement of Elephantine Island, whose island fortress of Yebu acted as the border post between Egypt and Nubia.

SUDAN



KHARTOUM

Virtually decimated by the warring Mahdists in 1885, the old city of Khartoum acted as the seat of the Anglo-Egyptian government that ruled Sudan until independence in January 1956, when it became the capital of the largest country in Africa. Nestled into the corner formed by the junction of the Blue and White Nile, Khartoum's population is less than one million, yet it remains the economic hub of the Sudan. Battered by dust storms and suffering precariously low water supplies, the city is picturesque in its own distinct way. Some 80 per cent of the workforce is occupied in farming on just five per cent of the land, growing cotton, peanuts, gum arabic, sugar and the like. Weak global agricultural prices, a limited infrastructure and ruthless climatic conditions have taken their toll on the capital, but an increase in oil production, regular rainfall and foreign investment in local irrigation projects have brought some respite.

MOUNT KINYETI

Standing proudly on Sudan's border with Uganda, Mount Kinyeti is perhaps Sudan's most significant natural landmark, and the 3,187m peak is the nation's tallest. It covers much of the flat countryside to the south of the rather featureless plain, and is bound in the east and west by separate mountain ranges. Surrounded by the tropical landscape of the southern reaches, its relatively lush slopes are sheltered from the harshness that pervades the aridity of the northern plains and stand in stark contrast to the inhospitable terrain that stretches north. Mount Kinyeti is a remarkable unspoiled wilderness but is virtually inaccessible to all but the bravest and most determined traveller.

NUBIAN DESERT

Commonly considered a desert, the Nubian is little more than a vast, virtually horizonless sandstone plateau that stretches across northeastern Africa from the cliffs of the Nile Valley to the shores of the Red Sea. The people here have always been an amalgamation of nomadic groups and subsistence farmers. In recent times the lives of many Nubians were adversely affected by the construction of the reservoir projects at Aswan, when the waters were dammed and thus flooded their traditional farmlands. Fortunately, commerce and the tourist trade now provide the bulk of employment.

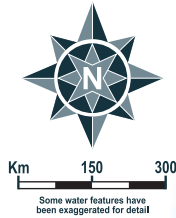
OMDURMAN

Situated on the banks of the Nile just north of the capital in central Sudan, this centre of industry and finance is the largest town in the country. Omdurman was the setting for the great Battle of Omdurman in 1898, in which the Mahdi was expelled by the armed forces of Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener (the 1st Earl of Khartoum and, the head of the Egyptian army). Enjoying a stark yet surprisingly beautiful setting, Omdurman is a significant contributor to the national economy – largely thanks to its proximity to Khartoum and its location on the course of the Nile.

'There was no answer, save the incessant angry murmur of the Nile as it raced around a basalt-walled bend and foamed across a rock ridge half a mile upstream. It was as though the brown weight of the river would drive the white men back to their own country.' Sir Rudyard Kipling, 1890.



