

# TRADITION AND CULTURE



Yours to Explore

*Eastern Cape*  
PARKS & TOURISM AGENCY

# EASTERN CAPE CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

The Xhosa tradition is an extremely powerful social force binding together the people of the Eastern Cape province, most evident in Xhosa beliefs by revering their ancestors. The original ancestor is Tshawe, but it is direct family members that Xhosa people call upon for guidance, support and to turn the tide of favour.

There are approximately 7.1-million Xhosa people in South Africa, the majority of whom live in the Eastern Cape, and ancient traditions remain strong in this proud people. They are descended from the Nguni, who began migrating south from central and northern Africa more than a thousand years ago.

The Xhosa comprise of a number of clans, such as Gcaleka, Ngika, Ndlambe, Dushane and the Qayi. A certain amount of intermarriage with the Khoisan people they found here also gave rise to clans like the Gqunkhwebe.

Enchantment winds through the Xhosa language, dress and rituals. Their language is often called the 'click' language because of its three dominant clicks, which entered the isiXhosa language when the Nguni arrivals mixed with the Khoisan.

Xhosa women are easily recognised by their heavy dress, matching turban and coloured dots decorating their faces. If a woman has children, whom she has raised to be adults, then it is usual

to find her seated among her peers smoking a long-handled pipe.

Beadwork similar to the Ndebele is an integral aspect of Xhosa tradition. It forms part of the ornamentation that reflects the different stages of a woman's life. A certain headdress will be worn by a newly married girl, while a woman who has just given birth to her first child will wear a differently styled headdress.

Xhosa beliefs recognise the presence of ancestral spirits and a supreme authority. The spirits of those who have passed on are honoured in rituals and ceremonies. They are called upon for guidance, support, or to turn the tide of fortune. The ceremonial slaughtering of animals is one of the many ways by which ancestors are invoked.

Some Xhosa beliefs dictate that the Xhosa people turn to a diviner or healer, usually attired in a headdress and shawl of fur, when needing advice on how to deal with the spirits, to help with illnesses, or to ward off evil from unnatural forces such as the tokoloshe — a potentially malevolent goblin who attacks at night. Other figures are the huge lightning bird (impundudu), and the gentle abantu bomlambo — aquatic human-like beings who accept into their family those who drown.



# WILD COAST

## CULTURAL EXPERIENCE TOUR WITH IMONTI TOURS

### AMATHOLE & WILD COAST

Eastern Cape Cultural Experiences is a unique and authentic experience of living with the Xhosa people in different villages of the Eastern Cape, cooking and staying with them in their living villages.

The Eastern Cape is the second biggest province in South Africa where the majority of people are Xhosa speaking. Most of the land is occupied by rural villages where most of these communities still live in their mud houses. This tour is designed for guests who want to spend time with these rural communities and learn about Xhosa culture and traditions. You will enjoy traditional meals and also learn how to cook and how to make your own beads. Meet with the local community, be part of their daily activities, cook and stay with the village community. This tour will help you learn about the Xhosa Culture in the different Xhosa living villages. Eastern Cape is the second biggest Province in South Africa where the majority of people are Xhosa speaking. Most of the land is occupied by rural villages where most of these communities still live in their mud houses.

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## ISINUKA MUD CAVES AND SULPHUR POOLS

For a unique cultural experience, come and visit the natural sulphur springs; a traditional healing site to the Pondo people.

Immerse yourself in the tradition by smothering yourself in the mud. Dry in the glorious sun and visit the sulphur pools afterwards to rinse off.

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## XHOSA CULTURAL VILLAGE EXPERIENCE WITH AMAPONDO BACKPACKERS

Amapondo Backpackers north of Port St Johns is situated close to Mthumbane, a Xhosa village which can be reached via a hike through mountainous terrain boasting scenic ocean views. After braving the trail's ropes and ladders you can sit down to a well-deserved traditional Xhosa meal in the village before heading back to the backpackers.

