



# Guide to local lingo to enliven stay

Exploration into heart of country's culture

**W**ANT to have a *lekker* time at the World Cup, chomping boerewors at a braai on the veld or downing a rooibos at the shebeen next to the traffic light?

Here is a guide to some uniquely South African words and phrases for football fans:

- **Howzit:** A universal greeting, a short-form version of "How is it going?"
- **Bru:** Abbreviation of "brother" used to address friends and colleagues as in "Howzit bru?"
- **Yebo:** The Zulu word for yes that is now used across the board.
- **Sharp:** A sign-off signalling an agreement as well as

farewell, often said twice.

- **Ag shame:** An expression of sympathy or annoyance.
- **Eishi!** An exclamation expressing exasperation.
- **Lekker:** An Afrikaans word meaning superb or fantastic, which is applied equally to a person, object or event.
- **Braai:** An originally Afrikaans word for barbecue, which often features a sizzling boerewors, a curled spiced sausage.
- **Biltong:** Dried meat - usually beef, but also from other animals as ostrich, antelope or buffalo - which is eaten as a snack, often accompanied by a beer or glass of wine.
- **Rooibos:** Red bush tea, South

Africa's unofficial national brew which is grown in the south-western Cape region.

- **Shebeens:** Makeshift bars in the townships that often sell strong home-made brews.
- **Muti:** A traditional tree or plant-based medicine. Its practitioners are known as *ryangas*.
- **Sangoma:** Traditional Zulu healers or sorcerers who often summon ancestral spirits to foretell the future.
- **Townships:** Black-only neighbourhoods under apartheid that comprised matchbox state houses, but now include affluent areas. The most famous is Soweto, short for South West Townships.



**HAVING A BLAST:** Fans support Bafana Bafana during training in Braamfontein, Joburg, yesterday. PICTURE: SARAH MAMKE

- **Jozi:** The abbreviation for the largest city of Johannesburg, which is also known as Joburg.
- **Veld or veldt:** An Afrikaans word meaning shrubland, it now generally refers to the countryside as a whole.
- **Robot:** Called traffic lights elsewhere. - Sapa-AFP

**KRISTEN VAN SCHIE**

**I**T'S HAPPENED to all of us. You're walking towards a culturally variant acquaintance and find yourself in a panic - how to greet them?

A hug is too familiar, a handshake too formal. Would it be disrespectful not to bow?

Before you know it, you're awkwardly negotiating a fist-bump-finger-snap combo, desperately searching for common ground.

Enter *Rainbow Nation Navigation* (Logogog Press), an etiquette book to guide locals and visitors through the peculiarities and practices of the 18 most prominent cultural

groups in South Africa.

A Sotho person shouting out "*Likhomiso!* (Those cows!)" when they see you, for example, is apparently a good thing. And don't be surprised if your Zulu boyfriend calls you "*Thambo lami le Kentucky* (My little Kentucky bone)".

Facts on food will have you stocking up on Sparberry when hosting coloured visitors or second-guessing your fried hake if entertaining Tsongas. Know that Xhosas consider it bad luck if beer is brewed badly (though, biologically speaking, that may be bad luck for everyone), and that giving a clock as a present to a Chinese person is an extreme no-no -

apparently, when the words for "clock" and "give" are combined, they sound like the word for "funeral".

"Only for your worst enemy" advises the book.

The tips on partying practices will teach you not to expect an RSVP from an Indian person (assume they are coming) and that heckling the groom at an Afrikaans wedding is perfectly normal.

If you find yourself the subject of gossip for eating standing up in a Swazi home or heaven forbid, licking your knife at an English dinner, order your copy of *Rainbow Nation Navigation* from [www.rainbownavigation.com](http://www.rainbownavigation.com)