Pyramids of Meroe, Sudan

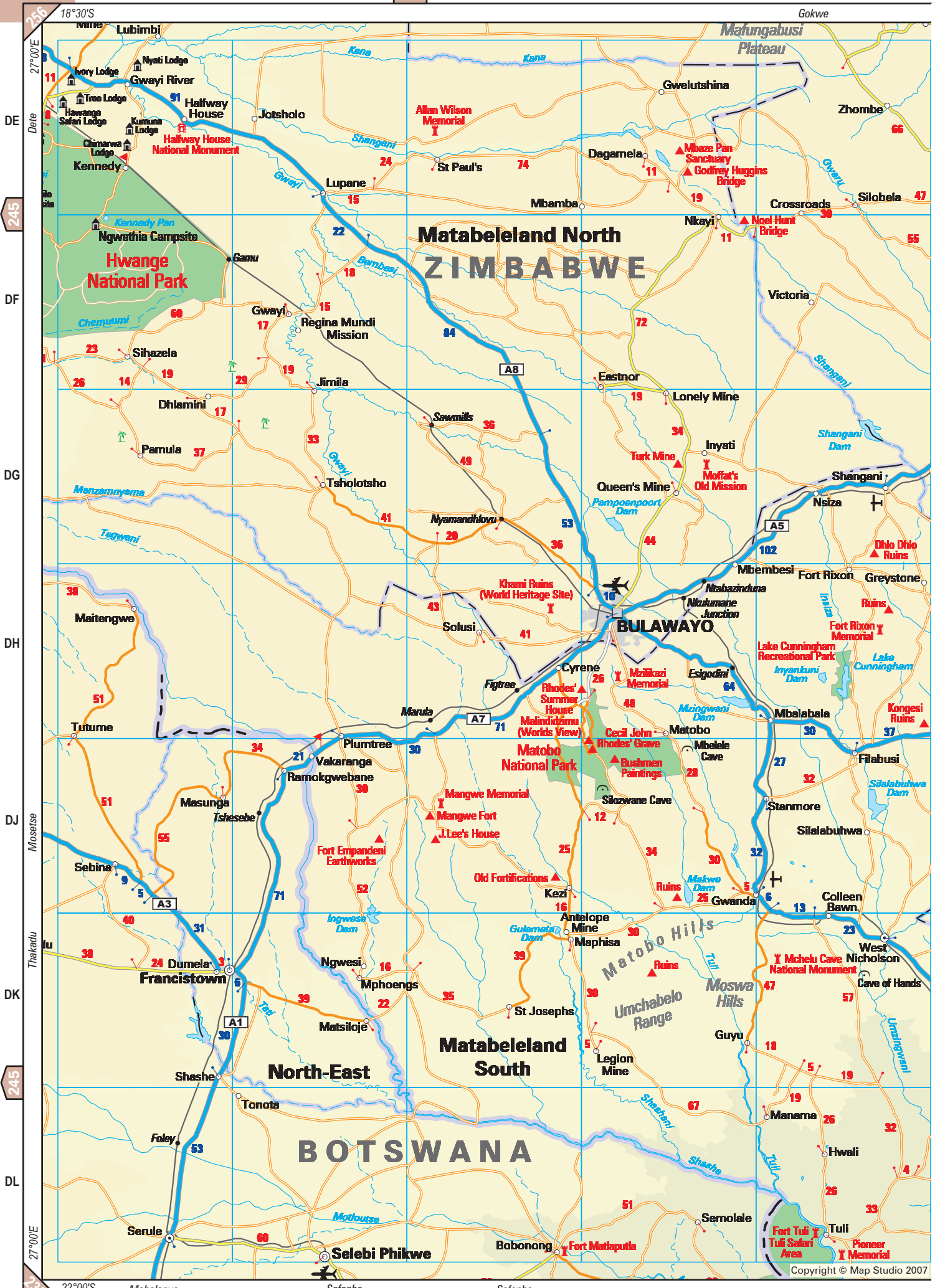


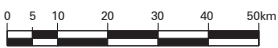
Feluccas, Nile River, Egypt



Pyramids at Giza, Egypt







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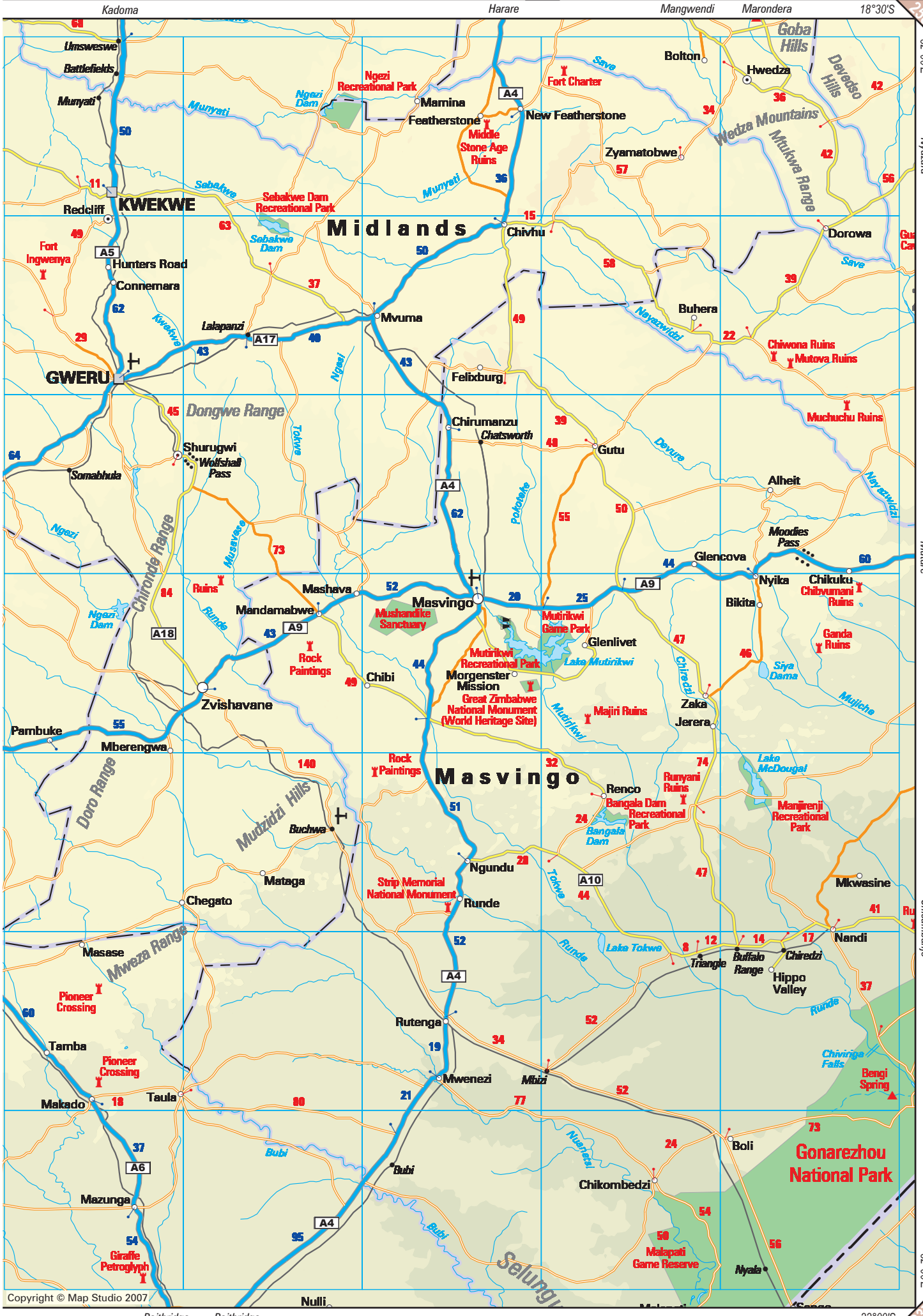
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ULTIMATE AFRICA ATLAS

REGIONAL CHAPTERS
REGIONAL OPENERS
NATIONAL PARKS, RESERVES AND SITES
STREETMAP SECTION
ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES
ROAD ATLAS
DETAILED MAP INDEX



CPT / MAC / 0507 / RA-CF-EF-JL

TRAVEL

ISBN 978-1-94809-524-5

9 781948 095245

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