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## NELSON MANDELA MUSEUM

The Nelson Mandela Museum was officially opened on 11 February 2000, to coincide with the tenth anniversary of his release from prison in 1990. Nelson Mandela insisted that the museum was not to be a static collection and tribute to him, but a living memorial to his values and vision. It was to inspire and enrich all who visit it and serve as a catalyst for development and share the heritage resources linked to him.

His gift is a living one, that embodies his commitment to the principles of human rights, freedom, peace and democracy. Located in Qunu (Nelson Mandela Youth and Heritage Centre) and in Mthatha (Bhunga Building ). At Qunu, the young Rolihlahla assumed the name Nelson, as was the custom at missionary schools. In his book "Long Walk to Freedom" Madiba states that Qunu is where he spent the happiest moments of his childhood. Visitors are able to view various exhibitions and several sites directly associated with Nelson Mandela, such as the ruins of the school he attended.

The Nelson Mandela Museum is more than a place; it is an experience that allows visitors to follow the footprints of the man affectionately known as 'Madiba', who's long walk to freedom began in the foothills that rise from the banks of the Mbashe River in Mvezo. Enquire about the accommodation available.

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mandelamuseum2@intekom.co.za  
<http://www.nelsonmandelamuseum.org.za>

## NQILENI VILLAGE, THE XHOSA COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

Situated on the breathtaking Wild Coast, the Lodge is nestled in one of the most beautiful locations in South Africa. An eco-friendly, Fair Trade certified, affordable, multi-night destination for South African and overseas visitors alike; the Lodge is superb for backpackers and cultural wanderers of this Earth.

The Bulungula Lodge sustains local culture and the planet, and is 100% owned and managed by the vibrant, traditional Nqileni village, a Xhosa community. The Xhosa community is an integral part of daily life in and around the Lodge. With no fences, no crime, and no hassles, the village is full of friendly smiles and lots of animals. You are invited to be part of this community throughout your stay - becoming part of the Bulungula Lodge and village community is the whole point of coming here!

The Lodge is powered by the sun and includes the legendary 'rocket' hot-water showers, our water comes from our own borehole and the virtually odourless compost toilets are the most colourful in Africa. 10 theme-painted traditionally built rondavel huts have beautiful sea and forest views. Stay in permanent tents on platforms under the trees or bring and pitch your own tent. Whichever roof you choose, you'll sleep well, to the sound of the Indian Ocean's surf.

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## VILLAGE DINNER EXPERIENCE WITH COFFEE SHACK BACKPACKERS

Coffee Bay is still a deeply traditional area of South Africa where visitors can experience a way of life far removed from Western culture. Here Xhosa culture, values and beliefs preside over daily life. Coffee Shack Backpackers is an accommodation establishment that gives visitors the chance to interact meaningfully with the local Xhosa people.

When Coffee Shack first started, the local Headman invited the owners to his home to share a meal with his family and celebrate the making of new friends. This has progressed to what is now called the Village Dinner and every Friday, guests are invited by one of three local families to attend a traditional dinner, song and dance. Be treated to a warm Xhosa welcome, enjoy a home-cooked traditional dinner, and join the dancing if you can keep up!

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<http://www.coffeeshack.co.za>

[happydays@coffeeshack.co.za](mailto:happydays@coffeeshack.co.za)

## A COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE WITH WILD LUBANZI BACKPACKERS

Wild Lubanzi Backpackers is 50% community owned - our staff are our extended family, all of them are directors of the company, and all of them make the place what it is. The backpackers is nestled on one of the hills overlooking the beach, providing you with stunning sunrise views. It is surrounded by local village huts, people, livestock, laughter and the lovely hum of Xhosa village life. South Africa is/has a powerful mix of politics, people and complexities that frame the context of our lives post-apartheid.

For these reasons we do not accept any guests who are racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic, xenophobic, ethnophobic or just a horrible person in whatever way. If you are, then we will happily drop you off at the nearest minibus taxi stop. (We are however open to debate any of the above if you are unsure of where you stand.)

Wild Lubanzi is a place for the young-at-heart, a place for dreamers, adventurers, travellers, or anyone who ever felt that "there must be more to life". Here's more. You wanna come see?

Please note: We are still rebuilding our backpackers from scratch - three years in and still going strong. However, some accommodation is available (check the accommodation page), the self-catering kitchen is operational and toilet/shower facilities are provided. The beers are cold and the view and short walk to the beach are the same as always.

+27 (0) 78 530 8997

[wild@lubanzi.co.za](mailto:wild@lubanzi.co.za)

## ELUNXWEMENI TOWNSHIP TOURS

Have you ever been inside a spaza shop or a shebeen (local tavern)? Have you ever consulted a traditional healer or drank umqombothi (traditional beer)? Have you seen amaXhosa in their traditional attire? Listened to their music and eaten their food? Come and experience a day in the life of the locals of iCwili township situated close to Kei Mouth and experience all of this and more!

Elunxwemeni Township Tours has been sharing the Xhosa culture with local and international visitors since 2013 and will walk you from door to door as you meet the locals, learn some Xhosa customs, play with their children and experience some aspects of the Xhosa life.

Siyabulela Aubrey Kema is your friendly and welcoming guide, and he started Elunxwemeni Township Tours with the purpose of sharing his African roots with visitors and reducing the unemployment rate.

The walk takes two hours and can be customised to meet your requirements.

Please note: Three days' notice is required if you wish to try umqombothi beer, as Aubrey will need time to brew some for you.

**Bookings: Call Aubrey on +27 (0) 78 064 8487**

## NGXINGXOLO VILLAGE

Visit Ngxingxolo village and meet Zinzi Tofu who speaks with passion and pride about the Xhosa culture.

Asked why she thinks it's important to do so, and how others can learn about her way of life, she said simply: "It's really important because it's totally different from other cultures."

"In the Eastern Cape, 80% of population are Xhosa people. It forms a huge part of the essence of what the Eastern Cape is."

Tofu and her team host cultural tours at the award-winning Ngxingxolo Cultural Village, welcoming guests in song, with Tofu beating on a drum. The tour settles down then as your guide Tofu explains various cultural aspects among the Xhosa people, including – Intonjane, the female rite of passage – courting and the roles of men and women in the home.

She also shows off the kraal, where only men are allowed to enter, and the Intonjane hut where a young woman is kept while undergoing the female rite of passage. Unlike the male rite of passage which includes circumcision, there is no physical contact with the young woman during Intonjane. "To people [visiting] it's complicated but to me, I live in the village," she said.

"I'm not speaking of something I've read in a book. It's my every day. I live in the village."

The tour also includes a lunch of traditional Xhosa food, such as umngqusho (samp and beans), steam bread, stew and spinach.

**Book this tour through Imonti Tours for a great guided experience:**

**+27 (0) 83 487 8975**

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# DISCOVER QOLORA WITH TREVORS TRAILS

Trevor's Trials has a variety of tours that include The Gates, Kobonqaba River estuary, visiting a local Xhosa home, Gxara Waterfall and the Khoisan middens at Halls Point, a sunset cruise on the Qolora River and the 'pool of prophesy'.

## THE GATE TRAIL:

The trip is a three-hour outing by boat and on foot and will take you about 1,5km up the Qolora River from the river mouth through a gorge and to a waterfall with a deep pool. Here a tempting high jump awaits the brave of heart. Trevor and Carlos lead you through the riverine forest, stopping occasionally to point out medicinal trees and plants, whilst boulder hopping across the river to another pool. You will be hard pressed to find a better way to spend a morning or afternoon in this little patch of paradise at Qolora Mouth.

## THE CULTURAL TRAIL:

This is where you can enjoy singing, traditional dancing and the preparation and tasting of traditional food. You will end this off with an informal chat with a traditional healer. For this trail we need to book a day in advance as this is a lived in authentic African home.

## THE KHOISAN MIDDEN AND GXARA WATERFALL TRAIL:

This is where you can see the last remains of a San Midden. Trevor will pick you up in his car and will take you to visit a Khoisan Midden at Halls Point where about 4000 years of Khoisan history is exposed. You will then take a drive to the spectacular falls on the Gxara River before being returned home.

## POOL OF PROPHECY:

Nongqawuse (also spelt Nongqause) is a name that will haunt the Xhosa people forever. In 1856, the Xhosa nation was in despair. A number of Friesland Bulls were imported from Holland in 1850 and with

them came lung-sickness. Thousands of their prized cattle, a sign of wealth in the Xhosa culture, had succumbed. The British had murdered King Hintsa and they had fought and lost many wars against the European settlers, who had taken large tracts of Xhosa territory and cattle. They were looking for a miracle, something to turn around this spell of misfortune.

Into the spotlight stepped Nongqawuse. She was the young niece of Mhlakaza, a priest/diviner who was held in high regard by the Xhosa King, Sarhili. One day, as she looked into the pools in the Gxara River, Nongqawuse had a vision. She claimed to have spoken to the ancestors who promised that they would rise from the dead and drive the hated white man into the sea and replace their sick cattle with strong, healthy cattle. All the ancestors asked for in return was that, as an act of faith, the people would kill all their cattle and destroy all of their crops.

A great commotion arose at the sound of this news and men from far and wide came to see Nongqawuse and to peer into the pool. Some said they had seen the faces of their ancestors in the water, others claimed to have seen whole armies of spirits waiting to arise, eager to destroy the Europeans.

For the next ten months, the Gcaleka Xhosas set about the destruction of all the cattle and crops. Then, on the appointed day, the 18th of February 1857, they awaited the rising of a blood red sun, the awakening of vast spirit armies and the arrival of fat cattle and ripe crops. The sun arose that morning just the same as it always had, there were no armies, no crops and no cattle, only ruin and the grim prospect of starvation. An estimated 25 000 people died of starvation and Nongqawuse fled for her life. She was housed for her own safety on Robben Island and ended her days in obscurity on a farm near King William's Town in the Eastern Cape.

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# AMATHOLE

## ELUNDINI AFRICAN RURAL VILLAGE EXPERIENCE

Elundini Backpackers is an 'off the grid' backpackers just 20 minutes away from Hogsback, high in the Amatola Mountains, in the picturesque African rural village of Elundini. Created from the desire to give guests a true African experience, this community based backpackers has it all; great views, yummy food, and cosy vibes.

If you are curious to venture off the beaten path and experience authentic sustainable living at the very heart of South Africa's Xhosa land, then Elundini is ideal. Here, at Elundini, we try to attain a self-sufficient lifestyle in harmony and tight collaboration with the local community.

Elundini Backpackers offers one dormitory rondavel and two family rondavels. These traditional rondavels are warm in winter and cool in summer, and solar lighting is provided, there is no electricity. The rooms have use of a communal bathroom with showers.

Just a few steps away from the rondavels is a communal kitchen, lounge and dining area with a pool table, a fireplace, and a hammock. Self-catering facilities are available, but you are welcome to join us for breakfast, lunch or dinner on request.

Visitors can try Xhosa bread making, have Xhosa language lessons, or do a Xhosa village tour. Other activities include mountain biking, hiking, and horse riding.

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<http://www.elundinibackpackers.com/>

## CATA VILLAGE

Cata Chalets, only 120km from East London and near the town of Keiskammahoek, is a 3-star self-catering establishment nestled in the Amatole Mountains in rural Eastern Cape. Surrounded by indigenous forest and grasslands, the spectacular panoramic scenery and authentic Xhosa hospitality found within the village and its surrounds places Cata Chalets amongst the most beautiful tourism destinations in South Africa. Consider a week-long stay with a Xhosa family and learn how to speak isiXhosa.

Visitors can learn about Cata's history of land dispossession and successful restitution by visiting the Village Museum or walking the Heritage Trail. Along this trail are the ruins of homesteads that were demolished during forced removals in the 1960s, as well as a topo scope – a viewpoint containing historical information engraved in stone.

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# SUNSHINE COAST

## ROUTE 67

The Mandela Bay Development Agencies Route 67 consists of 67 Public Art Works symbolising Nelson Mandela's 67 years of work dedicated to the freedom of South Africa and includes 67 steps leading up to the second largest flag in Africa. The artworks were designed by local artists from the Eastern Cape. The route is a proud celebration of our city's heritage and history. This is a must see stop for the whole family to walk and to enjoy. Guided tours of Route 67 is available at the Donkin Visitor Information Office inside the lighthouse building. Route 67 starts at the Campanile and climbs the staircase to Vuyisile Mini Market Square which is the centre of the city. From the city centre the route continues through the staircase at St Mary's Terrace, the experience of the route erupts in a celebration of colour, art and heritage that meanders up to the Donkin Reserve to the great flag on top of the hill.

Route 67 forms part the greater Nelson Mandela Bay Arts Journey which includes a number of Art Galleries and different locations such as the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum, the newly renovated Athenaeum Building, the Red Location Museum, Uitenhage .

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[https://www.nmbt.co.za/listing/route\\_67.html](https://www.nmbt.co.za/listing/route_67.html)  
[donkin@nmbt.co.za](mailto:donkin@nmbt.co.za)

## NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN ART MUSEUM

This Art Museum's collections reflect the rich diversity of cultural groups in the Eastern Cape province, consisting of South African art, particularly that of the Eastern Cape, British art, international printmaking and Oriental art. The permanent collection is supplemented by an active programme of temporary exhibitions, which showcase the best that art has to offer in South Africa and from abroad. A variety of educational services are offered for the whole community, including guided tours and art workshops.

+27 (0) 41 506 2000

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# KOUGA

## SARAH BAARTMAN

According to history, Sarah Baartman was born in 1789 in the Gamtoos Valley. When she was barely in her 20's, she was sold to London by an enterprising Scottish doctor named Alexander Dunlop, accompanied by a showman named Hendrik Cesars. She spent four years in Britain being exhibited for her unique anatomic features. Her treatment caught the attention of British abolitionists, who tried to rescue her, but she claimed that she had come to London on her own accord. In 1814, after Dunlop's death, she traveled to Paris.

With two consecutive showmen, Henry Taylor and S. Reaux, she amused onlookers who frequently visited the Palais-Royal. She was subjected to examination by Georges Cuvier, a professor of comparative anatomy at the Museum of Natural History.

In post-Napoleonic France, sideshows like the Hottentot Venus lost their appeal. Baartman lived on in poverty, and died in Paris of an undetermined inflammatory disease in December 1815. After her death, Cuvier dissected her body, then displayed her remains. For more than a century and a half, visitors to the Museum of Man in Paris could view her brain, skeleton and genitalia.

President Nelson Mandela formally requested that France return the remains of Sarah Baartman to South Africa. Her remains were reburied during a ceremony on 19 August 2002, on Vergaderingskop, a hill on the edge of Hankey, where the multi-million multi-purpose Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance is under construction.

The 4804.5 m<sup>2</sup> heritage site will include the declared gravesite, a museum, archives, story-telling pits, a healing pond, a symbolic and productive garden, a reception building, retail spaces, workshops, restaurant, multipurpose hall, auditorium, classrooms, accommodation, parking, a road underpass and walkways.

The museum will consist of two sections, one dedicated to the Khoi-San and the other to Sarah Baartman. Visitors will follow a route depicting a narrative about Khoi-San history that will contextualise Sarah Baartman's life.

**Gamtoos Tourism**  
**+27 (0) 42 283 0437**  
**info@baviaans.net**  
**www.baviaans.net**

# KAROO HEARTLAND

## MEDICINAL PLANT TOUR @ GANORA GUEST FARM

Henry, better known as Punky, is a local guide of Bushman descent who works at Ganora Guest Farm. His knowledge of Karoo plants and those with medicinal qualities was passed onto him by his grandfather. He enjoys guiding people on walks through the farm as he shows visitors the various local plants and discusses the healing qualities they have and how to best use them. He can also guide you on longer hikes through the canyon where he points out birds, reptiles and insects of interest.

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## ROCK ART TOUR

Ganora Guest Farm has various shelters where ancient rock art paintings/images were found. Guests are taken to one easily accessible site where there is a variety of rock art to view. The paintings date back from a few hundred years of the Khoi to about 8 000 years of the San people. A guide will explain everything about their spiritual beliefs and the meaning of the paintings as well as how they mixed the paints and how it was applied. Near the shelter guests will also be able to read the engravings of a young man that hid in the shelter during the time of the Anglo Boer War. The story of this family during that time will also be retold.

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# FRIENDLY N6

## MEHLODING ADVENTURE TRAIL

Discover the Mehlooding Adventure Trail for yourself! For the fit and the adventurous this is a stunning guided trail into the lesser known part of the uKhahlamba / Drakensberg National Park (a World Heritage Site).

Discover San rock art, protea and tree ferns, indigenous forests, wild flower gardens and rare birds that pass through rural villages and be greeted by friendly local communities and experience traditional culture. At the end of each day be welcomed by your hostess at comfortable chalets where you can enjoy a hot shower, African cuisine and an inviting bed!

Trail package includes:

- Twin or dormitory room accommodation
- Dinner, breakfast and free service tea/coffee
- Hot showers, linen and towels
- Professional guiding
- Packed lunch

Extras:

- Return transfers from Matatiele
- Bag transfers between chalets

+27 (0) 39 737 3289

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## TSHAKA ROCK ART AND OTHER TOURS

A little-visited area of the Eastern Cape between Maclear and Mount Fletcher has yielded one of the most impressive rock paintings found in South Africa. The richly-painted polychrome images of a herd of leaping eland are well preserved and occupy a large overhang about 70m long and 25m high. Local shepherds have known about the paintings for years, but only recently have they been brought to the attention of community guides and academics. Perched under a band of sandstone overlooking the Tsitsana River Valley, the site is known as KwaBhaliwe, a Xhosa name meaning “~place where it is written”. Thabathani Tshaka, a community guide who runs the Mount Fletcher tourist information office is the ideal person to guide you on this journey of discovery.

+27 (0) 73 242 6952

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# SAN ROCK ART

The Rhodes, Barkly East, Maclear and Mount Fletcher areas of the Southern Drakensberg in the Eastern Cape Highlands are famous for some beautiful rock art sites.

In the Rhodes/Barkly East areas, a three-day Rock Art Tour takes you into the heart of one of the wildest and most awe-inspiring landscapes in South Africa, if not southern Africa. The tours are conducted by qualified mountain guides and archaeological experts, and start with the Denorbin Farm site right above Barkly Pass. Here you will see lots of hunter-gatherer rock art under a large sandstone overhang – including animals, depictions of San rituals, serpents and dancing figures.

The tour continues on Day 2 and 3 to several other sites in the 'Wartrail' area, Ancestral Cave and Cathedral Cave.

The tours give you an opportunity to savour the ancient beauty around you, while giving you an insight into the amazing ancient culture and spirituality of the San Bushmen – an almost extinct tribe who were the first people in southern Africa.

Accommodation, meals and packed lunches are all included and are arranged on the route. Dawn Green offers a guided service to sites in the New England and Wartrail areas.

The Mount Fletcher area also has an excellent site, one of the best preserved in South Africa. This herd of leaping eland are worth the rather strenuous walk up the mountain to the overhang of rock, but once you arrive, you can imagine the San sitting there with this amazing backdrop and outlook over the Tistsana River Valley. The public are only allowed to view the site in the company of a guide.

Maclear also has its own treasure of San Art as featured in National Geographic magazine. Guided tours are available.

**New England and Wartrail areas.**

**Contact: Dawn Green**

**Tel: +27 (0) 45 971 9078.**

**The public are only allowed to view the Mount Fletcher site in the company of a guide.**

**Contact: Thabathani Tshaka**

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**Maclear**

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